

IPACS Benchmark Guidelines

Updated 2 February 2022

IPACS Benchmark B4 – The organisation has confidential reporting mechanisms, including for “whistle-blowers” with a protection scheme for individuals coming forward

Definitions

- Confidential reporting mechanism – a secure method for individuals to report any wrongdoing or activity that appears to violate the law or the organisation’s regulations, policies and procedures
- Whistle-blower – an individual who reports certain types of wrongdoing relating to an organisation, group or individual; definitions may vary depending on national legislation
- Protection scheme – protective measures that can be put in place; while more advanced protection requires action from public authorities and/or other stakeholders, a sports organisation should ensure confidentiality/anonymity (as appropriate) of the individual who reports and/or the victim and prohibit retaliation

Introduction on this Benchmark and its significance

- It is important that people who are aware of or suspect wrongdoing are able to report it in a safe, secure manner with the option to remain anonymous in order to protect their identity
- Whistle-blowing is believed to be an effective tool to detect and combat wrongdoing of various types

Commentary on the action to be taken

- A whistle-blowing or confidential reporting policy should be developed
- A procedure should be in place to investigate reports received, with protection measures for the person who makes the report and for any victim (if they are another person), including from retaliation
- The organisation’s rules should be published alongside other relevant regulations (refer to IPACS Recommendation A1)

Investment requirement – the level of investment should be proportionate to the specific nature of the organisation and the sport(s)

Guidance according to stage of organisation

Early stage

- The organisation has a link on its website to one or more credible external reporting platforms (e.g. IOC and WADA)

Developing

- The organisation has a confidential reporting policy and a basic reporting mechanism (e.g. a form on the website or a dedicated e-mail address) with confidentiality and security for the individual and other parties assured
- The policy sets out the procedure for processing and investigating reports and designates responsibility
- The investigation process is handled independently. The organisation takes steps to protect and support any individuals who report and the victim (if they are a different person), including from retaliation
- The organisation takes action based on credible reports, which can include referral to the relevant public authorities

Advanced

- The organisation has a robust, easily accessible and confidential reporting mechanism, which may operate through an external supplier
- The organisation carries out educational work to ensure that all stakeholders, whether internal or external, are aware of the reporting mechanisms available to them

- The organisation monitors the quality and effectiveness of its reporting system through the implementation of indicators (such as number of reports received, shelved or processed; processing times, problems raised) and improves its procedures accordingly
- The organisation informs individuals who report, where they can be identified, how their reports were processed
- The organisation provides support and guidance to whistle-blowers and victims
- The organisation has a duty to report in place for individuals who become aware of or suspect wrongdoing
- The organisation takes disciplinary action against acts of retaliation
- The organisation allows for individuals who report and victims to seek remedy

Good practice examples

International Federations (from June 2020)

- ITF: [A whistle-blowing policy](#) is published and various [reporting mechanisms](#) are in place, depending on the topic
- FIFA: Information about reporting mechanisms is published on [fifa.com](#). FIFA Compliance Pocket Guide on Raising Concerns is a document that explains what, why, who and how to raise a concern, which includes a non-retaliation policy. An external supplier manages the reporting mechanism
The [Annual Governance Report](#) has a section on reporting tools and a brief summary on activity – see pages 26-27
- World Rugby: The [confidential reporting policy](#) is published with a dedicated e-mail address and [online form for reporting](#)
- World Athletics: The independent [Athletics Integrity Unit](#) has a reporting mechanism

Overall standard among International Federations:

- 26 out of 31 members of ASOIF had developed their own reporting mechanism

Continental Bodies

- European Athletics: [Integrity Platform](#)

National Olympic Committees

- U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee [reporting platform](#)

National Federation

- Badminton Association of Malaysia: [Whistleblower Policy](#)

Selected references

- [ASOIF GTF Questionnaire 2019-20](#), Indicator 3.5
- [SIGGS](#): See Roadmap Principle 1, Headline 4: Integrity of sport competitions: Fight against doping (Section on Anti-doping policy: hotline/confidential reporting system)
- [SIGGS](#): See Roadmap Principle 1, Headline 5: Integrity of sport competitions: Fight against competition manipulation (Section on: Competition Manipulation policy: hotline/confidential reporting system)
- UNODC – IOC – [Reporting Mechanisms in Sport – A Practical Guide for Development and Implementation](#)
- [Council of Europe Recommendation on the Protection of Whistleblowers in the Context of the Fight Against Doping in Sport](#)
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, [Addendum to the report “Working towards a framework for modern sports governance”](#): Criterion 3.2: Ethical and disciplinary control – Mechanisms for whistle-blower protection
- Geeraert, A. (2018). [Sports Governance Observer 2018](#). An assessment of good governance in five international sports federations, Principle 41: The organisation establishes procedures that ensure whistleblower protection
- [G20 High-Level Principles for the Effective Protection of Whistleblowers](#)
- Document EPAS(2018)47rev3 - “Optimising the processes of compliance with good governance principles to mitigate the risk of corruption”:
 - *Paragraph 3: Conflict of interest*
 - *Indicator 3.5: Due diligence reporting mechanisms are established for stakeholders and confidential reporting allows to manage comments and allegations by whistle-blowers.*

ASOIF indicator 3.5 – scoring definitions used in the 2019-20 assessment

- 0 – No
- 1 – Some evidence of a response to comments and allegations
- 2 – A confidential reporting mechanism is in place for whistle-blowers

- 3 – A confidential reporting mechanism is in place for whistle-blowers with evidence of action taken
- 4 – State of the art reporting mechanism with evidence of action taken, externally verified and some form of protection scheme for individuals coming forward