



CANADIAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE / CANADIAN PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE
2021 PRE-BUDGET BRIEF FOR STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE



List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Prioritize the wellbeing of Canadians as a key driver of economic prosperity in Budget 2021;

Recommendation 2: Increase the annual investment in National Sport Organizations to support the leadership that fosters safe, healthy and inclusive sport development;

Recommendation 3: Partner with National Sport Organizations to innovate, modernize, and broaden the impact of sport delivery in Canada so that more Canadians can participate



Introduction

On behalf of the 61 federally funded National Sport Organizations (NSOs), 24 Multisport Services Organizations (MSOs) and seven Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institutes (COPSI), the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) and Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) recommend that the Government of Canada prioritize the wellbeing of Canadians as a key driver of economic prosperity in Budget 2021.

COVID-19 has tested the spirit and resilience of all Canadians. Sport is a powerful tool that will make a significant contribution to the wellbeing of our citizens and the vibrance of our communities as Canada recovers from the pandemic and begins to thrive again as a country. The physical welfare, mental health and social connectedness of Canadians are key factors in economic prosperity and resilience. It is well known that participating in sport positively impacts each of these factors. Likewise, sport programming for children provides necessary support to parents that facilitates productivity.

The COC and CPC further recommend that support to the NSOs, MSOs and COPSIs be enhanced to enable these organizations to provide leadership to foster safe, healthy and inclusive sport development. For the sport system to truly impact the wellbeing and economic prosperity of our country, leadership from Canada's National Sport Organizations is essential. The traditional role of NSOs has been to set the rules, regulations and policies by which sport is delivered; provide technical expertise for athlete development and coach training and certification; run national championships; and operate national team programs. This role has evolved and greatly expanded in recent years to include leadership in four fundamental areas:

- Protecting the health of participants - most recently developing return to sport protocols amid the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Taking action to address systemic racism by reducing barriers to participation for marginalized populations and creating inclusive sport environments;
- Ensuring a safe sport environment free from abuse, harassment and discrimination;
- Promoting youth participation in sport by creating a greater connection between all levels of sport, including with elite athletes

The ability of the NSOs to continue to provide leadership and support in these principle areas to the thousands of local clubs who deliver sport to Canadians will ultimately lead to a healthier, more resilient and more prosperous country.

2021 is now an Olympic and Paralympic year. While we celebrate, and are inspired by, our Olympians and Paralympians, it's essential to also recognise the sport system in which each of those athletes started. It's time to invest in sport to the benefit of all Canadians.



Current Reality

Sport is such an ingrained part of our culture and society that prior to COVID-19 the notion of our favourite pastimes being completely sidelined nationally and around the world was unimaginable. Almost overnight, events, leagues, facilities and training, from professional to the local playground were completely shut down – including the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

As restrictions have been eased, sport organizations have navigated returning to play in the COVID-19 world. Although NSOs continue to provide leadership amid uncertain circumstances, organizations throughout the sport system have been significantly impacted by canceled events and seasons of play. The current situation has exposed the fragility of sport organizations, who frequently stretch dollars and often operate on break even budgets.

Emergency funds from the federal government were essential to sustaining basic operations and allowed the planning required for a return to sport to occur. Nevertheless, the pandemic's impact was severe. Annually, the output of sport activities generates \$6.6 billion toward our economy. A significant amount of this financial loss caused by the pandemic has been acutely felt in the sport system and communities across the country.

Unfortunately, another difficult year lies ahead. Revenues are anticipated to remain low for the foreseeable future as income generating events remain on hold and health protocols continue to limit participation and add to costs of delivery. Moreover, both summer and winter NSOs find themselves quickly approaching unpredictable Olympic and Paralympic Games, further straining their resources and ability to prepare for athletic excellence.

The immediate challenges facing sport organizations are accelerating, and in some cases necessitating, substantive change in the Canadian sport system. In addition, the social and economic fall-out of the pandemic have created difficult conditions for all Canadians that require further adaptation and adjustment for sport to remain relevant, accessible, and appealing. Leadership of the NSOs is imperative to ensuring a safe, inclusive, and healthy sport environment so that the benefits of sport can be realized by more Canadians.



Recommendations

On behalf of our partners, the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) and Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) recommend that the Government of Canada:

1. Prioritize the wellbeing of Canadians as a key driver of economic prosperity in Budget 2021

WELLBEING IS THE FOUNDATION FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY. The COC, CPC and the sport community are determined to contribute to the recovery of our nation from the hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage the Government of Canada to adopt a holistic perspective and incorporate the wellbeing of Canadians as an economic policy priority. An underlying tenet to ensuring a productive economy is that the workforce and consumers themselves are healthy, resilient and able to conduct economic activity. The Government of Canada should exercise all options at its disposal to address the ongoing physical, mental and social difficulties inflicted on Canadians by the pandemic.

To this end, sport is a unique and powerful tool. Sport can reinvigorate individuals, families and communities. It can unite countries and by extension can contribute to the foundation upon which prosperity can emerge. According to the Government of Canada's study on sport¹, the benefits derived from participation can directly ameliorate the pandemic induced ills of fear, stress, and isolation by stimulating the following:

1. Overall good health – Sport develops physical fitness, resistance to certain diseases and improved quality of life;
2. Improved mental health - The culture of sportsmanship tends to give participants a positive feeling about themselves and a general sense of satisfaction;
3. Sense of belonging to the community - Sport participation encourages team building, social interaction and the bonding of all those involved, which helps to produce community identity and social cohesion

The economic recovery of the country requires the resilience and wellbeing of its residents. The sport community shares in the responsibility to get Canadians active and rebuild our community linkages. The COC has taken a first step by launching a Return To Sport campaign entitled 'It's Time,' which is designed to help inspire and motivate Canadians to live by Olympic values. Moreover, our National Sport Organizations, Multisport Services Organizations and the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institutes have the programs, experience, and infrastructure to contribute to the wellness of Canadians. By enshrining this goal of public wellness as a policy priority, the Canadian sport community can practically collaborate and coordinate with the Government of Canada to help drive health and economic prosperity.

¹<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/81-595-m/2008060/s12-eng.htm>



2. Increase the annual investment in National Sport Organizations to support the leadership that fosters safe, healthy, and inclusive sport development.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP SUPPORTS LOCAL DELIVERY. The COC and CPC recommend that the Government of Canada consider a significant funding increase to support National Sport Organizations in providing leadership that:

1. Fosters a safe and healthy environment for participants by providing community sport clubs with policies, tools, and expertise;
2. Addresses systemic racism and barriers to access through inclusive programming, targeted outreach, and education and training;
3. Promotes youth participation in sport by creating a greater connection with elite athletes

The Government of Canada has long been a valued partner of the Canadian sport system, recognizing the role that elite sport plays in inspiring youth and building national pride. Despite remarkable achievements in high performance, investment in sport development in Canada has lagged far behind other social initiatives in receiving federal attention and support. Sport is a unique and influential tool that has been underutilized in building communities and addressing a broad range of social issues that are important to Canadians, including the promotion of health and wellness, fostering safe communities, improving education outcomes, and assisting with the integration of new immigrants.

An increased annual investment will allow the national sport system to develop and retain essential expertise, create innovative new initiatives, expand existing programs and work closely with clubs in communities across Canada to deliver quality sport experiences that develop individuals and communities.

Specifically, an annual increase will be deployed to enhance programs that serve our shared Canadian values, namely:

- Emphasize gender equity;
- Create greater links between elite athletes and young Canadians to promote health and achievement among youth;
- Foster Indigenous participation in sport;
- Support sport participation for new Canadians;
- Support sport participation for Canadians living with disabilities;
- Foster sport environments that are free of abuse, harassment and discrimination; including the development and certification/licensing of coaches and officials;
- Strengthen policies and practices in community clubs

In order for the benefits of sport to be maximized, additional federal support is required to achieve our collective aspirations for diversity and inclusiveness.



3) Partner with National Sport Organizations to innovate, modernize, and broaden the impact of sport delivery in Canada so that more Canadians can participate.

AN EVOLUTION OF THE SPORT SYSTEM. Growing participation in sport is a longstanding goal that all organizations in the sport system share. Simply put, more Canadians participating in sport is good for Canada; sport enhances quality of life. However, increasing participation is not a simple task and will prove even more difficult in a post-lockdown pandemic environment. Consequently, it is essential for sport organizations to innovate and modernize operations and delivery to maximize efficiency and ultimately broaden participation.

National Sport Organizations are committed to working throughout the system to:

- Strengthen local sport clubs, ensuring that they have the resources and expertise to deliver and expand inclusive programming;
- Develop new business models for programs, leagues and events;
- Collaborate and form strategic partnerships to conduct outreach to marginalized groups, particularly Indigenous communities;
- Harness technology to reach new participants and form a stronger connection with existing participants;
- Define and measure impact

Changes are necessary for sport to operate successfully in the post-pandemic environment. The opportunity to evolve our partnership and collaboration with the Government of Canada to foster the requisite conditions for innovation and modernization has the potential to maximize the impact of sport in communities across the country and positively impact quality of life for Canadians.



Conclusion

On behalf of Canada's National Sport Organizations, Multisport Services Organizations, and Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institutes, thank you in advance for your consideration of our recommendations. The policy, investment and partnership ideas that we have presented are designed to be complementary to the submissions of ParticipACTION, Sport for Life, and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. Collectively our recommendations represent a comprehensive approach to leveraging the power of sport to address the current challenges facing our nation so that we may emerge even stronger.

The Canadian Olympic Committee and the Canadian Paralympic Committee will be submitting an adjoining sport community request to the Government of Canada in the Fall. Until then, we welcome the opportunity to discuss our recommendations with the Standing Committee on Finance at your earliest convenience

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