

GOVERNANCE RENEWAL POSITION PAPER

April 20, 2023



PURPOSE

Since its last major governance review in 2013 which resulted in major changes to its membership structure and governance processes, EC has seen many changes in both its external environment and internal operations. Key changes in the external environment include the significant reputational issues being faced by a number of Canadian NSOs, with the prevailing view that poor governance resulted in poor decisions. As a result the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) and Sport Canada have introduced both the Universal Code Of Conduct To Prevent And Address Maltreatment In Sport (the Code of Conduct) and more recently, Canadian Sports Governance Code and the Sport Canada Report Card (collectively the Code and Report Card).

EC has responded by taking immediate and positive action to undertake a full review of its governance framework, policies, and practices, not only to ensure that EC measures up to the standards of both the Code of Conduct and the Code and Report Card, but to ensure that it reassesses itself to become a more responsive, resilient and accountable NSO focussed on serving its stakeholders.

The purpose of this Position Paper is to provide an analysis of EC's current governance framework and processes to identify where EC is currently not aligned with the expectations of the Code, and, based both on the Code expectations as well as current and emerging governance best practices suitable to EC, provide recommendations for change.

The recommendations are based on taking a two-phase approach to change: the first phase focussing on the immediate and urgent need to comply with the Code, and within that plan, to implement more effective governance policies and practices; the second phase can then focus on a review of the strengths and weaknesses of the current membership structure, and, working with the membership and other key stakeholders, determine if and how a new membership structure would improve the effectiveness of EC to achieve its purpose.

The Position Paper is based on a thorough review undertaken with the assistance of a consultant with extensive governance expertise, of EC's legal and regulatory environment, its current bylaws, its Governance Manual, FEI and COC published expectations for NSOs, the Code and feedback from an extensive interview process with representatives of key stakeholder groups.



ANALYSIS

1. Legal and Compliance

- i. **Legislation**: EC has been continued under the Canada Not for Profit Corporations Act (the Act), as is required of all Canadian NSOs. The Act sets out certain requirements and restrictions that must be adhered to by EC respecting its governance structure, rights of voting members, and decisions that the board cannot delegate, among other things.
- ii. **ECs by-laws:** The EC By-laws approved at the 2020 AGM (By-laws) are characterized by their level of specificity in many areas, which has made it difficult for EC to be able to respond quickly or appropriately to changes in the operational and stakeholder environment. Essentially, ECs By-laws are inordinately 'rules-based'. While efforts have been made by the EC Board to amend the By-laws to permit the organization to be more responsive and resilient, deteriorating relationships with the membership over the past few years has resulted in a situation where the membership is unwilling to approve any changes. Requirements and constraints in the current By-laws are a major source of the discrepancies between Code standards and ECs current governance structure and processes. For EC to come into compliance with the Code, certain amendments will have to be made to the current By-laws by the board of directors and approved by the Membership.
- iii. Canadian Sports Governance Code: The Code, supported by a Guide for Implementing the Code and Templates, to improve organizational performance by encouraging NSOs to upgrade governance practices through the adoption of revisions to by-laws and other structural mechanisms. The Code provisions and requirements focus largely on board structure, composition, competency requirements, and board responsibilities. Compliance with the Code through immediate by-law changes is a requirement for EC to have access to funding from Sport Canada and related supporting organizations.

2. Stakeholder Feedback

In order to develop a more intimate and in-depth understanding of ECs governance environment, and its perceived strengths and weaknesses, the Consultant engaged in a number of semi-structured interviews with a broad spectrum of EC stakeholders.

The following is an analysis of the feedback provided based on the 5 key themes that were explored in the interview sessions:

1. What is EC's Purpose?

There was significant disparity among respondents with respect to their understanding of ECs purpose and focus. While some respondents articulated that ECs purpose should



focus on high performance and others felt the purpose should be broader to include either or both recreational or equine objectives, the unanimous feedback from the interviews is that EC does not have a well-defined purpose. EC is understood to be an 'umbrella' organization, but there is no clarity as to who or what fits under the umbrella.

2. <u>Clarity of Responsibilities & Accountabilities in the current (past) governance framework & processes</u>

Respondents focussed mainly on the lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities, especially between staff and operating (discipline) committees. This failure appears to have germinated with the 2015 by-law changes and the crisis in trust that arose following the changes due to many factors.

3. Transparency and Communication

There is broad consensus that EC has not historically performed well either in terms of transparency (disclosure) or with respect to communications to its broad stakeholder groups. While there was general agreement that Meg Krueger, as CEO was helping overcome ECs reputation for lack of availability or disclosure, all stakeholders feel they are not getting the information they need to understand what or how EC is doing.

4. EC Relationships with Categories and Stakeholders

- i. Stakeholder engagement needs to be strengthened and seen as part of the culture of EC through more visibility at events talk to people one on one or group one on one getting members more involved and committed.
- ii. The categories as key stakeholder representatives may not actually reflect all the key stakeholders; in addition, while their voting rights are well understood, they do not feel connected to the EC enterprise.
- iii. The PTSO/EC relationship has been improving with recent collaboration over joint initiatives. But there is no clear understanding of the 'who does what' from grass roots to high performance.
- iv. Respondents expressed concern about the management of Volunteers as key stakeholders. There is strong consensus that volunteers have been underused due to poor connection with staff and failure to have clear lines of roles and responsibilities.

5. Board Composition -diversity – independence – board functioning

The feedback on board composition is consistent on voicing the need for more diverse voices – but varied in what sectors those voices should be from. As well, concerns were raised about the effectiveness of the board in terms of developing appropriate strategies, then being effective in exercising the appropriate level of oversight to see realization of objectives.



COMPARISON OF CODE REQUIREMENTS WITH EC CURRENT STRUCTURE AND PROCESSES

Appendix 1 sets out a detailed comparison of the Code requirements with EC current practices and notes where changes are required. In general, the recommended changes require only six substantive amendments to EC By-laws to come into compliance with the Code. Additional changes to ensure that EC aligns with Code expectations will require changes to existing policies and procedures to be made subject to Board oversight.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order for EC to fully meet the expectations of the COC as set out in the Code, the organization will need to make critical changes in its governance framework (structure and processes). Mere compliance with the Code could be achieved by making the required changes to EC's by-laws, amending the Terms of Reference of the Board and its Committees, and putting into place certain board approved policies and procedures in order to be able to demonstrate Code compliance.

However, for EC to become a resilient, sustainable, and universally trusted NSO for equestrian sport, the organization will need to consider such fundamental issues as who participates in the processes to arrive at key decisions – how are decisions reached – and how EC can strengthen its capacity to demonstrate Transparency, Accountability, Independence and Participation in achieving its purpose.

This process may require consideration by the board and the current membership of whether and how the current membership structure can be amended to better reflect the evolving needs of all ECs key stakeholders over time. It is therefore recommended that EC take a 2-phase approach to determining and implementing the changes needed for EC to most effectively achieve its purpose.

The first priority and fundamental purpose of this review is to bring EC into compliance with the Canadian Sports Governance Code expectations, and in doing so, take the opportunity to make as many needed changes as possible in EC policies and processes to achieve a more resilient and effective organization. EC will collaborate with its Members and key stakeholders to ensure this is a consultative process.

Phase 2 in the path to governance excellence for EC would focus on engaging all key stakeholders in a dialogue to find the appropriate changes to membership structure that will deal with current issues with respect to concerns about the imbalance between member category voting rights and alignment with ECs core purpose, resonate with current members and other key stakeholders and garner their needed support and approval.

The following recommendations focus on the first priority and are therefore divided into the 'compliance required' recommendations and the 'governance excellence' recommendations. The



Board of EC has reviewed, discussed, and enthusiastically approved all the 'compliance required' recommendations.

With this Position Paper, EC wishes to begin an engagement with its key stakeholders to ensure stakeholders and ultimately the voting members, will understand, embrace, and approve the bylaw changes required.

1. Compliance Required Recommendations (Phase 1)

Extracting from the table set out in Appendix 1, the following additions/changes or deletions will be required with respect to EC's current By-laws

By-Laws

- i. Amend 4.5 to add that a director cannot become CEO within 12 months of leaving the Board
- ii. Amend 4.8 to add specific diversity requirement, independence requirements and acknowledge need for athlete representation
- iii. Amend 4.10 to delete right of a board member who has served full term to be reelected after 9 months.
- iv. Amend 4.25 to provide Board Chair must be independent and include full definition of independence
- v. Amend 6.4 to require posting financial statements on EC website within 6 months of year-end

EC's internal policies and procedures will also be revised to embrace changes needed to bring to fruition the intentions of the Code. These changes will include:

- i. **Amend Board of Directors Terms of Reference** to be more specific about the role of independence, especially as that term is viewed by the Code, and diversity in board composition, the specific responsibilities of the board, and ensure there are board evaluations at least annually.
- ii. **Amend Nominations Committee Terms of Reference to** provide for representation from the Board and athletes and to ensure the Attendance Record for re-applying directors is disclosed for director election process.
- iii. Amend Governance & Ethics Committee Terms of Reference to ensure there is a Director Onboarding Policy.
- iv. **Amend CEO Terms of Reference** to add responsibility to provide Directors with a quarterly a written certification of the CEO and CFO with detailed compliance disclosures including material risks.
- v. Add to Website:
 - a. Articles of Continuance
 - b. Member Meeting Minutes



- c. Board and Committee Terms of Reference
- d. Diversity Report

2. Governance Excellence Recommendations (Phase 1)

There are many ways that EC can begin its 'governance renewal' immediately. Some of the more significant areas to improve EC's capacity to be resilient and responsive are:

- i. Develop a **Board Nominations Policy** to guide the Nominations Committee on evolving needs respecting board composition, including the adoption of a skills (attributes) matrix which should be frequently reviewed, updated and used to reflect emerging or future skills gaps.
- ii. Develop **Director Onboarding Policy** to be administered by the GEC to ensure appropriate attention is given to help new directors be fully functional as quickly as possible.
- iii. Amend the Human Resources Committee TOR to ensure it is transparent with the Board on its work respecting CEO performance evaluations and takes input from the entire board as part of its process.
- iv. Develop a 'Statement of Expectations' for individual directors that includes rules respecting communication with management as well as many of the other expectations that are currently scattered throughout the Governance Manual. It is not appropriate for directors to have to sign an agreement the relationship is not contractual but fiduciary. It is the responsibility of EC to ensure it has advised its board members of what is expected of them.
- v. Develop a **Stakeholder Engagement Policy** that reflects ECs commitment to engage appropriately with each of its key stakeholder groups, and to develop procedures for the implementation of stakeholder engagement strategies, and review and oversight of the effectiveness of the policy.
- vi. Develop a **Risk Management Framework** appropriate for ensuring achievement of ECs purpose, which clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Board and management in risk identification, assessment, management, and review.

3. Membership Structure Proposed Approach (phase 2)

- i. Focus on review of membership structure and possible changes for the 2024 AGM.
- ii. Continued internal improvements not requiring by-law changes.



CONCLUSION

Over the next few months, leading up to EC's Annual Meeting of Members, EC will be reaching out to all the membership categories, as well as key groups within each category, and to other stakeholders to obtain your feedback, address concerns and provide whatever support is needed to ensure EC can achieve and exceed the standards being set by our supporters.



APPENDIX 1

Comparison of Code Requirements with EC Current Structure and Processes

The following table sets out the Code requirements as illustrated in documentation provided to support implementation of the Code provisions¹.

BL=By-law GM = Governance Manual TOR = Terms of Reference

Code Provision	EC practice	Change required
B1 Board size minimum of five board members and a maximum of fifteen board members - typical board would have seven to eleven members	Articles provide min 7 and max 14. BL 4.1 permits BoD to determine number of directors. Current is 9.	None
B2 Not less than 40% of the directors should be Independent . "Independent" means that a director has no fiduciary obligation to any body for the subject sport at the national or provincial level, receives no direct or indirect material benefit from any such party, and is free of any conflict of interest of a financial, personal or representational nature (provided that participating in the NSO's sport does not alone cause a person not to be Independent.'	BL 4.5 eliminates employees of EC or a Recognized Affiliate Organization as participant on an EC Operating Committee, or a Member. EC does not have a definition of 'independence' for assessing its board members.	Embed definition of 'independent' directors in either a Board Policy or in bylaws, and consider implication for changing processes for board nominations
B3 No member of management should be a board member. No board member should become the CEO or interim CEO during or within 12 months after their term	No prohibition against a board member becoming CEO.	Embed in by-law re director eligibility

¹ CANADIAN SPORT GOVERNANCE CODE: SUPPORTING RESOURCES Draft dated April 27, 2021 Prepared by Goodmans LLP



B4 Must have board mandate which includes responsibilities for strategic plan + CEO Succession	GM 11.3 fails to include responsibilities for strategic planning and weak on succession planning as a key responsibility	Create Board Charter
B5 (Demographic) Diversity policy required that supports max 60% same gender on BoD on which BoD shall report annually with appropriate disclosures	BL4.8 only requires Nom Comm to 'taking into consideration (i) the nominee's knowledge of EQUINE CANADA, (ii) required skills and diverse needs of EQUINE CANADA and the community it serves, and (iii) a balance of new and experienced Directors.	Amend BL 4.8 to add diversity requirement Amend BoD TOR to add responsibility to provide annual Diversity Report
B6 Need athlete ² representation either as BoD member or as board observer to ensure processes for significant input.	No requirement in BL or GM	Amend BL 4.8 Create position of Board Observer of Board TOR
Code Provision	EC Practice	Change Required
B7 Must have skills matrix ensuring competency-based board (min financial, governance, legal, sports)	Skills matrix used last cycle but not integrated into Nominations Committee TOR or procedures	Create Nominations Policy for adherence by Nom Comm to include board approved and annually updated skills matrix
B8 Board Chair elected by directors	EC term used is 'President' BL 4.26 (only BoD Chair requires election) GM 12.2 (all officers elected by BoD)	No change

² the term "athlete" means a person currently on a national team or competing at the international level or a person who is retired and was a member of a national team or competed at the international level, not more than eight years previously.



	employee of EQUINE CANADA or an employee or paid contractor of any Recognized Affiliate Organization. GM 12.3 Criteria to be considered in selecting a person to serve as an Officer includee) a lack of competing interests;	Amend GM 12.3 or insert in BoD TOR
B10 max term limit of 10 years with terms 4 years or less, with additional term service for a sitting board chair (max 6 years as Chair) or a director who also serves on the board of ECs international federation	BL 4.9 terms for Directors shall be three years BL 4.10 no Director may serve for more than six (6) consecutive years. After serving six (6) consecutive years as a Director, an individual may be elected or appointed to serve another term after an absence of at least nine (9) months from the date he or she last served as a Director	Amend BL4.10 to delete right to return to BoD after 9 months. Can consider changing term limit to 10 years and terms in Phase 2
B11 Board Orientation and annual refresher for all directors	Not embedded in any policy document or GM	Develop Director Onboarding Policy under review of GEC
B12 Board must be responsible for CEO hiring & firing	BL 4.3 (f) Board may employ or engage under contract such persons as it deems necessary to carry out the work of EQUINE CANADA and its committees. GM 11.3 Board responsibilities include: i) appointing a chief executive officer and such other senior officers as the Board wishes, defining their respective duties, establishing their compensation packages, monitoring and evaluating their performances, providing for adequate succession, and replacing the chief	Amend Bod TOR with specific responsibilities appropriate to a strategic board, including CEO succession planning as a specific risk oversight responsibility.
	executive officer or other officers when appropriate GM 19.8.3 – HR Committee: 3) Regarding matters related to the Chief Executive Officer, the Committee shall: a) advise on Board policies about the appointment of, review of (annual and end-of-term) and compensation to the CEO;	Amend HR Committee TOR to ensure full reporting to BoD and appropriate Bod approvals. This



	EC PRACTICE	reflects the need for
	b) review succession planning for the CEO and advise the Board on any necessary policies or actions;	CHANGE REQUIRED
	c) receive from the CEO their proposed priorities for each forthcoming year and establish key performance goals and objectives for the CEO that are linked to EC's goals, objectives and priorities. The agreed key performance indicators will be presented to the Board for approval;	the full board to have the information it needs to be able to approve key HR related decisions.
CODE PROVISION	d) monitor trends for the compensation of the CEO with reference to other national sport organizations and relevant sectors, and advising the Board on the framework and policies for their remuneration, compensation, and retirement; and	
	e) review and approve the President's annual performance review of the CEO against agreed key performance indicators, along with their annual remuneration (determined within the parameters established by the Board).	
B13 No board members liaison with management except CEO and in some cases with the CFO or assume operational responsibilities unless	GM 3.5 The CEO takes strategic guidance from the President and implements the Board's intent. To do	Consider developing a 'Statement of Expectations' for individual directors
approved by Bod + CEO	this, the CEO:	that includes rules respecting
	a) Considers any advice from the Operating Committees or Councils;	communication with management to ensure that there is
	b) Uses the staff to develop, implement and oversee the activity: and	an appropriate balance of board/senior management interaction.
	c) Reports back to the President, progress on activities, any variances from the intent and any risks not fully considered	
	GM 12.6 5) - Role of CEO All Board communications with staff are through the agency of the CEO	



B14 No remuneration for BoD members except approved expenses, and, for Chair expenses, approval of CEO and Audit Comm Chair.	BL 4.34 All Directors, Officers, and members of committees, with the exception of the Chief Executive Officer or other employees who hold salaried positions, shall serve their terms of office without remuneration except for reimbursement of expenses in accordance with Policies approved by the Board . Notwithstanding the foregoing, EQUINE CANADA may provide an honorarium to a Director who temporarily and non-competitively fulfills the duties of a vacant senior executive position	Ensure the Board Approved expense policy specifies that Chair expenses are approved by the CEO and Audit Comm Chair
B15 Annual Board Review process responsibility of board Chair		Add to Chair TOR
Code Provision	EC Practice	Change Required
B16 Attendance Record must be disclosed for director election process		Add to Nom Comm TOR
disclosed for director election process B17 Board entitled to retain	EC has the appropriate committees in place (only Audit/Finance noted in BL.	TOR



C3 **Nominating Committee** should be odd numbered and include appropriate representation from the BoD, athletes, etc. Committee recommendations for election need not be board approved.

BL 4.7 Nominating Committee shall be comprised of seven Persons who are

not Members and are not seeking election at the Annual Meeting as follows: one (1) Director who shall be non-voting and serve as chair; and a maximum of two (2) individuals nominated by each of the three categories of membership.. The

Board may appoint Persons to serve on the Nominating Committee in the event of a vacancy that is not filled by nominations from the applicable category of membership

GM 16.5. 2) The Nominating Committee shall be comprised of eight (8) members as follows:

- a) a Chairperson who shall be a Director appointed by the President and who shall be nonvoting;
- b) a second non-voting Director who will provide continuity when the Chair changes;
- c) six (6) members, which shall be comprised of a maximum of two (2) individuals nominated by each of the three categories; and d) a management representative who shall be the CEO or his Designate, as appointed by the CEO and shall be non-voting.
- 3) Members of the Nominating Committee must not be EC Category Voting Members and must not be seeking election at the Annual Meeting.

Amend Nom Comm TOR to provide for representation from the BoD and at least one athlete, if not satisfied by the attributes of the other selected members.

Code Provision

EC Practice

Change Required



D1 EC voting members should vote only on the election of directors, the appointment of the auditors, those matters on which members are entitled to vote under the Act and any specific matter that the board determines shall be voted on by the members.

BL 5.2 5.2. Agenda -- The agenda for the Annual Meeting shall include:

- (a) Call to order
- (b) Approval of the Agenda
- (c) Adoption of Minutes of the previous Annual Meeting
- (d) Report of the Audit and Finance Committee
- (e) Acceptance of Financial Statements
- (f) Appointment of Auditors
- (g) Other business as specified in the meeting notice
- (h) Introduction of Board of Directors for coming year
- (i) Adjournment (should be termination)
- 3.15. Dues Except as provided for in the By-laws, (a) dues for Registered Participants and any membership dues may be established by the Board.
- (b) Provincial and Territorial Sport
 Organizations shall pay an annual variable
 fee, on behalf of such organization,
 calculated by a formula established by the
 Board and approved by two thirds of such
 Provincial and Territorial Sport
 Organizations. This provision (Section
 3.15(b)) may not be amended or deleted
 without the express approval of two-thirds
 of the Category B Members in addition to
 any other requirements under the Act

BL 3.15 may be contrary to the voting rights suggested by the Code since voting for dues by the members is not a requirement under the Act.

Consider changing in Phase 2



E1 Annual financial statements must be audited and posted on the EC's website within six months of year end.	BL 6.4. Annual Financial Statements – EQUINE CANADA may, instead of sending copies of the annual financial statements and further information respecting the financial position of EQUINE CANADA as required by the Act, publish a notice to its Members stating that these documents are available at the registered office of EQUINE CANADA and any Member may, on request, obtain a copy free of charge at the registered office or by prepaid mail	Amend BL 6.4 to require posting on EC website within 6 months of year-end
E2 Unaudited quarterly financial statements must be reviewed by the board within 60 days of quarter ending. Audited annual financial statements must be reviewed by the board within 90 days of year end.		Add to BoD and Audit/Finance Committee TORs
Code Provision	EC Practice	Change Required
E3 The board is responsible for risk management including ongoing identification of risks and measuring annually its risk management and internal control systems.	BL silent on risk management responsibilities of the Board GM 11.3 k) identifying the principal business and financial risks of EC's business and ensuring the implementation of appropriate systems to manage such risks	Amend BoD TOR to include specific responsibilities for risk identification and annual assessment of rm and internal control systems



that all government remittances have been made, all other payments for which directors are personally liable have been made, describes any breach of a material agreement and the status of any claims or lawsuits threatened or initiated against EC including a status update of each, confirms that all insurance coverage approved by the board is in force and that all premiums have been paid, and describes any material risks (financial or otherwise) to EC. F1 EC must post the following on its website for public access: -articles of continuance; By-laws; member meeting minutes; board mandate; committee TORs; Annual Diversity Report	Website does provide link to Governance Manual but not clear whether the Manual contains the board approved TORs. Refer to Appendix 1: EC Policies posted on the Website	Amend CEO TOR to include Amend BoD TOR to include receipt Add to Website: Articles of Continuance Member Meeting Minutes Board and Committee TORs Diversity Report Delete: Board Minutes
G1 + 2 EC is encouraged and supported if needed to make necessary changes to its by-laws and take such other steps as may be required so that EC is in compliance with the Code on or before December 31, 2022.		



APPENDIX 2

Equestrian Canada Policies posted on the Website

Abuse Policy (Individuals) - last updated September 23, 2019

Affiliate not in Good Standing Policy - last updated April 20, 2021

Athlete Protection Guidelines - last updated March 22, 2020

By-law - last updated September 22, 2020

Cancellation and Refund Policy - last updated October 14, 2016

Code of Conduct and Ethics - last updated April 1, 2023

Concussion Policy and Concussion Code of Conduct - last updated March 22, 2020

Corrective Action During Events Procedure - last updated March 22, 2020

Discipline, Complaints, and Appeal Policy - last updated May 17, 2021

Governance Manual - last updated October 24, 2022

Horse Welfare Code of Conduct - last updated May 9, 2022

Operational Committee Manual - last updated May 5, 2022

<u>Policy for Enhanced Safety at Competitions During the COVID-19 Pandemic- last updated June 30, 2020</u>

Policy for Enhanced Safety at Competitions During the EHV-1 Outbreak - last updated May 5, 2021

Privacy Policy - last updated September 20, 2016

Reciprocal Agreement between United States Equestrian Federation Inc. and Equestrian Canada - last updated November 25, 2022

Reciprocation Policy - last updated March 22, 2020

Schedule of Fees - last updated December 12, 2022

Schedule of Fines & Penalties - last updated December 12, 2022

Screening Policy - last updated May 17, 2021

Social Media Policy - last updated March 22, 2020

Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport - last updated May 31, 2022

Voting Member Not In Good Standing Policy-last updated April 20, 2021

Whistleblower Policy - last updated September 23, 2019



