

# Program Quality Standards (V3)

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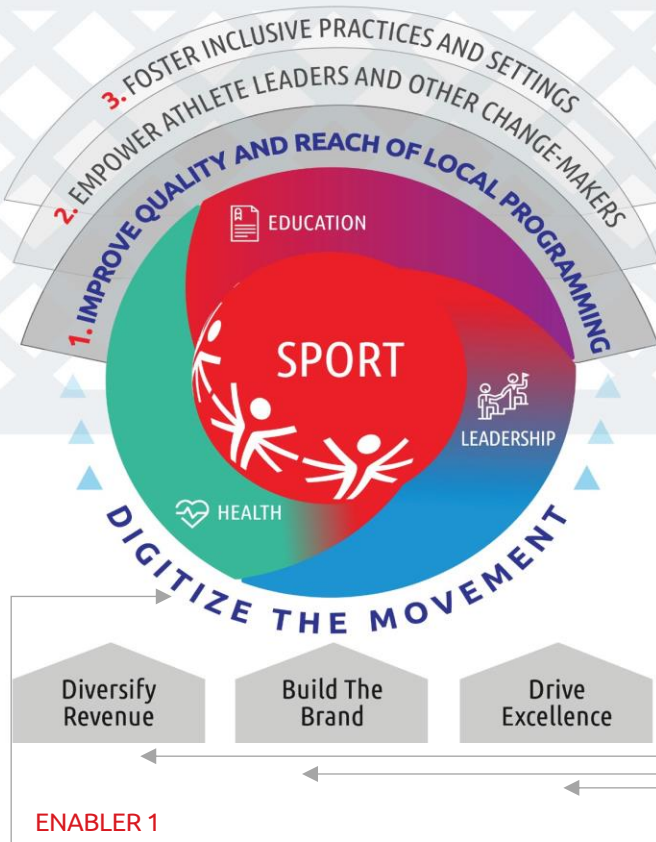
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## Program Quality Standards: Frequently Asked Questions:

<p><b>What are Program Quality Standards?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Program Quality Standards (PQS) are a tool to <b>help Programs develop and increase quality</b> of programmatic areas and overall operations. They help Programs identify what to focus on in order to provide athletes with the highest quality programming.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How were they created?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PQS has been initially developed in 2013 <b>with the input from the Programs in all Regions</b>. The PQS Version 3 revision was completed in 2020 with the input from the SOI Departments, Regional and Program staff.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What is new in PQS Version 3?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PQS Version 3 are <b>aligned to the 2021-2024 Global Strategic Plan</b> structure. Some standards have been updated, added or removed to reflect the advances and new developments in the Special Olympics programmatic areas in the last 5 years.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How are they structured?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PQS are structured by 3 Strategies and 4 Enablers of the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan. Within each section the standards are set out in <b>3 logical steps</b>, or stages, that build on each other.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Who should use them?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PQS help Program Leaders understand, manage, and support Special Olympics programmatic areas and deliver them at high standards<sup>1</sup>. <b>National Directors, CEOs and Program Boards</b> should use the PQS for planning and developing their Programs. The PQS are also useful for working with sub-Programs, athlete, family, and youth committees. Each set of standards has 3 stages so they can be relevant for all types of Programs from small to large, new to mature, and from Programs lacking resources to those that are well-resourced.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How should quality standards be used?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Self-Assessment:</b> the primary use of the PQS is to self-assess, find ways to improve and increase quality.</li> <li><b>Roadmap:</b> PQS should be used when developing annual operational plans and longer-term strategic plans. If a Program is developing a new plan, PQS can help identify what should be included. If a Program is in the middle of a strategic plan, PQS can help focus on improvements that fit within the current strategy.</li> <li><b>Track progress and celebrate success:</b> achieving new standards means the Program is growing and improving! These are measurable results. Use PQS to recognize and celebrate advancement and growth in your Program.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Why should you use them? What is the benefit?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>For Programs:</b> PQS help Programs grow and improve. It's a great assessment, planning, and tracking tool. It helps start honest conversations about Program priorities and goals.</li> <li><b>For Athletes:</b> A better Program = improvements to the lives of athletes. Use PQS as a tool to get athletes involved, provide them with a reference point to share what they think a Program should focus on.</li> <li><b>For Program Leaders:</b> Help National Directors, CEOs, Boards of Directors focus on quality, set realistic plans and help answer the question "what's next?" PQS are useful in transferring knowledge to new or inexperienced leaders and staff.</li> <li><b>For the Movement:</b> PQS are a consistent reference tool which drive us towards excellence. It moves us away from subjective 'judgements' of progress and supports our focus on quality across our diverse Programs.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Note: Program Quality Standard do not take the place of detailed technical standards in other areas to help coaches, event managers or other managers.

S1. IMPROVE AND EXPAND LOCAL ACTIVITIES				
AREA OF STRATEGIC PLAN		STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
S1.1 Local operations, structures & outreach	Local Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Olympics at local level (e.g. village, administrative district, chapter) is organized by a team of volunteers (3+) with defined roles (e.g. communications, logistics, outreach).	<input type="checkbox"/> Local level brunch of Special Olympics is set up as a "Club" (sometimes referred to as Sub-Program or Chapter) that is run by a committee with defined roles.	<input type="checkbox"/> Local "Clubs" offer sports, health, young athletes, athlete leadership engagement, and school engagement activities. "Clubs" raise funds locally and secure coverage in local media.
	Athlete and Partner Recruitment & Retention	<input type="checkbox"/> Program recruits new athletes and Unified partners from diverse backgrounds and locations and measures their retention annually.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program actively recruits athletes and Unified partners in low presence areas (e.g. remote areas). Basic athlete retention plan is in place and 75% of athletes retained annually.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program successfully retains 90% of athletes and Unified partners.
	<a href="#">Coach Recruitment and Retention</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program actively recruits new coaches and tracks their retention annually.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program targets certified coaches through sports partners and sports community (clubs, federations, PE teachers) and retains 75% of coaches each year.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program retains 90% of certified coaches each year.
	Athlete & Unified Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Athlete leaders have meaningful roles at a local level (e.g. team captain, responsible for equipment set-up at training).	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Special Olympics "Club" Committee includes an athlete leader and adjusts its practices to ensure equal participation and contribution to decision-making and activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Committee roles and local "Club" operations are led by athlete leader(s) (e.g. training schedules, communications, fundraising, etc.).
S1.2 Coach education	Coach Development System	<input type="checkbox"/> Program ensures that coaches complete basic certified training through SOI or equivalent coach training providers, supporting all stages of the <a href="#">Athlete Development Model (ADM)</a> .	<input type="checkbox"/> Program ensures that coaches complete some components of Special Olympics Global <a href="#">Coach Development System</a> . Program provides or facilitates certified sport-specific coach training and opportunities to gain higher certification (incl. Motor Activities Training Program). 70% of coaches hold an approved coaching certification.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a fully developed coach education system aligned with a National Coaching Framework or Special Olympics Global <a href="#">Coach Education System</a> . 90% of coaches hold an approved coaching certification.
S1.3 Frequency & quality of sports	Coach to Athlete Ratio	<input type="checkbox"/> Average Certified coach to athlete ratio is less than 1:20.	<input type="checkbox"/> Average certified coach to athlete ratio less than 1:16.	<input type="checkbox"/> Average certified coach to athlete ratio is less than 1:12.
	Unified Sports	<input type="checkbox"/> Program offers 1 <a href="#">Unified Sports</a> model (recreational, player development, or competitive) in at least 1 sport in a community, school, or university setting. 5% of all athletes participate in Unified Sports.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program offers 2 Unified Sports models in at least 2 sports and 2 settings (community, school, university). 10% of athletes participate in Unified Sports.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program offers all 3 Unified Sports models in at least 3 sports in all 3 settings. 15% of athletes participate in Unified Sports.

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	<b>Athlete Development Model (ADM)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program engages athletes in 1 of the stages of <a href="#">Athlete Development Model (ADM)</a> (Fundamental, Learning to Train, Training to Compete, Recreation).	<input type="checkbox"/> Program engages athletes and Unified partners in min. 2 stages of ADM progression.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has implemented 3-4 levels of ADM progression into a comprehensive athlete development model.
	<b>Frequency of Participation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> All athletes/Unified partners have at least one weekly Special Olympics sports training session with a coach during sport season (*session = 60 minutes at moderate to vigorous intensity).	<input type="checkbox"/> 50% of athletes/Unified partners have min.1 weekly sports training session with a coach + another training or fitness session led or prescribed by a certified coach/fitness instructor during sport season (120 minutes per week).	<input type="checkbox"/> 75% of athletes/Unified partners have min.1 weekly sports training session with a coach + another training or fitness session led or prescribed by a certified coach/fitness instructor during sport season (120 minutes per week).
	<b>Equipment and Facilities</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Sport is conducted using basic sports facilities, equipment and clothing, following safety rules.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sport is conducted using approved sports facilities, equipment and clothing similar to mainstream sports.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sport is conducted using national/international standard sports facilities, equipment and clothing.
	<b>Competition Frequency</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Athletes/Unified partners have at least 1 competition opportunities per year in each sport offered by the Program. At least 1 competition offered is virtual.	<input type="checkbox"/> Athletes/Unified partners have at least 3 competition opportunities per year in each sport offered by the Program. At least 2 competitions offered are virtual.	<input type="checkbox"/> Athletes/Unified partners have the opportunity to participate in league-style competition opportunities throughout the year. Program conducts at least 3 virtual competitions.
	<b>Competition Quality</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Competition manager ensures each competition is conducted in accordance with Special Olympics Sports Rules. Competition schedules provided in advance.	<input type="checkbox"/> All head technical officials meet minimum Sport Governing Body certification requirements for the level of competition.	<input type="checkbox"/> Technical delegates and sport-specific juries are in place for all events, including local level.
	<b>Young Athletes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program offers multiple opportunities to participate in <a href="#">Young Athletes</a> (ages 2-7) throughout the year.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program offers two of three Young Athletes Models (school, community or home) and registers all Young Athletes in GMS, Connect or local database.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program offers sustained, expanding Young Athletes activities that last a minimum of 8 weeks and transition children to other Special Olympics sports opportunities after Young Athletes.



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<p><b>S1.4 Local partnerships</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Sport Partnerships</a></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program builds relationships with Sport Governing Bodies or other sport-related organizations who can support high-quality sports training and competition opportunities.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program has a partnership with Sport Governing Bodies / recognized sport-related organizations for at least 50% of sports offered, including access to coaches and coach education.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program has a formal partnership with Sport Governing Bodies / recognized sport-related organization for all 100% of sports offered.</p>
<p><b>S1.5 Health &amp; well-being integration</b></p>	<p><b>Fitness Frequency</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program communicates the importance of health and fitness to all athletes, Unified partners, coaches, families through wellness sessions, orientations and online.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program offers at least 6 weeks of on-going health and fitness programming, outside of Healthy Athletes events with at least 10% of athletes completing the program each year.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program offers year-round health and fitness programming, outside of Healthy Athletes events, for athletes, involving Unified partners, coaches and families with at least 20% of athletes completing the program each year.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Fitness Quality</a></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Sports training includes general warm-up, cool-down and fitness elements (e.g. conditioning, education on nutrition) prescribed by coach per his/her knowledge.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Sports training activities include warm-up, cool-down and fitness elements specific to the sport, prescribed by coach or fitness coach.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program promotes athlete/partner fitness tracking (e.g. daily activity levels, workout or training logs, nutrition logs, fitness elements).</p>
	<p><b>Health &amp; Wellness</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Facilities and competition venues offer healthy food and drink options.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Performance Stations</a> are offered at all large competitions.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Performance Stations are offered at local competitions</p>
	<p><b>Healthy Athletes</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program directly or through partnership (e.g. with a health clinic) provides at least 1 screening event and 1 virtual activity annually (Family Health Forum, virtual Healthy Athletes, online or app-based fitness tracking). Network of service providers is established to provide follow-up care after a screening.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program directly or through partnership provides Healthy Athletes screening or virtual events in at least 3 disciplines and 2 virtual activities annually (Family Health Forum, online or app-based fitness tracking).</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program directly or through partnership provides Healthy Athletes screening or virtual events in all disciplines and 3 additional virtual activities annually (Family Health Forum, online or app-based fitness tracking).</p>



S2. EMPOWER ATHLETE, YOUTH AND OTHER LEADERS TO MAKE CHANGE				
AREA OF STRATEGIC PLAN		STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
S2.1 Skills & knowledge	Health Professionals	<input type="checkbox"/> Program engages health professionals and students for training and implementation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program partners with one university or professional association to recruit health professionals and students for training and implementation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program partners with multiple universities and/or professional associations to recruit health professionals and students for training and implementation.
	<a href="#">Athlete Leadership Training</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program delivers two Athlete Leadership core training modules.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program delivers 1 advanced leadership course and Special Olympics role training.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program partners with external organizations to provide specific training to the Athlete Leaders (e.g. communications training).
S2.2 Unified Schools	Unified Schools	<input type="checkbox"/> Program builds relationships with educational institutions (e.g. schools, universities) in at least one geographic area to recruit and engage youth with and without ID in Special Olympics activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program partners with educational institutions to conduct inclusive sport and education activities (e.g. Unified Sports, youth leadership summit). Program works to transition Unified Schools to Unified Champion Schools.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program expands Unified Champion Schools to all major geographical areas within the country or state.
S2.3 Internal athlete jobs/roles	Athlete Leadership Structures	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has an Athlete Input Council actively providing input to Program leaders and Program decision making.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has Athlete Leadership Council that plays a meaningful role in Program decision-making as well as implementing its own projects.	<input type="checkbox"/> All committees, planning and implementation activities have athletes fully included as members or leaders of committees.
	<a href="#">Athlete Leadership Roles</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has athletes trained and serving in meaningful leadership roles (e.g. Spokesperson, Coach, Health Messenger).	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has athletes in intern or unpaid staff positions implementing programming, and uses trained athlete leaders in programmatic areas, events, and activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has an athlete as paid staff. Trained athlete leaders train other athlete leaders and educate Program constituents.
S2.4 Athletes & youth teaching inclusion	Athlete and Youth Leaders as Spokespeople	<input type="checkbox"/> Program invites youth and athletes to participate in events with external groups (e.g. giving a speech or introducing an external speaker during an opening ceremony at local Games).	<input type="checkbox"/> Program creates opportunities for meaningful and sustainable interaction between youth/athletes and external groups (e.g. inviting a local official to a Unified Champion School for a Unified Sports game and lunch with students).	<input type="checkbox"/> Program includes youth and athletes in the planning and execution of events and regular engagement with external groups.
	Youth Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Program actively recruits young people to get involved in Special Olympics.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program organizes activities to build inclusive mindsets and behaviors in young people (e.g. youth leadership summits, training, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/> All committees, planning and implementation activities have youth fully included as members or leaders.





S3. GROW INCLUSIVE PRACTICES AND ACTIVITIES				
AREA OF STRATEGIC PLAN		STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
S3.1 High level systems change	<b>Government Relations*</b> <i>(if Program judges it appropriate to do so)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program analyzes government structure and develops contact with government entities. Relevant government officials attend Special Olympic events and/or take meetings with Special Olympics representatives.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program develops strong relationships with government entities that are willing to use their influence to advance the work of Special Olympics and the rights of people with ID through policy or resource allocation in support of Special Olympics mission.	<input type="checkbox"/> Government officials proactively engage Special Olympics in policy-setting related to inclusion and disability.
	<b>NGO and Service Organizations</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has at least 1 partnership with a non-governmental, intergovernmental, quasi-governmental or service organization (e.g. Lions Clubs International, UNICEF) whose work is complementary and beneficial to Special Olympics.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has partnerships with at least 2 non-governmental, intergovernmental, quasi-governmental or service organizations whose work is complementary and beneficial to Special Olympics.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has partnerships with at least 2 non-governmental, intergovernmental, quasi-governmental or service organizations that directly support Special Olympics programming.
S3.2 Inclusive organizations	<b>External Engagement</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program engages with external organizations (e.g. companies, sports federations, health providers, school districts) to raise awareness of need for inclusion of people with ID	<input type="checkbox"/> Program educates external organizations about implementing a <a href="#">Unified Leadership</a> approach to make their organization more inclusive. Athlete Leaders co-lead external education sessions	<input type="checkbox"/> Program is partnering with external organizations to help them change policies and practices to become more inclusive of people with ID.
S3.3. Use Games to change systems	<b>High Level Engagement</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program Games include participation by high ranking, influential sport, government, business, education or health leaders (e.g. making a speech, panel discussion, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Program Games include discussions and/or announcements involving high ranking, influential sport, government, business, education or health leaders about policies or resources for inclusion of people with ID.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program Games are a high profile, respected platform external partners use to make announcements about improving the lives of people with ID or wider inclusion issues beyond Special Olympics and/or people with ID.
	<b>Games/Events Quality</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program Games run on time and contain basic protocol elements as defined in the Special Olympics General Rules, including athlete-focused ceremonies and awards that involve external, influential leaders/celebrities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program Games include an educational component for influential external guests and ensure they have opportunities for interaction with the athletes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program Games feature high-quality branding and well-planned experiences for external, influential guests to ensure they gain a positive, professional perception of Special Olympics.



E1. DIGITIZE THE MOVEMENT				
AREA OF STRATEGIC PLAN		STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
E1.1 Digital Platforms	Internal Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Program engages constituents through traditional technology (e.g. email, Facebook, etc.) and regular virtual events.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program engages constituents through new technology (e.g. Zoom, apps). Sub-programs hosts regular virtual events.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program engages constituents through customized apps or technology, and has advanced systems for online information sharing with staff and volunteers (e.g. fundraising, marketing, social media, communication apps).
E1.2 Digital content	Content Creation and Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> Program utilizes digital content created by SOI or Region for website, social media or e-newsletters and/or for physical printing of banners, posters or information booklets.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program develops its own digital content for website, social media and/or e-newsletters, engaging volunteers or partner/sponsors for digital content creation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program creates and analyses year-round digital content across website, social media, e-newsletters with dedicated staff or agency support.
E1.3 Data management	Competition Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Program uses spreadsheets or databases to collect and manage local/state/national competition data.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program uses a competition management system at all levels to record competition data (e.g. GMS or <a href="#">SO Connect</a> ) and maintain consistent, regularly updated records. Delegations meet competition registration deadlines.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program uses a web-based competition management system to record competition data (e.g. GMS or SO Connect). Competition results are consistent, reliable, and available on-demand for engaging fans and media locally.
	Constituent Data	<input type="checkbox"/> Program maintains basic data on athletes, Unified partners, coaches, families, and volunteers (e.g., name, demographic and contact information) and captures donor, celebrity and fans data.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program uses GMS or <a href="#">SO Connect</a> to maintain up-to-date data for key constituents, including participation information (e.g., events attended, competition results) and coaches certification details and tracks donor/celebrity/fan engagement.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program uses constituent data from GMS or <a href="#">SO Connect</a> to make strategic decisions. Program database records include external coach certification details and support the administration of coach recertification needs.
	Virtual Engagement	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a way of tracking numbers of constituents engaged virtually (e.g., number of followers on social media account).	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a way of tracking numbers, level, and frequency of virtual constituent engagement.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program consistently tracks levels of virtual constituent engagement and strategically uses results to ensure constituents are engaged and impacted by activities and campaigns.





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	<b>Healthy Athletes Data</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program captures screening data online during or after Healthy Athletes events and accesses event reports.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program uses digital technology within fitness/ Young Athletes or health education, Healthy Athletes screenings and training (healthcare professionals, Health Messengers).	<input type="checkbox"/> Program captures and provides data to help with SOI health research & evaluation efforts.
<b>E1.4 Secure online environment</b>	<b>Technology Software</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program uses basic computer applications for office and program administration, has a basic data back-up system and uses virus protection software.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a secure data storage and cloud-based back-up system for storage and sharing of documents, photos, digital tools and documents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program uses solutions (e.g. cloud-based file sharing, video conference calling) for enabling work in-office or virtually, implements comprehensive information security measures and policies, and runs regular technology checks.
<b>E1.5 Digital modernization</b>	<b>Technology Infrastructure</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has basic internet connection and access to basic equipment (phone, computer), dedicated Special Olympics email and develops a basic technology improvement plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has consistent, dedicated internet connectivity and equipment and develops a comprehensive technology improvement strategy across all major functional areas of operations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has advanced internet connectivity, necessary equipment and services, and a technology strategy that improves programming (e.g. Healthy Athletes tablets for live data capture and sharing with relevant partners for follow-up).



E2. INCREASE AND EXPAND REVENUE				
AREA OF STRATEGIC PLAN		STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
E2.1-E2.3 Build strategic partnerships	Donor Management & Recognition	<input type="checkbox"/> Program implements a basic approach to assigning rights and benefits to donors and recognizing their support (e.g. thank you letters).	<input type="checkbox"/> Program actively seeks donors and recognizes them based on an established rights and benefits plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program advances top donor relationships based on written strategies and internal or external fundraising expertise.
	Government Relations <i>(if Program judges it appropriate to do so)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program collaborates with a government entity to obtain financial support (cash/VIK) for Special Olympics events.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program collaborates with 1 or more government entities to obtain financial support (cash/VIK) for Special Olympics programming (v/s a stand-alone event).	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a formal commitment (e.g. MOU) from at least 1 government entity to financially support Special Olympics programmatic areas/initiatives (e.g. Sport) through cash/VIK
E2.4-E2.5 Fundraising capacity	Planning & Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Program implements basic fundraising plan, attends SOI/Region-led fundraising trainings and best practices sharing sessions. Program has capacity to prepare/present basic fundraising materials and proposals	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a fundraising strategy with targets, fundraising materials and identified staff/volunteers, and a pipeline of potential funders with a solid rationale for each	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a multi-year fundraising strategy and professional proposal materials, including sponsor rights and benefits packages, supported by professional staff. Program builds partnerships to jointly apply for grants.
E2.6-E2.7 Diversify funding channels	Fund Diversification	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has at least 1 source of budget-relieving cash funding, excluding SOI (e.g. external grant), and receives 2 or more budget-relieving in-kind donations of goods or services	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has 3 or more sources of cash funding and 3 or more in-kind donations of goods or services. Program conducts risk analysis of current funding and secures at least 1 new source of funds each year.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has 5 or more sources of cash funding from diverse donors supporting different programmatic areas, receives 5 or more in-kind donations of goods or services, and secures multi-year sources of funding.
	Global Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/> Program stays informed on regional/global fundraising campaigns.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program actively participates in regional/global fundraising campaigns. Program implements global/regional partnerships as appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program actively participates in regional/global fundraising campaigns and customizes them to their market in order to expand brand recognition and maximize funding.



E3. BUILD THE BRAND				
AREA OF STRATEGIC PLAN		STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
E3.1 Brand reach	Social Media Presence	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a strong managed social media presence through at least one platform, where stories and sporting events highlighting athletes are consistently shared.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program online platforms (social media or website) are professionally designed and managed. Program strategically integrates social media to support marketing activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program social media platforms and website have interactive features designed to attract and engage the public (e.g. online giving). Program uses social media analytics to guide marketing.
	Media Coverage	<input type="checkbox"/> Program secures media coverage for at least 1 major annual event, competition, or campaign.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program secures media coverage for one major event, competition or campaign each quarter.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program actively seeks and secures year-round media coverage.
	Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has relationships with PR, marketing, communications and/or media professionals for guidance and support.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a value in-kind arrangement at least one PR, marketing agency and/or media outlets.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a formal sponsorship/partnership arrangement with at least one PR, marketing agency and/or media outlet.
	Branding	<input type="checkbox"/> Program implements SOI brand guidelines for basic digital and traditional materials (e.g. digital logos, banners, t-shirts).	<input type="checkbox"/> Program conducts market analysis and implements digital and traditional brand guidelines on all tools and materials at Program and sub-Program levels (e.g. website, uniforms).	<input type="checkbox"/> Program consistently implements virtual and traditional brand guidelines on all materials at all levels and promotes the brand externally.
E3.2 Build on global Special Olympics events	Global Alignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Program uses information supplied by SOI about global Special Olympics events (e.g. World Games) to raise awareness.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program builds its own campaign to raise awareness related to at least one global Special Olympics event every year.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program integrates global Special Olympics events/campaigns into its multi-year marketing strategy to take full advantage of opportunities to raise awareness of Special Olympics.
E3.3 Build on external events	External Alignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Program takes part in events organized by external groups to help raise awareness of Special Olympics.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has at least one agreement with an external event organizer to use their event as a means of raising awareness of Special Olympics.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has agreements with multiple external events, including at least one national or state level event, to promote Special Olympics and inclusion of people with ID
E3.4 Athlete leaders building awareness	Joint Promotion with Celebrities	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has at least 1 known, influential public figure who collaborates with an athlete leader to promote Special Olympics at least once a year	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has at least 2 known, influential public figures who collaborate with athlete leaders to promote Special Olympics at least 3 times a year	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has 3 or more known, influential public figures who collaborate with athlete leaders to raise awareness of Special Olympics throughout the year.
	Highlighting Athlete Talents	<input type="checkbox"/> Program promotes achievements of athletes, especially in sport, on social media.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program uses athlete leaders as its main spokespeople and has an active strategy of gaining coverage that features athlete leaders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program partners with local, regional or national TV/radio/online media entity to profile achievements of the athletes and athlete leaders (e.g. documentary, feature stories).

## Special Olympics Accredited Program quality standards



E3.5-E3.7 Local marketing & communications	Local Capacity	<input type="checkbox"/> Program ensures local Special Olympics programs (Clubs) have basic training and materials to engage in PR activities in their local community.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a deliberate strategy to enable and support local Special Olympics programs (Clubs) to raise awareness in their local community.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program uses donor or media partnerships to help local Special Olympics programs (Clubs) raise awareness in their local community.
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E4. PROMOTE EXCELLENCE				
AREA OF STRATEGIC PLAN		STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
E4.1 Unified Leadership	Unified Leadership Approach	<input type="checkbox"/> Program provides internal training for staff, Boards, volunteers on <a href="#">Unified Leadership</a> . Program leaders actively identify and facilitate roles for athlete leaders at all levels.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program engages in educating external organizations about the Unified Leadership approach led or co-led by athletes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program seeks and uses external opportunities such as conferences to promote the Unified Leadership approach, with athlete leaders as independent or co-facilitators.
	E4.2 Leadership development	Training & Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Program ensures that all staff and key volunteers receive basic training on their roles.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a structured approach to training and developing staff and key volunteers to improve how the Program is run and to support succession planning.
E4.3 Board of Directors	Strategic Recruitment	<input type="checkbox"/> Program actively seeks new Board members and educates Board on its role in supporting the annual, ongoing and long-term needs of the Program.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program conducts regular assessment of Board diversity and skills and strategically recruits to ensure diversity and address skill gaps.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program engages external expertise to support recruitment of diverse, qualified, and experienced Board members.
	Effective Engagement	<input type="checkbox"/> Board members are active, regularly attending meetings and events. Board has defined standing and ad hoc committees.	<input type="checkbox"/> Board is actively meeting its fiduciary, oversight, strategic planning, fundraising and sustainability commitments to the Program. Board has active committees with written annual goals.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a fully engaged and productive Board that guides the Program and brings in resources. All members are assigned to at least one committee based on expertise and/or interest.
	Intentional Revitalization	<input type="checkbox"/> Program ensures ongoing training and engagement opportunities for Board.	<input type="checkbox"/> Board holds at least one retreat per year and develops members for leadership positions (e.g. officer, committee chair).	<input type="checkbox"/> Board conducts individual member and full Board evaluations annually and has a succession plan for its leadership positions.
E4.4 Volunteers & staff	Family Engagement	<input type="checkbox"/> Program collects basic information on families and provides at least one education opportunity for families annually.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program communicates with families regularly, has a formal families structure to get input. At least 3 education or networking opportunities are provided for families each year.	<input type="checkbox"/> Family members serve in leadership roles at all levels within the Program. Program provides a year-round schedule of education and networking opportunities for families.
	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I)	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a DE&I policy and makes internal efforts to promote DE&I through outreach, programming and marketing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program integrates DE&I into all aspects of its operations and seeks to support and promote DE&I efforts externally.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program is a leader in DE&I implementation and a respected national or state DE&I influencer and thought leader.

## Special Olympics Accredited Program quality standards



	<b>Volunteer Recruitment</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program proactively seeks new volunteers (e.g. online or at events) and has regular training opportunities for volunteers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a formal recruitment process for volunteers and has a volunteer retention strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program engages institutions, organizations, and companies to recruit volunteers. Program retains and/or increases volunteer numbers year on year.
	<b>Volunteer Recognition</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program provides basic recognition for staff and volunteers, including coaches (e.g. thank you letters).	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has formal recognition program for staff, volunteers, and coaches (e.g. awards, special events).	<input type="checkbox"/> Program partners with external recognition/certification partners to enhance volunteer and staff recognition and retention.
	<b>Staff Performance</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has written job descriptions for key paid staff and/or volunteer leadership positions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program sets annual goals and evaluates progress for paid staff and volunteers in key leadership roles.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a formal staff performance management and professional development process.
<b>E4.5 Quality improvements</b>	<b>Event Management</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Competition and non-sports activities are run by trained volunteers with clear roles. Program implements a process for registering and training day-of event volunteers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Event volunteer registration, training and assignments are done in advance. Families, media and honored guests are registered to attend the event through a registration system. Program conducts basic post-event evaluation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Events are run by experienced teams who train new volunteers into key roles, seek feedback and continuously improve how events are run. Volunteers are engaged with and support the event through digital media. Event evaluation by constituent groups is completed.
<b>E4.6 Evaluation &amp; data use</b>	<b>Data Reporting</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program reports consistent and accurate data in a timely manner (e.g. <a href="#">Census</a> , Policy Survey, World Games registration, grant reporting).	<input type="checkbox"/> Program is proactive in submitting recurring data and reporting on grants. Program tracks data submitted and uses it to inform its annual planning.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program tracks and evaluates data to drive strategic decisions. Program tracks its operational and strategic plans.
<b>E4.7 Tools &amp; practices</b>	<b>Financial Accounts</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has assigned responsibility for centralized management and banking of funds in Program name. Annual financial statements are maintained (preferably audited).	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly and annual cashflow projections are maintained and updated regularly. Financial policies and procedures are reviewed and updated annually.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program manages financial accounts on a monthly basis (revenue and expenditures).
	<b>Planning</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program develops and implements an annual operational plan with goals, actions, metrics, timelines, aligned with <a href="#">SOI strategic plan</a> .	<input type="checkbox"/> Program develops and implements a multi-year (i.e. strategic) plan with goals, actions, metrics, timelines, aligned with <a href="#">SOI strategic plan</a> .	<input type="checkbox"/> Program conducts ongoing review of its annual plan and a year-end review of its strategic plan and adjusts it according to lessons learned.



**Special Olympics Accredited Program quality standards**



	<b>Budget</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program operates within Board approved budget that is aligned with annual plan objectives.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has 3-month operating financial reserves and implements a plan for long-term financial sustainability.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has 6 months operating financial reserves.
	<b>Risk Management</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program conducts a basic risk assessment and implements a plan to address risks, including venue checks in advance of events. Program provides basic risk management training to staff and key volunteers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program conducts a formal risk assessment, including issues such as safeguarding and medical management at events. Program has a written risk/crisis management plan. Program secures necessary basic insurance coverage.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program develops and implements risk management policies and procedures. Program partners with law enforcement, fire, and security services to support risk management at events. Risk Management training (e.g. event rehearsal, tabletop exercise) is conducted with all venue staff and event leads.
<b>E4.8 Internal collaboration</b>	<b>Internal Communication</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Program engages in regular communication with key stakeholders (e.g. athletes, staff, key volunteers) at all levels, and communicates regularly with Special Olympics Region.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a formal channel for two-way communication with internal stakeholders (e.g. social media, chat group, etc.). Program engages with other leaders in Special Olympics Region to share best practices and learn from others	<input type="checkbox"/> Program has a platform that enables internal stakeholders, in particular staff and volunteers, to work on projects with each other.

