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**Governance Code for Sport**

**Culture and Values**

Assessment framework

**Disclaimer**

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**How to Use this Document**

The document is designed to assist sporting organisations with their adoption of the Governance Code for Sport by the end of 2021. It provides an overview of key considerations and a framework for initial consideration of culture and values of an organisation.

In all cases the document will require some critical reflection and adaption to the circumstance and nuances of the organisation.

**Why an organisation needs to assess its culture and values**

Company culture can be defined as a set of shared values, goals, attitudes and practices that characterise an organisation. Company culture can be simply described as the shared ethos of an organisation.

Culture is central to the success of an organisation and the leadership will set the culture with the tone from the top. To implement the culture further throughout the organisation, collaboration is key. The clearest way of setting a path for a thriving organisational culture is to ensure that within the strategic plan there is a defined section on values. Setting out the vision and goals will enable the organisation to define what the organisation has to do, whilst setting the values will show the organisation how to do it.

Having strong culture and values speaks to all five principles of the Code, but especially principle 1, ‘Leading Our Organisation’. Sub-principle 1 states that the organisation should:

* Agree our vision, purpose and values and make sure that they remain relevant.

It also speaks strongly to principle 4, ‘Working Effectively’ and principle 5, ‘Behaving with Integrity’.

The values defined in the strategic plan and shared across the organisation, will set the culture. Culture cannot be created from scratch but is an endless journey of improvement and a shared commitment from all of the staff and volunteers to improving the organisation’s performance, efficiency and reputation. Culture and values are important to the success and overall health of the organisation and the people within it.

Whose responsibility is it to define the culture and values

It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure that all the principles of the Code are being upheld and delivered. The executive lead / Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is tasked with ensuring that the principles of the Code are being implemented in the organisation and thus will be responsible for ensuring values are contained in the strategic plan.

However, it is everyone’s responsibility to set the organisation’s culture by living by the values of the organisation. It is particularly critical that the leadership of the organisation (Board and management) lead by example, and show the values in action, thus setting the company culture.

What is culture?

Culture is the shared set of values by which the organisation operates. There is a famous quote from management consultant Peter Drucker that says that "culture eats strategy for breakfast". This implies that the culture of the organisation always determines success regardless of how effective the strategy may be.

Reasons why the organisational culture are important include:

* It defines the organisation’s internal and external identity
* Culture is about living the organisation’s core values
* Culture can transform employees, volunteers, tutors, coaches, and members into advocates (or critics)
* A strong organizational culture helps retain the best people
* Culture transforms the organisation into a team or community, with a shared identity
* Culture impacts performance and wellbeing

What are values?

Values outline how an organisation will behave to its various stakeholders. Values are the beliefs, philosophies, and principles that drive the organisation. They impact the employee and volunteer experience, as well as the relationship the organisation has with its members, partners, and stakeholders. Values shape the culture - values are the deeply ingrained principles that guide all of an organisation’s actions.

How to undertake a values definition

The following process could be used when developing the organisation values:

* Set up a workshop with the Board and key individuals from the organisation. It would be of benefit to have an external facilitator to run the workshop
* Depending on the number of people, split into small groups
* Within the groups, write down the values each want to see in the organisation - share and debate these.
* As a combined group, select the key values. It is recommended that an organisation select between four and six core values
* Start to create a statement for each value selected
* Take a break, then ask the Board to review within seven days
* Ensure that the Board confirms the value statement

Example core values and value statements

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| **Core values** | **Value statement** |
| **Fair play** | **We will manage and promote all aspects of our sport with impartiality and respect** |
| **Integrity** | **We adhere to strong ethical, moral and sporting values** |
| **Passion** | **We are passionate in every aspect of sporting endeavours** |
| **Respect** | **We respect all within and without our sport, and demonstrate respect to all participants on and off our field of play** |
| **Transparency** | **We will promote and communicate our policies, processes and decisions in a timely manner** |
| **Accountability** | **We accept responsibility for aligning programmes and activities with expected aims and outcomes** |
| **Excellence** | **We deliver our programmes to the highest standards** |
| **Service** | **We will provide programmes for all level of participants** |
| **Innovation** | **We are dedicated to continuous research and development of our game** |
| **Teamwork** | **Commitment to our common goals, while showing concern and support for all** |

How to implement values and culture within an organisation

A values system can be incorporated throughout an organisation in the following ways:

* As part of a Board, staff and volunteer induction policy
* Discussion at Board level I.e., as part of the annual review of Board effectiveness
* As a part of an appraisal system
* As a part of an organisation’s staff and volunteer reward scheme
* Through member newsletters and other forums e.g., workshops
* Visualised in physical locations (office/stadia) and in reports/publications/on the website
* Shared through the social media accounts
* In how meetings are conducted, including Board meetings
* Code of Conducts – Board, staff, values