

## Chapter 2 Strategic Management of Olympic Sport Organisations

The following subchapters will introduce the strategic management process for NOCs. Common knowledge on strategic management in industry was transformed to make it applicable for NOCs. Thus, in subchapter 2.2, the five phases of strategic management are explained to provide a general understanding. However, to work strategically, each NOC must have well-defined goals. The way in which to formulate them will be described, together with how to develop the overarching vision and mission of an NOC (subchapter 2.3). This is essential for every NOC that wants to start strategic planning. Finally, in subchapter 2.4, a deeper introduction is given about the elements a strategic plan of an NOC should consider. This chapter concludes with some important considerations about culture (subchapter 2.5). That should enable the reader to reflect upon his/her culture and NOC organisational culture, and help to sensibly finetune the recommendations and workshops that are provided in this book.

### 2.1 *Strategic Management of NOCs*

Strategic planning is an intelligent preparation for action, which is systematic, deliberate, continuous (Glaister & Falshaw, 1999), widely used by NOCs, irrespective of their cultural background or size, and the formal consideration of an organisation's future course (Kriemadis & Theako, 2007).

To govern where an NOC is going, whether it operates as a quasi-private or remains a public owned non-profit organisation, each NOC needs strategic planning. An NOC should know the following important points:

- 1) where it stands. Ask yourself "What are we doing?",
- 2) where it wants to go. Ask yourself "For whom do we do it?", and
- 3) how it will get there. Ask yourself "How do we excel?" (Bradford & Duncan, 2000)

These are three core questions in strategic management. The success of a strategic plan depends on the quality of the planning behind its creation.

Before an NOC starts to develop a strategic plan (subchapter 2.2), it must formulate a detailed political and administrative plan. According to Robinson (2020, 52), that should address four key questions:

- 1) Why do you need a strategic plan?
- 2) How will you develop your plan?
- 3) How much time do you have?
- 4) What is your budget?

It is important to have influential advocates of the strategy and its development process, and to communicate both properly (see chapter 4).

## *2.2 Strategic Management Process*

There are different reasons for an NOC to use strategic management and in this way, develop a strategic plan. Reasons can be:

- 1) internal problems (e.g., vague objectives, unclear priorities, poorly defined roles and responsibilities, and an overall lack of organisational cohesion).
- 2) external factors (e.g., the need to demonstrate good governance, please sponsors, and better communicate Olympic Values) (Robinson, 2020, 52).

In this section, an overview of the Strategy Change Cycle is given. The nine-step process adopted from Bryson (2018, 39) explains the strategic management of NOCs, and contains five general phases (the RINGS in Fig. 6) with which to provide hands-on recommendations. The nine steps are:

1. Initiate a strategic planning process for any challenge the NOC has adopted
2. Check the NOC mandate for the project area
3. Reflect the project towards the current vision and mission of the NOC
4. Diagnose the external and internal environmental factors, in order to identify the strengths and weakness of the NOC, and the opportunities and threats from those environmental factors
5. Identify the strategic issues facing an NOC
6. Formulate the strategic plan
7. Review the strategic plan and develop an implementation plan
8. Implement the project through change management
9. Monitor the change process, and then reassess the situation

**Illustration: Liechtenstein Strategy Process**

The NOC of Liechtenstein started its strategic process in 2014 with a situation analysis. Here, the answer to “Why do we need a strategic plan?”, was developed. Then, in 2016, the NOC of Liechtenstein defined its strategic plan for 2017-2020. Before the plan started, goals were set on the basis of the vision and mission (see subchapter 2.3). Actions were defined to achieve the goals; resources were allocated, and a four-year plan was prepared. But, the NOC learned that two important actions were not addressed in this early phase – the involvement of stakeholders, and a stakeholder (external) evaluation of the plan. Thus, the lessons learned from the entire strategic process were:

1. **Analyse** the initial situation before you start planning
2. Aim to **foresee** the **future**, or **imagine** the future you would wish to achieve - that is, set your **goals**
3. Organise or provide **resources** to achieve those goals – but, be as realistic as you possibly can
4. **Plan** your actions in detail and over a long period of time – changes can take time
5. Determine and integrate your **stakeholders** – consider their power and alignment impacting on your changes
6. Constantly **rethink** and **evaluate** your strategy and your actions, and check whether you are still on the right track

As the environmental factors and persons are constantly changing, so does an NOC also need to change, in order to keep up over the course of time, if it does not want to be changed from outside pressure(s). Therefore, each NOC board should be permanently concerned regarding moderate change(s), in order to achieve its strategic plans / aims. In what follows, the nine steps of strategic management, according to Bryson (2018), are reorganised into five phases (Fig. 6). Then, we can start to draw up an NOC strategic plan (subchapter 2.4).

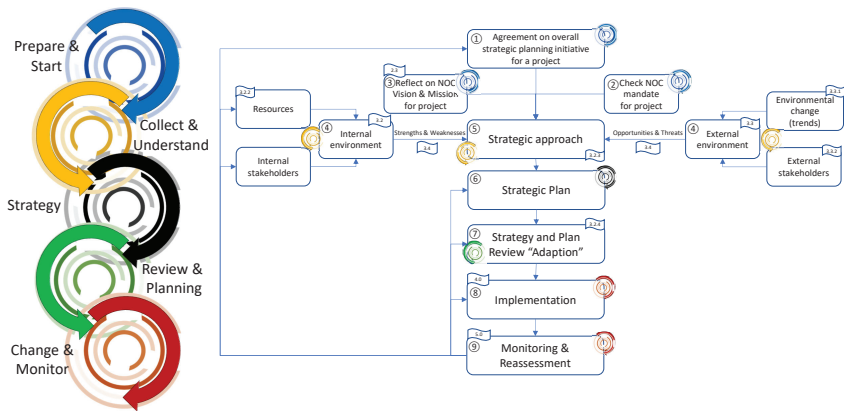


Fig. 6: Five-phases in NOC Strategic Management Related to the nine Steps from Bryson (2018)

### 2.2.1 Phase 1 – the BLUE RING: Prepare & Start

First, the NOC identifies the problem areas for which it wants to develop a strategic plan (project). The project can be about the current challenges (subchapter 1.4), topics related to IOC Agenda 2020+5, or other issues.

Implementing a precise definition of the purpose of the strategic plan (project) is important. Then, a steering team must be set up, and the members must fully understand the decision-making structures within the NOC. The team should be made up of a good mix of people, who know all about the different areas of the problem(s) (internal, external) at hand. The team members should be aware of the decision-making process and culture within the NOC. They should collect existing internal data, and also existing strategies (if available) concerning the project. An external search can be added (e.g., looking to see if other NOCs, or the EOC, or the IOC have any relevant data). In this phase, the steering team should write a draft of a “strategy development plan”, and also reflect upon “what must stay the same”, and “what must be changed”. Here, both must be set up, a priority and an understanding of the importance of issues. To do that an “NOC vision” is needed (subchapter 2.3).

**Recommendation: Blue Ring - Prepare & Start**

1. Identify and describe your problem or aim, as precisely as you can.
2. Identify persons that would fit into the steering team. They should be ambitious and/or influential people, such as communicators and decision makers.
3. Write a strategy development plan – i.e., produce a Gantt Chart.
4. Identify red lines to determine: What must stay the same, and what must be changed.

2.2.2 Phase 2 – the YELLOW RING: Collect & Understand

Here, the NOC needs a team that looks deeper into the current situation and the problem / project to gain an overview of actions that would be necessary, for fully understanding the current situation. A diagnosis must be undertaken (Robinson, 2020, 51).

The NOC may use a brainstorming session to formulate questions that need to be answered, for a full understanding of the NOC's current situation regarding the topic. It is important to gather all relevant information here. To this end, the NOC can use assessment questions to develop a tailored guide for consultation interviews, that are aimed towards the project / issue. After that, the NOC can conduct consultation interviews with internal and external stakeholders.

**Recommendation: Data Gathering via Consultation Interviews**

1. Choose enough people to gain a good breadth of opinion and knowledge
2. Conduct six-fifteen interviews, depending on the complexity of the issue / project, including people in charge of the project, to determine whether they are positively or negatively affected by the project
3. Identify any knowledge gaps (outcome)

The NOC can also conduct benchmarking regarding the project against other NOCs and/or other national sports organisations.

### Fact Box: Benchmarking of NOCs

Benchmarking is the practice of comparing organisational processes and performance metrics to good practices from other NOCs. It is a tool with which you can measure your NOC's degree of success (in a project), against other similar NOCs, in order to discover whether there is a gap in performance that can be closed by improving your performance/processes/governance. Studying other NOCs can highlight what it takes to enhance your own NOC's efficiency and thus become a better organisation within the Olympic Movement.

For benchmarking, it is recommended to consider organisations with a similar geographical and cultural background. From the knowledge gained, your NOC may take lessons from successful practices and apply them, while considering its own culture, politics, and specialties.

In a final step, compile all findings from analysis, diagnosis, and consultation interviews, and then produce an overview of insights. With this information, a SWOT analysis (see subchapter 3.6) can be conducted. A SWOT analysis makes it clear what the strengths and weaknesses of the NOC are, against the project/issues. Further, threats and opportunities can be found by analysing the environment of the NOC. The result of the SWOT analysis is a direct link to strategy development.

### 2.2.3 Phase 3 – the BLACK RING: Strategy

In this phase, the objectives (goals) are clear, and a strategy will be developed. Important stakeholders will have to be included by workshops, or informed via feedback loops. It is a good idea to conduct interviews with senior management and relevant specialists, to identify all necessary actions that are required to support an emerging strategic plan.

Workshops are needed for each action of the strategy, and each action is differently important in a strategic plan. The different actions of an NOC strategy and their importance should be seriously developed before initiating any strategy. In these workshops, a set of actions for each objective in the strategy has to be developed. A clear ownership and a high-level timeline for each action are needed. The actions of a strategy are, for example, targeting:

- People who are addressed, such as staff, athletes, etc.
- Venues, and their staff and volunteers to run the project
- Financial resources (costs and revenues) of the NOC

- Leadership, governance, and organisation
- Legal issues

As can be seen here, a strategy is composed of several strategic objectives, each addressing the different action areas. Specific criteria for setting goals and project objectives should be SMART (Drucker, 1977). To be effective, every project goal must adhere to the SMART criteria:

1. **Specific:** The goal should target a specific area of improvement, or answer a specific need of an action area noted above, e.g., checking a new NOC code of ethics from a legal perspective.
2. **Measurable:** The goal must allow for measurable progress, e.g., reaching all Olympic athletes of your country, to educate them about World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Code.
3. **Attainable:** The goal must be realistic, based on available resources. Existing constraints must be considered, e.g., the planning for an Olympic Day.
4. **Relevant:** The goal should align with other NOC objectives, which are considered worthwhile, in order to address the challenge / problem, e.g., addressing Olympic Values.
5. **Time-bound:** The goal must have a specific deadline, e.g., one Olympiad.

#### Illustration: SMART Goals for NOC Project Managers

SMART goals can be applied to all aspects of NOC project management. To be clear, all SMART goals should be simplified into one simple sentence. Then it becomes a powerful tool for aligning the NOC team around a shared intention. The German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB) developed a “Strategy 2028” and formulated SMART goals. These are e.g.:

- By 2020, we will formulate a “Strategy for Major Sporting Events of the DOSB”, in consultation with the relevant partners in the federal government, the states, and member organisations, and implement the first steps by 2022, under the responsibility of the DOSB Director of Association Development.
- Together with the member organisations, we are creating at least 20% more offerings in the “Sport pro Gesundheit” [Sport for health] quality label by 2022. We are revising quality management by the beginning of 2020, and adapting it to the new framework conditions, under the responsibility of the DOSB Director of “Sport Development”.

- By the end of 2020, we will reverse the downward trend in the number of German sports for all “Sportabzeichen” [badges] awarded each year, and increase the number of sports badges awarded annually to 900,000, again by 2022, under the responsibility of the DOSB Director of “Sport Development”.



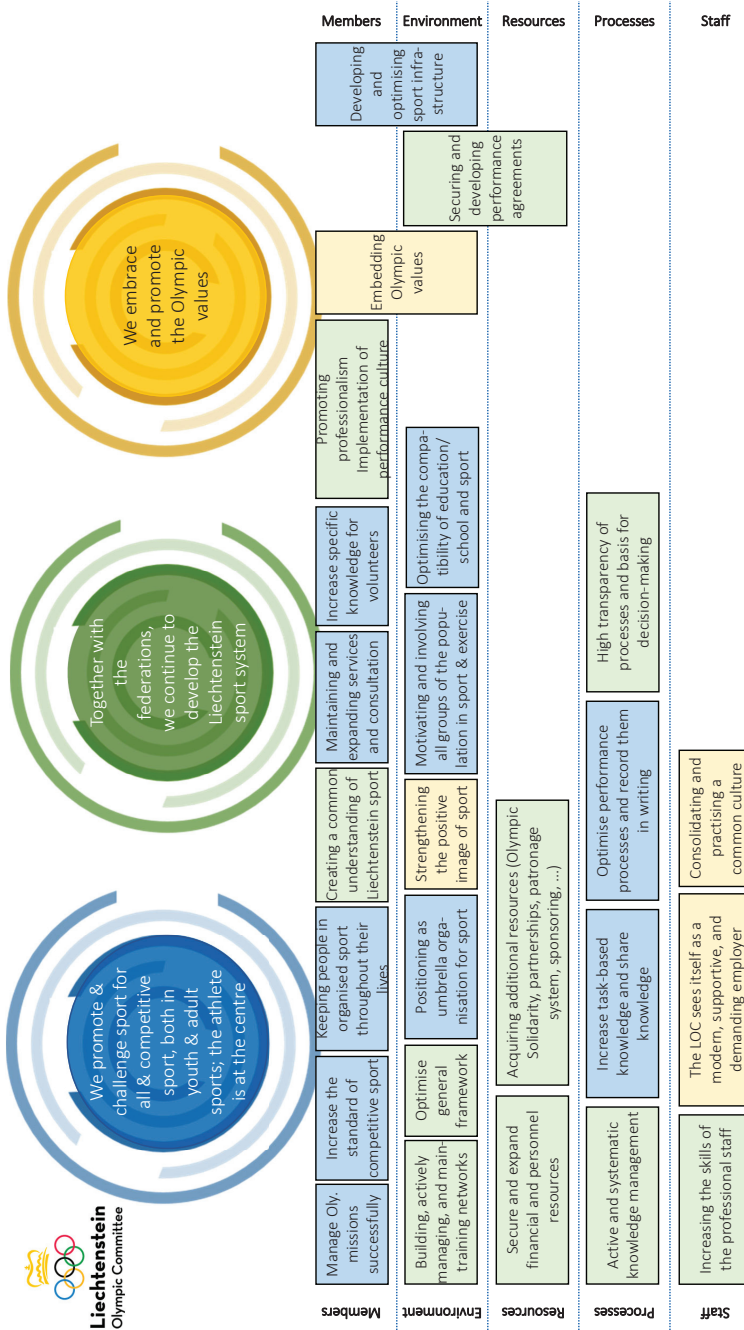


Fig. 7: Goals of NOC Liechtenstein Strategy 2021-2024

**Case Study: NOC Liechtenstein goals prepared prior to adoption into its strategic plan**

In 2016, the NOC Liechtenstein formulated its goals, that were driven by its vision/mission, that were divided into five areas, which then needed to be transferred into actions. Here, the assignment of goals of its revised strategy 2021-2024 is shown.

Questions to be answered:

1. Notice the overarching goals of the NOC. Do you also have these for your NOC?
2. Discuss whether all of the subgoals are assigned to the overarching goals.
3. Take some subgoals and reformulate them, by considering the SMART concept.
4. Imagine that you are the NOC Liechtenstein, and then aim at placing the subgoals from your perspective into the Action Priority Matrix (explained below)

As there are actions and SMART goals for many strategic objectives, an NOC should build priorities. To identify priorities, the NOC can use an action priority matrix (Covey, Merrill & Merrill, 1995).

This is useful, because not all actions have the same importance. Further, NOCs rarely have time to complete all of the extra tasks and projects on their wish lists. Therefore, the aim here is to identify the high-value activities that keep the NOC moving forward.

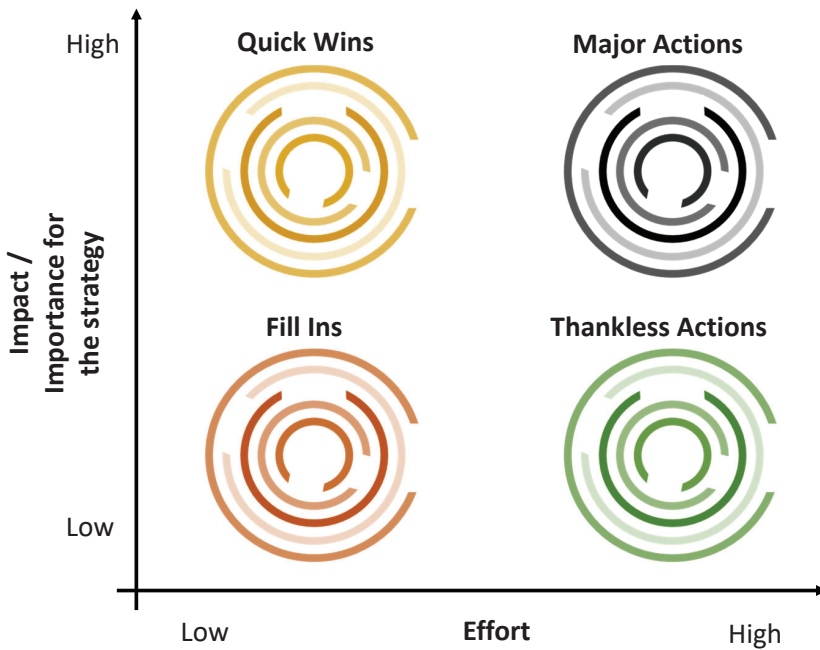


Fig. 8: Action Priority Matrix for NOCs

Source: Adopted from Covey, Merrill, and Merrill (1995)

To use the matrix, you score tasks based, firstly, on their impact and, secondly, on the effort needed to complete them.

**Quick Wins (High Impact, Low Effort):** Quick wins are the most attractive goals because they give you a good return for relatively little effort.

**Major Actions (High Impact, High Effort):** Major actions give good returns, but they are resource-consuming. There is a risk that one major project can crowd out many other actions.

**Fill Ins (Low Impact, Low Effort):** These actions are of low importance, and if there is sufficient capacity, then you can do them; but drop them if something more important comes up.

**Thankless Actions (Low Impact, High Effort):** Try to avoid these activities, even though they are mentioned as integral to your strategy. Not only do they give little return to achieve your goals, but also they take up time and resources.

Plan the process of reviewing the draft strategy that was developed in the workshops. Develop clear procedures for involving the necessary people, and collecting the necessary information.

### Workshop: Strategy Development for NOCs

Strategy development workshops should have the most relevant attendees to achieve the goals. They can then facilitate a successful implementation of actions or even organisational change (explained in RING RED - Change).

- A) The attendees who are needed for strategic change are different from project to project, NOC to NOC, and culture to culture. In many cases they are in senior positions (with experience), directors, board members, and external stakeholders (e.g., delivery partners, athletes, politicians). The attendees must be relevant for the action which is discussed in the workshop. Attendees should represent those that will later be important in the change process (e.g., the leader, the enablers of change, the blockers of change).
- B) Size and duration depend on the size of the project and its degree of importance. Decide between: a one-off discussion versus a series of workshops.
- C) It is important to think about reasons for some potential failure of change.
- D) Prioritise actions via the action priority matrix: Develop a list of all your actions, and rate each of the actions that you need in your strategy, regarding:
- IMPACT: Importance for your strategy, such as number of people/stakeholders reached, other benefits received
- EFFORTS: resources used, such as time to implement, costs, staff required
- How to manage priorities
- Step 1: List the major activities that you need to manage for achieving your goal.
  - Step 2: Score these in consultation with others on Impact (0 for no impact to 10 for maximum impact), and on effort involved (0 for no real effort (included in business as usual) to 10 for a major effort).
  - Step 3: Plot the activities on an “Action Priority Matrix” (Fig. above), based on your scores.
  - Step 4: Check if any action that has a low impact is a “must do” activity which is vital for your strategy.

- Step 5: Prioritise actions appropriately, and then decide on the actions to take.

#### 2.2.4 Phase 4 – the GREEN RING: Review & Planning

This phase represents the planning process of how the drafted strategy can be put into action, i.e., the so-called “action plan”.

To set up the action plan, the NOC meeting(s) should be used to review and refine the strategy, with all its actions, and then check each action for good governance practices.

When reviewing the actions planned, it will be necessary to confirm whether or not the financial requirements can be met. The reviewing should include internal stakeholders (board members and affected members) to review and discuss the draft strategy, and to ensure the feasibility of any actions. Then, external stakeholders (athletes, sponsors, government, etc.) should be involved, when they are affected by the strategy. This final consultation ensures that no major issues are missed out, and that all relevant stakeholders are willing to be involved. This helps to communicate the strategy (see more in change management, chapter 4).

Identified problematic issues must be addressed here. Depending on the likely impact of the issue not being resolved, a particular degree of urgency could be given. Consider the accountability and the timeline for the resolution, and address the right persons in this regard. The strategy development team should, therefore, not only collect the issues, but also rate them, and develop a plan, in order to aim at resolving those issues.

A final adjustment of the strategy will be done, based on the received feedback of the internal and external stakeholders, the resolution of problematic issues, and the availability of necessary resources. The final “action plan” includes an assignment of ownership, plus prioritised and established timelines for each strategic action.

At the end of this phase, the NOC will develop the final strategy document.

#### Case Study: “Strategic Plan” IOC Agenda 2020

Started by the IOC Session in December 2014, Olympic Agenda 2020 is a set of 40 SMART Actions, whose overarching goal was to answer the challenges of outdated structures and a loss of interest in the Olympic Games. Agenda 2020 was made to safeguard Olympic values,

and strengthen the role of sport in society, and is built on the three pillars of Credibility, Sustainability, and Youth.

The “strategic plan” for the IOC (and indirectly for the Olympic Movement) was formulated as Olympic Agenda 2020. The 40 separate – yet interrelated – recommendations were identified and collated through a collaborative and consultative process, involving Olympic Movement stakeholders and a panel of external experts. Since February 2014, the IOC received 1,200 ideas that were generated by 270 contributions, and 43,500 emails from various stakeholders from within the Olympic Movement, as well as from various organisations and individuals from the civil society (academics, NGOs, business, etc.). These ideas were shared with the relevant working groups. They were driven by a recognition that the world was evolving rapidly, and that the Olympic Movement had the opportunity to be an important agent of change.

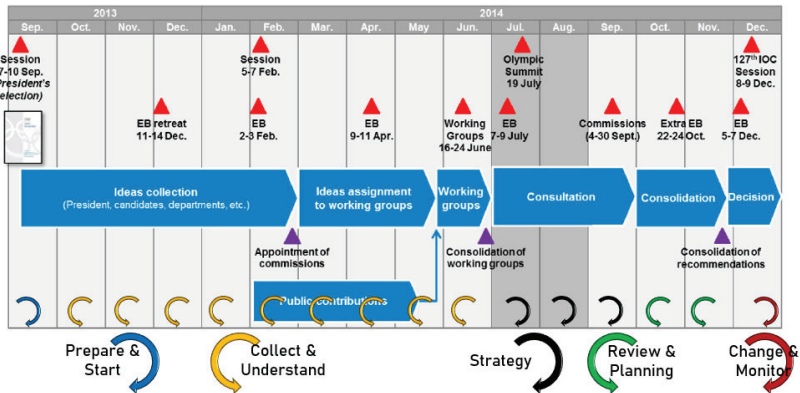


Fig. 9: Timeline of the Development of Agenda 2020

Figure 9 shows the process that was used to develop the strategic plan, which took 15 months to build, and included a worldwide consultation process. The outcome is the strategic plan (phase 4). Agenda 2020 closed in March 2021, when IOC President Thomas Bach published the “Closing Report” ahead of the 137<sup>th</sup> IOC Session. The Session voted on it, which is an important step to formally close a strategic plan, that was well communicated, and agreed upon by the members of the organisation.

The closing report describes in detail each of the 40 recommendations, the different activities undertaken to implement them, and the im-

pacts that all of the recommendations, both individually and together, have had on the IOC and the Olympic Movement since December 2014.

Case Study questions to be discussed:

1. Check which of the recommendations are also valid for your NOC, and to what extent you can take the IOC action as a benchmark.
2. Judge how well the recommendations follow the SMART formulation of objectives.
3. Look at Agenda 2020+5 and discuss potential actions which your NOC may address.

### 2.2.5 Phase 5 – the RED RING: Change & Monitor

Here, the change process starts (see chapter 4), and the NOC needs to get buy-in from all the relevant stakeholders. The objectives and the role of the change team must be clear. An implementation plan must be developed and the budget needs to be secured. The main task here is to develop a plan for organisational changes, and a communication plan. Some actions may cause only a small change, while others could call for major changes. Remember to never make too many changes at the same time.

After successful implementation, the NOC should monitor the ongoing strategy and constantly review/evaluate its development. The accountability for this must also be clear.

At the end, the NOC should review the measures, and then the next big steps can be planned. The attention of the NOC must then be refocused towards the next strategic plan (Chapter 5).

### 2.3 Setting NOC Objectives: Vision – Mission – and Working Objectives

A strategy is a clear plan that describes the path by which an NOC intends to reach its vision by fulfilling its mission. The mission defines why the organisation exists, what it aims to accomplish, and how it will proceed on its journey, while the strategy specifies the practical steps the organisation will take to achieve its vision. This chapter helps to find a good vision and mission statement, which is the founding structure of any strategic management process.

The typical deliverables from a Mission, Vision, & Values project in NOCs would include:

- Stakeholder agreement on the mission of an organisation, resulting in renewed commitment to, and enthusiasm for, the NOC's work (most important deliverable).
- A clear and shared picture of what the NOC will look like in four years time (i.e., the next Olympiad), should be compelling enough to rally the commitment of the people.

### 2.3.1 Vision

A vision is a representation of a future reality that is aspired to by the NOC. It thereby defines the ambition level; that is to say, the “height of a bar over which the NOC would like to jump, one day” (i.e., aiming at a goal). The vision and values allow NOC members and partners to share the NOC dreams (i.e., better ideas of better goals) for the future; therefore, it defines what the NOC would wish to be in the long term (which might, seemingly, be out of reach) (Chappelet & Bayle, 2005). See many examples in Table 3.

Collins and Porras (1996) describe a well-constructed vision as being comprised of two parts: a core ideology and an envisioned future. The latter is made up of both a clear picture (vision) of what the NOC will become, and the major long-term results to be accomplished. In colloquial terms, Collins and Porras (1996) call these “BHAGs” (Big, Hairy, Audacious Goals). A true BHAG is clear and compelling, serves as a unifying focal point of effort, and acts as a catalyst for team spirit.

To establish a vision, an NOC must be very clear about the values it wants to protect and promote. Values, such as those that guide the Olympic Movement (friendship, respect, excellence), are the essence of an NOC's vision, working both as principles and as a framework that will inspire the formalisation of its objectives, and the implementation of its strategic plan. The perception of Olympic Values can vary by culture (see Chapter 2.5). Fig. 10 shows the core values of the Olympic Movement, as tested in four cultures. There are three main values. Each of the value positions is described by four adjectives, giving a deeper understanding of that value. They are the essence of the NOC's vision.



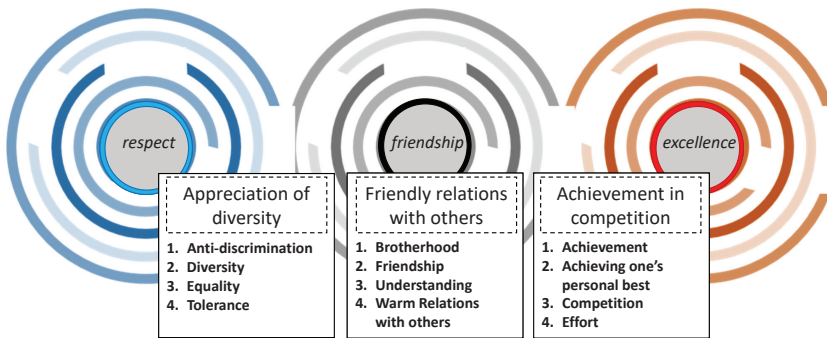


Fig. 10: Values Perceived by the Population (GER, UK, BRA, USA)

Source: Koenigstorfer and Preuss (2018)

Agenda 2020+5 faces additional values besides respect, friendship, and excellence, by adding solidarity, sustainability, and credibility. These values represent a collective belief that inspires individuals' behaviours, and are often a reflection of the society's contemporary concerns. An NOC's vision and values provide a framework for the rest of its strategic planning process (subchapter 2.2), which is why it is important to be sure of the values that an NOC wants to promote the most (see Table 3, where many NOCs stick to excellence).

### Recommendation: Vision Statement

Vision should be

1. Unique
2. Simple & Short
3. Memorable
4. Ambitious but Achievable
5. Inspirational
6. Rational & Emotional
7. Meaningful

#### 2.3.2 Mission

Any successful strategic planning project requires that first, there has to be clarity and agreement on the NOC's mission or purpose. Its mission must

be agreed upon by the major stakeholders, before undertaking a strategic planning process. Even though the Olympic Charter and the Olympic Movement define a large part of the mission, each NOC will apply it in its own particular way.

With the mission (also called mission statement), an NOC defines the purpose of its actions. It explains what mission the NOC and its employees are pursuing, and what its contribution or value proposition to its stakeholders should be. It is focused on the present, and emerges from discussions about what it wants to do. A mission is aspirational, therefore, it can never be fully realised. In this way, the purpose explains why the NOC does the work it does, but a mission does not define how that work is to be done.

Many NOCs centre their mission on the idea of sport performance and winning medals (excellence). Today, NOCs should integrate humanistic, social, and environmental concerns, to reflect the values of the Olympic Movement, such as those which are formulated in Agenda 2020+5.

Workshop: Development of a Mission Statement		
This workshop takes about 1 hour, and provides you with a mission statement.		
Steps	Action / Task	Time
Preparation	Paper / Pencils / Whiteboard / Index cards Introduce what you will do, what a mission is, and why it is important to have one.	5 min
Storytelling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Split up into several small groups of three to five people in each group, and make the people in each group as diverse as you possibly can.</li> <li>2. Each member of your small groups gets a few minutes to share a story. This question can prompt some good stories: “What does it look like when we’re doing our best work?” If they do not have any story, allow them to simply make one up.</li> <li>3. Write details out on a sheet of paper, because you will need to share it with the larger group later.</li> <li>4. Look at the stories and identify and <u>circle</u> every phrase when a specific place or person is mentioned.</li> <li>5. Now, draw a <u>square</u> around any mention of your organisation making a difference and taking action. (It is fine for you to overlap your squares and circles.)</li> <li>6. Then, <u>underline</u> at any time, something in the story that changes for the better; or results from your work, for example.</li> </ol>	10-20 min

### 2.3 Setting NOC Objectives: Vision – Mission – and Working Objectives

Sharing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All small groups merge back into one large group.</li> <li>You, as moderator, will create a grid on a whiteboard behind you having the lines:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Our Cause (Who?/What?/Where?)” - then, write down the <u>circled</u> items</li> <li>“Our Actions (What are we doing?)” - then, write down the <u>squared</u> items</li> <li>“Our Impact (Changes for the better)” - then, write down the <u>underlined</u> items</li> </ul> </li> <li>Have several group members share stories from their own small group. As they share, have them identify the objects, and place them on your grid (use attributes and abstract terms).</li> <li>Patterns and similarities will develop naturally - group similar ideas together, more or less.</li> <li>Name and identify that “common ideas” (from 4.) from your stories, and label their <b>Big Idea</b>.</li> </ol>	20-25 min
Craft your statements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return to your small groups.</li> <li>Write a mission statement for your NOC that incorporates the <b>Big Ideas</b> you identified as a large group (They should still be in a place where everyone can see them). All mission statements have these three elements: Cause (the <u>circled</u>), Actions (the <u>squared</u>), and Impact (the <u>underlined</u>) of <b>Big Ideas</b>.</li> <li>Remind your group of these five factors:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not worry about word choice. This is the easiest part to nit-pick and the least important for your final statement!</li> <li>Keep it short. Many of the best mission statements have fewer than ten words.</li> <li>Keep it simple. Too many non-profits have long, flowery mission statements that sound as if they were constantly toiled over.</li> <li>Say it out loud. Does it sound awkward? Memorable? Catchy? Humanly possible?</li> <li>If no one would disagree with your statement (e.g., “make the world better” or “act with integrity”) then your statement is too generic. Do not hide behind clichés!</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	5-10 min
Sharing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All small groups merge back into one large group.</li> <li>Have the moderator write down each potential mission statement for everyone to see, as each group loudly broadcasts and shares it.</li> <li>If you like, you can identify each time a <b>Big Idea</b>, which was identified earlier shows up. Remember: the Big Ideas can be implied — they do not have to be stated directly.</li> </ol>	5 min
A dose of vision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Now you have several strong, simple mission statement possibilities. Each statement is built from the powerful stories your NOC has experienced, or hopes to make true.</li> <li>The moderator asks for volunteers to share why they know the mission you have defined is important. Why does it matter? And most of all, why do you know that you can achieve this mission together? This is the final, and most important, test.</li> </ol>	5 min
Jump	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appoint a committee or final decision maker to take these mission statements and Big Ideas, and finalise the wording.</li> <li>Have the final decision maker present the final mission statement to your organisation at a later date.</li> </ol>	

Source: <https://nonprofitHub.org/wp-content/themes/nonprofitHub/img/landing-pages/mission/nonprofitHub-missionstatement.pdf>

After you have developed your new mission statement, the typical next steps are:

- Individually interview five to nine key stakeholders (board members, staff, external key stakeholders, e.g., donors, partners, govt. agency reps) to assess alignment on mission, vision, and values. If wide divergence appears, additional interviews may be required.
- Hold small focus groups (up to seven people), if needed, to complete the picture and to work in a similar way to that in the workshop above. Ensure that people are in groups which are different to the groups where their bosses are, to facilitate an open dialogue.
- Complete a mini-assessment of the clarity and alignment regarding the mission, vision, and values, and meet with the president and board members (if they are not already included in the workshop) to present the findings. If there is severe resistance and an unwillingness to hear things, then consider terminating the project.
- Design additional communications and discussions to facilitate stakeholder, and most importantly, member buy-in.

### Case Study: Vision and Mission-making Process NOC Denmark

The NOC of Denmark (DIF) developed its Vision and Mission:

**Vision:** Sport must have a significant place in the lives of all Danes throughout their lives - in communities on and off the pitch, and through experiences that excite and unite Denmark.

**Mission:** DIF moves Denmark through sport, volunteering, and joy. In our many sports and diverse associations, we create great achievements and cohesion in society.

The process behind this was complex and inclusive. Following Lewis (2006), the Danish leadership style is: “Basic Danish assumptions are generally in line with their essentially democratic stance. Leadership is by achievement and demonstration of technical competence. Leaders are expected to be low profile and benign and to consult colleagues for opinions.” (Lewis, 2006, 352). This best fits to the communication pattern which is, firstly, the examination of facts, then the making of a proposal. When resistance comes in from stakeholders, skilful moderations are made and the outcome will be repackaged.

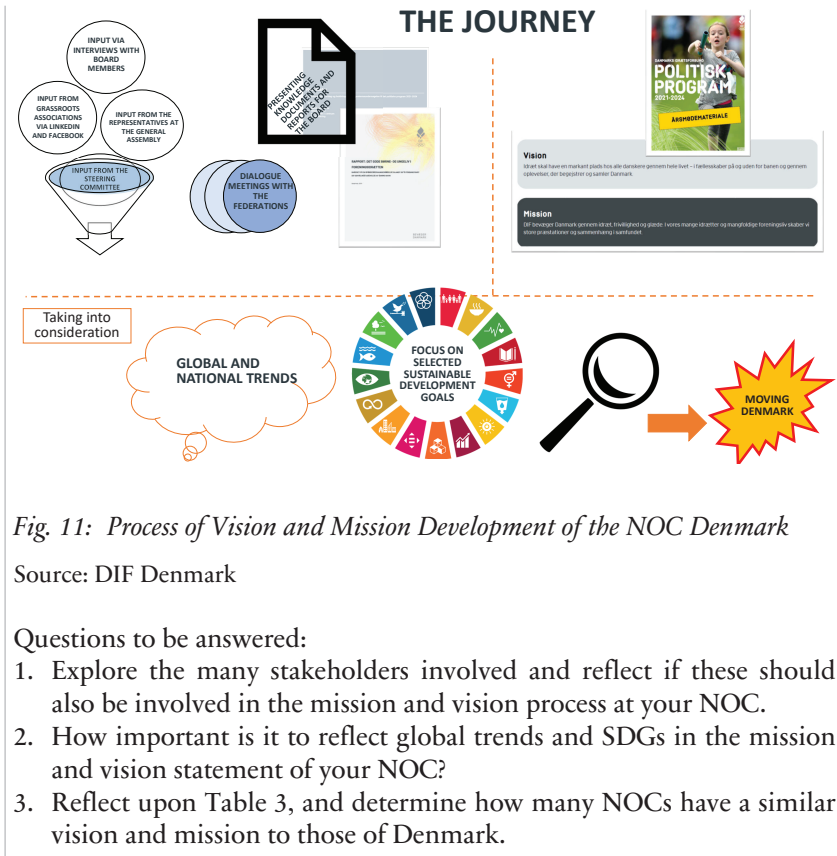


Fig. 11: Process of Vision and Mission Development of the NOC Denmark

Source: DIF Denmark

Questions to be answered:

1. Explore the many stakeholders involved and reflect if these should also be involved in the mission and vision process at your NOC.
2. How important is it to reflect global trends and SDGs in the mission and vision statement of your NOC?
3. Reflect upon Table 3, and determine how many NOCs have a similar vision and mission to those of Denmark.

We mention “brainsteering” several times in this book. Many senior NOC board members, at some point or another, experience the pain of pursuing new ideas by way of traditional brainstorming sessions. It is still the most common method of using groups to generate ideas at sport organisations worldwide. The scene is familiar: a group of people, often chosen largely for political reasons, will begin by listening passively as a moderator urges them to “Get creative!” and “Think outside the box!”, and cheerfully reminds them that “There are no bad ideas!”. But, all of that really does not work very well. Coyne and Coyne (2011) developed a better method, called “brainsteering,” and while it requires more preparation than traditional brainstorming, the results are worthwhile.

### Recommendation: Brainsteering to Replace Brainstorming

#### 1. Know your NOC's decision-making criteria

One reason good ideas often go nowhere, is that they are beyond the scope of what the NOC would ever be willing to consider. Those hoping to spark creative thinking in their teams should, therefore, start by understanding the real criteria (restrictions, limitations), which the NOC will use to make decisions about the resulting ideas.

#### 2. Ask the right questions

Research shows that traditional and loosely structured brainstorming techniques (“Go for quantity — the greater the number of ideas, the greater the likelihood of winners!”) are inferior to approaches that provide more structure. The best way to provide more structure, is to use questions as the platform for idea generation.

In practice, this means building your workshop around a series of the “right questions” that your team will explore in small groups, during a series of idea generating sessions. The technique involves identifying questions with two characteristics: A) They should force your participants to take a new and unfamiliar perspective; B) They should limit the conceptual space which your team will explore, without being too restrictive.

It is recommended to come up with 15-20 questions for a typical workshop that is attended by about 20 people. Choose the questions carefully, as they will form the heart of your workshop. Your participants will be discussing them intensively in small subgroups during a series of sessions.

#### 3. Choose the right people

The rule here is simple: pick people who can answer the questions that you are asking. Try to choose participants with first-hand knowledge.

#### 4. Divide and conquer

To ensure fruitful discussions, have the participants conduct multiple, discrete, and highly focused idea generation sessions among subgroups of three to five people - no fewer, no more. Each subgroup should focus on a single question for a full 30 minutes. When you assign people to subgroups, it is important to isolate “idea crushers” in their own subgroup. These people are otherwise suitable for the workshop but, intentionally or not, they do prevent others from suggesting good ideas. They come in three varieties: 1) the boss type, 2) the indiscreet or boastful type, and 3) the subject expert type. By quarantining the idea crushers, and violating the old brainstorming

adage that “a melting pot of personalities is ideal”, you will free the other subgroups to think more creatively. Your idea crushers will still be productive and, above all, they would never stop each other from speaking up.

Finally, take the 15 to 20 questions which you prepared earlier, and divide them among the subgroups - with about five questions each.

5. **On your marks! - Get set! - Go!**

After your participants arrive, but before their division into subgroups, orient them so that your expectations about what they will — and will not — accomplish are clear. Remember, many participants are accustomed to traditional brainstorming, where the flow of ideas is fast, furious, and ultimately shallow. The first five minutes of any subgroup’s brainstorming session may feel like typical brainstorming, as people test their pet ideas or rattle off superficial new ideas. The new part is that now each subgroup will thoughtfully consider and discuss a single question for 30 minutes. No other topic should be mentioned during a subgroup’s individual session.

Prepare your participants for the likelihood that when a subgroup attacks a question, it might generate only two or three worthy ideas. In knowing that probability, in advance, you shall surely prevent participants from becoming discouraged.

6. **Wrap it up**

Consider that, a typical subgroup has produced perhaps 15 interesting ideas for further exploration. Thus, all of the 20 persons in their subteams have generated up to 60 ideas. One thing not to do, is to have the full group choose the best ideas from the pile, as is common in traditional brainstorming. Instead, have each subgroup privately narrow its own list of ideas to a top-rated few, and then share all of the leading ideas with the full group, in order to motivate and inspire participants. But, the full group should not pick a winner. Rather, close the workshop and describe to them exactly what steps will be taken to choose the winning ideas, and how they will learn about the final decisions.

7. **Follow up quickly**

Decisions and other follow-up activities should be quick and thorough. A high-level board member should announce, before a brainstorming workshop, that a full staff meeting would be held the morning after it, in order to discuss the various ideas the group had generated. To close the loop with participants, the NOC board should make sure to communicate the results of the decisions quickly to

everyone involved, even when an idea was rejected. While it might seem demoralising to share bad news with a team, it has been found that doing so actually has the opposite effect. Participants are often desperate for feedback, and eager for indications that they have at least been heard.

Source: Coyne and Coyne (2011)

Tab. 3: Selection of Visions and Mission Statements of NOCs

Nation	Vision	Mission
Australia		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop, promote, and protect the principles of Olympism and the Olympic Movement in Australia in accordance with the Olympic Charter and all regulations and directives issued by the IOC;</li> <li>2. Promote, raise awareness of, and encourage participation in sport for benefits of health, longevity, fitness, skill, achievement, social interaction, wellbeing, others regarding exercise for all individuals in AUS;</li> <li>3. Encourage the development of sport for all for the health, wellbeing and other benefits to all individuals in Australia, and in support and encouragement of those objectives, the development of high-performance sport as the pinnacle of the benefits of sporting participation;</li> <li>4. Promote the fundamental principles and values of Olympism in Australia, in particular, in the fields of sport and education, by promoting Olympic sport and health, educational programmes at all levels of schools, sports, and physical education institutions and universities, as well as by encouraging the creation of institutions dedicated to Olympic education, such as National Olympic Academies, Olympic Museums (OMs), and other programmes, including cultural, and all things related to the OMs;</li> <li>5. Ensure the observance of the Olympic Charter;</li> <li>6. To recognise the heritage, culture, and contribution of our nation's first people, and to give practical support to the issue of indigenous reconciliation through sport.</li> </ol>
Belgium	Contribute to the image of a successful country, and share this success with everyone by significantly increasing the number of Belgian athletes in the world top athletes (Top 8) at Olympic Games.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Select the Belgian top athletes and send them to Olympic Games in optimal conditions, to perform to the maximum with respect for Olympic Values.</li> <li>2. Mobilise all the actors involved to create a 'top sports climate' in Belgium.</li> <li>3. Support the sports federations, members of the BOIC, in their activities.</li> <li>4. Promote the values of the Olympic Movement, of which the Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee is the representative in Belgium.</li> </ol>
Cyprus		The mission of the Cyprus N.O.C. is to encourage interest in Olympic Games and to develop, promote, and protect the Olympic Movement in Cyprus, in accordance with the Olympic Charter.



### 2.3 Setting NOC Objectives: Vision – Mission – and Working Objectives

Nation	Vision	Mission
Denmark	Sport must have a significant place in the lives of all Danes throughout their lives - in communities on and off the pitch, and through experiences that excite and unite Denmark.	DIF moves Denmark through sport, volunteering, and joy. In our many sports and diverse associations, we create great achievements and cohesion in society.
Great Britain	Our vision is to inspire the nation with Olympic athletes, in the pursuit of excellence.	Our mission is to bring our country together behind a team which everyone can believe in through the power of Olympic Values.
Greece		<p>The mission of the HOC is to oversee and act to ensure the development, promotion, and safeguarding of the Olympic Movement, the spirit of fair play, and out-of-school physical activity, in accordance with the principles of the Olympic Ideal and the traditions of the Hellenic sport. The HOC's role is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To supervise the Olympic Sports and cooperate with the State, as well as with the public and private bodies for the promotion of healthy sport policies.</li> <li>– To encourage love for sports and respect for the spirit of sportsmanship among the young.</li> <li>– To organise in cooperation with the National Federations the Olympic preparation of athletes.</li> <li>– To proceed, on its sole responsibility, to the final selection of athletes, who will represent Greece at Olympic Games and Mediterranean Games.</li> </ul>
Ireland	Inspiring the nation through the success of Irish Olympic athletes by improving our Olympic performance in each cycle	Our role is to use our mandate as a member of the International Olympic Movement, to positively enhance Irish sport, Irish athletes, and the country itself.
Italy		The Italian National Olympic Committee (CONI), by authority of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), provides discipline, regulation, and management of national sports activities. CONI is a public entity, which is responsible for the organisation and strengthening of national sports, and the promotion of the maximum proliferation of sport.
Japan		As a National Olympic Committee, constituted in accordance with the Olympic Charter and the ideals of Olympism, the JOC aims to contribute to the promotion of sport by supporting the Olympic Movement, which serves the cause of preserving world peace, and developing international goodwill through sport, and by developing and strengthening athletes in Japan.

Nation	Vision	Mission
Liechtenstein		The Liechtenstein Olympic Committee (LOC) is the umbrella organisation of the federations and clubs, and the direct contact for all sports-related questions. The LOC supports and advises the organisations in their activities and developments for sport in Liechtenstein, provided that these comply with the principles of sports ethics (environment, fairness, anti-doping, anti-discrimination, etc.).
Netherlands	Our ambitions: High sports participation, excellent top sports performance	Our mission is to create optimal sports conditions for everyone: from recreational to top athletes, from disabled athletes to volunteers and fans. The more specific mission of TeamNL is to inspire and connect the Netherlands from the achievements of TeamNL. This is how TeamNL shows that we win a lot with sports in the Netherlands.
Slovakia		Mission of SOSK is to universally contribute to development of sports in the Slovak Republic, to spread and to popularise basic principles and values of Olympism, to expand the Olympic heritage through sports, to contribute to harmonic development of a human being, mutual understanding and friendship among nations, and to deepen peaceful coexistence.
Spain	In the fulfilment of its aims, the Spanish NOC will act in collaboration with the Spanish Sports Federations affiliated to the International Sports Fed., recognised by the IOC and, where appropriate, with the other sports federations and organisations legally recognised in Spain.	The Spanish Olympic Committee aims to develop and perfect the Olympic movement and sport, to stimulate and guide its practice, and to prepare the activities that will be represented in Olympic Games, as well as to strengthen the Olympic ideal through the appropriate dissemination of its spirit and philosophy. The Spanish Olympic Committee is committed to participating in actions in favour of peace, and the promotion of women in sport. It also undertakes to participate with its athletes in Olympic Games, to defend and encourage the promotion of sports ethics, to fight against doping in accordance with the rules of the World Anti-Doping Code, and to take environmental issues into account in a responsible manner.
Türkiye	Creating a winning Olympic nation in which sports and Olympic Values become indispensable parts of the lives of every citizen	Instilling the spirit of Olympism in our people and promotion of our nation via Olympic Values, with a focus on: <i>Athletes / Infrastructure / Olympic Games</i>
USA	Inspire and unite the US through Olympic and Paralympic Sport	Empower Team USA athletes to achieve sustained competitive excellence and well-being.

Sources: respective webpages of NOCs mentioned

### 2.3.3 Implementation of the Mission and Working Objectives

Before the strategic plan, based on the Vision and Mission, gets formulated, the working objectives must be implemented in the NOC. This is not an easy task, because the staff and stakeholders should be taken into the process.

It is of particular importance that the vision and mission become guiding principles. As an example, Fig. 12 shows eight steps (to be read from left to right). A so-called “counter-current” process is used, which oscillates back and forth between top-down and bottom-up processes. In this way, a broad anchoring and widespread acceptance of the mission statement can take place. The initiative for the mission statement should formally come from the NOC Executive Board, as it will later be responsible for it. The NOC board then sets up a project team in which stakeholders and employees are represented. They then create a group of experts, who then prepare the first version of the mission statement, based on their particular knowledge. This is then evaluated by the project team to crosscheck it, and if it is found to be good, it can then be given to the staff. This is where further input can take place. The project team can then formulate a final version to present to the NOC board. If it is then found to be good, they will ratify it, and ultimately pass it to the staff. Here, it needs to be diffused and brought to life by everyone (as similarly described in Müller-Stevens and Lechner, 2005, 241f).

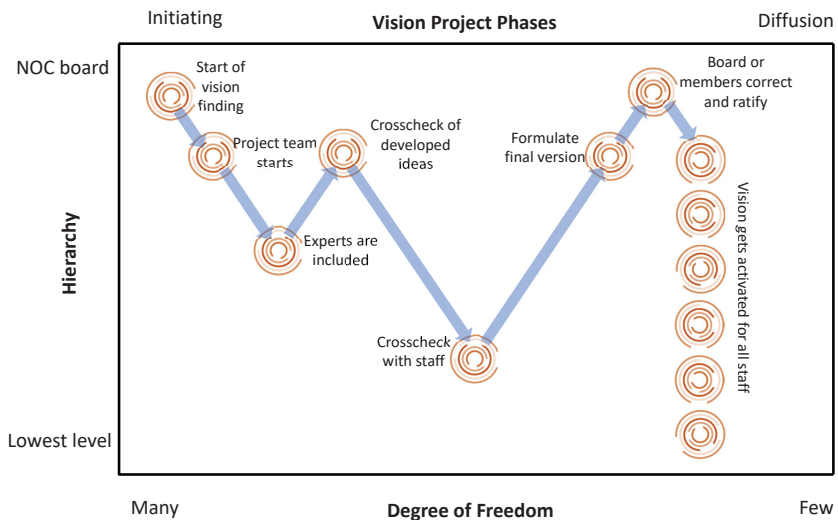


Fig. 12: Stepwise Counter-Current Process to Produce a Mission Statement

Source: Adopted from Müller-Stevens and Lechner (2005, 242)

This process is not only valid for the development of the Vision and Mission, but it can also be used for the plan of any major project.

### Case Study: Netherlands NOC\*NSF Development of its Strategic Cycle

The Netherlands developed their strategy in a similar way as described above. The NOC\*NSF started with an internal evaluation of the actual strategic plan, and took a broad look at the overall functioning of our NOC (organisation and association). That process led to the process of the Sportagenda and, specifically, the need of a strategic plan, one year before a discussion with the NOC board and management (in a strategic session) took place. Here, a first draft of the Mission and its goals was written. Then a consulting session was executed, with an advisory group consisting of CEOs as representatives of all members and experts. After that, a working group started with a detailed proposal of the strategic plan (led by NOC professionals). Six months before, a discussion of the strategic plan with the council took place. In this discussion, all member federations had access to the proposal. This was important, to get a kind of first approval before the strategic plan will enter the annual meeting. After that first iteration, the working group finalised the proposal

according to the new inputs. Then it was given via the board to the general assembly, which had to vote on the strategic plan in their annual meeting.

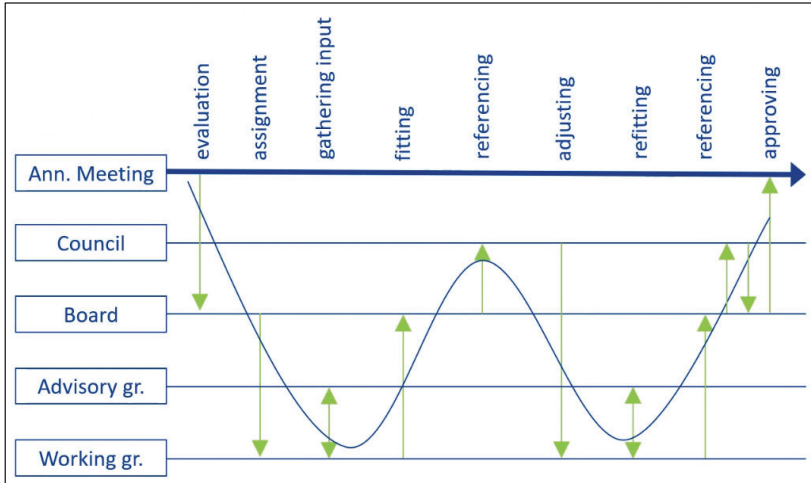


Fig. 13: NOC\*NSF Process Towards its Strategy

Source: NOC\*NSF (2022)

Questions to answer:

1. Have a close look at Fig. 12 and Fig. 13 and compare both of them. Can you see a pattern that could also be the process for your NOC?
2. Discuss, whom you would invite to the working group when you develop your strategic plan.
3. Reflect, who or where potentially could be the bottle necks in your NOC when you develop a new strategic plan.

## 2.4 Formulating a Strategic Plan for an NOC

Strategic management refers to the implementation of a strategic plan, that is designed to achieve long-term goals, and the allocation of the resources which are necessary to meet these goals. A strategic plan for an NOC considers many areas.

Depending on the size of the country, the national sporting success, the existence of a national sport association, besides an NOC, and many other factors, not all areas of a strategic plan have the same importance. Many areas become more important when the NOC is also the national sport confederation. Then, it not only accounts for the IOC obligations, but also for many governmental activities (e.g., coordinating subventions for high-performance sports, taking care of grassroots sports). Another fact that makes some areas more important is, when the NOC wants to bid for the Olympic Games in the near future.

### Illustration: Netherlands NOC\*NSF Strategic Plan

The NOC\*NSF developed a strategic plan, based on their vision and mission. Fig. 14 illustrates the time span of validity for the vision, mission, and the final executed plan.

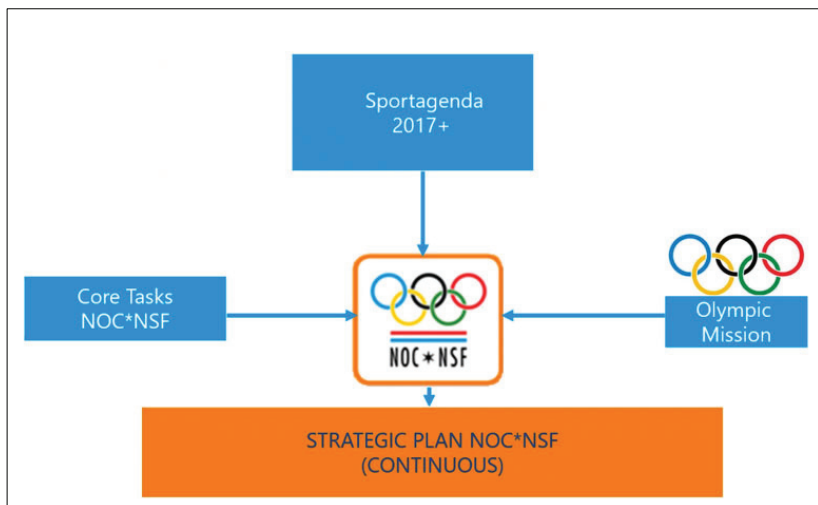


Fig. 14: Influence on Fundamental Strategy of the NOC\*NSF plan

Source: Source: NOC\*NSF (2022)

Then, the strategic plan was developed by recognising the “binding blocks”, which are the Sportagenda of the Netherlands, the core tasks of the NOC\*NSF, and the Olympic Mission as formulated in the Olympic Charter.

Then, five areas are particularly considered in the Netherlands, as shown in Fig. 15.

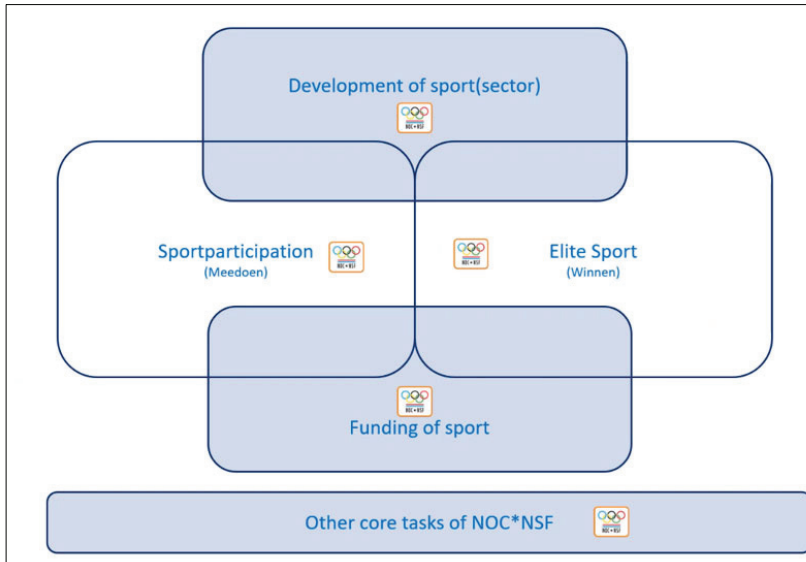


Fig. 15: Fundamental Strategy of the NOC\*NSF plan

Source: Source: NOC\*NSF (2022)

There are 9 areas which are important for NOCs, without claiming completeness. They are discussed in detail in this chapter.

1. Governance
2. Sport Development
3. Sport and Olympic Team Presentation
4. Sport Promotion
5. Medical and Safety
6. Risk Management
7. Commercial
8. Events
9. Sustainability and Legacy

Before starting strategic management, an NOC should answer four key questions for each of the nine areas:

- What is the situation of your NOC in area \_\_\_?
- What are the objectives of your NOC in area \_\_\_?

- How can your NOC achieve these objectives of area \_\_\_?
- Have you achieved your objectives in area \_\_\_ in the past, and how did you do that?

Strategic plans for NOCs often used to run for an Olympiad, as financial streams are regulated in this way. At the end of each Olympiad, the NOC Board and its management must review the plan, and make revisions for the next Olympiad.

### 2.4.1 Governance

The question of good governance in Olympic sport organisations has become a key issue since the Salt Lake City scandal in 1999. Good governance is increasingly becoming a core topic for sport organisations at all levels (Henry & Lee, 2004; Siekmann & Soek, 2010; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2011; Brands, 2017). According to Zintz and Gérard (2019), there are many reasons for this trend, including the pressure on the proper use of public funds, as well as the responsibilities of sport organisations, towards their sports and wider stakeholders.

Many NOCs have implemented Basic Principles of Good Governance, through self-assessments (e.g., via SIGGS-Project), and their own initiatives. Good governance standards in the corporate world have also evolved towards an increased level of requirements, specifically concerning transparency, and checks and balances. The expectations from the general public, sponsors, Olympic hosts, and athletes, to name just a few, have grown accordingly. Consequently, NOC governance needs to match these expectations.

For many NOCs, the athletes have become a very important stakeholder for the good governance of the NOC. Athletes have become a matter of interest, not only to ensure that the finances are well managed in order to support the athlete, but also to defend the credibility and image of Olympic sports and the Olympic Games. For example, recent exciting issues refer to the Olympic Charter (§ 50), and the Olympic Games in Tokyo (vaccination) and Beijing (political issues).

Another area is IOC Agenda 2020+5 calling for credibility. According to the IOC, trust in traditional institutions is declining, and younger generations are demanding more purpose from organisations and businesses. “Our ability to make a difference will rest with the credibility of our institutions and competitions, by further strengthening integrity, transparency,



and good governance across the entire Olympic Movement” (IOC, 2021c, 3).

The IOC wants to foster the compliance of all NOCs with the ‘Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance’, and will, in the future, widen the scope of the auditing of NOCs in this regard. The IOC will “urge the [...] NOCs to be transparent in their budget and accounts concerning the direct and indirect support for athletes, sports development and Olympic Values” (IOC, 2021c, 33).

For the strategic plan, this means that the NOCs will have to continue, and also deepen their efforts to match the constantly evolving standards of governance.

#### 2.4.2 Sport Development

Sport Development is a very broad field. Even though grassroots sport development is more related to the national sport confederations of the NF, NOCs usually have the responsibility to support the NFs (as they are members of the NOCs). Additionally, NOCs shall develop the national sport system. NOCs can provide athletes with service (e.g., when sending them to the Olympic Games), and help in the development of high-performance sport, in general. The NOC is often the link to the government and, therefore, needs to lobby for greater public support (public affairs).

Depending on the responsibility of an NOC, it can also include the development of sports for all. Then, the NOC may take care of sustainable sport infrastructure, to ensure that COVID-19 or the Energy Crisis in Europe do not stop sports for all. An exciting topic here is the potential inclusion and development of physical virtual sports.

#### **Illustration: CONI - Italian Government has Confirmed Plans to Recognise and Regulate Esports**

The Customs and Monopolies Agency (ADM, Italy) took action following a complaint, which required it to “verify compliance of taxation on gambling and with regard to the correct application of the legislation aimed at the protection and health of minors.” The Italian Government has confirmed it will seek to introduce legislation, which will include the establishment of an esports federation. That would potentially be a national governing body with the Italian National Olympic Committee (CONI).

The Italian Government is considering, in concert with the CONI, the establishment of a federation that oversees the organisation of competitive sports gaming. The Italian Federation for Electronic Disciplines (FIDE) has welcomed the “positive news”. The organisation said that the recognition of esports would support the development and sustainability of the esports sector.

Source: Pavitt (2022)

Overall, this is a good example of sport development, in the case of sport being regulated in Italy.

### Case Study: Sport Development Commission of the Indonesia Olympic Committee

The Indonesian Olympic Committee established a commission to take care of sport development. Even though it is an Asian country, many of the obligations fit with European Olympic Committees. The duties and obligations of the Indonesian Olympic Committee are to:

- Help Executive Committee (EC) members and the President to carry out their duties and obligations, especially for coaching activities, and the development of sports achievements.
- Provide recommendations to the EC and the President in preparing and establishing the Indonesian Contingent to participate in regional, continental, and international multi-event sports activities.
- Provide technical assistance for the implementation of training camps [...] facing regional, continental, and international competitions.
- Provide deliberations/recommendations to award sportsmen, coaches, referees, and technical coaches who have gained achievements in sports.

Source: Indonesian Olympic Committee (2022).

Issues to work on:

1. Reflect upon which of the obligations fit to your NOC.
2. Develop ideas which are important for “Sport Development” of your NOC.

Olympic Solidarity is also keen to support NOCs in developing and strengthening the national sport systems, by supporting their placement of a medium- to long-term action plan for one or more sports. According to Olympic Solidarity, the detailed action plan “must be coherent and realistic and must be established in close collaboration with the national federation (NF) concerned, after a detailed analysis of the situation (strengths,

weaknesses, objectives, etc.). It must include proof that the training of local coaches will continue once the project has ended (Olympic Solidarity, 2016).

#### 2.4.3 Sport and Olympic Team Presentation

Each NOC is promoting sport by presenting Olympic sports, the Olympic Games, and in particular the Olympic team. The quickly changing technology and digital innovations offer new formats and entertainment to show the Olympic and Paralympic Teams. Regarding the Olympic Games coverage, the NOC can take action with its national TV channels and other media forms. NOCs could start events to show the Olympic athletes, and present the Olympic Team, their dressing event, or their arrival after the Games.

Even though the sport presentation and its format are obligations of the IFs, the NOC should keep supporting them. For example, United World Wrestling announced in 2021, that it will be making substantial modifications to its wrestler and referee uniforms, as well as changing the colour of its competition mats, to improve the online and television viewership experience.

#### 2.4.4 Promotion of Sport and Olympic Content

Communication becomes increasingly more important for NOCs. Information and communication technology and social media have changed strategic planning. The use of e-mails, social media, clouds, virtual conferences, podcasts, etc., have become increasingly more important for planning processes (Bryson, 2018). Judicious use of social media tools can stimulate and support the assembly of relevant people, groups, perspectives, and knowledge in such a way that noticeably better judgements, coordination, collaborations, and overall effectiveness can occur (Mergel, 2015; Shilbury et al., 2020, 27).

Communication is needed, not only for efficient work, but also to promote the Olympic Movement. Olympic Games should be accessible to all and must connect people. Agenda 2020+5 wants that “value-adding innovative solutions must be sought to increase the number of touchpoints with people to share the unique Olympic Games experience regardless of age, gender and location” (IOC, 2021c, recommendations 1 and 8). With

new emerging technologies and innovations, the broadcasting landscape (i.e., radio, television, or internet) is in constant evolution. This provides new opportunities to highlight the Olympic Values and experience the Olympic Games, and all of the sports therein, like never before.

Therefore, strategic communication is needed to present the topics and diversity of sport, and the Olympic Movement, more strongly to the public. NOCs shall make greater use of new and digital forms of communication. Regarding commercialisation, NOCs have to consider strengthening and further developing their brand (in the same vein as what IOC is doing).

To do so, NOCs could improve internal communications (with member organisations) and work with them to develop and implement media campaigns, to promote sports participation in general.

Public affairs are also becoming increasingly more important. A large part of the population is sceptical about the Olympic Sport Organisations and the Olympic Movement, which can be seen in public referendums against hosting the Olympic Games, politicians professing to be against the Olympic Games, or in the many critical news items that are published by the media. Strategic plans are needed to turn this perception back. Koenigstorfer and Preuss (2019) proved that the perception of the NOC is different, based on the values people see in the Olympic Games. Therefore, NOCs need to report on their work with even greater transparency, and understand communication as a dialogue-oriented and participatory process.

Finally, a public affairs strategy is useful. The political representation of the interests of public-spirited sport is a central and increasingly important task for NOCs. The many environment changes (political, economic, media, etc.) lead to an increasing number of policy fields, regulations, and laws affecting the NOC, directly or indirectly. NOCs need to advocate consistently for the interests of sport, especially regarding legal regulations, and in doing so we will increasingly focus on international developments. RINGS Public Affairs Guidelines provide information on 10 key elements to consider, for successful public affairs of an NOC.

Public affairs also mean to expand networks and alliances, wherever the interests of sport and the Olympic Movement are affected in your country, and in the European and international context.

### 2.4.5 Medical and Safety

Strategic planning is needed for athletes' safeguarding, medical services, and all anti-doping and clean sport initiatives. An NOC should strengthen safe sport/safeguarding, to protect the physical and mental well-being of athletes, as recommended by Agenda 2020+5.

The strategic plan covers key aspects, from athlete representation to protection from doping and competition manipulation, to supporting athletes, both on and off the field of play. Each NOC must implement the anti-doping programmes, and should support innovative testing, intelligence and investigations, and work closely together with the respective NADO.

Regarding safeguarding athletes, an NOC should implement safeguarding policies and procedures among all stakeholders, establish a Safeguarding Officer position within the NOC, promote the fact that the NF should be doing the same, and offer safeguarding education for their national stakeholders (in particular athletes and entourage) through webinars, courses, and international scholarships (IOC, 2021c, 13).

### 2.4.6 Constant Change of Environment

Each strategic planning process should include risk management, which means the proactive process that involves assessing all possible risks to events and their stakeholders by strategically picked actions which would minimise any of the identified risks (Leopkey & Parent, 2009) (see subchapter 3.5). Risk management should be developed by every NOC, as changes in the environment, or sudden incidences, could cause severe harm. As the COVID-19 pandemic or the Russian invasion of Ukraine have shown, NOCs should be prepared for incidences affecting their field of action (see case study in subchapter 6.3).

### 2.4.7 Commercial

Successful sport marketing and financing are the result of carefully structured planning, creativity, and perseverance. Technology and the change of external forces constantly impact on and, consequently, change the commercial environment. NOCs must monitor changes in each of the financing sources, also be aware of changes elsewhere, that could be impact-

ing on those financing sources. Government legislation, for example, can alter the economic infrastructure of an NOC through legislative change.

**Illustration: CONI Transformed by Government**

The Italian NOC (CONI) is already facing challenges as a result of government actions in 2018, that included stripping 360 million Euros in funding, leaving it with only 40 million Euros. The sum of 360 million Euros was distributed by CONI to the national governing bodies for sport, a responsibility which is now handled by a new ministry for health and sport.

Source: O’Kane, P. (2019).

There are other examples (apart from that of CONI) of what can affect an NOC, such as the change in lotteries and gaming legislation, or Pay-TV legislation; and other factors like demographic trends. For example, the youth consume sport in a different way (e.g., in non-linear formats, via social media, or via second screen, which is using a mobile device for supplementary content while watching TV) than in the past, which will have an effect on the finances of an NOC.

Overall, the commercial situation is determined by the market in which the NOC acts. Even though the NOC will be limited to the national market, there is competition to attract sponsors (against other sports). Sponsors and suppliers have a bargaining power that changes over time. Strategic planning should consider these changes.

#### 2.4.8 Events

Many nations develop national strategies on how to attract major sporting events. These strategies help NF to win bids and attract major events to their country. In a strategic plan, the NOC should consider how responsibilities are distributed among relevant stakeholders in the bidding, and the hosting process of major sporting events. Here are some relevant questions:

- Are special (central) structures established for organising the bidding and hosting processes?
- Is a standardised decision-making process established for the allocation of public funding?
- Is a procedure established to avoid competing bids for the same major sporting event?

- Does a taxonomy for different types of major sporting events exist in the country under study?
- Which major sporting events are eligible for public funding?
- Are clear requirements formulated for an award of public funding?

Further, an NOC has to consider which competitions the national team will be sent to, the relevant team sizes related to multi-sport events, and how the selection process, dressing, travel support, etc. will be organised (e.g., for Special Olympics, Universiade, World Games, Youth Olympic Games, the Olympic Games, Urban Games).

#### 2.4.9 Sustainability and Legacy

The relevance of sport in society was acknowledged in 2015 by the United Nations (UN), when sport was highlighted as an “important enabler” to achieve the ambitious agenda of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (IOC, 2018, 2). Climate change is already impacting sport activities and events, and will continue to do so, even more seriously, in the foreseeable future. Winter sport may be challenged, heat will harm outdoor sports, rain and flood water may destroy sport venues, and vulnerable groups of the society may reduce their sport participation.

Therefore, each NOC should make sustainability an integral part of all its activities. Sustainability is a continually evolving and changing process and, therefore, should be included in a strategic plan. An NOC Sustainability Strategy could include a long-term perspective that is aligned to both the 2030 Strategic Development Goals (SDGs), as set out by the UN in 2015, and climate action. These “global goals” provide a framework. The IOC is working to ensure that sustainability considerations are integrated into the future work of Olympic Solidarity with the NOCs, including providing guidance, education manuals, and evaluation of funding requests from NOCs. A strategy is needed to enable your NOC to start implementing sustainable measures.

#### **Fact Box: NOCs and Sustainability**

The IOC started a European NOC Sustainability Working Group in 2017, to collate and share existing sustainability best practices of NOCs. Discuss opportunities for future support and collaboration; discuss challenges faced in embedding sustainability at an NOC; carry out an initial gap analysis by subject matter; and discuss how best to assist, and share best practice with, other NOCs. (IOC, 2018, 85)

The EOC EU Office (together with the IOC) is running a series of webinars on climate action in sport on areas such as sustainable sourcing, climate, sport and biodiversity, and sport and sustainable events. Additionally, the EOC EU Office will start a new project to educate climate action officers in 18 NOCs and measure the NOCs' carbon footprint. In response to requests received from the Olympic Movement for simple, easy-to follow guides on sustainability, the IOC has begun to create a series of entry-level guides that are specifically aimed at NOCs and IFs. Known as the "Sustainability Essentials" series, these guides will provide simple, practical, and useful information on key aspects of implementing sustainability within sport.

An example is the way to create an "event plastic plan" (see below), and also find essentials for climate action, sustainable sourcing, sustainable management, and how to be a sustainable champion. An example here is from "Create your event plastic plan" (IOC, 2018). The text is taken from IOC (2018)

**Want to cut down on plastic at your next sporting event?** You'll need to create a plan and get all the right people involved. To have the most impact, be sure to start well in advance. These are the key steps you should take:

 <b>Identify and prioritise</b>	 <b>Engage and research</b>	 <b>Plan</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Start by understanding where plastic is used and the main sources of plastic waste. You can use the checklist on page 36 to get started.</li><li>• You may not be able to tackle everything in one go, so be prepared to prioritise.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include some easy-win steps to boost morale but also some more aspirational and challenging goals. If you think big, you'll get further.</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify the stakeholders who will need to be involved. This may be everyone from suppliers and athletes to catering managers and volunteers.</li><li>• Discuss your plans and ask for people's ideas. You may find they have helpful suggestions and creative solutions.</li><li>• Explore ways to reduce plastics use and alternative options. Beware of unintended consequences: reducing plastic waste from catering outlets, for example, only to find it increases food waste.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write your plan; you can use the template on page 34 as a guide.</li><li>• Your plan should set out the goals and policy for your event. Be specific. It should list the actions that must be taken and identify who is responsible.</li><li>• You'll probably need to create more detailed plans for different phases and areas of your event.</li></ul>

The importance of legacy is specifically addressed in Rule 2.14 of the Olympic Charter (IOC, 2021a), and highlighted in Olympic Agenda 2020. Any activity that an NOC is undertaking should leave a legacy. A strategic plan should cover the various ways in which the NOC intends to further encourage, support, monitor, and promote legacy in partnership with its stakeholders.

Olympic legacy encompasses all of the tangible and intangible long-term benefits that are initiated or accelerated by any national sport project / sport event for people, cities / territories, and the member organi-



sations. NOCs could encourage Olympic legacy celebrations for former host cities, and build strategic partnerships (IOC, 2017).

**Illustration: Importance of the nine areas of any strategic plan for an NOC**

In 2020, 11 European NOCs rated the individual importance of the areas of any strategic plan. Even though all areas were important (scale 1-10; 1=not important at all, 10=most important), the commercial and governance parts are the most important, followed by sport promotion and events (Olympic Games).

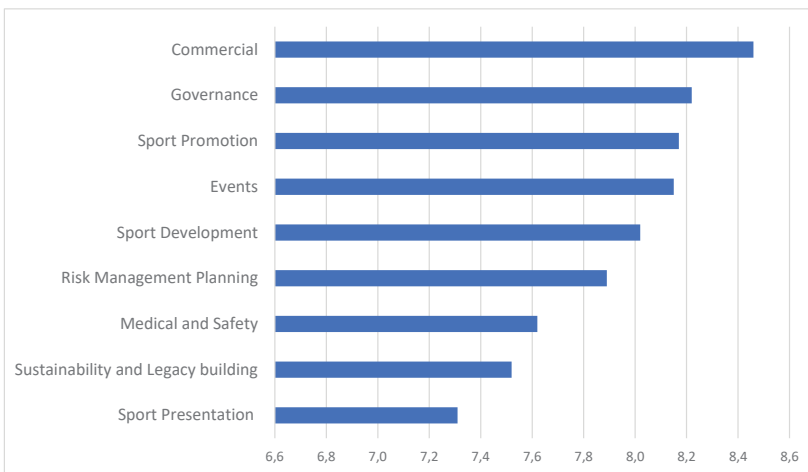


Fig. 16: Importance of Areas of the Strategic Plan Evaluated by 11 NOCs

Finally, an NOC should regularly review how its organisational performance is still aligned with the NOC’s strategic plan.

2.5 Organisation and Strategy in Different Cultures

Without doubt, it is clear that culture is a strong influencer on the success of any strategy. According to Hofstede (2004), culture is “The collective programming of human thought, which differentiates members of one group from those of another group.” The late management guru, Peter Drucker (1977), said that “culture eats strategy for breakfast”, which illus-

trates the fact that the best strategy does not always work, and especially when it is not implemented into cultural habits. However, that does not mean that an adopted strategy works better. Lewis (2005) discusses the phenomenon of “cultural myopia”, which means that ethnocentrism blinds everyone to the salient features of his/her own cultural makeup. This makes someone see other cultures as deviations from his/her own “correct” system. To read the suggestions in this book, rightly means that any advice should not be taken as being equally successful in every NOC. Policies and regulations that are congruent with the IOC or other NOCs (within their own cultural values), may not necessarily be congruent with your own NOC. However, as the Olympic Movement is global, and the objectives may be similar for each NOC, the management and stakeholder reflections must be culturally adopted.

For this book, two applications of cultural differences are particularly important in being considered. One is the differences in leadership style, the other is the differences in communication methodology (see subchapter 4.4).

*Leadership* can be autocratic or democratic (see subchapter 4.2.4 for more detail), collective or individual, merit-based or ascribed, desired or imposed. According to Lewis (2005, 104), it is not surprising that business leaders, as well as national sport leaders, often wield their power in conformity with the national setup. For instance, a democracy like Sweden produces low-key democratic managers; Arab managers are good Muslims; and Chinese managers usually have government or party affiliations. It is almost impossible to transfer good leaders successfully from one culture to another. Even though we may think that football coaches can be from nationalities that are different to our own, that may not be the case when the task becomes much more complex, and the leader needs a deep knowledge of processes, and also a large network. For example, a Japanese NOC president would be largely ineffective in the United States; American league commissioners would fare badly in most European sport leagues; and an Arab sport leader would probably not be tolerated in a Scandinavian sport confederation. The same applies when a strategic plan is set up by simply copying it from another nation.

### 2.5.1 Cultural Roots of Organisation and Leadership

The development of concepts of leadership is closely connected with the organisational structure of the society. Each society breeds the type of

leader it wants, and expects him or her to keep to the path of the age-old cultural habits of that society. In the long run, people of an NOC will adhere collectively to the set of norms, reactions, and activities which their experience and development have shown to be most beneficial for them. When it comes to the development of strategic plans, and the change management to implement a plan, the mentality of a culture — the inner workings and genius of the mindset — are important for success.

Culturally speaking, each NOC is a specific group. It organises itself in ways that are different from what other NOCs are doing. The leaders in each NOC think in a variety of ways about authority, power, cooperation, aims, results, and satisfaction. Thus, developing a strategy and change management would imply leadership skills, which means: people in authority who know how to write the rules for the system.

Lewis (2005, 42) constructed a cultural model, according to which, leaders in NOCs in cultures that are linear-active (i.e., task-oriented, highly organised planners, operating in a positive one-step-at-a-time way, etc.), such as in countries like Germany, the UK, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, or Finland, will generally demonstrate task orientation. They look for technical competence, place facts before sentiment, and logic before emotion. Furthermore, they will be deal-oriented, focusing their own attention, and that of their staff, on immediate achievements and results. They are generally orderly, while adhering to agendas and inspiring their staff with their careful planning.

In contrast, multi-active leaders in NOCs in countries such as Italy, Spain, Russia, Türkiye, France, or Greece, for example, are much more extroverted, and they tend to rely on their eloquence and ability to persuade, and will finally use human force as an inspirational factor. They often complete human transactions emotionally, assigning the time this may take to developing the contact to the limit. Such NOCs are usually more oriented to networking.

### 2.5.2 The Sense for Change and Innovation

As already explained, the environment changes constantly and, thus, ever new challenges occur for NOCs. Depending on the culture, both “change” and innovation are seen differently.

Tab. 4: Innovation and Change in Different Cultures

NOCs in linear-active cultures (Germany, UK, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, or Finland)	NOCs in multi-active cultures (Italy, Spain, Russia, Türkiye, France, or Greece)
Change is constantly necessary NOCs must innovate to survive	Change is imaginative and exciting Innovation should be aesthetic
Decisions should be future-oriented Change stimulates growth and improvement	Decisions should be bold and original Change stimulates people
Plan in detail, then change	Change charismatically, then plan details
Change is top-down	Change after key lateral clearances
Democratic brainstorming is an excellent way to foster creativity	Brainstorming is great, but it must be restrained in the presence of superiors

Source: Lewis (2005, 128)

Lewis (2005, 128) shows differences which are important in strategic management. Table 4 illustrates the differences in planning and innovation, and should be considered when planning.

### 2.5.3 Communication and Culture

Communication is key in strategic management. It is needed when developing a strategy, and then when implementing it (change management). Effective communication is different in each country and, as a result, so is the way in which to address and motivate stakeholders and staff. Each NOC that is working with recommendations from this book, must reflect on adapting them to their NOC culture (organisational culture), based on the national culture.

According to researchers on cultural differences, there are different dimensions that have impacts on management.

Each culture possesses its own set of components dictating the limits of what is culturally acceptable. These components are involved in the transfer of information among individuals within that culture, and they lend context to the discourse and activities of the community, which can be your NOC as the organisation. Therefore, regarding communication, it is important whether a culture acts more in either a high context or a low context (see Hall, 1976).

### Fact Box: Low versus High Context Culture

In a **high-context** culture, there are many contextual elements that help people to understand the rules. As a result, much is taken for granted. This can be very confusing for persons who do not fully understand the ‘unwritten rules’ of the culture, such as in the trust cultures (i.e., population majority believing that others can be trusted) of Greece, Hungary, or Türkiye, for example.

In a **low-context** culture, very little is taken for granted. While this means that more explanation is needed, it also means that there is less chance of misunderstanding, particularly when visitors are present: Contract cultures (e.g., Switzerland, Netherlands, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, or the UK). In the middle, between high- and low-context cultures, we find France, Russia, Spain, or Italy, for example.

The ‘context’ (high or low) refers to the amount of information, with regards to communication and cultural issues, that is conveyed via a strategic plan, action undertaken, behaviour for or against staff, or speech. Depending on the amount of information conveyed, cultures can be classified as being high-context and low-context, as in the above descriptions. However, this type of segregation is not rigid, but rather it is relative and, in brief, in some national cultures, more information needs to be given regarding the strategic plan and change management than in others. The following explanation is taken from Lewis (2005), and is adapted to strategic management.

*High-context Culture:* Most of the information is either in the physical context or initialised in the mind of the person. The execution of change management and the strategic plan is highly dependent on the relationships between the people, and the attention paid to the group process. Staff see a specific hierarchy in social structure and authority. The responsible person (NOC Executive Board) will look after the benefit of the NOC and its success. Information about the strategic plan is often conveyed implicitly, and is heavily dependent on context rather than actual words. Communication is also indirect, can be lengthy, and avoids direct concentration on the topic at hand. Communication is considered to be more of an art than a skill, and as a means to establish and nurture relationships. Change management can, therefore, be achieved through relations, but change management can also indirectly manifest or create certain relations. Any disagreement or conflict can quickly be taken at the personal level. A differing opinion is seen as being personally threatening; hence, conflict must either be avoided or resolved, and as soon as possible.

Indeed, this makes change management difficult to achieve. Knowledge is gained from situation-specific cues, and in a change process misunderstandings can occur. Learning and problem solving, which are inherent in strategic plans and change, are seen as group tasks.

*Low-context Culture:* The mass of information is vested in the explicit message, e.g., a detailed description of the strategic plan and its steps for its implementation. Tasks are carried out by following predetermined procedures, as explained in the plan, and attention is paid to the end goal. The social structure is not centralised, and the authority is distributed on various levels. Each level is, in turn, responsible for something. Information is conveyed explicitly in a precise and easy to understand form. The information depends on the actual words rather than the context. This makes it critical to give explanations for each step during change management. Communication is direct, succinct, and to the point. Communication is regarded as a means with which to exchange information, ideas, and facts. Disagreement is not taken personally, but is rather acknowledged as a difference in opinion/outlook that does not affect the personal relationship of the individuals. Instead, both individuals focus on formulating a rational solution. Gained knowledge is subject to the individual's perception, which means without explanation; in that, some of the staff may think differently about given situations, or the goals of a strategic plan. Learning is achieved by following the directions and explanations of others. Learning and problem solving, in order to achieve the goals of the strategic plan, are considered to be individual tasks.