

REIMAGINING CANADIAN SPORT A DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

Submission to the Future of Sport in Canada Commission (FSCC) for Discussion

Submitted by: Summer Sport NSO Caucus Executive – December 2024

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Executive Summary

Canada's sport system stands at a critical juncture, facing significant leadership, alignment, and resource challenges along with an unprecedented funding gap. National Sport Organizations (NSOs), Multi-Sport Organizations (MSOs), and Provincial-Territorial Sport Organizations (PTSOs) operate within a fragmented framework, lacking cohesive roles, governance standards, and consistent collaboration. These issues result in duplicated efforts, misaligned goals, and inefficient resource use, exacerbated by investment that is failing to keep pace with increasing demands on the system. This submission outlines a comprehensive restructuring of Canada's sport system to enhance its effectiveness, inclusivity, safety, and sustainability, creating a strong foundation for long-term success in parallel with sustained and meaningful investment.

Rationale

Canada's sport system cannot reach its full potential without unified leadership, strategic alignment, and efficient resource allocation, along with increased investment. NSOs, MSOs, and PTSOs often work in silos with overlapping mandates, which reduces accountability, stifles collaboration, and limits overall impact. The absence of a shared vision across Canada's sport system further weakens its capacity to serve athletes, stakeholders, and communities effectively. Structural and operational reforms are essential to foster a trusted, resilient, and efficient system.

Summary of Key Recommendations for Discussion

1. Address Funding Requirements for a Safe, Sustainable Sports System in Canada

Increase annual core funding by \$144 million for NSOs, with further increases linked to inflation rates, ensuring stability and capacity for growth. Simplify funding processes, protect athlete support, and leverage new gaming revenues to create a National Sport Fund, addressing program needs, equity and athlete well-being.

2. Affirm CCES as the Independent Sport Integrity Agency for Sport in Canada

Empower the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) as the independent agency to take a leadership role in upholding anti-doping standards, athlete protection, and ethical conduct, ensuring a safe and trustworthy environment for all Canadians.

3. Establish "Canada Sport" as an Executive Leadership Body for Sport in Canada

Create "Canada Sport" as a central, executive leadership body with the authority to oversee national sport policy, funding, and governance, improving alignment and strategic direction across all levels of the Canadian sport system.

4. Restructure MSOs and NSOs, and Alignment with PTSOs

Streamline and consolidate Multi-Sport Organizations (MSOs) and National Sport Organizations (NSOs), clarifying roles and enhancing alignment with Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations (PTSOs) and Provincial Agencies to reduce inefficiencies, optimize resources, and strengthen the overall sport system.

FSCC Interim Summit: An Opportunity to Build Consensus and Momentum

The FSCC Interim Summit presents a crucial opportunity to bring together key constituents of the sport system to build consensus and generate momentum for the FSCC recommendations. By engaging stakeholders at this Summit—including federal, provincial, and athlete representatives—the sport system can establish a unified commitment to the proposed reforms and ensure broad-based support for these transformative changes.

Call to Action

This submission calls for urgent, decisive reform of Canada’s sport system. Establishing a new “Canada Sport” agency, restructuring of MSOs and NSOs, and creating alignment across national and provincial bodies, will require sustained commitment, oversight, and targeted investment. These changes will yield a system that is well-governed, efficient, safe, and inclusive, benefiting athletes, communities, and stakeholders alike.

Now is the time to act. Through strong leadership and collaboration, and appropriate investment, Canada can build a sport system that inspires national pride, fosters equity, and drives excellence at all levels of sport.

Introduction

The Summer Sport NSO Caucus Executive is pleased to present this comprehensive submission – for discussion - to the Future of Sport in Canada Commission (FSCC), informed by the collective perspectives of Canada’s National Sport Organizations (NSOs). This submission addresses the FSCC’s dual mandate to improve both the safety and the effectiveness of the Canadian sport system. Specifically, we recognize and support the FSCC’s goals to address:

1. **Safe Sport in Canada:** Developing trauma-informed approaches to help sport participants disclose experiences of maltreatment and heal from any associated harm; and
2. **The Sport System in Canada:** Recommending improvements across policy, funding structures, governance, accountability, conflict of interest, systems alignment, culture, and legal considerations.

Our recommendations build on an extensive consultation process, including in-person sessions with Summer and Winter NSO leadership, structured dialogues with Winter NSO Caucus colleagues, surveys, interviews with individual sports, and focus groups with representatives from the Small Sport NSO Caucus, Non-Olympic NSO Caucus, and ongoing dialogues with athlete representatives, including the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) and Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) Athlete Commissions and AthletesCAN. This wide-ranging consultation surfaced insights that emphasize the need for unified leadership, reliable and adequate funding, and a restructured framework that reduces fragmentation and ensures alignment.

The findings and recommendations in this submission highlight four critical areas essential to a safe and high-functioning sport system: *Funding Requirements, Independent Sport Integrity Agency, Executive Leadership Structure, Restructure of MSOs and NSOs, and Alignment with PTSOs*. Within each area, we outline solutions designed to foster a more cohesive, well-funded, and accountable system that regains the trust of athletes, sport participants, and the Canadian public. Our recommendations further underscore how a system that is well-governed, and appropriately funded, is inherently safer, with structures that protect athletes’ interests and build confidence across all stakeholders.

The Summer Sport NSO Caucus Executive is committed to supporting the FSCC in fulfilling this mandate. We believe that the FSCC can drive the momentum needed for transformative change, leading into the FSCC Interim Summit and beyond. Together, we can build a sport system in Canada that exemplifies integrity, inclusivity, and excellence.

1. Funding Requirements

The Canadian sport system is experiencing a critical funding crisis marked by stagnant core funding, a fragmented funding process, and inflationary pressures that have significantly reduced purchasing power. Core funding for NSOs has remained fixed at approximately \$40 million since 2005, which, adjusted for inflation, has diminished in real terms. This funding constraint restricts NSOs from maintaining programs, let alone expanding their reach or supporting new sports. Without immediate and substantial increases in funding, NSOs are projected to face a cumulative deficit with current estimates of around \$135m expecting at current trajectory to move upwards of

\$500m in the coming years, threatening both the operational stability and the future of Canadian sport.

Key Findings and Context

- **Stagnant Core Funding**

Since 2005, the lack of adjustment to core funding has effectively halved NSOs' purchasing power, leading to difficult trade-offs between short-term needs and long-term growth. Without a substantial increase in core funding, it will not be possible for NSOs to meet the current challenges and increasing demands associated with supporting emerging sports, and making investments that align with safe sport athlete well-being, mental health and sport sustainability.

- **A \$144m Annual Funding Gap**

NSOs require an immediate \$144M increase to annual core funding to stabilize operations and deliver on their mandates. This includes \$20m annually to account for 50% inflation since 2005; \$56.8m annually to make permanent the short-term funding levels, reached in 2021/22 and 2022/23, dedicated to the priorities of gender equity, safe sport, removing barriers to sport participation, and athlete and coach mental health; and \$26.8m annually to address the forecast growing deficit that NSOs will run while delivering on their mandate.

- **Positive Impact of Enhanced Funding**

In recent years we have seen the positive impact of when NSOs are provided with enhanced funding for Safe Sport, Governance Reform, DEI Initiatives, COVID relief, and the uplift in community programming as a result of the Community Sport for All Initiative.

- **Delayed Access and Inequities in Sport Funding**

Emerging sports often face wait times exceeding five years for funding through the Sport Funding and Accountability Framework (SFAF), which hampers their development. Additionally, para-sport funding remains disproportionately low, limiting opportunities for inclusivity. Equitable increases in funding are essential to ensure representation and support for athletes of all abilities, contributing to a more comprehensive and inclusive sport system.

- **Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) Vulnerabilities**

The AAP, which provides critical support for Canada's athletes, is increasingly threatened by inflation, reducing its effectiveness in meeting athletes' needs. Ring-fencing AAP funds is essential to ensure that athletes receive consistent financial assistance, supporting their development and overall well-being from grassroots to elite levels.

- **Fragmented and Inefficient Funding Processes**

The current system of multiple funding applications and reporting is overly complex, creating administrative burdens that detract from NSOs' ability to focus on sport and athlete development. Additionally, limited transparency and inconsistent timing in funding allocations make planning difficult. Streamlining these processes would enable NSOs to allocate resources more effectively, allowing them to prioritize both performance and athlete well-being.

- **Late, Uncertain and Multiple Funding Cycles**
 Unpredictable funding cycles prevent effective long-term planning. Multiple overlapping application and submission timelines create unnecessary capacity issues and increase inequity for smaller sports. Late-year funding can result in “binge spending,” which limits strategic resource allocation. Establishing stable, predictable funding cycles would allow for sustainable planning, enabling NSOs to support both performance and holistic athlete care.
- **Enhanced Excellence and Clear Criteria**
 The Enhanced Excellence program should be re-evaluated with transparent criteria that align with a high-performance strategy rooted in the values, priorities, and public mandate for Canadian sport. This strategy should reflect what Canadians wish to see on the world stage: not only strong competitive performance but also a commitment to athlete well-being and the ethical values associated with Canadian sport.
- **International Program Delivery and Bulk FX Strategy**
 NSOs are tasked with delivering international programs, which face added financial pressures due to currency fluctuations. Implementing a coordinated bulk foreign exchange (FX) strategy would mitigate these pressures, enabling NSOs to manage international costs effectively and allocate funds in ways that support both competition and athlete care.
- **Hosting Strategy and Investment in Canadian Events**
 Developing a national hosting strategy could reduce expenses associated with international travel and generate revenue to reinvest in Canadian sport. Hosting profitable events domestically can strengthen local infrastructure, lower international travel costs for national teams, and reinvest profits back into sport development and athlete support programs, making it a cost-effective and sustainable solution.
- **Role of Major Multi-Sport Games in Infrastructure Development and Economic Legacy**
 Hosting major multi-sport events, such as Commonwealth Games, Pan American Games, and Olympic and Paralympic Games, plays a pivotal role in strengthening Canada's sports system. These events inspire youth participation, catalyze community engagement, and, crucially, lead to significant infrastructure and facility investments, as evidenced by impact of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics and the Toronto 2015 Pan American Games.
- **Opportunity to exploit GST revenues from single-sport betting in Canada**
 The projected GST revenues from single-sport betting in Canada are substantial, with Ontario alone estimating around \$91 million annually from its portion of the market. Nationally, the broader economic impact of single-game sports betting is anticipated to grow the sector significantly. For instance, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) projected that Canada could see an industry worth between \$1.5 billion and \$2.4 billion within the first few years of legalization. This new revenue stream represents a notable opportunity for Canada’s sports system to capture a portion of these funds.

Recommendations

- 1.1. **Increase Core Funding:** Advocate for an immediate annual increase of \$144 million in core funding, with further increases linked to inflation rates, restoring purchasing power and providing NSOs with the financial stability to meet rising demands, invest in long-term development, and support athlete well-being.
- 1.2. **Secure and Protect Athlete Funding:** Implement ring-fenced funding for the Athlete Assistance Program, Gameplan and Mental Health support, to safeguard from inflation, and other program pressures, ensuring athletes receive adequate financial support and support for their wellbeing throughout their careers.
- 1.3. **Streamline Funding Processes:** Simplify and standardize funding applications and reporting procedures. Introduce a multi-year single sport planning, with annual check-in, creating transparent, efficient process that reduces administrative burdens and increase accountability, enabling NSOs to focus on longer term plan for core programming and sport development.
- 1.4. **Revisit Enhanced Excellence Criteria:** Establish clear and publicly endorsed criteria for Enhanced Excellence funding of high performance sport, that reflect Canadians' priorities and values, including athlete well-being, ethical conduct, and competitive success on the world stage.
- 1.5. **Implement a Bulk FX Strategy:** Develop a coordinated foreign exchange strategy for NSOs, to manage currency risks, and take advantage of wholesale foreign exchange rates, associated with international program delivery.
- 1.6. **Establish a Sport Specific Hosting Strategy:** Promote a national hosting strategy that views domestic events as both an investment in local sports infrastructure and a revenue-generating opportunity, reducing international travel costs and creating reinvestment opportunities to support athlete health and performance.
- 1.7. **Establish a Strategy for Hosting Major Multi-Sport Games:** Canada should prioritize and strategically plan for the hosting of major multi-sport games as part of its national sport and economic policy. This approach should include dedicated funding and infrastructure planning that emphasizes legacy facilities to support both high-performance and community sports for years to come.
- 1.8. **Establish a National Sport Fund Supported by Gaming Revenues:** Capitalize on the significant revenue potential of single-sport betting, establish a National Sport Fund, supported by a portion of new gaming revenues, to create a sustainable financial foundation for sport development, infrastructure, and Safe Sport programs.

A reliable and robust funding structure is essential for improving NSO operations, fostering transparency, and creating a unified Canadian sport system. By addressing funding challenges, protecting essential athlete support, and aligning investments with a shared vision of competitive success and athlete well-being, Canada can build a resilient sport system that serves athletes and gains public trust—ensuring a sustainable future for sport in Canada

2. Independent Sport Integrity Agency

To uphold the highest standards of safety, integrity, and transparency in Canadian sport, the role of the Independent Sport Integrity Agency, managed by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES), must be strengthened. This agency should serve as a trusted body for independent complaint handling, and take a leadership role in driving structural change for a safer system, closing jurisdictional gaps while enabling NSOs to focus on sport-specific preventative measures and education. The CCES mandate should encompass proactive safe sport education, anti-doping, and gambling oversight, supported by stable funding and a clear governance framework. This alignment would empower CCES, allow them to take a much-needed leadership role, and provide NSOs with essential resources to foster safe, supportive environments that emphasize athlete well-being.

Key Findings and Context

- **Effectiveness of OSIC and Current Complaint Mechanisms**

The Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner (OSIC) was intended to centralize complaint handling under the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS). However, over 60% of NSOs rate OSIC as ineffective due to jurisdictional confusion, long delays, and fragmented communication, which hinders trust in the process.

- **NSO Response to UCCMS and Safe Sport**

In response to a shared commitment to the UCCMS, NSOs have taken significant steps to address athlete safety, including sport specific policy development, enhanced screening, independent third party complaint management, rule of two, addressing power imbalances and safe sport training and development.

- **Jurisdictional Gaps and Capacity Constraints**

Jurisdictional ambiguity poses a significant challenge for NSOs, as the responsibilities between national and provincial organizations in enforcing UCCMS standards are often unclear. Most NSOs operate with limited staff and resources, impeding their ability to implement comprehensive safe sport programs, especially at the grassroots level. The lack of jurisdictional clarity creates a risk that individuals may evade accountability by shifting across organizational boundaries. This could be mitigated by establishing a National Safe Sport Registry, facilitating cross-jurisdictional data sharing, and aligning provincial and territorial efforts through robust agreements.

- **Support for Victims and a Focus on Prevention**

Victim support in cases of abuse is often limited to legal aid and fails to meet the holistic mental health and counseling needs of affected individuals. Additionally, the current system places excessive focus on complaint handling rather than on proactive education and prevention. A more preventative approach, supported by a national safe sport framework and shared educational resources, would help NSOs build sport specific measures and environments that prioritize athletes' well-being.

Recommendations

- 2.1. **Affirm CCES as an Independent Sport Integrity Unit:** Empower CCES to operate as a fully independent Sport Integrity Unit responsible for safe sport, anti-doping, and gambling oversight. CCES's role should encompass trusted complaint handling and proactive oversight, and take a leadership role in driving change and establishing jurisdictional agreements, allowing NSOs to focus on localized, sport-specific prevention and safe sport education measures within a consistent framework.
- 2.2. **Direct and Reliable Multi-Year Funding for Safe Sport:** Provide direct, multi-year funding to CCES/OSIC that is independent of NSO user fees, ensuring the agency's capacity to manage Safe Sport complaints effectively, establish its independence and maintain an impartial stance. Reliable, multi-year funding for MSOs and NSOs is critical for establishing and sustaining education and prevention initiatives that focus on shifting the culture in sport, and athlete well-being and reducing incidents of abuse.
- 2.3. **Roll Out the Canadian Safe Sport Program (CSSP)**
Endorse and adopt the Canadian Safe Sport Program (CSSP) as the national standard, led by CCES and supported by Provincial Agencies, offering a unified framework that ensures NSOs and PTSOs may implement a consistent and robust approach to the handling of Safe Sport complaints.
- 2.4. **Provide Support for Safe Sport Complainants and Impacted Parties**
Make available robust support that goes beyond legal support to provide holistic, trauma informed counselling and advice to ensure the wellbeing of complainants, and other impacted parties, both during and after the process.
- 2.5. **Clarify Roles for NSOs and MSOs in Prevention**
Overseen by 'Canada Sport' and with guidance from CCES, establish clear, delineated responsibilities for MSOs and NSOs in safe sport initiatives. MSOs should lead in developing a robust framework, providing centralized resources, and ensuring a consistent national approach to education and prevention. NSOs, in turn, would implement these resources locally, adapting them to reflect sport-specific needs. This collaborative structure allows for consistency while giving sports the flexibility needed to serve their unique communities effectively.
- 2.6. **Close Jurisdictional Gaps through Bi-Lateral Agreements**
CCES to lead work to establish bilateral agreements between provincial, territorial, and other jurisdictional entities to create alignment across Canada. A National Safe Sport Registry, with cross-jurisdictional data sharing, will further enable the consistent application of safe sport standards and provide an additional safeguard against individuals circumventing accountability.
- 2.7. **Revise UCCMS Definitions of Abuse**
Led by CCES, together with the Interdepartmental National Safe Sport Working Group (INSSWG) and athlete representatives, to refine UCCMS definitions of abuse, ensuring they are contextually specific to the sport environment, including consideration of para

sport. This focus will help prioritize cases of maltreatment and reduce administrative strain by appropriately handling lower-severity misconduct issues

2.8. Establish a Professional Coach Association

Develop an independent Professional Coach Association to support coaches with legal guidance, professional development, and accountability mechanisms, akin to professional colleges for other sports practitioners. This would help address concerns around coaches adversely impacted by complaint weaponization and provide a trusted resource for coaches.

These enhancements will help CCES fulfill its mandate as an independent integrity body while equipping NSOs with the framework and resources needed to support safe, supportive, and accountable sport environments. Reliable funding, jurisdictional clarity, and a preventive focus will allow the Canadian sport system to better protect athlete well-being, build public trust, and create a safe sport culture rooted in transparency and proactive care.

3. Executive Leadership Structure

Effective leadership is essential for a well-governed, safe, and inclusive sports system in Canada. A strong, centralized leadership entity is needed to guide the national sports ecosystem, foster trust among stakeholders, and address key governance challenges that hinder efficiency, alignment, and accountability. Meaningful athlete representation must be integrated into governance and decision-making, providing a direct and influential voice in shaping Canadian sport policy. Recent gaps in national leadership—including the stalled Sport Funding and Accountability Framework (SFAF), the challenges with Canadian Sport Policy (CSP 3.0), and inconsistent governance standards—have led NSOs to call for a clear, authoritative body to provide cohesive direction and a unified vision for Canadian sport.

Key Findings and Context

- **Leadership Gap and System Fragmentation**
National sport organizations (NSOs) identify a leadership gap as one of the primary issues facing Canadian sport, often considering it as critical as funding shortages. Without a dedicated agency to define vision and set standards, inefficiencies and duplications arise. This gap is exacerbated by the lack of alignment across national, provincial, and community levels, limiting the system’s effectiveness and its ability to support sport programming and development initiatives consistently. Involving athlete representatives at all levels could bridge some of these gaps, ensuring alignment with athlete priorities.
- **Systemic Failures and Challenges in Policy Implementation**
Efforts to reform key governance and policy initiatives have faced multiple setbacks. The stalled SFAF, the challenges in launching CSP 3.0, the back tracking on the Sport Governance Code, and issues with implementing the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner (OSIC) highlight the need for an executive body that can articulate a clear vision, values, and strategy for organized sport in Canada. This agency would drive

accountability and ensure momentum for policy implementation while incorporating athlete insights into critical decisions.

- **Absence of a Unified Vision, Mission, and Values for Canadian Sport**

The Canadian sports system lacks a cohesive vision and values framework, limiting its capacity to effectively advocate for the importance of organized sport at the individual, community, and national levels. Without a shared vision and values, inconsistent messaging persists, weakening public trust and missing opportunities to highlight the social, cultural, and economic benefits of sport in Canada. Embedding athlete perspectives in this framework would enhance its relevance and resonance with the public.

- **Examples of Successful System Collaboration**

There are several recent examples of where the system has collaborated to successfully deliver a system wide response including COVID Response Task Force, development of UCCMS and Safe Sport Policy, and Mental Health Strategy for Sport. In 2006, the Canadian government announced the creation of Podium Canada (now OTP), with the support of MSO/NSO and funding partners, to create a comprehensive plan for Canadian teams to improve their performance at the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Recommendations

3.1. Establish a “Canada Sport” Agency

Create a central agency, tentatively named “Canada Sport,” with executive powers to lead and coordinate the Canadian sports system. This agency would have a mandate to develop a unified Vision, Mission, and Values for organized sport in Canada and to ensure these principles guide governance at all levels, including the inclusion of a structured, influential athlete voice in decision-making at all levels of the sport system.

3.1.1. **Develop Vision, Mission, and Values:** Collaborate with key stakeholders—including federal and provincial governments, multi-sport organizations (MSOs), NSOs, and athletes—to create and communicate a shared vision that promotes inclusivity, safety, and excellence. This guiding framework would shape strategic decisions and unify efforts across all levels of sport.

3.1.2. **A Long Term Strategy for Canadian Sport:** an agreed and publicly endorsed sport policy that outlines a long term strategy for sport in Canada that sets direction, priorities and informs resource allocation.

3.1.3. **Direct Authority and Funding Oversight:** Empower “Canada Sport” with authority over specific national MSOs and responsibility for recommending funding allocations for NSOs and other MSOs. This would ensure that resources are efficiently and equitably distributed to support strategic priorities, including Safe Sport, and other critical programs for the development and furtherance of sport in Canada.

3.1.4. **Coordinate with Provinces and Territories:** Work collaboratively with provincial and territorial bodies, such as the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Sport Committee (FPTSC) or multi-sport Provincial/Territorial agencies, to implement a cross-jurisdictional approach to policy and service delivery.

3.2. **Advocate for the Value of Organized Sport**

“Canada Sport” should lead advocacy efforts, highlighting the physical, mental, and community benefits of organized sport, leading efforts to secure additional investment in sport and activity from Health and Education, and encourage greater private and public partnership for the benefit of the sports system.

3.3. **Institute a Robust Accountability Framework**

“Canada Sport” must establish clear accountability mechanisms, measuring progress against strategic goals and publicly reporting on both achievements and challenges. Athlete representation within governance and accountability structures would reinforce trust and credibility, a commitment to athlete-centered governance and continuous improvement.

Establishing “Canada Sport” as a centralized leadership body with executive authority, shared goals, and strategic oversight—alongside a meaningful, hard-wired athlete voice—would foster a well-governed, cohesive, and safe sports system. By addressing the existing leadership gap and setting a unified vision for Canadian sport, “Canada Sport” would improve the system’s resilience, effectiveness, and capacity to achieve long-term benefits for athletes, organizations, and communities alike.

4. Restructure of MSOs, NSOs, and Alignment with PTSOs

The Canadian sports system currently consists of over 60 national sport organizations (NSOs), more than 20 multi-sport organizations (MSOs), and various provincial/territorial sport organizations and agencies (PTSOs). However, these entities often lack alignment, resulting in inefficiencies, duplicated efforts, and limited impact. A strategic restructuring and consolidation of MSOs and NSOs, along with clearer role definition and alignment between NSOs, PTSOs, and PT Agencies is essential to create a more effective, inclusive, and safe sports system for all participants. Establishing a more cohesive structure will optimize resources, streamline service delivery, and enhance sport quality and accessibility across all levels.

Key Findings and Context

- **Lack of Cohesive Alignment Between MSOs and NSOs**

The \$75 million Sport Canada allocates annually to MSOs supports numerous organizations with overlapping functions and unclear mandates. This fragmentation hinders coordinated support for NSOs and limits the overall impact of funding. Several MSOs operate with self-determined mandates and performance metrics, leading to accountability challenges, duplication and misalignment with national objectives.

- **Inconsistent Structure Among NSOs**

NSO structures vary significantly, with some closely aligned to their international federations (IFs) and others fragmented across multiple entities. For example, while Cycling Canada operates as a single NSO aligned with the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), Aquatics and Snow Sports remain divided across multiple NSOs for different disciplines. This inconsistency in NSO structure results in administrative inefficiencies,

unclear strategic direction, and increased operational costs, which could be reduced by consolidating similar disciplines.

- **Unequitable Support for NSOs**

All NSOs are required to meet similar expectations but receive widely different levels of support and funding depending on their size and designation as Enhanced Excellence, Olympic or Paralympic, or not. Many smaller, Paralympic or non-Olympic sports operate with limited support and makeshift HR, IT and Finance support, and rely more heavily on volunteer support.

- **Undefined Roles Between NSOs and PTSOs**

A lack of clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of sport specific NSOs and PTSOs and multi-sport P/T agencies, contributes to inconsistent service delivery, duplicated efforts, and resource gaps across regions. This unclear division of duties hinders strategic alignment between national objectives and provincial priorities, further limiting the overall effectiveness of the system.

Recommendations

4.1. Consolidate and Realign MSOs under the ‘Canada Sport’ Agency

Streamline the number of MSOs by merging or eliminating those with overlapping or outdated mandates under the leadership and oversight of ‘Canada Sport’ Agency . This consolidation would allow Sport Canada’s funding to be concentrated in critical areas, increase accountability, and enhance alignment with national sport objectives. All remaining MSOs should operate within a cohesive framework and unified oversight to maximize their support for NSOs, ensuring a system that is efficient and aligned with strategic goals.

4.2. Integrate Operations of the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) and Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC)

Encourage a shared operational model for the COC and CPC, with clearly defined guardrails to preserve para-sport funding and support. Shared resources would improve operational efficiency, benefiting athletes in both organizations while upholding the unique needs and objectives of Olympic and Paralympic sports. This approach aligns with the concept of “shared operations to support a shared field of play.”

4.3. Consolidate the COPSIN Network for Improved Efficiency

Bring the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institute Network (COPSIN) under a single leadership structure, reporting to ‘Canada Sport’ Agency, to reduce administrative redundancies and improve coordination. This restructuring would enhance the impact of COPSIN on athlete development and research, fostering a more coordinated approach to support high-performance athletes.

4.4. Align NSOs with International Federation Models

Where feasible, NSOs should be restructured to reflect the structures of their international federations (IFs). Consolidating multi-discipline NSOs, such as Aquatics or Snow Sports,

could yield economies of scale, reduce administrative expenses, and standardize sport development programs across disciplines.

4.5. Set Minimum Viable Organization (MVO) Standards for NSOs, MSOs, and PTSOs

Develop and implement minimum criteria to ensure NSOs, MSOs, and PTSOs are structured for success. The MVO standard would encompass clear governance expectations, adequate resourcing, and operational capacity, ensuring each organization can deliver on its mandates effectively and sustainably. Organizations would benefit from centralized support (IT, HR, Legal, Translation etc.) with a goal to build a strong foundation within each organization to drive accountability, performance, and athlete-centered outcomes.

4.6. Define Roles and Responsibilities for NSO and PTSO Alignment

Establish a national model that clarifies NSO-PTSO roles and responsibilities to reduce duplicated efforts and ensure efficient resource use. This model would promote cooperative planning, enabling NSOs to focus on national objectives while allowing PTSOs to address provincial priorities within a unified framework.

4.7. Joint Strategy Sessions to Ensure Policy and Goal Alignment

Organize regular joint strategy sessions between NSOs and PTSOs to foster alignment on long-term priorities, including athlete safety, inclusivity, and program accessibility. A central coordinating body – ‘Canada Sport’ Agency - should facilitate these sessions to support unified policy development, mitigate potential conflicts, and reinforce a cooperative framework for mutual success.

4.8. Establish Governance Standards with Diversity, Inclusion, and Training Expectations

Adopt a governance framework that sets standards for board diversity, inclusion, and ongoing training for leaders at all levels. By prioritizing good governance practices, the Canadian sport system can operate more inclusively and effectively, building public trust while supporting the safety and well-being of all athletes.

4.9. Promote Leadership Development, Succession Planning, and Career Development

Invest in leadership development and establish succession planning frameworks to create a pipeline of future leaders within the Canadian sport system. Offer career development opportunities across NSOs, MSOs, and PTSOs – including fast-tracking for athletes and support for underrepresented groups - to attract and retain skilled professionals who are prepared to meet governance standards and support athlete welfare, organizational effectiveness, and continuous improvement across the system.

Through a targeted realignment of MSOs and NSOs, improved role clarity, and strengthened alignment between NSOs and PTSOs, this restructuring plan aims to build a cohesive, efficient, and well-governed Canadian sports system. Instituting clear governance standards, leadership development opportunities, and MVO criteria will foster a more accountable, resilient, and athlete-centered environment that prioritizes safety, effectiveness, and inclusivity.

Conclusion and Call to Action

Canada's sport system requires both additional funding and a foundational transformation to enhance collaboration, reduce redundancies, and ensure efficient resource use across all levels. This submission underscores the urgent need to address both the funding gap and the structural misalignments across MSOs, NSOs, and PTSOs to create a more cohesive, efficient, and impactful sports system that can better serve athletes and communities across the nation. This vision depends on investment and structural alignment, clear role definition, and consistent standards, all of which will drive a well-governed, inclusive, and safer environment for all participants.

The recommendations outlined here not only identify what needs to change but also provide a structured roadmap to support the system through this transition. By consolidating roles, establishing minimum viable organization criteria, and implementing clear expectations for governance, diversity, inclusion, and leadership development, Canada's sport organizations will be positioned for greater impact. These proposals include a more unified framework with formal national-provincial sport agreements, joint strategy sessions for policy alignment, and well-defined roles for NSO-PTSO cooperation. This approach will ensure that organizations across Canada are equipped and supported to be successful and sustainable.

Call to Action: The moment for decisive action is now. To advance these recommendations, strong support and investment is essential from all stakeholders—federal, provincial, and local—and ongoing guidance and accountability must be built into the process. The establishment of a central coordinating body or “Canada Sport” agency, with executive powers, is crucial to drive clear direction, align the system under shared values, and provide strategic support as organizations navigate these significant shifts. Such a structure would unify Canada's sport sector under trusted, transparent governance that champions athlete welfare, maximizes resources, and amplifies the collective value of organized sport.

This pathway forward is comprehensive and ambitious, but its success relies on decisive and collaborative action. With shared commitment, robust leadership, and appropriate investment, Canada can create a sports system that is worthy of trust and pride—a system that inspires a healthy, safe, and inclusive sporting environment for all.