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Project Report

Governance audit of the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone: an appraisal of the 'strategic direction' of the Committee to identify gaps and make succinct recommendations for its optimal performance.

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Declaration

I declare that this research project which I hereby submit for the award of the Masters in Sports Organisation Management (MEMOS) to the University of Ottawa, Canada, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

Ahmed Khanou

Signature of student

Signature of supervisor

Dedication

This research paper is dedicated to my beloved mother, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been my greatest source of strength and inspiration. To all those who share a relentless quest for knowledge and a profound desire to position sports as a powerful tool for development, your passion and dedication continue to drive progress and innovation in this field.

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Abstract

This extensive research project is dedicated to conducting a thorough governance audit of the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone (NOCSLE). The examination assesses the efficiency, openness, and responsibility of the NOCSLE's governance mechanisms and procedures. Through the utilization of a diversified range of methods, such as scrutinizing documents, conducting surveys, and engaging in interviews with key stakeholders, the audit aims to pinpoint both the strengths and areas needing enhancement within the NOCSLE's governance framework. Notable areas of focus encompass the efficacy of leadership, involvement of stakeholders, financial administration, and adherence to global governance benchmarks.

The outcomes derived from the audit will furnish practical recommendations for bolstering governance protocols, fostering ethical criteria, and refining the general operation of the NOCSLE. This research underscores the significance of solid governance in nurturing sustainable sports progression and elevating Sierra Leone's standing in the global Olympic arena. Furthermore, this study contributes to the wider conversation on sports governance, offering valuable perceptions that can be utilized by other national sports bodies seeking to fortify their governance frameworks.

Abstrait

Ce vaste projet de recherche est dédié à la réalisation d'un audit approfondi de la gouvernance du Comité national olympique de Sierra Leone (NOCSLE). L'examen évalue la l'efficacité, l'ouverture et la responsabilité des mécanismes de gouvernance du NOCSLE et procédures. Grâce à l'utilisation d'une gamme diversifiée de méthodes, telles que l'examen minutieux documents, en menant des enquêtes et en participant à des entretiens avec les principales parties prenantes, l'audit vise à identifier à la fois les points forts et les domaines à améliorer au sein du NOCSLE cadre de gouvernance. Les domaines d'intérêt notables comprennent l'efficacité du leadership, implication des parties prenantes, administration financière et adhésion à la gouvernance mondiale des repères. Les résultats issus de l'audit fourniront des recommandations pratiques pour renforcer protocoles de gouvernance, en favorisant les critères éthiques et en affinant le fonctionnement général du NOCSLE. Cette recherche souligne l'importance d'une gouvernance solide pour nourrir progression sportive durable et élever la position de la Sierra Leone dans le monde olympique arène. En outre, cette étude contribue au débat plus large sur la gouvernance du sport, offrant des perceptions précieuses qui peuvent être utilisées par d'autres organismes sportifs nationaux cherchant à renforcer leurs cadres de gouvernance.

List of Acronyms

GOSL	-	Government of Sierra Leone
IOC	-	International Olympic Committee
NF	-	National Federation
NOCSLE	-	National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone
NSA	-	National Sport Authority
NSC	-	National Sports Council
NSO	-	National Sports Organisation
OS	-	Olympic Solidarity
SWASAL	-	Sports Writers Association of Sierra Leone

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The governance of sports organizations is a critical factor in their effectiveness, transparency, and overall success. National Olympic Committees (NOCs) play a pivotal role in the development and promotion of sports within their respective countries. As the primary bodies responsible for representing their nations in the Olympic Movement, NOCs are tasked with ensuring the proper administration and growth of sports, as well as upholding the values of the Olympic Charter.

In the case of Sierra Leone, a country with a rich yet challenging sports history, the governance of its National Olympic Committee (NOC-SLE) is of particular interest. Sierra Leone's NOC has faced various hurdles, including political instability, limited resources, and infrastructural deficiencies. These challenges necessitate a comprehensive examination of the governance structures and practices within the NOC-SLE to identify areas for improvement and to ensure that the organization can effectively fulfill its mandate.

1.2 Research Question

This research aims to conduct a governance audit of the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone. The primary research question guiding this study is:

How effective and transparent are the governance practices of the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone in fulfilling its organizational objectives and promoting the development of sports within the country?

1.3 Objectives

The specific objectives of this governance audit include:

1. Assessing Governance Structures: Evaluating the organizational structure, roles, and responsibilities within the NOC-SLE to determine their alignment with best practices in sports governance.

2. Evaluating Transparency and Accountability: Examining the transparency and accountability mechanisms in place, including financial management, decision-making processes, and stakeholder engagement.

3. Identifying Challenges and Opportunities: Identifying the key challenges faced by the NOC-SLE and potential opportunities for enhancing governance practices.

4. Recommending Improvements: Providing recommendations for improving governance practices to enhance the NOC-SLE's effectiveness and sustainability.

1.4 Significance

The findings from this governance audit will provide valuable insights into the current state of governance within the NOC-SLE. By identifying strengths and weaknesses, this research aims to contribute to the development of more robust and effective governance frameworks, not only for Sierra Leone but also for other NOCs facing similar challenges. Enhanced governance practices within the NOC-SLE can lead to better resource allocation, increased stakeholder trust, and ultimately, the growth and success of sports in Sierra Leone.

The approach to the research would be the use of mixed methodologies applying largely qualitative studies although some measures of quantitative analyses would be considered.

Some of these would include the following:

- Desk reviews of existing literature within the national governance frameworks;
- Interviews and administered questionnaires;
- Utilizing the governance frameworks already studied in the MEMOS study programme
 - IOC Self-governance evaluation
 - Readiness Assessment Tool (RAT)
 - UMAP
 - NOCNET

Table 1. IOC Governance Principles

Principle	Element
Structures, regulations and democratic process	<p><i>Structures</i></p> <p><i>Clear regulations</i></p> <p><i>Governing bodies</i></p> <p><i>Representative governing bodies</i></p> <p><i>Democratic processes</i></p> <p><i>Attribution of the respective bodies</i></p> <p><i>Decision-making</i></p> <p><i>Conflicts of interests</i></p> <p><i>Duration of the terms of office</i></p> <p><i>Decisions and appeals</i></p>
Highest level of competence, integrity and ethical standards	<p><i>Competence of the members of the executive body</i></p> <p><i>Power of signature</i></p> <p><i>Internal management, communication and coordination</i></p> <p><i>Risk management</i></p> <p><i>Appointment of the members of the management</i></p> <p><i>Code of Ethics and ethical issues</i></p>
Accountability, transparency and control	<p><i>Accountability</i></p> <p><i>Processes and mechanisms</i></p> <p><i>Transparency and communication</i></p>
	<p><i>Financial matters – applicable laws, rules, procedures and standards</i></p> <p><i>Internal control system</i></p> <p><i>Education and training</i></p>
Solidarity and development	<p><i>Distribution of resources</i></p> <p><i>Equity</i></p> <p><i>Development</i></p>
Athletes' involvement, participation and care	<p><i>Right to participate and involvement of the athletes in the Olympic and Sports Movement and governing bodies</i></p> <p><i>Protection of athletes</i></p> <p><i>Health</i></p> <p><i>Fight against doping</i></p> <p><i>Insurance</i></p> <p><i>Fairness and Fair play</i></p> <p><i>Athletes' education and career management</i></p>
Harmonious relations with governments while preserving autonomy	<p><i>Cooperation, coordination, and consultation</i></p> <p><i>Complementary missions Maintain and preserve the autonomy of sport</i></p>

1.5 Scope and limitations

The scope of research on sports governance is broad and multifaceted, encompassing various dimensions that are critical to the effective management and development of sporting organizations. A comprehensive examination of the scope of research in this area includes, but is not limited to, the following aspects:

- Organisational Structures
- Regulatory Frameworks
- Ethical and Integrity Considerations
- Financial Management
- Stakeholder Engagement

National Sports Governing Bodies face significant challenges stemming from the multiple stakeholder expectations in the modern sports era: performance pressures and the loud call for transparency and accountability resulting from huge investments from corporate entities. The situation is further compounded by the quest for high level performance of elite athletes on the field of competition which in turn requires highly trained coaches and other technical officials all built into one team for delivery on the organisation's mission.

Governance is therefore a necessary aspect of an organization in that it concerns with the 'development of policy and strategic direction'.

The situation at the NOCSLE and, indeed, across all national sports governing bodies in Sierra Leone is that optimal performance is minimal, litigation or rowdy Annual General Assemblies is the order of the day. There is, additionally, a dearth in private investment in areas such as sponsorship. Most sponsorships agreements are mere corporate social responsibilities turning out to be marketing efforts of corporate institutions rather than marketing of corporate products through sport. The resulting effect is that the NOCSLE is limited in realizing its essence in the country.

The issues surrounding such limitations as well as the benefits of aligning with best practice is the focus of this research. The objective being to identify existing gaps and making recommendations drawn from global best practice.

While the scope of research on sports governance is expansive, it is important to acknowledge the limitations and challenges that researchers may encounter in studying this complex and dynamic field. Some of the key limitations include:

1. **Access to Data:** Research on sports governance may be constrained by limited access to proprietary or sensitive data held by sports organizations. Gaining comprehensive insights into the internal operations and decision-making processes of sporting bodies can be challenging due to confidentiality concerns and privacy considerations.
2. **Power Dynamics:** Investigating power dynamics and governance structures within sports organizations can be sensitive, as it may involve scrutinizing the actions and decisions of influential stakeholders. Navigating the complexities of power dynamics and organizational politics requires careful consideration of potential biases and conflicts of interest.
3. **Evolving Landscape:** The landscape of sports governance is constantly evolving, shaped by technological advancements, regulatory changes, and socio-political developments. Keeping pace with the dynamic nature of sports governance requires researchers to adapt their methodologies and theoretical frameworks to capture emerging trends and challenges.
4. **Interdisciplinary Complexity:** Research on sports governance often intersects with various disciplines, such as law, management, economics, and sociology. The interdisciplinary nature of this field may pose challenges in terms of integrating diverse perspectives and theories into a cohesive research framework.

1.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, research on sports governance encompasses a wide array of topics and themes that are integral to understanding the structures, processes, and challenges inherent in the governance of sports organizations. While the scope of research in this area is expansive, researchers must navigate inherent limitations related to data access, contextual diversity, power dynamics, the evolving landscape of sports governance, and the interdisciplinary complexity of the field. By acknowledging these limitations, researchers can adopt robust methodologies and analytical frameworks to contribute meaningfully to the advancement of knowledge in the field of sports governance.

Chapter 2

Literature Review on Sport Governance

2.1 Defining Sport Governance

Sports governance refers to the system of rules, processes, and practices by which sports organizations are directed, and controlled. It involves the establishment of organizational structures, decision-making processes, and regulatory frameworks to ensure that sports organizations operate effectively, ethically, and in the best interests of all stakeholders (Zhang & Kim 2022)

The importance of sports governance lies in its ability to uphold the integrity of sports, protect the rights of athletes and stakeholders, ensure fair competition, and promote the values of transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct. It is essential for maintaining public trust in sports organizations, attracting investment, and fostering the growth and development of sports at all levels, Chappelet, J. L. (2020). Additionally, sound governance practices help to mitigate risks, prevent corruption and unethical behavior, and ultimately contribute to the overall success and sustainability of the sports industry, Budevici- Puiu et al, 2022.

The key components of sports governance include:

a. **Organizational Structure:** This component involves the design and arrangement of roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes within sports organizations. It includes the allocation of power, the relationship between different levels of authority (e.g., board, management, and members), and the establishment of effective governance mechanisms such as committees and oversight bodies. Such structures can either be centralized or decentralized.

According to Geeraert, A. (2020), centralised structures in sports governing bodies are hierarchical systems where decision-making power is concentrated in a single authority. He further argues that centralized structures enable efficient decision-making, consistency in policies, and effective resource allocation.

Johnson (2017) suggests that centralized structures are more relevant in situations requiring urgent decisions. Scholars such as Maraine et al, (2016) assert that centralized structures ensure uniformity in rules and regulations, promoting fairness and equity across different sports.

The concentration of power may lead to transparency and accountability concerns, as decision-making power is concentrated in a few individuals Brown (2018). Others like

Mittag, J. and Putzmann, N (2018) highlight the potential for bureaucratic inefficiencies and delays in decision-making within centralized structures.

Decentralized structures in sports governing bodies, on the other hand, distribute decision-making authority across multiple levels or regional bodies, Misener, L., Doherty, A., & Cuskelly, G. (2020). They encourage stakeholder participation and enhance local autonomy, inclusivity, and diversity by involving various stakeholders in decision-making processes. It is also believed to foster adaptability, as regional bodies can tailor policies to suit local needs and conditions Parnell, D, Widdop, P., Bond, A., & Wilson, R. (2020).

The downside to decentralised structures is inconsistencies in rules and regulations across different regions, potentially compromising fairness coupled with the challenges of coordination and communication. Brown (2018) connects this ..whether centralized or decentralized either has its benefits and challenges as it relates to efficient decision-making, uniformity, transparency and accountability, stakeholder participation as well as coordination and consistency. The choice of organizational structure should consider the unique context and requirements of each sports governing body.

b. Regulatory Frameworks:

Regulatory frameworks in sports governance are essential for ensuring that sports are conducted in a fair, ethical, and organized manner. These frameworks provide the structure for managing the sport at all levels, from local clubs to international competitions. They typically include a mix of formal legislation, policies, and rules established by sports governing bodies, as well as international agreements and conventions. Here are some key aspects of regulatory frameworks in sports governance:

1. Rules of the Game: Each sport has its own set of rules that govern play. These rules are established and updated by the sport's respective international federation (e.g., FIFA for football/soccer, FIBA for basketball).

2. Anti-Doping Regulations: The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) sets the global standards for anti-doping through the World Anti-Doping Code, which is adopted by sports organizations worldwide to ensure a harmonized approach to doping control.

3. Athlete Eligibility: Regulations determine who can compete in certain competitions, including age, gender verification, and nationality requirements.

4. Integrity and Ethics: Sports organizations implement policies to combat unethical behaviors such as match-fixing, corruption, and gambling. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has established the Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions.
5. Safety and Health Standards: Governing bodies are responsible for setting safety standards to protect athletes, including equipment specifications, playing conditions, and medical protocols.

6. Governance Structures: These include the organizational policies and procedures that define how sports organizations are managed and operated, such as leadership selection, financial management, and stakeholder engagement.

7. Dispute Resolution: Sports organizations often have their judicial bodies and processes for resolving disputes, such as the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), which provides arbitration for sports-related disputes.

8. Commercial Regulations: These cover areas such as broadcasting rights, sponsorship, and merchandising, which are crucial for the financial sustainability of sports organizations.

9. Youth Protection: Policies and guidelines are established to protect young athletes from exploitation, overtraining, and abuse.

10. Equity and Inclusion: Regulations ensure that sports are accessible and fair, promoting gender equity, diversity, and inclusion within sports organizations and competitions.

The regulatory frameworks in sports governance are constantly evolving to adapt to new challenges and societal changes. For example, the rise of esports has prompted discussions about how to regulate this new form of competition. Similarly, advancements in technology and data analytics are influencing how sports are governed, particularly in areas such as performance enhancement and fan engagement.

c. **Ethical considerations** in sports governance involve promoting integrity, fairness, and respect for the rights and well-being of athletes, officials, and other stakeholders. This includes addressing issues such as sportsmanship, anti-corruption measures, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding and welfare policies, and the ethical use of technology in sports. One common ethical dilemma in sports governance is the conflict of interest among decision-makers, such as administrators, coaches, and athletes. These conflicts can arise from financial interests, personal relationships, or other vested interests (Smith, 2018). Another dilemma is ensuring fairness and equality in sports governance. Issues such as discrimination, doping, and match-fixing pose significant challenges to the ethical integrity of sports organizations (Sullivan, 2019).

Ethical Decision-Making in Sports Governance:

Ethical dilemmas also emerge from the lack of transparency and accountability within sports governance. Decision-making processes, financial transactions, and resource allocation should be transparent to maintain ethical standards (Barksdale & Dwyer, 2017).

Ethical Decision-Making Models such as the Utilitarian and Deontological approaches, can guide decision-makers in resolving ethical dilemmas in sports governance (Gibbons & Ebbeck, 2016). Utilitarianism on the one hand places emphasis in maximizing overall happiness for the greater number even where it involves breaking the rules or principles. The deontological approach emphasizes following the rules and principles of organisations. Stakeholder Engagement in ethical decision making including athletes, coaches, fans, and governing bodies, is crucial to ensure a fair and inclusive decision-making process (Frawley & Adair, 2018).

Ethical Leadership within sports organizations plays a pivotal role in setting the tone for ethical decision-making. Leaders who prioritize integrity and ethical values foster an ethical culture within the organization (Cuskelly & Hoye, 2019).

Role of Ethics in Shaping Policies and Practices:

Ethical considerations play a central role in shaping sports governance policies. Policies addressing fairness, equality, anti-doping measures, and conflict of interest aim to ensure ethical standards within sports organizations (Bredemeier & Shields, 2019).

Ethics shape the practices and behaviors within sports organizations. By prioritizing ethical values, organizations can create a culture that promotes integrity, fairness, and

accountability (Hums & MacLean, 2017).

Ethical practices in sports governance are crucial for maintaining public trust and reputation. Organizations that prioritize ethics are more likely to gain public support and enhance their overall reputation (Mazanov et al., 2018).

Ethical dilemmas are inherent in sports governance, requiring decision-makers to navigate through conflicting interests and values. Ethical considerations are pivotal in shaping policies and practices within sports organisations to maintain integrity, fairness, and accountability of sports governance.

d. Financial Management in sports governance pertains to oversight and transparency of financial operations, budgeting, revenue generation, and expenditure. Sound financial controls, risk management practices, and accountability mechanisms are essential for the prudent and ethical use of resources within sports organizations.

Revenue generation is a critical aspect of financial governance in sports organizations.

Scholars have highlighted different perspectives on this matter. Some argue that relying heavily on commercial partnerships and broadcasting rights can lead to the commercialization of sport, potentially compromising its integrity Maguire (2018). On the other hand, proponents argue that increased revenue allows for investment in infrastructure, athlete development, and wider participation Szymanski. 2018).

Effective budgeting is essential for financial governance in sports organizations. However, challenges related to budgeting practices persist. Scholars have identified issues such as overreliance on short-term financial gains, inadequate forecasting, and misallocation of funds (Hamil, S., & Chadwick, S., 2022). Conversely, best practices in budgeting involve long-term financial planning, considering both revenue and expenses, and ensuring transparency and accountability (Chadwick & Hamil, 2022).

Financial transparency is a key aspect of financial governance in sports organizations.

Scholars have emphasized the importance of disclosing financial information to stakeholders, including fans, sponsors, and governing bodies. However, challenges exist, such as the reluctance of some organizations to disclose sensitive financial information (García-Unanue et al., 2019). Best practices in financial transparency involve adopting standardized reporting frameworks, conducting independent audits, and providing accessible information to stakeholders (Morrow et al., 2019).

Financial governance in sports organizations is a complex and multifaceted issue. While challenges persist, best practices in financial management can contribute to the long-term sustainability and success of sports organizations. These include the following practices:

- Transparent Financial Reporting.
- Independent Financial Oversight.
- Compliance and Ethics Programmes.
- Financial Control and Risk Management.
- Good Governance Structures.
- Financial Sustainability.

e. Stakeholder Engagement: This component focuses on building effective relationships and communication channels with various stakeholders, including athletes, fans, sponsors, government bodies, and the broader community. It involves mechanisms for consultation, feedback, and collaboration to ensure that the interests and perspectives of stakeholders are considered in decision-making processes and that their voices are heard. *Dos Santos (2018)*

These components are interconnected and collectively contribute to the overall effectiveness and integrity of sports governance. They play a crucial role in shaping the culture, operations, and impact of sports organizations at local, national, and international levels. Stakeholders in sports governance encompass various individuals and groups, including athletes, coaches, fans, sponsors, media, government bodies, and local communities. Each stakeholder group has unique interests and expectations, engaging them fosters transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in decision-making processes *Andreff, W., & Szymanski, S., 2020*. It ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, leading to more informed and effective decisions. Moreover, engaged stakeholders are more likely to support and contribute to organizational goals.

Kitchin et al (2021) suggests that involving stakeholders in decision-making processes leads to higher-quality decisions. Stakeholder input provides valuable insights, expertise, and alternative viewpoints, leading to more comprehensive and well-informed decisions. When stakeholders are actively engaged in decision-making, they are more likely to accept and support the decisions made. This acceptance contributes to smoother implementation and reduces resistance, ultimately benefiting organizational performance. Engaging stakeholders in decision-making processes enhances the legitimacy of sports organizations. This legitimacy, in turn, positively impacts public perception, sponsorships, and

financial support, leading to improved organizational performance. By involving stakeholders in decision-making, sports organizations can address their concerns and meet their expectations, leading to higher levels of stakeholder satisfaction. Satisfied stakeholders are more likely to remain loyal and actively support the organization, contributing to improved performance. Critics argue that stakeholder engagement can be time-consuming and resource-intensive, potentially hindering decision-making efficiency. Some may have conflicting interests, making consensus-building challenging. However, effective stakeholder engagement processes can help identify common ground and manage conflicts, leading to better decision outcomes. Research (dos Santos (2018) suggests that stakeholder engagement positively influences decision quality, acceptance, organizational legitimacy, and stakeholder satisfaction. While challenges exist, the benefits of stakeholder engagement outweigh the drawbacks which make stakeholder engagement a priority for sports organisations.

f. E-Governance

E-governance in sports refers to the application of information and communication technology (ICT) in the management and administration of sports organizations, events, and activities. It involves leveraging digital platforms to streamline processes, enhance transparency, improve communication, and engage stakeholders more effectively in the governance of sports. Smith & Stewart (2017).

When applied to the management of sports organizations, e-governance can offer several benefits, including:

1. **Transparency:** E-governance can help increase transparency in the management of sports organizations by providing easy access to information regarding policies, regulations, and financials. This can enhance accountability and build trust among stakeholders.
2. **Efficiency:** Digital platforms and automated processes can streamline administrative tasks, such as athlete registration, event scheduling, and resource allocation, leading to increased operational efficiency for sports organizations.
3. **Communication:** E-governance facilitates effective communication between sports organizations, athletes, coaches, and other stakeholders. Through online portals and mobile apps, relevant information and updates can be shared in a timely manner.
4. **Data management:** Electronic systems allow for the collection, storage, and analysis of data

related to athlete performance, participation, and finances. This can enable informed decision-making and strategic planning for sports organizations.

5. Accessibility: E-governance can improve accessibility to sports-related services and information for a wider audience, including athletes, fans, and the general public. This can help promote inclusivity and engagement within the sports community. By leveraging e-governance, sports organizations can enhance their overall management capabilities and effectively address the needs of athletes and other stakeholders in the sports industry. References/ sources.

2.2 Limitations of Existing Research in Sports Governance:

Data Access

One of the primary challenges in sports governance research in Sierra Leone is the limited access to relevant and reliable data. Sports organizations often restrict access to their internal data, making it difficult for researchers to conduct comprehensive studies. This limitation hampers the ability to analyze governance practices, identify trends, and draw accurate conclusions. (Jones, 2018).

Contextual Diversity

Sports governance encompasses a wide range of sports, each with its unique characteristics, structures, and challenges. Existing research often fails to account for the contextual diversity within the sports industry, leading to generalizations and oversimplifications. For instance, governance issues in team-based sports may differ significantly from those in individual sports. Neglecting such contextual diversity limits the applicability and effectiveness of research findings (Bloyce & Smith, 2019).

Power dynamics within sports governance structures can significantly influence decision-making processes and outcomes. Research in this area often struggles to adequately capture and analyze these power dynamics. The complexity of power relations between stakeholders, such as athletes, administrators, sponsors, and government bodies, requires a nuanced approach that integrates sociological, political, and economic perspectives (Pielke, 2018).

Interdisciplinary Complexity

Sports governance is a complex field that necessitates interdisciplinary research approaches. However, existing research often remains confined within disciplinary boundaries, limiting the ability to address the multifaceted nature of governance challenges. Integrating perspectives from disciplines such as law, sociology, economics, and management is crucial

to comprehensively understanding and addressing governance issues (Frawley & Adair, 2017).. The limited availability of relevant data, the failure to account for contextual diversity, inadequate analysis of power dynamics, and the absence of interdisciplinary approaches hinder the comprehensive understanding and effective implementation of governance mechanisms.

Potential Areas of Future Research

As the field of sports governance evolves, it becomes increasingly important to identify potential areas for future research and acknowledge the need for interdisciplinary collaboration.

Potential Areas of Future Research in sports governance will include investigating ethical dilemmas in sports governance decision-making processes and analysing the impact of ethical lapses on organizational reputation and stakeholder trust. Other areas are gender equality aimed at examining the representation of women in sports governance roles and its effects on decision-making, and assessing the influence of gender bias in sport governance practices and policies.

Exploring the implications of emerging technologies on sports governance structures and processes, investigating the role of data analytics in enhancing transparency and accountability in sports governance.

There is therefore a need for Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Advancing Sports Governance:

Understanding the legal frameworks governing sports governance and their implications, analyzing the role of legal experts in shaping effective governance practices.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the study of sports governance can benefit greatly from interdisciplinary collaboration. By addressing potential areas of future research, such as ethical considerations, gender equality, and technology-driven innovations, researchers can contribute to the development of effective governance practices. Furthermore, integrating legal, sociological, and business perspectives into the study of sports governance can lead to a comprehensive understanding of the field. Moving forward, interdisciplinary collaboration will be crucial in advancing the study of sports governance and promoting positive change within sports organizations.

Chapter 3 - Research Methodology:

Audit of Sport Governance of the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone

Introduction: Sports governance is a critical aspect of ensuring the effective and ethical management of sports organizations. The National Olympic Committee (NOC) of Sierra Leone plays a pivotal role in overseeing and promoting Olympic sports in the country. Conducting an audit of the sports governance of the NOC of Sierra Leone is essential to evaluate its adherence to best practices, transparency, accountability, and overall effectiveness. This research methodology outlines the approach and methods that will be employed to conduct the audit of the sport governance of the NOC of Sierra Leone.

Research Design: The research design methodology for this study will be primarily qualitative, aiming to provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of the sports governance of the NOC of Sierra Leone. Qualitative methods such as interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis will be utilized to gather rich and in-depth data. This qualitative approach will allow for a thorough exploration of stakeholders' perspectives, experiences, and insights regarding the governance practices of the NOC.

Sampling: The study will involve a purposive sampling strategy to select participants who have direct knowledge and experience with the governance structures and processes of the NOC. Key stakeholders such as NOC members, athletes, coaches, administrators, government officials, and representatives from sports federations will be included in the sample. The sample size will be twenty-nine persons.

Data Collection:

1. Interviews: In-depth semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders to gather qualitative data on their perceptions, experiences, and recommendations regarding the governance of the NOC. A total of nine (9) persons would be interviewed drawn from the Board of the NOC, the supervising ministry and its relevant agencies, sport management professionals, sports writers, and academics in Sports management. The interviews will be audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed for analysis.

2. Questionnaires: Questionnaires will be administered to different stakeholder groups to facilitate interactive conversations on specific aspects of sport governance within the NOC. A total of nine (9) persons distributed as follows: two athletes, a coach, an NF president, a sport management practitioner, two media practitioners and two sports fans. The questions will allow for the exploration of diverse viewpoints and the identification of common themes and patterns.
3. Document Analysis: Relevant documents such as the NOC's constitution, strategic plans, financial reports, meeting minutes, and governance policies will be analysed to assess compliance with established guidelines and standards in sport governance. The document analysis will provide additional insights into the governance practices of the NOC.

Data Analysis: Thematic analysis will be employed to analyse the qualitative data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions. The data will be coded, categorized, and interpreted to identify key themes, patterns, and issues related to the governance of the NOC using available tools such as Sports Governance Observer 2 Tool. The findings will be triangulated with data from document analysis to ensure the reliability and validity of the results.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical considerations will be paramount throughout the research process. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, and their confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured. The research will adhere to ethical guidelines to protect the rights and well-being of the participants. Any potential conflicts of interest will be disclosed and managed appropriately.

Limitations: Some limitations of this study may include the potential for bias in self-reported data from persons interviewed limited generalizability of findings, and constraints in accessing certain stakeholders. These limitations will be addressed by employing rigorous data collection methods, ensuring transparency in the research process, and acknowledging any potential limitations in the interpretation of the results.

Conclusion: In conclusion, this research methodology outlines a qualitative approach to conducting an audit of the sport governance of the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone. By utilizing interviews, administering questionnaires, and document analysis, this study aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of the governance practices of the NOC. The findings of this audit will contribute to enhancing transparency, accountability, and governance effectiveness within the NOC, ultimately benefiting the development of sports in Sierra Leone.

Chapter 4 Data Analysis

4.1 Data analysis Strategy

The governance audit of the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone (NOC-SL) represents a critical step towards understanding and improving the organization's operational efficiency, transparency, and accountability. This audit is particularly timely given the increasing global emphasis on good governance within sports organizations, where ethical practices and robust management systems are crucial for sustaining credibility and ensuring equitable resource distribution.

This report presents the findings and analysis derived from a comprehensive audit of the NOCSLE. The data collection strategy employed for this audit was multifaceted, incorporating desk reviews, questionnaires, and interviews to ensure a thorough and holistic assessment.

Desk Reviews: This method involved an extensive examination of existing documentation related to the NOCSLE, including policy documents, financial statements, meeting minutes, and previous audit reports. The desk review provided a foundational understanding of the organization's structural and operational frameworks, enabling the identification of key areas for further investigation.

Questionnaires: Structured questionnaires were distributed to various stakeholders, including NOCSLE members, athletes, coaches, and affiliated sports organizations. These questionnaires aimed to capture quantitative and qualitative data on perceptions of governance practices, the effectiveness of communication channels, and the overall satisfaction with the NOCSLE's performance.

Interviews: In-depth interviews were conducted with selected stakeholders to gather detailed insights and personal perspectives on the governance practices of the NOCSLE. These interviews facilitated a deeper exploration of issues identified through the desk reviews and questionnaires, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the committee.

Triangulation of Data: By using multiple data collection methods, you can cross-validate findings, enhancing the credibility and reliability of your audit.

Inclusivity: Engaging various stakeholders through interviews and focus groups ensures a diversity of perspectives, promoting inclusivity and equity in the research process.

Depth and Breadth: This approach allows for both depth (through interviews and focus groups) and breadth (through desk reviews), enabling a thorough examination of sports governance in the NOC.

Holistic Analysis: By combining qualitative data from different sources, you can gain a holistic understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to sports governance in Sierra Leone's NOC.

Integrating these diverse data collection methods ensured a robust and comprehensive audit process, providing a well-rounded perspective on the governance of the NOC-SL. This report highlights the current state of governance within the organization and offers recommendations for enhancing governance practices, thereby contributing to the overall improvement of sports administration in Sierra Leone.

4.2 Analysis of the Constitution of the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone

The constitution of the National Olympic Committee and Commonwealth Games Association of Sierra Leone outlines a clear framework for governance, membership, and adherence to international standards. It emphasizes the promotion of Olympism, ethical sports practices, and the development of athletes and sports administrators. The document ensures the inclusion of various stakeholders and maintains a commitment to the principles of the Olympic Charter and Commonwealth Games Federation.

The governance framework described ensures a structured and hierarchical approach to managing the Committee's operations. The emphasis on collaboration with international bodies and autonomy for members highlights a balanced approach to governance. The defined roles, election processes, and financial oversight mechanisms aim to establish transparency and efficiency in the Committee's activities. The Congress, as the highest decision-making body, plays a crucial role in steering the Committee's direction while empowering the Executive Council and President to manage day-to-day operations.

The constitution further provides for a comprehensive governance structure. The processes for the election of officials, voting, and decision-making are clearly outlined to ensure democratic and transparent operations. The Executive Council has specific roles and responsibilities, and procedures for meetings and voting are designed to maintain efficiency and fair representation. The emphasis on gender equity and the safeguarding of the autonomy

and cooperation with international sports bodies highlight the Committee's commitment to inclusivity and global standards.

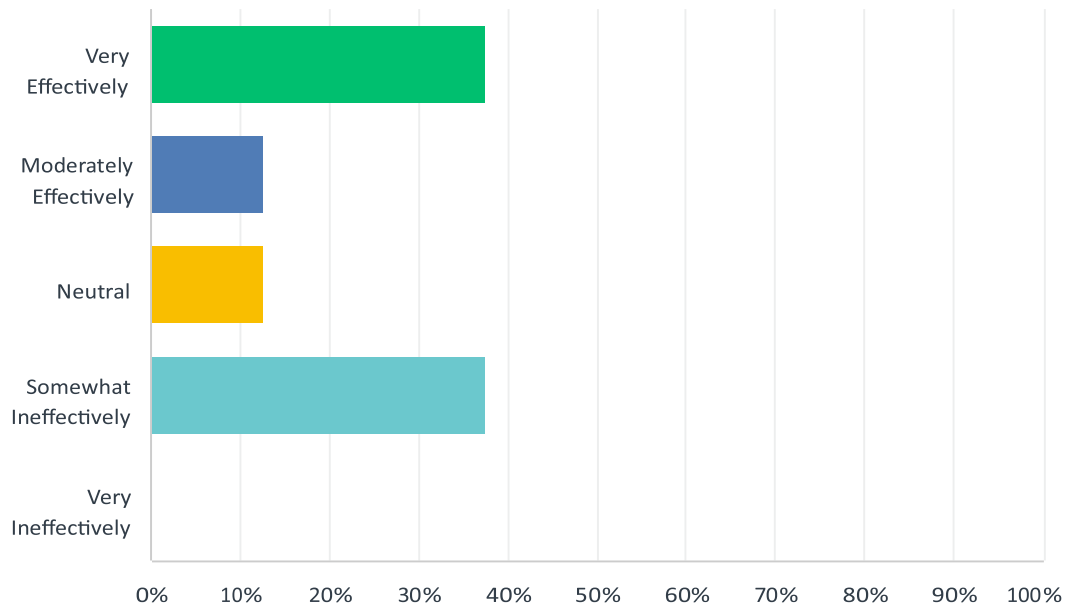
The articles above detail the roles, election processes, and responsibilities of key officers in the Committee. The President holds significant authority in representing and managing the Committee, especially between formal meetings. The Vice President supports the President, stepping in during absences. The Secretary-General, appointed for administrative efficiency, handles day-to-day operations and coordination of projects. The Treasurer oversees financial management, ensuring transparency and accountability through audits. Procedures for handling vacant positions maintain stability and continuity in the Committee's leadership. This structured approach ensures effective governance and adherence to democratic principles within the Committee.

The concluding articles of the constitution establish procedures and guidelines for honorary recognitions, interpretative governance, amendments, dissolution, and dispute resolution.

These provisions suppose the Committee operates within a framework that is transparent, equitable, and aligned with the broader principles of the Olympic Movement. They emphasise governance practices consistent with international standards while maintaining the autonomy and specific needs of the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone.

In truth, the interviews and survey responses speak to these governance accolades, especially with the change of guard in the last sixteen months.

For example, the current board's composition indicates democratic inclusion with various groups (women - 30%, competence - 20%, athletes – 10%, elective – 40%).



ANSWER	RESPONSE
Very Effectively	37.5%
Moderately Effectively	12.5%
Neutra	12.5%
Somewhat Ineffectively	37.5%
Very Ineffectively	0.0%
TOTAL	

Graph 1. Diversity and democratic governance

In the area of athlete selection to games, the NOCSLE makes this an exclusive preserve for NFs and their technical officials while paying attention to eligibility criteria.

4.3 Audit Findings

1. Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan

The research suggests the absence of specific governance elements in the governance of the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone.

1. Absence of a Clearly Defined Vision and Mission:

Finding: The NOCSLE lacks clearly defined vision and mission statements.

Implications: Without clearly articulated vision and mission statements, the organization may struggle with strategic direction and purpose. This absence can lead to misalignment of goals, priorities, and activities, reducing organizational effectiveness and cohesion.

2. Absence of a Strategic Plan:

Finding: There is no strategic plan in place for the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone. What exists are IOC/OS programmes initiatives accessed by the committee for its annual activities. Long term development plans or initiatives such as athletes programmes, development of national sports systems are absent.

The lack of a strategic plan means there is no formal framework to guide the organisation's long-term goals, objectives, and resource allocation. This has resulted into inefficient use of resources, missed opportunities, and an inability to measure progress or success effectively.

2. Human Resource (HR) Plan and other HR related findings.

The governance audit further suggests the following discrepancies

1. Absence of an Organizational Structure or Non-Compliance to Statutory Provisions:

The National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone lacks a defined organizational structure or does not comply with its statutory provisions.

The absence of a clear organizational structure or non-compliance with statutory provisions can lead to confusion regarding roles and responsibilities, inefficiencies in operations, and potential legal and regulatory issues. This undermines the effective functioning of the organization and its ability to achieve its objectives.

2. Absence of a Human Resources (HR) Plan:

There is no HR plan in place within the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone.

Without a strategic HR plan, the organization may face challenges in workforce planning, recruitment, development, and retention of staff. The result is a lack of skilled personnel, reduced employee morale, and higher turnover rates, negatively affecting organizational performance.

3. Lack of Clear Channels of Communication in the Workplace:

There are no clear channels of communication within the workplace.

The absence of clear communication channels can lead to misunderstandings, reduced collaboration, and decreased efficiency. It hinders the flow of information, making it difficult to coordinate activities and align efforts towards common goals.

4. Absence of a Code of Ethics:

The organization does not have a code of ethics.

Without a code of ethics, there is no formal framework to guide the behaviour and decision-making of members and staff. There are evidences of ethical breaches amongst staff, conflicts of interest, and a decline in organizational integrity and public trust.

5. Lack of HR Supervision and Control:

There is insufficient supervision and control over HR functions.

Poor HR supervision and control can result in ineffective management of personnel, inconsistency in HR practices, and potential violations of labour laws and policies. This can adversely affect employee performance and satisfaction.

Implications on the Olympic Movement in Sierra Leone

General Implications: The identified governance deficiencies impede the National Olympic Committee's ability to effectively promote the Olympic Movement in Sierra Leone. Ineffective governance can lead to a lack of strategic direction, reduced stakeholder confidence, and limited public engagement.

Impact on Sports Growth and Development: Poor governance structures, inadequate HR planning, and communication challenges hinder the growth and development of sports in Sierra Leone. The lack of a supportive and well-organized environment affects athlete development, the implementation of sports programs, and the overall progress of the sports sector.

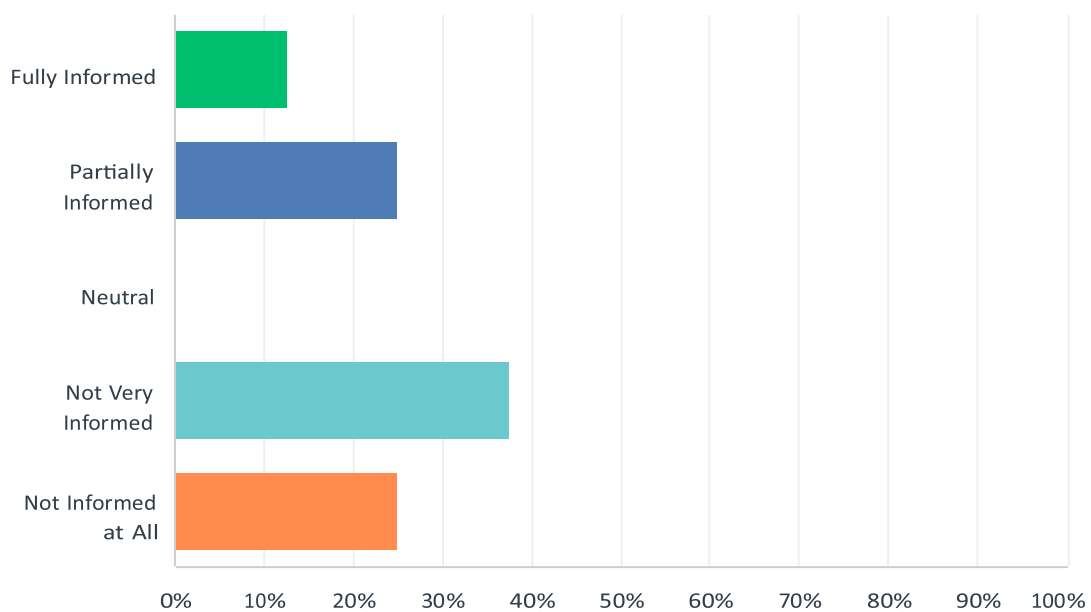
3. Financial governance

In a governance audit of the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone, the findings can be represented as follows:

1. Conflict of Interest in Financial Oversight:

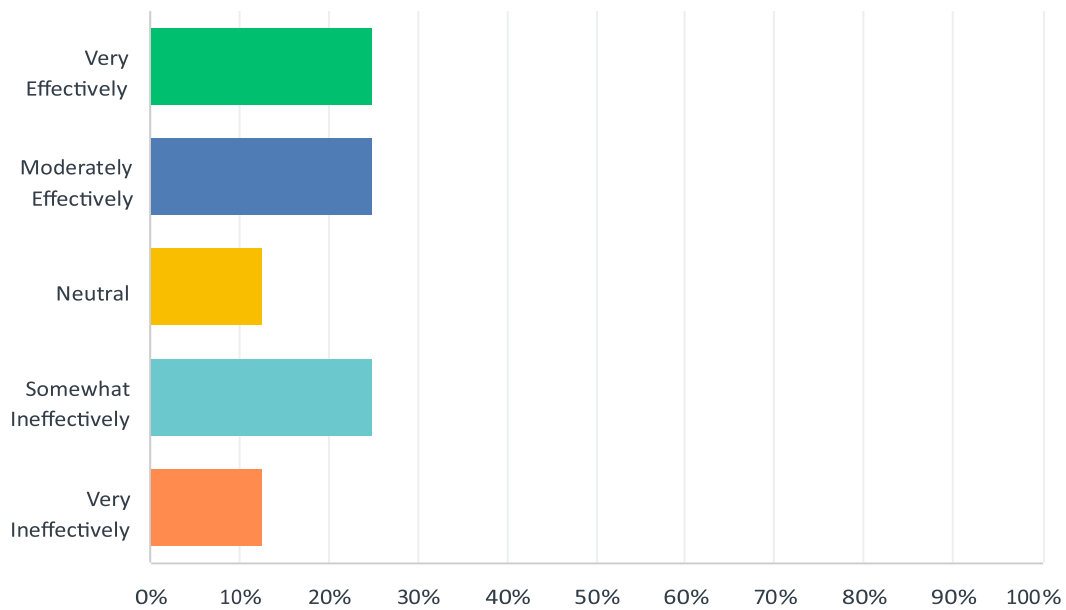
Finding: The Treasurer, who is an elected member of the Board, simultaneously holds the position of Finance Manager. This dual role encompasses responsibilities such as communicating, reporting, and forecasting finances to the Board.

This concentration of financial oversight roles in a single individual can lead to potential conflicts of interest and reduces the checks and balances essential for robust financial governance. It compromises the independence of financial reporting and oversight, potentially undermining the integrity and transparency of financial management within the organization.



ANSWER	RESPONSE
Fully	12.5%
Partially	25.0%
Neutra	0.0%
Not Very	37.5%
Not Informed at	25.0%
TOTAL	

Graph 2 Level of information about NOC financial activities.



ANSWER	RESPONSE
Very Effectively	25.0%
Moderately Effectively	25.0%
Neutra	12.5%
Somewhat	25.0%
Very	12.5%
TOTAL	

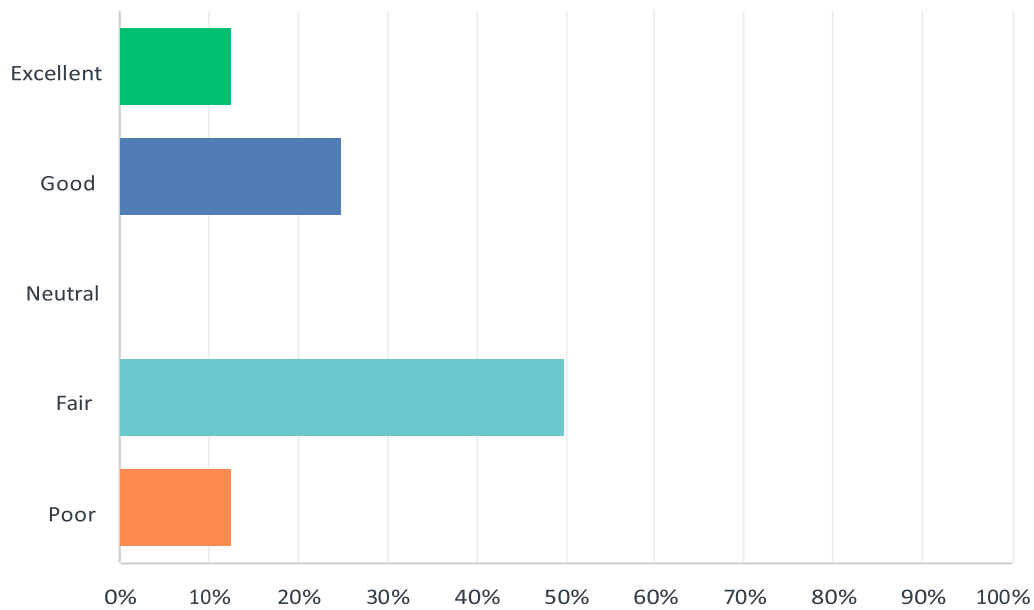
Graph 3. Managing financial risks

In Chart 3 above the survey reveals that the efforts made at managing financial risks are 50 percent. This is because of banking procedures, targeted funding from the IOC/OS and other fund management activities that are statutory from the IOC/OS.

2. Absence of Internal Financial Audit Mechanisms:

Finding: There are no internal mechanisms in place for conducting financial audits within the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone.

Implications: The lack of internal audit mechanisms means that there is no systematic process to independently review and verify financial transactions, internal controls, and compliance with financial policies. This gap can lead to undetected financial mismanagement, errors, or fraud, and diminishes accountability and financial transparency. This partly explains why over sixty-two percent of interviewees indicated that financial governance practices at the NOCSLE were below-par



ANSWER	RESPONSE
Excellent	12.5%
Good	25.0%
Neutral	0.0%
Fair	50.0%
Poor	12.5%
TOTAL	

Graph 4. Accountability, efficiency and sustainability in financial governance.

4. Communication of activities

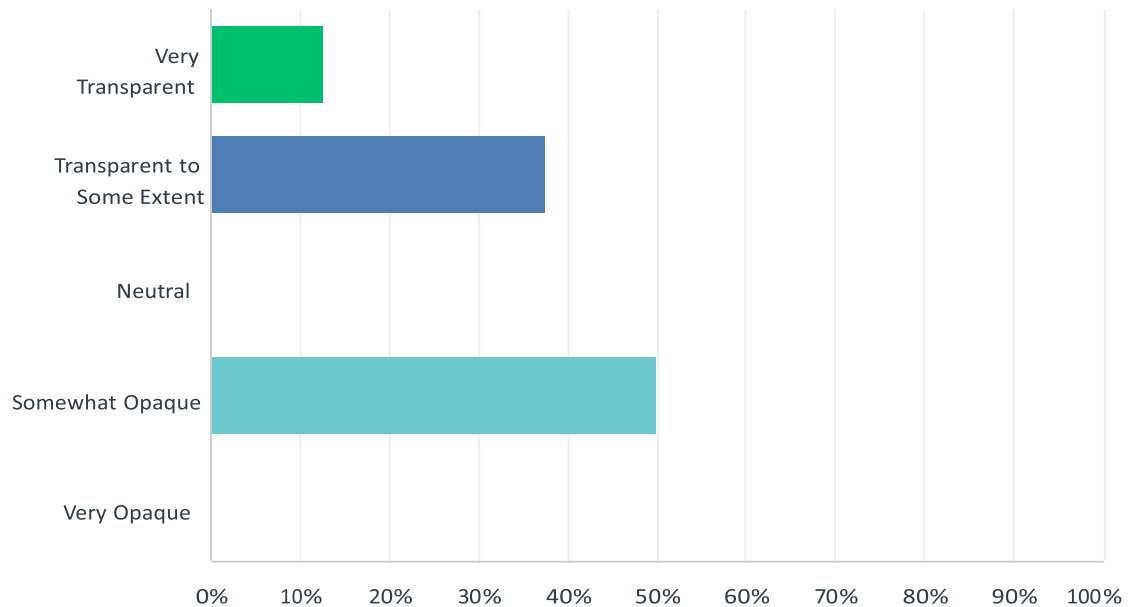
1. Lack of Communication:

Interviews conducted and surveys administered reveal that stakeholders of the Committee are not adequately informed or educated about the Committee’s Mission, activities, programmes and policies.

For example, stakeholder engagement initiatives recorded to be moderately effective at 37.5 percent. A fact reinforced by the transparency feedback channels of the Committee which are recorded at 50 percent opaque and 37.5 percent to some extent.

This has resulted into a situation whereby stakeholders are uninformed about key

activities, decisions, and changes within the organization, thereby undermining trust and collaboration.

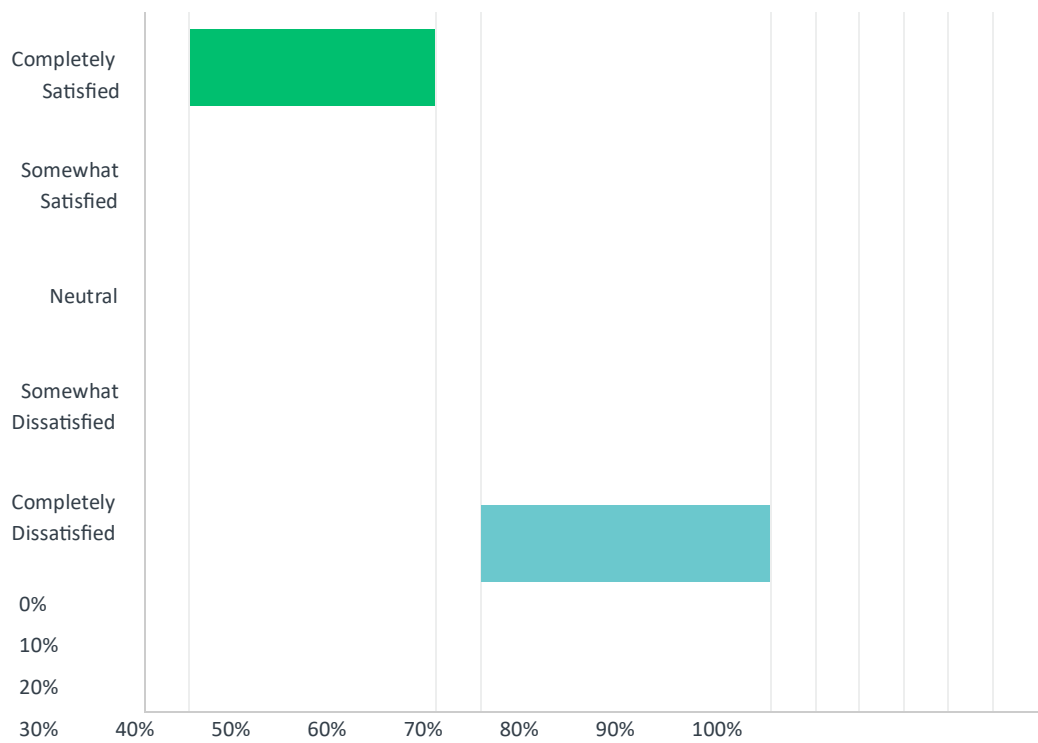


Graph 5. Transparent in communication channels for feedback and inquiries from stakeholders.

2. Non-Transparency in Organizational Activities:

There is a marked lack of transparency in the activities of the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone, including decision-making processes, financial transactions, and operational activities.

For example, the survey suggests a massive sixty-two percent of participants are somewhat dissatisfied with the level of transparency of the NOCSLE.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Completely Satisfied	37.5%
Somewhat Satisfied	0.0%
Neutral	0.0%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	62.5%
Completely Dissatisfied	0.0%
TOTAL	

Graph 6. Level of satisfaction with NOCSLE transparency.

Implications: Non-transparency can breed mistrust among stakeholders, reduce accountability, and increase the risk of mismanagement or corruption. It hampers the ability of members and external stakeholders to fully understand and engage with the organization's operations and objectives.

3. Ineffective Spread of Olympism in Sierra Leone:

Finding: The organization is ineffective in promoting and spreading the principles of Olympism throughout Sierra Leone.

Implications: The failure to effectively disseminate the values and principles of Olympism limits the organization's impact on the community and its ability to fulfil its

mandate. This can lead to a lack of engagement and support from the public and other key stakeholders.

5. New Media/Technology

The absence of a communication strategy, particularly in relation to new media platforms, has several significant governance implications for the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone. These implications impact the organization's transparency, stakeholder engagement, and overall effectiveness in promoting sports and the Olympic Movement.

Governance Implications

1. Lack of Transparency and Accountability:

Implication: Without a clear communication strategy, the NOC of Sierra Leone may struggle to provide transparent updates and information to stakeholders, including athletes, coaches, sponsors, and the public. This lack of transparency can lead to mistrust and scepticism about the organization's activities and decisions.

New Media Aspect: Effective use of new media platforms like social media, websites, and digital newsletters can facilitate timely and transparent communication, enhancing accountability and stakeholder confidence.

2. Reduced Stakeholder Engagement:

Implication: A weak or non-existent communication strategy hampers the NOC's ability to engage with its stakeholders. This includes athletes, sports associations, sponsors, and the wider community. Poor engagement can result in a lack of support, reduced participation in programs, and diminished public interest in sports initiatives.

New Media Aspect: Leveraging new media platforms can significantly enhance engagement by providing interactive and real-time channels for communication, feedback, and involvement. Social media, for example, allows for direct interaction with stakeholders and the promotion of events and achievements.

3. Ineffective Promotion of Olympism:

Implication: The principles of Olympism, which include promoting physical education, cultural exchange, and peace, may not be effectively communicated or promoted without a strategic communication plan. This undermines the NOC's mission and its ability to inspire and mobilize the community around these values.

New Media Aspect: New media platforms offer powerful tools for promoting the ideals of Olympism through storytelling, multimedia content, and broader reach, particularly among younger audiences who are more active on these platforms.

4. Operational Inefficiencies:

Implication: Internal communication within the NOC can be disorganized and inefficient without a defined strategy. This can lead to misaligned objectives, duplication of efforts, and slow decision-making processes, ultimately affecting the organization's performance and ability to achieve its goals.

New Media Aspect: Internal communication platforms, such as intranets, collaborative tools (like Slack or Microsoft Teams), and regular digital updates, can streamline communication, enhance coordination, and improve operational efficiency.

5. Missed Opportunities for Fundraising and Sponsorship:

Implication: A lack of strategic communication can result in missed opportunities for securing sponsorships and funding. Sponsors and donors are more likely to support organizations that communicate their vision, successes, and impact effectively.

New Media Aspect: Utilizing new media platforms can highlight achievements, showcase impact, and engage potential sponsors through targeted campaigns, thereby enhancing fundraising efforts.

6. Inadequate Crisis Management:

Implication: In the absence of a communication strategy, the NOC may be ill-prepared to handle crises, such as scandals, financial issues, or public relations challenges. This can exacerbate the impact of such crises and damage the organization's reputation.

New Media Aspect: A well-defined communication strategy that includes crisis management protocols and uses new media for timely dissemination of accurate information can help mitigate negative impacts and maintain public trust.

4.4 Relating the Situation to the IOC's Governance Mechanism

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has established robust governance mechanisms to ensure transparency, accountability, and integrity within its operations and those of its affiliated organizations, including National Olympic Committees (NOCs). The issues identified in the governance audit of the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone (NOC-SL) can be directly linked to the IOC's governance principles. Here's how:

1. Absence of a Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan

- IOC Governance Mechanism: The IOC emphasizes the importance of having a clear vision, mission, and strategic plan to guide the organization's activities and goals. The IOC's Olympic Agenda 2020 is a strategic roadmap aimed at strengthening the Olympic Movement.

- Relation and Implications: The NOC-SL's lack of a vision, mission, and strategic plan indicates a deviation from the IOC's recommended practices. This absence can lead to uncoordinated efforts and failure to align with the global objectives of the Olympic Movement.

2. Poor Communication with Stakeholders and Lack of Transparency

- IOC Governance Mechanism: The IOC prioritizes transparency and effective communication with stakeholders. This is evident in its public disclosure of financial statements, decisions, and policies. The IOC also encourages NOCs to adopt similar practices.

- Relation and Implications: NOCSLE's poor communication and lack of transparency undermine stakeholder trust and engagement, which are crucial for the success of any sports organization. This could also affect the NOC's ability to secure funding and support from the IOC and other stakeholders.

3. Absence of Internal and External Audit Mechanisms

- IOC Governance Mechanism: The IOC mandates regular internal and external audits to ensure financial integrity and compliance with regulations. The IOC's Code of Ethics and financial regulations require NOCs to maintain transparent and accountable financial practices.

- Relation and Implications: The absence of audit mechanisms in NOC-SL creates a risk of financial mismanagement and non-compliance with the IOC's standards. This lack of oversight can lead to misappropriation of funds, reducing the NOC's effectiveness and credibility.

4. Conflict of Interest in Financial Matters

- IOC Governance Mechanism: The IOC's governance framework includes strict guidelines to avoid conflicts of interest, particularly in financial matters. The IOC Code of Ethics requires that financial roles and responsibilities be clearly separated to prevent conflicts.

- Relation and Implications: The conflict of interest in NOC-SL, where the treasurer and finance manager are the same person, directly contradicts the IOC's governance principles. This situation can lead to fraud, lack of accountability, and financial mismanagement, jeopardizing the NOC's operations and its relationship with the IOC.

Chapter 5 Recommendations

5.1 Development of Strategic instruments (Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan)

Formulate and clearly define the vision and mission statements of the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone.

Action Plan: Engage stakeholders in a comprehensive process to develop vision and mission statements that reflect the core values, aspirations, and purpose of the organization. Ensure these statements are communicated widely and integrated into all aspects of organizational planning and operations.

Creation of a Strategic Plan:

Develop a strategic plan to provide a structured approach to achieving the organization's long-term goals.

Conduct a strategic planning process involving key stakeholders to identify priorities, set measurable objectives, and outline action steps. Regularly review and update the strategic plan to ensure it remains relevant and aligned with the organization's goals.

Enhancement of Decision-Making Flexibility:

Introduce mechanisms to increase spontaneity and flexibility in decision-making processes.

Develop decision-making protocols to allow for quicker responses to new opportunities and challenges. Encourage a culture of innovation and adaptability by providing training and resources to staff and board members.

5.2 Establish and Comply with an Organizational Structure:

Develop and implement a clear organizational structure that complies with statutory provisions.

Define roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines. Ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations to enhance organizational efficiency and accountability.

Develop a Comprehensive HR Plan:

Create a strategic HR plan to address workforce needs.

Conduct a thorough assessment of HR requirements, develop recruitment and retention strategies, and establish training and development programs to build a competent and motivated workforce.

Enhance HR Supervision and Control:

Strengthen HR supervision and control mechanisms.

Implement robust HR policies and procedures, conduct regular audits of HR practices, and ensure consistent application of HR policies across the organization.

5.3 Develop a Comprehensive Communication Strategy:

i. Create a strategy that outlines clear objectives, key messages, target audiences, and communication channels.

ii. Include specific plans for using new media platforms to enhance outreach and engagement.

iii. Leverage New Media Platforms:

a) Establish and maintain active profiles on social media platforms.

b) Regularly update the NOC's website with news, events, and resources.

c) Use multimedia content (videos, infographics, podcasts) to make communication more engaging and accessible.

iv. Enhance Internal Communication:

a) Implement internal communication tools to ensure efficient information flow within the organization.

b) Conduct regular internal briefings and updates to keep all members aligned with the NOC's goals and activities.

v. Promote Transparency and Accountability:

a) Regularly publish reports, financial statements, and minutes of meetings on the NOC's website and social media.

b) Engage in open dialogues with stakeholders through online forums, Q&A sessions, and surveys.

6. Crisis Management Planning:

a) Develop a crisis communication plan that includes guidelines for addressing potential issues promptly and transparently.

b) Use new media platforms to manage and communicate during crises effectively.

5.4 Implement Clear Communication Channels:

Enhance Communication Strategies:

i. Develop and implement comprehensive communication strategies to improve both internal and external communication.

Action Plan: Establish regular communication channels such as newsletters, meetings, and digital platforms to ensure timely and effective dissemination of information. Train

staff and board members in effective communication practices to foster a culture of openness and collaboration.

ii. Improve Transparency:

Increase transparency in all organizational activities, including decision-making, financial reporting, and operational procedures.

Implement transparent reporting mechanisms, such as regular publication of financial statements, minutes of meetings, and detailed reports on activities. Create a transparency policy that mandates the disclosure of key information to stakeholders and ensures adherence to best practices in governance.

iii. Strengthen the Spread of Olympism:

Develop targeted initiatives to effectively promote and spread the principles of Olympism across Sierra Leone.

Design and implement outreach programs, educational campaigns, and community engagement activities that highlight the values of Olympism. Collaborate with schools, sports organizations, and community groups to broaden the reach and impact of these initiatives. Regularly assess the effectiveness of these programs and make adjustments as needed to enhance their impact.

Establish clear and effective communication channels within the organization.

Develop internal communication policies, utilize digital tools for communication, and encourage regular team meetings to facilitate information sharing and collaboration.

Adopt a Code of Ethics:

Develop and enforce a code of ethics for the organization.

Engage stakeholders in drafting a code of ethics, provide training on ethical standards, and establish mechanisms for reporting and addressing ethical violations.

5.5 Financial Controls

i. Separation of Duties:

Separate the roles of Treasurer and Finance Manager to ensure that no single individual holds both positions. This separation will enhance financial oversight, reduce conflicts of interest, and improve the integrity of financial management.

Action Plan: Amend the governance structure to clearly define and separate these roles. Recruit or appoint a qualified Finance Manager who is independent of the Board's elected members.

ii. Establishment of Internal Audit Mechanisms:

Implement robust internal audit mechanisms to regularly review financial operations, internal controls, and compliance with financial policies.

Develop and institutionalise an internal audit function, either through the establishment of an internal audit department or by engaging external auditors on a periodic basis. This function should report directly to an independent audit committee or the Board to ensure unbiased and effective oversight.

Conclusion

Addressing these gaps is essential for the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone to enhance its strategic direction, organizational effectiveness, and responsiveness. Implementing the recommended actions will foster a more dynamic and purposeful organization capable of achieving its goals and adapting to changing environments.

It is essential that the governance deficiencies identified by the audit are addressed to enhance the effectiveness and transparency of the committee as well as its impact on the national sports ecosystem. Implementing the recommended actions will promote the Olympic Movement, foster the growth and development of sports, and build a stronger organizational foundation for achieving its goals.

It is equally crucial for strengthening the financial governance of the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone. Implementing the recommended actions will enhance financial accountability, transparency, and overall organizational integrity.

These findings are crucial for enhanced governance and effectiveness of the NOCSLE. Implementing the recommended actions will improve communication, transparency, and the spread of Olympism, thereby strengthening the organization's overall impact and stakeholder trust.

The absence of a communication strategy, particularly regarding new media platforms, poses significant governance challenges for the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone. By developing and implementing a comprehensive communication strategy that effectively utilizes new media, the NOC can improve transparency, stakeholder engagement, operational efficiency, and overall impact on the promotion and development of sports in Sierra Leone.

While it is very obvious that these gaps exist, it is equally evident that tremendous efforts are being made to develop and implement several mitigating actions to stem the identified risks.

For example, the new Finance Manual that was approved by the last congress is a testament to this fact.

The board has equally raised issue with the mandate of the treasurer to which the NOCSLE President has committed to reviewing and addressing by November 2024.

It is important to categorically state that the gaps identified were articulately presented by the President of the NOCSLE during my interview with him for this audit. His commitment to resolving the issues identified and repositioning the organisation by the next Olympic cycle is just phenomenal.

It is for this reason that this audit identifies and emphasises a rethink of the organisation's strategic plan with a clear and concise vision and mission.

The missing links to realising such a monumental aspiration are:

1. A comprehensive plan that speaks to identifying concrete actions with specified, measurable and realistic timelines for implementation.
2. The resources: financial, technology and human to be deployed in carrying out such dedicated tasks.

The research calls on the NOCSLE leadership to put together a project proposal for the attention of Olympic Solidarity's governance advisors that would seek to provide this support.

Aligned with IOC Governance Mechanisms

To align the NOCSLE's governance with IOC standards, the following recommendations are made with specific timelines:

1. Develop and Implement a Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan
 - Timeline: 3-6 Months
 - Actions:
 - Collaborate with IOC governance advisors to develop a vision and mission statement.
 - Formulate a strategic plan that aligns with the IOC's Olympic Agenda 2025.
 - Engage stakeholders in the development process to ensure broad support and understanding.

2. Improve Communication and Transparency

- Timeline: 1-3 Months

- Actions:

- Adopt the IOC's best practices for transparency, such as regular publication of financial statements and decisions.

- Establish regular communication channels with stakeholders, including newsletters and public meetings.

- Implement a stakeholder engagement plan modelled after the IOC's communication strategies.

3. Establish Internal and External Audit Mechanisms

- Timeline: 3-6 Months

- Actions:

- Hire an internal auditor to conduct regular reviews and ensure compliance with IOC financial guidelines.

- Appoint an external audit firm for annual audits, in line with IOC requirements.

- Set up an audit committee to oversee the auditing process and address any issues identified.

4. Address Conflict of Interest in Financial Matters

- Timeline: Immediate (1-2 Months)

- Actions:

- Separate the roles of treasurer and finance manager to align with the IOC's governance framework.

- Implement a conflict of interest policy that adheres to the IOC Code of Ethics.

- Regularly review and update financial governance policies to prevent future conflicts.

By addressing these issues and aligning its governance mechanisms with those of the IOC, the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone can enhance its operational efficiency, transparency, and accountability. This alignment will also strengthen its relationship with the IOC, ensuring better support and integration within the global Olympic Movement.

Summary of Recommendations with action points.

Priority	Recommendation	Action Required	Lead Person	Resources Required	Timelines	Critical Success Factors
1	Develop and implement a Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan aligned with IOC/OS Development agenda	Collaborate with IOC governance advisors to partner with local sports management practitioners.	The President.	- Time - human and material resources	December 2024	- Board Commitment - Availability of resources from the IOC/OS - Stakeholder availability and engagement
2	Improve communication and transparency	Develop and implement a strategic communication plan. Train personnel and deploy communication with new media handles	Secretary-General	- time - Human resources - financial resources	December 2024	- Commitment of the board. - Resource availability (human and material).
3.	Establish internal and external audit mechanisms	hire an Internal auditor or set up an audit committee from the membership to carry out that function. Appoint an external audit firm to carry out audit functions.	The Board	- Finance - Personnel	November 2024	- Commitment of the leadership. - Availability of resources.

4.	Address conflict of interest in financial matters	1. Separate the role of the treasurer from that of the finance manager. 2. Develop and implement a conflict of interest policy.	The Board Secretary General	Personnel and funding	November 2024	
5.	Organise on-boarding protocols and knowledge-transfer training for Board and staff at NOCSLE	Develop training manuals for Board and staff	The Secretariat	Finance personnel	November 2024	

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Annex 1 Sample invitation letter of participation

Ahmed Khanou

President

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30th March 2024

Mr. Joseph Nyande

Secretary General

National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone

Walpole Street,

Freetown

Dear Mr. Joseph Nyande,

Subject: Invitation to Participate in Research Interview on a Governance Audit of the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone

I hope this letter finds you well.

My name is Ahmed Khanou, President of the Volleyball Federation of Sierra Leone. I am currently researching Sports Governance in the National Olympic Committee of Sierra Leone. Specifically, I am appraising the governance of the movement to identify gaps and make recommendations where necessary and I would like to invite you to participate in a research interview as part of this study.

Your expertise and insights would greatly contribute to the depth and quality of the research findings. Your perspective on the Committee's organisational structure, regulatory framework, stakeholder management and ethical considerations would be invaluable in helping us gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

The interview is expected to last approximately sixty (60) minutes and will be conducted at a time and location convenient for you. Alternatively, we can arrange for a virtual interview via [Zoom/Skype/Microsoft Teams] if that is more convenient.

Please be assured that your participation will be strictly confidential, and any information shared during the interview will be anonymized in the final research report. Your privacy and confidentiality are of utmost importance to us.

Your participation in this research interview would be highly appreciated and would contribute significantly to advancing knowledge in this field. Should you agree to participate or if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at khanou68.ak@gmail.com or via telephone/WhatsApp at +23276670461.

Thank you for considering this invitation. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss Sports Governance at the National Olympic Committee with you in more detail.

Warm regards,

Annex 2 Sample interview questions

1. Role and Responsibilities:

- Can you outline the primary responsibilities and duties associated with your role as the treasurer of the NOCSLE.
- How do you ensure transparency and accountability in financial management within the NOCSLE?

2. Financial Management Practices:

- What financial controls are in place to safeguard the NOCSLE's assets and funds?
- How does the NOCSLE ensure compliance with financial regulations and reporting requirements?
- Can you provide insights into the budgeting process and financial planning within the NOCSLE?

3. Risk Management:

- How does the NOCSLE identify and assess financial risks, and what measures are taken to mitigate these risks?
- Are there any specific challenges or vulnerabilities related to financial management that the NOCSLE has encountered in the past?

4. Internal Governance and Oversight:

- What mechanisms are in place for internal oversight of financial operations within the NOCSLE?
- How does the NOCSLE ensure independence and objectivity in financial decision-making processes?
- Can you describe the composition and role of the audit committee, if applicable, in overseeing financial matters?

5. External Audits and Compliance:

- How frequently does the NOCSLE undergo external audits, and what are the outcomes of these audits?
- How does the NOCSLE address any findings or recommendations from external auditors?
- What steps are taken to ensure compliance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements?

6. Financial Reporting and Transparency:

- How does the NOCSLE communicate financial information to stakeholders, including members of the Olympic community and the public?
- Are financial reports and statements easily accessible to stakeholders, and how often are they published?
- What measures are in place to promote transparency and accountability in financial reporting?

7. Professional Development and Training:

- What opportunities are available for professional development and training for finance personnel within the NOCSLE?

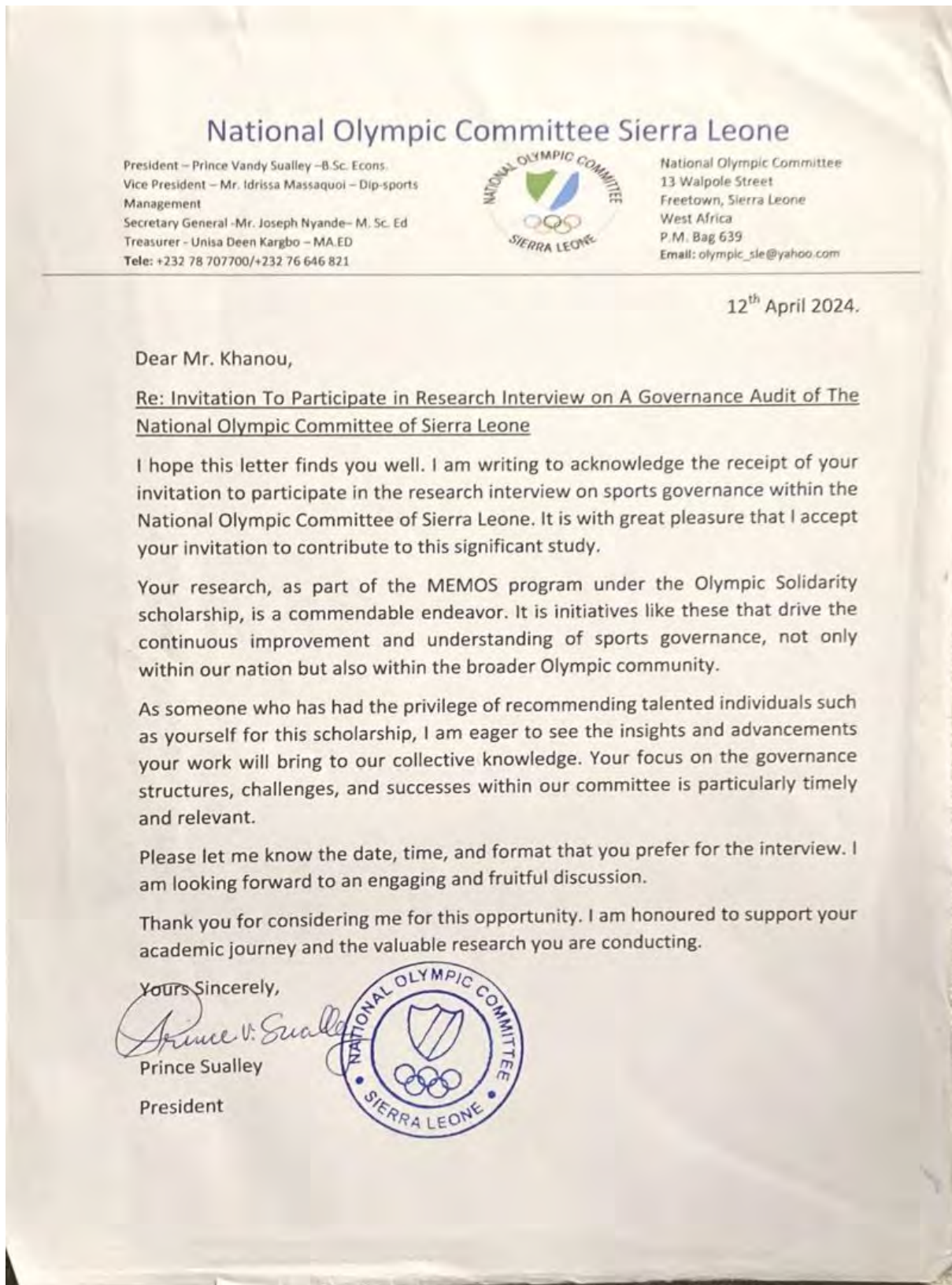
- How does the NOCSLE ensure that finance staff are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfill their roles effectively?

8. Future Priorities and Improvements:

- In your opinion, what are the key areas for improvement in financial governance within the NOCSLE?

- Are there any specific initiatives or strategies that the NOCSLE plans to implement to enhance financial management practices?

Annex 3 President's commitment



Annex 4 Draft questionnaire

Draft Research Questionnaire

1. How would you rate the transparency of decision-making processes within the National Olympic Committee (NOC)?
 - a) Very Transparent
 - b) Somewhat Transparent
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Somewhat Opaque
 - e) Very Opaque

2. To what extent do you feel adequately informed about the financial activities of the NOC?
 - a) Fully Informed
 - b) Partially Informed
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Not Very Informed
 - e) Not Informed at All

3. How would you assess the accessibility of information regarding the NOC's policies and regulations?
 - a) Highly Accessible
 - b) Moderately Accessible
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Slightly Accessible
 - e) Not Accessible at All

4. How transparent do you perceive the selection process for athletes representing the country in international competitions organized by the NOC?
 - a) Very Transparent
 - b) Transparent to Some Extent
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Somewhat Opaque
 - e) Very Opaque

5. In your opinion, how accountable is the NOC to stakeholders (athletes, coaches, sponsors, etc.) regarding its decisions and actions?
 - a) Highly Accountable
 - b) Moderately Accountable
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Slightly Accountable
 - e) Not Accountable at All

6. How transparent do you find the communication channels established by the NOC for feedback and inquiries from stakeholders?
 - a) Very Transparent
 - b) Transparent to Some Extent
 - c) Neutral

- d) Somewhat Opaque
 - e) Very Opaque
7. Are you satisfied with the level of transparency demonstrated by the NOC overall?
- a) Completely Satisfied
 - b) Somewhat Satisfied
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Somewhat Dissatisfied
 - e) Completely Dissatisfied
8. How would you rate the National Olympic Committee's (NOC) efforts in soliciting feedback and input from stakeholders?
- a) Excellent
 - b) Good
 - c) Satisfactory
 - d) Fair
 - e) Poor
9. In your opinion, how effectively does the NOC engage with athletes regarding their needs, concerns, and feedback?
- a) Very effectively
 - b) Moderately effectively
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Somewhat effectively
 - e) Ineffective
10. How well does the NOC involve coaches in decision-making processes related to athlete development and support?
- a) Extremely well
 - b) Well
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Poorly
 - e) Very poorly
11. To what extent does the NOC engage with sponsors and partners to ensure their needs and expectations are met?
- a) Fully engaged
 - b) Partially engaged
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Minimally engaged
 - e) Not engaged at all
12. How satisfied are you with the NOC's efforts in fostering dialogue and collaboration with national sports federations?
- a) Very satisfied
 - b) Moderately satisfied
 - c) Neutral

- d) Somewhat dissatisfied
- e) Very dissatisfied

13. In your experience, how inclusive is the NOC in engaging with diverse stakeholder groups, including minority sports organizations and underrepresented communities?

- a) Highly inclusive
- b) Somewhat inclusive
- c) Neutral
- d) Not very inclusive
- e) Not inclusive at all

14. Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement initiatives undertaken by the NOC?

- a) Highly effective
- b) Moderately effective
- c) Neutral
- d) Ineffective
- e) Very ineffective

15. To what extent do you believe the NOC adheres to established governance principles and best practices?

- a) Fully Adheres
- b) Partially Adheres
- c) Neutral
- d) Somewhat Does Not Adhere
- e) Does Not Adhere at All

16. How satisfied are you with the diversity and inclusivity of the NOC's governing body and leadership positions?

- a) Very Satisfied
- b) Moderately Satisfied
- c) Neutral
- d) Somewhat Dissatisfied
- e) Very Dissatisfied

17. How effectively does the NOC manage conflicts of interest within its governance structures?

- a) Very Effectively
- b) Moderately Effectively
- c) Neutral
- d) Somewhat Ineffectively
- e) Very Ineffectively

18. How well does the NOC communicate its governance structure and processes to stakeholders?

- a) Extremely well
- b) Well
- c) Neutral
- d) Poorly
- e) Very poorly

19. How transparent do you perceive the financial reporting and disclosures of the National Olympic Committee (NOC)?

- a) Very Transparent
- b) Transparent to Some Extent
- c) Neutral
- d) Somewhat Opaque
- e) Very Opaque

20. To what extent do you feel adequately informed about the NOC's financial activities, including budget allocation and expenditure?

- a) Fully Informed
- b) Partially Informed
- c) Neutral
- d) Not Very Informed
- e) Not Informed at All

21. How effectively does the NOC manage financial risks and ensure compliance with relevant regulations and standards?

- a) Very Effectively
- b) Moderately Effectively
- c) Neutral
- d) Somewhat Ineffectively
- e) Very Ineffectively

22. How satisfied are you with the accountability of the NOC's financial management to its stakeholders (athletes, coaches, sponsors, etc.)?

- a) Very Satisfied
- b) Moderately Satisfied
- c) Neutral
- d) Somewhat Dissatisfied
- e) Very Dissatisfied

23. In your opinion, how well does the NOC utilize its financial resources to support athlete development and participation in national and international competitions?

- a) Very Well
- b) Moderately Well
- c) Neutral
- d) Somewhat Poorly
- e) Very Poorly

24. Overall, how would you rate the financial governance practices of the NOC in ensuring accountability, efficiency, and sustainability?

- a) Excellent
- b) Good
- c) Neutral
- d) Fair
- e) Poor

25. How transparent do you perceive the democratic decision-making processes within the National Olympic Committee (NOC)?

- a) Very Transparent
- b) Transparent to Some Extent

- c) Neutral
 - d) Somewhat Opaque
 - e) Very Opaque
26. To what extent are stakeholders (athletes, coaches, officials, etc.) involved in the democratic processes of the NOC, such as elections and policy formulation?
- a) Actively Involved
 - b) Partially Involved
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Minimally Involved
 - e) Not Involved at All
27. How effectively does the NOC ensure fair and equitable representation of diverse voices and interests in its democratic structures?
- a) Very Effectively
 - b) Moderately Effectively
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Somewhat Ineffectively
 - e) Very Ineffectively
28. How satisfied are you with the transparency and accountability of NOC leadership to its members and stakeholders in democratic processes?
- a) Very Satisfied
 - b) Moderately Satisfied
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Somewhat Dissatisfied
 - e) Very Dissatisfied
29. In your opinion, how accessible are democratic processes within the NOC for all members and stakeholders to participate?
- a) Highly Accessible
 - b) Moderately Accessible
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Slightly Accessible
 - e) Not Accessible at All
30. How well does the NOC uphold and enforce democratic principles and procedures in its decision-making and governance?
- a) Extremely Well
 - b) Well
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Poorly
 - e) Very Poorly
31. Overall, how would you rate the NOC's regulatory framework on democratic processes in ensuring inclusivity, fairness, and representation?
- a) Excellent
 - b) Good
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Fair
 - e) Poor
32. How effectively does the National Olympic Committee (NOC) ensure compliance with anti-doping regulations and policies?

- a) Very Effectively
 - b) Moderately Effectively
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Somewhat Ineffectively
 - e) Very Ineffectively
33. To what extent does the NOC prioritize education and awareness programs on ethics, fair play, and integrity among athletes, coaches, and officials?
- a) Highly Prioritized
 - b) Moderately Prioritized
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Minimally Prioritized
 - e) Not Prioritized at All
34. How transparent do you perceive the NOC's efforts in investigating and addressing instances of misconduct, corruption, or unethical behavior in sports?
- a) Very Transparent
 - b) Transparent to Some Extent
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Somewhat Opaque
 - e) Very Opaque
35. How satisfied are you with the NOC's collaboration with law enforcement agencies, national/international sports bodies, and other stakeholders to combat match-fixing and other forms of corruption?
- a) Very Satisfied
 - b) Moderately Satisfied
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Somewhat Dissatisfied
 - e) Very Dissatisfied
36. In your opinion, how effectively does the NOC enforce sanctions and penalties for individuals or entities involved in unethical or corrupt practices in sports?
- a) Very Effectively
 - b) Moderately Effectively
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Somewhat Ineffectively
 - e) Very Ineffectively
37. How well does the NOC protect whistleblowers and provide mechanisms for reporting suspicions of integrity violations?
- a) Extremely Well
 - b) Well
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Poorly
 - e) Very Poorly
38. Overall, how would you rate the NOC's commitment to preserving sport integrity and combating corruption and unethical behavior within its jurisdiction?
- a) Excellent
 - b) Good
 - c) Neutral

- d) Fair
- e) Poor

39. How would you rate the clarity and effectiveness of the organizational structure of the National Olympic Committee (NOC) in achieving its objectives?

- a) Highly Effective
- b) Moderately Effective
- c) Neutral
- d) Somewhat Ineffective
- e) Very Ineffective

40. To what extent do you believe the NOC's regulations and policies are aligned with international standards and best practices in sports governance?

- a) Fully Aligned
- b) Partially Aligned
- c) Neutral
- d) Somewhat Misaligned
- e) Completely Misaligned

41. How transparent do you perceive the decision-making processes within the NOC regarding policy formulation and strategic planning?

- a) Very Transparent
- b) Transparent to Some Extent
- c) Neutral
- d) Somewhat Opaque
- e) Very Opaque

Annex 5 List of survey participants

No.	Person	Designation	Institution/Sport
1.	Ms. Hafsa Kamara	Athletes' Commission	NOCSLE
2.	Mr. Mohamed Turay	President	Sierra Leone Aquatics
3.	Ms. Fatmata Binta Bah	Athlete	Volleyball
4.	Tito	President	Golf
5.	Mr. Sahr Morris Jnr.	President	Sports Writers
6.	Mr. Martin Wusha Conteh	Journalist	Radio Mount Aureol
7.	Mohamed Ishmail Kamara	Marketer/Sport Fan	TAF Sierra Leone

Annex 6 List of persons interviewed

No.	Person	Institution/Organisation	Date and location
1.	Mr. Prince Vandy Sualley	NOCSLE	19 th April 2024 at the NOCSLE office, Walpole Street, Freetown.
2.	Mr. Unisa Deen Kargbo	NOCSLE	15 th May 2024 at the NOCSLE office.
3.	Mr. Joseph Nyande	NOCSLE	25 th April 2024. Responses submitted online.
4.	Dr. Abdul Rahman Swarray	National Sport Authority	16 th May 2024 at the NSA office, New Signal Hill Road, Freetown
5.	Mr. Sahr Morris Jnr.	President	13 th May 2024 at SWASAL headquarters, Campbell Street, Freetown
6.	Dr. Samuel Joseph	Njala University (NU)	20 th April 2024 online.
7.	Sorie Kamara	Volleyball Federation/Coach	13 th May 2024, Beach Sports Arena, Lumley.

