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A REVIEW OF GASC INTERNATIONAL SPORT EXCHANGE  
PROGRAMS OF THE YEAR AWARD

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## **ABSTRACT**

This project analyzes the application process, management, and measurement of the International Sport Exchange Programs of the Year launched by the General Administration of Sport of China (GASC). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with stakeholders from both administrative and applicant perspective to find out what they think about the Award. Available documentation including the documents sent out by GASC and final reports submitted by the Awardees were reviewed. Information and data from the interviews and review of secondary reports were analyzed and recommendations provided to enhance the notice, application, selection, implementation facilitation, evaluation, and experience sharing on the administrators' end. An action plan was formed in accordance with the findings and recommendations made to the administrators to help identify the priority.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## **1.1 Overview of the International Sport Exchange Programs of the Year Award**

The International Sport Exchange Programs of the Year Award (hereinafter referred to as the “Award”) was launched in 2021 by the General Administration of Sport of China (GASC), the ministerial department in charge of sport in the Chinese Government. It is the first attempt of GASC to honor the national sports federations and institutions (NF&Is) for their international sport exchange programs. The NF&Is were invited to apply for the Award with a certain amount of programs which function as serving the diplomatic initiatives of China, promoting understanding, friendship, and solidarity with foreign countries, promoting Chinese culture, or enhancing sport development of China. The Award and fund have been mostly initiated and monitored by the External Affairs Department of GASC with the assistance of the Finance Department.

While in 2021, there was only the Award without any fund, GASC started to fund some of the Award-winning programs in 2022 and beyond. The grants to be distributed totaled 1.5 million RMB (approximately 221.7 thousand USD) each year. In 2022, the grants were given to 6 programs while in 2023, 10 programs will be able to share the fund.

The administrators of the Award sent out *Application Guidelines* in the middle of March in the previous year of the Award to their target group of 56 NF&Is. The NF&Is wishing to apply for the Award and/or fund should make an application directly to the External Affairs Department of GASC by middle of April, so the NF&Is roughly have 1 month to prepare their application. GASC formed a selection panel, consisting of 3 representatives from the External Affairs Department and 2 financial experts from the Finance Department, to select which programs could win the Award and/or the fund. The panel prepares a draft list of Award-winning and funded programs for GASC leadership to review. With the approval by GASC leadership in July, a *Notice to the Award-winners* is published to announce the winners and clarify the administrators’ requirements to the NF&Is whose programs won the Award and/or fund.

### 1.1.1 Selection criteria listed in the *Application Guidelines*

The following criteria are listed in GASC *Application Guidelines* for choosing the programs:

- a. The programs should be designed under the framework of “Belt & Road” Initiative, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the “BRICKS” Cooperation, China-Central & Eastern European Countries (CEEC) “17+1” Cooperation, China-ASEAN “10+1” Cooperation or other cooperation frameworks.
- b. The programs should have a distinct theme;
- c. The programs should be delicate, i.e. on comparatively small scale and carefully designed;
- d. The programs should promote understanding between peoples, traditional sports, and/or Chinese culture, or create new exchange mechanism.
- e. Considering the uncertainty of the Covid-19 affect, the programs for 2021 are suggested to conduct more online than in person.

#### 1.1.2 List of Awardees in 2021 and 2022

The following 9 programs won the Award in 2021:

No	Organized by	Title
1	Beijing Sport University	Studies on China-CEEC Sport Think Tank Exchange and cooperation
2	Chinese Sports Museum	Sport Culture International Exchange Series
3	Chinese Wushu Association	Wushu Training Camp for ASEAN countries
4	Chinese Wushu Association	Wushu Training Camp for Baltic Countries
5	Chinese Gymnastics Association	“Belt&Road” International Trampoline Invitational
6	Chinese Health Qigong Association	“Belt&Road” Heart to Heart - Health Qigong Lecture Hall
7	Chinese Tennis Association	“CENA Expo” Tennis Forum
8	Chinese Draughts Association	“SCO” Draughts Invitational
9	Chinese Weiqi Association (Weiqi: Chinese Go)	Strategic Cooperation in Weiqi between China and Latin America

Table 1-1: Award-winning programs in 2021

The following 19 programs won the Award for 2022:

No	Organized by	Title
1*	Chinese Wushu Association	Wushu Training Camp for Latin American and Caribbean Countries
2*	Chinese Sepaktakraw Association	“ASEAN Cup” International Sepaktakraw Invitational
3*	Beijing Sport University	Studies on China-CEEC Sport Think Tank Exchange and cooperation

4*	Chinese Health Qigong Association	"BRICS" Health Qigong Elite Training Camp and Lecture Hall
5*	Chinese Archery Association	"Belt&Road" Countries Archery Invitational
6*	Chinese Cycling Association	Cycling Competition for "Belt&Road" Diplomats in China
7	Chinese Equestrian Association	"Ambassadors Cup" 4 Countries Polo Tournaments and Forum on Polo Culture
8	Chinese Swimming Association	China-Japan-South Korea Adult Swimming Masters Competition
9	Chinese Wushu Association	Wushu Training Camp for Baltic Countries
10	Chinese Sports Museum	Sport Culture International Exchange Series
11	Chinese Underwater Association	China-ASEAN-"Belt&Road" Diving Destination Sport Culture Exchange Program
12	Chinese Tennis Association	"CENA Expo" Tennis Forum
13	Chinese Health Qigong Association	"Belt&Road" Heart to Heart - Health Qigong Lecture Hall
14	Chinese Dragon Boat Association	International Forum on the Development and Exchange of the Sport and Culture of Dragon Boat
15	Chinese Baseball Association	China-Japan Baseball Friendly
16	Chinese Chess Association	"Belt&Road" World Women Chess Masters Summit
17	Chinese Xiangqi Association (Xiangqi: Chinese chess)	China-ASEAN Xiangqi Invitational
18	Chinese Dragon Boat Association	China-ASEAN 10+1 Dragon Boat Friendly
19	Chinese Weiqi Association	Strategic Cooperation in Weiqi between China and Latin America

Table 1-2: Award-winning programs in 2022  
 \*Indicates the six programs that received fund

### 1.1.3 Requirements by GASC set out in the *Notice to the Award-winners*

GASC required the NF&Is in charge of the programs chosen to do the following:

1. The programs should be carried out hundred-percent. Any cancelation without a proper reason will affect the NF&I's opportunity of being chosen and awarded in the future.
2. The programs should have substantial contribution to the promotion of peoples' understanding.
3. The NF&Is should incorporate the programs in their annual international activities masterplan.
4. The NF&Is should submit a final report to GASC within 1 month of the completeness of their programs, elaborating how the programs contribute to peoples' understanding and what experience can be drawn.



## **1.2 General Target of this Project**

The Award is the first ever initiative by GASC in the field of honoring international sport exchange programs. Considering the lack of experience of the administrators, there is great potential for them to improve their governance of the Award. The aim of this project is to find out how to improve the notice, application, selection process, implementation facilitation, evaluation, and experience sharing of the International Sport Exchange Programs of the Year Award.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 What are international sport exchange programs?**

#### **2.1.1 Sport Diplomacy**

Kobierecki (2017) summarized the term sport diplomacy as utilization of sport for the sake of shaping political relations between states, of reaching political rapprochement between usually hostile states, of transferring political conflicts to sport, of shaping international image of a country, or of diplomatic engagement of sports actors such as international sports governing bodies. Sport diplomacy is often regarded as one dimension of public diplomacy.

#### **2.1.2 Background of International Organizations & Sport Programs**

##### **2.1.2.1 UN's engagement in sport diplomacy**

According to Castan-Vicente (2017), after 1945, most of international organizations had the notable aim of building strong cultural bonds between countries that had been divided by war and ensuring a peaceful future. He indicated that these organizations could be places for countries of different "blocs" to create or recreate links and therefore, collaborations continued between the blocs, particularly in sports, where international sporting institutions could display 'sporting diplomacy' or be used as tools of pacification.

The fact that sport can create opportunities to change the lives of those in need boosted the establishment of the many Sport for Development (SfD) organizations. The UN has been "a key vector for the consolidation and evolution of the practice and its (SfD) study" (Rofe, 2021). The UN was first engaged in sports when it put "the practice of physical education and sport is a fundamental right for all" in UNESCO's 1978 *International Charter of Physical Education and Sport* (UNESCO, 1993). The new millennia saw the involvement of the UN in sport soar until the closure of the UN Office for Sport, Development and Peace and its responsibilities controversially shifted to the International Olympic Committee (Rofe, 2021).

##### **2.1.2.2 Programs conducted by the International Olympic Committee**

The IOC has conducted many sport exchange programs of which the most notably ones are its Olympic Games. Beyond the Games, the IOC has

programs to promote art, culture and heritage, education, gender equality, human rights, integrity, solidarity, peace & development, active society, sustainability through sport and Olympism. It also conducts programs for refugees and young leaders program (IOC, 2022). Examples of some of the IOC programs are described below.

- In the field of promoting gender equality through sport, the IOC worked with UN Women in the program on the One Win Leads to Another project- a community-based sports programme which builds leadership skills and increases the self-confidence of adolescent girls in Brazil and Argentina as a social legacy of Rio 2016 & Buenos Aires 2018. Through the IOC Women and Sport Awards, it honoured persons who championed gender equality. (IOC, 2022)
- The IOC Young Leaders Program was launched in 2016 as part of the IOC's long-term commitment to support young people through sport by empowering them to become social change makers. Young applicants should finish a 6-month online course before applying for the program. Once the young leaders were selected, they could receive CHF 10,000 seed-fund, attend monthly expert-led workshops, have access to thought-leaders and inspirational figures from the IOC. (IOC, 2021)
- The IOC partnered with the UNHCR and global stakeholders on sport and education for young refugees in countries such as Jordan, and Colombia, Ethiopia by sending Special Envoy, development conciliation through sport programs, or setting up youth and sport facilities in refugee camps. (IOC, 2022)

#### 2.1.2.2.1 The L&S Activities in the Youth Olympic Games (YOG)

In order to inspire young people around the world to participate in sport and live by the Olympic values, the IOC designed the Culture and Education Programs (CEP) based on five main themes: Olympism, Social Responsibility, Skills Development, Expression, and Well-being and Healthy Lifestyles. Doll-Tepper (2011) indicated “a kind of non-formal pedagogy” by the CEP. The name of the Program changed into Learn & Share (L&S). And the form of activities of L&S can be found below.

- Booths. From the NOC booths, participants are able to learn more information of other parts of the world in a one minute visit. According to Doll-Tepper (2011), the booths “were accessible from morning to night, and offered open opportunities for young athletes to learn about ‘typical’ characteristics of specific countries.” There are also booths run by the International Organizations,

providing useful and crucial information in anti-doping (WADA), Olympism (IOA), and Children's Rights (UNICEF).

- Workshops. The workshops are tailor-made for the athletes' age group, not too long in time, and not very formal. In some workshops, sport stars were invited as the Athletes' Role Model, to chat with young athletes and share their experiences about their career planning. Some other workshops focusing on digital media, healthy food, and first aid are also organized to make the activities educational.

- Outdoor activities. Based on the local conditions, each Organizing Committee has designed their own outdoor activities, mainly a combination of excursion tours to the local cultural highlights and some educational activities.

### **2.1.3 Programs conducted by specific Countries/Territories**

#### **2.1.3.1. The Sports Diplomacy Programs by the ECA of the U.S. Department of State**

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' (ECA) mission is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange that assist in the development of peaceful relations. (ECA, 2022) Examples of its people-to-people sports exchanges programs are below.

- The Global Sports Mentoring Program is a professional development exchange that pairs international leaders with American executives in the sports sector for a mentorship that promotes inclusion and gender equality. (ECA, 2022)

- The Sports Envoy Program is comprised of elite American athletes, coaches, and educators who travel abroad on short-term (7-10 day) sports exchanges. Sports Envoy programs are designed to reach underserved communities, inspiring youth and coaches alike, with stories of resilience, teamwork, and education. Sports Envoys lead sports clinics, speak at universities, and meet with senior level officials to discuss the role of sport in improving individual lives and transforming societies. (ECA, 2022)

- The Sports Visitor Program brings youth athletes, coaches, and administrators from around the world to the United States for a short-term (approximately two-week) sports-based-exchange. During the program, participants engage with American peers and sports practitioners, participate in clinics and sessions on leadership, team building, and conflict resolution as well as inclusion and equity

in sports. Sports Visitor programs show young people how success in athletics can translate into achievements in the classroom and in life. They also provide Americans an opportunity to interact firsthand with people from every region of the world. (ECA, 2022)

#### 2.1.3.2 Sport for Tomorrow (Japan)

SPORT FOR TOMORROW (SFT) is an international contribution through sport initiative jointly implemented by Japanese public and private sectors. SFT aims to share the values of sport and promote the Olympic and Paralympic Movement to people of all generations around the world including developing countries, for a better future for the world, from 2014 toward the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.(JSA, 2022)

The Programs and activities under the framework of SFT are teaching by instructors and coaches, provision of sport gear, exchanges with overseas teams, events and competitions, seminars, forums, and outreach activities, spread of materials imparting the values of sport, support for school physical education. Examples of activities that has cultural design are Japan Healthy Lifestyle Exhibition in foreign cities, visit to Japanese cultural site during international sport activities held in Japan, judo coaching, targeting foreign underdeveloped groups, and involving women and children in sports. (JSA, 2022)

#### 2.1.3.3 The Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival

In 1976, the Hong Kong Tourism Association (HKTA) started to encourage the Fishermen's Society of Hong Kong to revive its dragon boat races. Nine local teams and one invited from Nagasaki, Japan for the sake of publicity raced that year. The revived races were held one week after the actual day of the Chinese "Dragon Boat Festival" to avoid overlapping with the traditional celebration of local communities and allow winners of the local community races to participate in the international event organized by the HKTA which makes its races "Grand Final" of the series. In this way, the HKTA maintained the support of the communities on whom the dragon boat races depended. (Sofield and Sivan, 2010).

Since its revival by the HKTA, the races have continued to expand in size and commercial sponsorship. As the number of international teams participating in the races has grown, so the festival as a sport established a foothold in many countries. National Federations have been formed in more than 20 countries and a large number of national and international events are organized. (Sofield and Sivan, 2010).

While the races went internationally, the HKTA paid attention to maintain the

traditional core of dragon boat races. They encouraged the fishermen to make the boats with the wood that was used to make dragon boat in ancient China, and kept the Taoist ritual in making the boats. The Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival attracted overseas teams which brought the sport culture back and spread it to communities that were not Chinese or did not have a Taoist background (Sofield and Sivan, 2010).

## **2.2 Practices of measuring international sport exchange programs**

### **2.2.1 ECA's evaluation on its Programs**

The ECA Evaluation Division is responsible for monitoring and evaluating ECA's programs with assessment of program effectiveness of advancing U.S. foreign policy goals. (ECA, 2022). Its evaluation covered ECA's cultural and educational programs including sports diplomacy programs.

The Division conducted 25 evaluations since 2012, 21 completed and 4 ongoing. The evaluations included interviews and surveys of stakeholders and analysis of data with the assistance of independent research companies

In 2020, the Division published an evaluation report on its Sports Visitor Program. By analyzing pre-, post-, and 6-month follow-up surveys, in-depth interviews with 16 U.S. Embassy staff in 11 countries, and additional alumni survey to all program alumni from 2018 to Feb. 2020, and in-depth interviews with 27 program alumni from 14 countries, the report made 8 recommendations based on the findings. (ECA, 2020)

### **2.2.2 IOC's evaluation on the L&S in Lillehammer 2016 Winter YOG**

The IOC asked a research team composed of 4 researchers to examine the overall perceptions of the young athletes participating in Lillehammer 2016 regarding the Games. The research team conducted 26 interviews with 36 athletes representing 24 NOCs, all continents, and 14 disciplines during the Games. The interviewees were asked the following 3 questions regarding the L&S activities (Parent et al., 2016).

- What do you think about the L&S activities?
- Which ones have you done so far and which ones do you prefer?
- Did you learn something? Give examples.

The team's work was supported by data from the IOC generated from surveys sent out to participants and the feedback received.

### **2.2.3 Japan Sports Agency's measurement on SFT**

A search of the SFT Legacy Data Site (2022) found that the data include both static figures and trends of figures. The statistics include the number of beneficiaries, of countries/regions covered, of implemented programs, and of beneficiaries in each continent as well as changes in number of foreign beneficiaries, of projects, of accredited projects, and of members on a yearly basis.

Analysis of the SFT in the *Final Report* includes comparison between statistic data against those listed in the goals announced before the start of the program, examination of which of the UN Sustainable Development Goals the projects under SFT programs met, and qualitative analysis supported by feedbacks from participants, both from Japan and abroad, on the projects, and case demonstrations. The organizers also examined the internal governance model and found it a good try for collaboration between public and private sectors of Japan (JSA, 2022).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

As the main target of the project is to help the administrators to improve the Award, the most significant reference is the stakeholders' comments and suggestions. Based on this principle and the findings of the literature review, interviews with different stakeholders and review of related documentation have been done.

#### **3.1 Interview**

##### **3.1.1 Interviewee selection**

To make the research more objective, interviews have been made with both the administrators and the applicants.

Interviews were first made with the representatives of administrators in order to get a better understanding of the Award and which of the applying programs meet the requirements of the administrators.

- Mr. Yuan Lei, the sole designer of the Award and Director of International Communication Division of External Affairs Department of GASC, was invited to an interview regarding the aim of and expectation from the Award, the guidelines, application materials, how organizations were informed about the applications process, and results of the Award.
- Ms. Wang Xiaoyin, the representative from the selection panel and Co-Deputy-Director of YUAN's division, also in charge of collecting and reviewing final reports, was asked for views on the application documentations and guidelines, criteria for selection, requirements on final reports by the NF&Is, and limitation on the application and final reports.

Upon the advice of YUAN and WANG on the quality of each of the applications they received in 2021 and 2022, it is vital to find out what the NF&Is that yielded the "best" applications/programs think about the Award and what advice/practices/experience they can provide to the improvement of the Award. After comparing the list of Awardees of 2021 and the list of Awardees and funded ones of 2022, representatives of all 5 repeated Awardees were invited to participate in one-on one interviews, of which 3 were from the NF&Is that won the Award in 2021 and was funded in 2022 and 2 were from the NF&Is that won the Award in both 2021 and 2022 but were not funded in 2022. The list of the 5 NF&Is are below.



- 3 NF&Is winning Award in 2021 & 2022 and also receiving fund in 2022
  - Beijing Sport University
  - Chinese Health Qigong Association
  - Chinese Wushu Association
- 2 NF&Is winning Award in 2021&2022 but not receiving fund in 2022
  - Chinese Tennis Association
  - Chinese Sport Museum

As Yuan and Wang divided their applicants into 2 categories, i.e. the Olympic Sport Federations and the Non-Olympic Sport Federations & Institutions, the 5 interviewees from the applicants side covered both categories.

### **3.1.2 Interview method**

Since GASC awarded the grants in January 2022, interviews were carried out in July 2022 when most of the NF&Is were preparing their programs. The interviews were done one-on-one via phone calls based on interview outlines (Appendix B) made according to the interviewees' position in the Award, be it the designer, the representative of the selection panel, or representatives from the selected NF&Is. Customized questions were also asked in response to the answers by the interviewees either to find out more details or ask for clarification.

The interviews were performed while reviewing documentation mentioned in 3.2.1.

## **3.2 Review**

### **3.2.1 Documents reviewed**

The following documents were reviewed before and during the interviews with stakeholders.

- *Application Guidelines* for the year 2021 &2022 sent out by GASC
- *Notice to the Award-winners* for the year 2021 &2011 published by GASC
- 5 final reports in 2021 submitted by 4 NF&Is, which completed their Award-winning programs. These reports were analysed both subjectively and objectively. 1 other NF&I did not submit final reports after completion of its program in 2021 because the person in charge of the program left the NF&I and the one who continue this work did not read the documents sent out by

GASC and claimed ignorance of the requirement of submitting a final report. The list of the 4 NF&Is is below.

- Beijing Sport University
- Chinese Health Qigong Association
- Chinese Wushu Association (had 2 Award-winning programs in 2021)
- Chinese Go Association

Results are presented in a generalized way to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.

### **3.2.2 Aim of review**

By reviewing the documentations by GASC and the NF&Is, the goal is to better understand the following details.

- Has the administrators made it clear what they would like to encourage/require the NF&Is to do in their *Application Guidelines* and *Notice to Award-winners*? If not, what can be done to improve?
- Has the administrators provided enough information for the NF&Is to apply for the Award, conduct the programs, and use the fund properly? If not, what can be done to improve?
- Have the administrators made enough effort in selecting the “best” programs to win the Award, especially the fund? If not, what measures are needed to improve?
- Has the NF&Is submitted final reports that provided all the information the administrators wanted to see? If not, what further instructions should be made to the NF&Is?
- Has the administrators evaluated the final reports thoroughly?
- Has the Award achieved its mission? If not, what is the gap and how to improve?

## **4. RESULTS**

### **4.1 Considerations in designing the Award**

#### **4.1.1 The Vision**

At the beginning of designing the Award, Yuan, the designer, realized he would like to carry forward the special role of sport in promoting understanding, friendship, and solidarity among peoples, which has been listed in GASC's working priority. In order to encourage the NF&Is to participate in the undertaking, the Award was launched as an incentive and to provide a certain amount of financial support as a start-up fund for selected programs.

In addition to involving the NF&Is in the vision and mission of GASC, Yuan also mentioned the expectation that the NF&Is could realize their potential in promoting understanding, friendship, and solidarity and think, design, establish, and develop their own "signature" programs. Hopefully, by doing so, the NF&Is could elevate their vision and attach equal importance to international sport exchange as to other missions such as training and preparation of athletes, sport for all, marketing, academic research, and so on.

#### **4.1.2 Target Group**

With regards to priority level of international sport exchange in different NF&Is, Yuan drew experience from previous practices of international sport exchanges by GASC and put the target group of the Award – the NF&Is- in 2 categories, the "Olympic Sport Federations (OSFs)" and the "Non-Olympic Sport Federations and National Institutions (NOSF&Is)." The OSFs are national federations that are in charge of an Olympic sport/sports in China, and the NOSF&Is are either in charge of non-Olympic sport/sports in China or are an academic/educational/research institution that are not in charge of any specific sport in China.

While most, if not all, NOSF&Is have already included international exchanges as a working priority, most of the OSFs, especially the NFs in charge of an Olympic sport in which China excels, viewed international exchange as "extra work" that distracts them from training and preparing their athletes for the Olympic Games and other major sport competitions, and therefore it is the OSFs that needs more stimulation to carry out international sport exchange programs. However, in the "elementary stage" of the Award, GASC adopted a one-for-all guidelines of the Award for both OSFs and NOSF&Is.

Yuan had a vision to gradually expand the target group to include the local sport associations and more academic/education/research institutions in the future, especially when the limitations on international travels are lifted.

#### **4.1.3 Allocation of financial Support**

Wang indicated that they decided to provide fund to about 1/3 of the Award-winners in 2022. Among the 19 Award-winning programs, 6 programs from 6 NF&Is received fund from GASC while 13 other programs did not. The amount per NF&I received ranged from 100 thousand to 300 thousand RMB.

##### **4.1.3.1 The procedure in place**

Considering the scope of the target group and their capability of international exchange, Yuan and his team applied to GASC for an amount of 1.5 million RMB (approx. 221.7 thousand USD) each year as the total financial support to be provided to applying NF&Is. With discussion and negotiation with GASC Finance Department which is in charge of budget management of GASC and application of financial rules and regulations, Yuan and his team formed the following procedure of fund allocation with the example of the distribution of fund for 2023:

- a. List of selected programs for the Award for 2023 and fund was approved by GASC in July 2022.
- b. Once approved, the fund will be counted in the budget for the year of the Award, e.g., the selected NF&Is will have the fund listed on their overall budget for 2023, and expect to receive the money early 2023.
- c. In around March 2023, GASC will allocate the fund directly to the respective accounts of the selected NF&Is as soon as it received it from the Central Finance, i.e., the fund does not “stay” in GASC account.
- d. The corresponding NF&Is can use the fund for their selected programs in 2023 abiding the financial rules and regulations.
- e. If any NF&Is failed to carry out its selected program, it has to return the fund to GASC.

The merits of this procedure is that since the fund was already accounted in the budget of the respective NF&Is, and will be directly allocated to the NF&Is without “staying” in GASC account, the accounts will be settled within the NF&Is, which frees Yuan’s division from the task of settling accounts.

The demerits of this procedure lie in two aspects: first, in order for the fund to be listed in the respective NF&Is' budget, it has to be approved in the previous year, e.g. the Award-winning programs for 2023 have to be approved before July 2022 which caused the application by the NF&Is for the Award and fund starting in March 2022, about half a year earlier than they usually planning their 2023 international activities which may lead to the programs they use to apply for the Award outstanding of their master plan of international activities for 2023; second, according to financial regulations, any returned fund due to failure of implementation cannot be reallocated to other NF&Is, which will lead to a "waste".

#### 4.1.3.2 The alternative procedure which was abandoned

Yuan and his team also discussed with the Finance Department about an alternative allocation procedure but had to abandon it due to understaffing. The alternative is as follows:

- a. GASC spares an amount of 1.5 million RMB on its account for the year's fund and starts selection of programs for the Award in October of the previous year.
- b. The NF&Is which completed their selected and funded programs apply for the fund GASC promised to give as reimbursement to their spending.
- c. For any failure of implementation, the fund can be reallocated to reimburse other programs.

The merit of this procedure is obvious: the unused money can be reallocated and it will narrow the application-implementation gap which enables the NF&Is to design its international exchange programs consistent with their annual masterplan of international activities.

The demerit mainly focuses on the account settling procedure where Yuan's division and the NF&Is have to sign agreements beforehand and undergo complicated financial procedures to settle accounts. Considering Yuan's teams' human resource and regular responsibilities in addition to the Award, the team has to abandon this alternative fund allocation procedure. Besides the fund wouldn't have been seen as a "start-up" but as a reimbursement if it was transferred afterwards.

## 4.2 Findings in Application Procedure

### 4.2.1 Contents of the *Application Guidelines*

The Guidelines elaborated the following information:

- Background. This part includes a description of the vision and mission of the Award, the situation and needs of China's international sport exchange, and the potential of receiving a certain fund for selected programs.
- Requirements for application. This part listed the requirements on the content and form of the application, i.e., orientation of cooperation including a list of diplomatic initiatives that can be considered in designing the programs, aim of program being promotion of friendship, understanding, and solidarity. The application form shall be filled completely with no blank left.
- Number of applications per NF&I accepted: In this part, it indicates that only 1 application of 1 program from each NF&I will be accepted except for Chinese Wushu Association and Chinese Health Qigong Federation of which no more than 2 applications from either organization will be accepted (Wushu and Health Qigong are considered an essential part of China's cultural export).
- Principal of financial support: this part indicated that the fund provided to each program will be less than 50% percent of the total budget of the program and less than 300 thousand RMB.
- Notice of selection: A selection Panel 5 people, with 3 from the External Affairs Department of GASC and 2 finance experts will be organized to select programs that will win the Award and fund.
- Attachment: Application Form. The form requires the following information:

Category	Sub-category	Choices if any
NF&I	Organization	/
	Contact	/
Program	Name	/
	Cooperation platform (multi-lateral or bilateral mechanisms)	/
	Formality	Online, in-person, or hybrid
	Type of activities	Training & competition / coaching & training camps

		/ meetings&seminars&academic exchanges / performance&exhibition / friendly exchange / others
	Beginning and ending date	/
	Brief description	/
	Expected result	/
	Flexibility and Plan B	(newly established for 2023)
	Other things to elaborate	/
Budget	Total amount	
	Amount applied to GASC	
	Amount self-raised	
	Detailed budget	(the NF&Is shall attach a budget sheet to the form)

Table 4-1: Information Required in the Application Form for the Award

From the interview with the administrators, it was discovered that the NF&Is were not asked to describe how they will measure and evaluate the programs impact as part of the application. Such measurement and evaluation were only requested in their final reports.

Besides, neither were the NF&Is asked to describe specifically how they will design and carry out cultural exchange in their programs.

#### 4.2.2 Supplementary measures by GASC to help NF&Is understand the Award

In order to help the NF&Is better understand the objectives of the Award, Yuan's team organized a briefing where illustration on the policies, requirements, and expectations were made to the representatives from the NF&Is. The briefing came soon after the *Application Guidelines* were published. Feedback from participating NF&I representatives show that they comprehend more about the Award and application.

#### 4.2.3 Results from Interviews with NF&Is

All 5 representatives from selected NF&Is as mentioned in 3.1.1 participated in one-on-one interviews and were willing to share their thoughts and considerations of the Award and the administrators.

All the NF&I representatives interviewed indicated the Guidelines they received were clear and provided enough information for them to understand what the Award targets and how to apply for the Award and fund. Suggestion of improvement came from the representative of Beijing Sport University, with the following two points:

- The Guidelines mentioned that the fund from GASC will cover no more than 50% and no more than 300 thousand RMB of the total cost of one program, which means the Award-winning NF&Is, even if they win the fund, have to raise more than half of the budget on its own. It will be better if the Guidelines make the self-fund-raising clear and compulsory. For example, GASC may send a written notice to the award-winning NF&Is, stating that they need to raise money to support their programs. This will make the completion of programs more likely.
- Since Beijing Sport University and other institutions competing for the Award and fund have different responsibilities and tasks other than National Sport Federations, it will be better if GASC provide customized guidelines to both the institutions and NFs. For example, institutions may have instructions/guidelines tailored to their main functions (education, research, etc.) rather than those focusing on training and competing, which are the functions of NFs.

#### **4.2.4 Reasons why NF&Is apply for the Award**

When asked “why did you apply for the Award and fund,” the 5 NF&Is provided several reasons that can be summarized as follows:

- Reasons for applying for the Award
  1. All 5 representatives indicated that thanks to the award, the departments which initiated the programs were able to receive more resources, especially financial resources, from their own organizations.
  2. All 5 representatives viewed their programs being selected for the Award as an honor and encouragement.
  3. All 5 representatives referred to the Award as a “platform” that allow their programs’ influence to grow further.
  4. 4 representatives that had domestic partners in organizing their programs mentioned that with their programs selected for the Award, it was easier for them to find and build ties with domestic partners as those partners view the programs as endorsed and supported by central government and thus reliable and feasible.
  5. With regards to the impact on international partners, all representatives indicated only indirect impact was expected where international partners will enjoy more carefully designed programs and have better experience if



the Chinese side is encouraged by winning the Award.

- Reasons for applying for fund: All 5 representatives mentioned that with the fund provided by GASC, the NF&Is will have more financial resources to better design the program in order to match the founding ideas of the Award and involve more participants. The representative from Chinese Sport Museum even indicated that the organization would have launched a “special” activity in addition to the “routine” ones in the programs should the program win the fund but pitifully it was only listed in the Award without fund from GASC.

#### **4.2.5 Administrators’ opinions on the application documentations**

Both Yuan and Wang were satisfied with most of the applications submitted by the NF&Is. They see growing passion among the NF&Is to compete for the Award and fund, with annual total application forms received increased from 20 for 2021 to 31 for 2023. However, they admitted some application forms needs improvement. The areas that need most improvement include the description of program being vague or too general, loose expression or incoherence, or worse, as pointed out by Yuan, misunderstanding of or deviation from the idea and focus of the Award, with the example of one program of which all content is hiring a foreign coach without any cultural part.

Based on the observation of application documentations for 3 years, Yuan asserted that misunderstanding or deviation happens with newly-established NFs or NFs that had carried out few international exchange programs before. While discovering a major problem in any application, Yuan’s team will reach out to the corresponding NF&I for more elaboration or adjustment.

### **4.3 Findings in Selection Procedure**

#### **4.3.1 Selection criteria formed by the Selection Panel**

The Selection Panel rated each application documentation according to a “rate form” they worked out before the open of application. The rate form for the Award for 2021&2022 is as follows:

Aspects	Highest Score	Criteria
Completeness	10	Complete the application form with no blank
	10	With accurate description of background, aim, and content
	5	With comparatively definite plan for implementation

Necessity	5	Abide by laws, rules and regulations, and national and GASC policies
	10	Focus on a diplomatic initiative and aiming at deepening friendship with people in other countries, preferable featuring traditional Chinese culture
	5	Not limited to technical exchange
	5	Newly-established program
Feasibility	10	Has HR and financial resources for the program
	5	Reasonable planning or arrangement for the program
	5	Potential for long-term implementation
	5	Potential for expansion of influence
Budget (for those who apply for fund in 2022)	5	Has enough financial resources for the program
	15	With detailed arrangements of spending in line with existing financial rules and regulations
	5	Accurate calculation
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	

Table 4-2: Rate Form for Each Program in 2021&2022

Based on the form for 2021&2022 and the practice in the selection, the Selection Panel made a few adjustments to that of 2023. The major changes underlined below.

Aspects	Highest Score	Criteria
Completeness	10	Complete the application form with no blank
	10	With accurate description of background, aim, and content
	5	With comparatively definite plan for implementation
Necessity	5	Abide by laws, rules and regulations, and national and GASC policies
	10	Focus on a diplomatic Initiative and aiming at deepening friendship with people in other countries, preferable featuring traditional Chinese culture
	5	Not limited to technical exchange
	5	Newly-established program (score 5) <u>or “signature” program that included more people or activities than previous editions(score 3) (new criterion)</u>
Feasibility	<u>5(was 10 in 2021&amp;2022)</u>	Has HR and financial resources for the program
	5	Reasonable planning or arrangement for the program
	<u>5(was 10 in 2021&amp;2022)</u>	Potential for long-term implementation and expansion of influence
	<u>5</u>	<u>Include media coverage in planning (new criterion)</u>
	<u>5</u>	<u>Be flexible (online or hybrid) or with a plan B considering the</u>

		<u>Covid uncertainty(new criterion)</u>
Budget (for those who apply for fund)	5	Has enough financial resources for the program
	8	Criteria of measurement abide by financial rules
	7	With clear description of measurement
	5	Accurate calculation
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	

Table 4-3: Rate Form for Each Program in 2023, Compared to the Previous Version with Trace Marks

Compared to 2021&2022 rate form, 3 new criteria were included in the 2023 rate form. According to Wang, the reasons are as follows:

- Attributing 3 scores to “signature” programs that included more people or activities than previous editions: to encourage the NF&Is to design and plan programs that have long-term potential or to develop their current programs further.
- Attributing 5 points to media coverage in the planning by NF&Is: after reviewing the final reports from year 2021 submitted by the NF&Is which completed their selected programs, the Selection Panel discovered that some programs have been intentionally designed to have media involvement. The Panel considered it a good practice to foster awareness of and attract attention to the programs so that it set this new criteria.
- Attributing 5 points to flexibility: the Selection Panel found that 3 programs that were meant to be held in-person out of 9 chosen for the Award 2021 was yet to implement due to Covid affects while the rest 6 which were held either online or hybrid fulfilled the NF&Is’ commitment in application. Considering the uncertainty of pandemic and in order for the NF&Is to think a way out of the negative influence in the planning session, the Selection Panel decided to add flexibility as one of the criteria.

#### 4.3.2 The work of the Selection Panel

The administrators set up a working group, i.e., the Selection Panel to study the applications submitted. The members from External Affairs Department looked at what impact those programs could have on international exchange and sport development, and if the NF&Is have reasonable plans and resources to carry them out. The members from Finance Department examined the budgets to see if they comply with financial regulations. The group then rates each application using the forms presented in 3.1 based on their findings from their review.

After rating all applications, the Selection Panel listed the programs according

to their scores from highest to lowest. For 2021, 9 programs won the Award. For 2022, 22 programs won the award of which the top 6 won the fund amounting from 100 thousand RMB to 300 thousand RMB. For 2023, it is said that 21 programs will win the Award, of which the top 10 will receive fund. The sum of funds for 2023 remains 1.5 million RMB, with amount given to each NF&I reduced. In Yuan's word, they intend to support all programs the Selection Panel considered "consistent with the ideas and likely to happen."

In Wang's view, those programs with a clear goal for fostering friendly ties and potential for long-term growth or being creative in formality tend to score higher. Those featuring traditional Chinese culture also tend to score higher. Therefore, they are more likely to receive the Award and grant.

Through interviews, it was also found that the Selection Panel reached an unsaid consensus to categorize the applications in different groups according to their cognition of the applying NF&Is. They understand well that among all NF&Is, the Non-Olympic Sport Federations attach the most importance to international exchange, and these federations will account for most of the Award-winners. While the panel perceived that the Olympic Sport Federations usually did not pay as much attention as Non-Olympic Sport Federations to international exchange because of their other priorities, they will still try to include a few Olympic-sport-related programs by OSF in the Award-winners as a role model for the OSFs. Considering the number of institutions is relatively small compared to the number of federations, usually only 1 or 2 program by institutions can win the fund with 1 or 2 more such programs win the Award without fund.

#### **4.3.3 Selection Panel's opinions on the criteria and procedure**

Overall, the Selection Panel are satisfied with the selection criteria and found them clear and not causing any difficulty. Yet the panel is adjusting the criteria from year to year based on previous practice and anticipation of the status quo of next year and the panel is open to recommendations and suggestions.

Wang mentioned specifically that although the criteria is clear, site visits and interviews with NF&Is may enable the panel to evaluate the feasibility of the programs more accurately and thus be supplementary to the mostly paper-based selection procedure. This was a suggestion for future selections and was not possible before due to tight schedule and understaffing challenges. This point was echoed by one of the interviewed NF&I representatives who appealed for more discussion before selection.

#### **4.3.4 The requirements listed in the *Notice to the Award Winners***

Once the list proposed by the Selection Panel was approved by GASC, a notice including the list of Award-winners and funding-winners will be published with the following requirements to those winners:

- The programs shall be listed in the corresponding NF&Is' masterplan of international exchange.
- The fund to be allocated by GASC shall be listed in the corresponding NF&Is' overall budget.
- The NF&Is of Award-winning programs shall maintain contact with the administrators of the Award in order to update their implementation and receive support from GASC.
- The corresponding NF&Is shall submit a final report within one month of completion of their programs. Final reports for all award-winning and fund-winning programs are required.
- Failure of implementation without reason will have negative effects on future application of the same NF&I.

#### **4.4 Implementation statistics of 2021&2022 Award-winning programs**

Among the 9 programs selected for the Award 2021, 6 was completed and 3 were either cancelled or postponed "due to Covid effects" according to Wang, who is also responsible for collecting the final reports besides selecting programs. Wang received 5 reports for 5 programs by 4 NF&Is among the 6 completed in 2021, and was urging the Chinese Sport Museum which completed its program in early 2022, to submit the report immediately at the time of interview.

Among the 19 Award-winning programs for 2022, 1 is completed, 4 undergoing, 8 in preparation, 1 postponed, and 5 cancelled or to be cancelled. The 8 in preparation will be completed in September or October. The main reason for cancelation and postponement is unanimously Covid-19 impact, which triggered the Selection Panel to modify its criteria, giving flexibility to encourage online/hybrid format of program from the very beginning of designing the programs. Wang mentioned in particular about one program that was already cancelled had received financial support from GASC and the corresponding NF&I is returning the money to GASC.

## **4.5 Findings in post-event evaluation procedure**

### **4.5.1 Analysis of the final reports submitted by NF&Is in 2021**

Per request of the administrators, the final reports should be within 1 month after the respective program is finished. For 2021 and 2022 programs, GASC did not provide a form or template for the final report asking specific questions.

Both objective and subjective analysis was made to the 5 reports received by the administrators in 2021 in order to find what was included and what could be improved.

#### **4.5.1.1 Objective analysis**

<b>Contents covered</b>	<b>Report A</b>	<b>Report B</b>	<b>Report C</b>	<b>Report D</b>	<b>Report E</b>
Description of background	√	√	√	√	√
Details of program	√	√	√	√	√
-Exact beginning and ending dates	√	√	√	√	x
-Formality of program	√	√	√	√	√
-Goals achieved (that match the ideas of the Award)	√	√	√	√	√
-Stories & best practice	√	√	√	x	√
-Clear statistic data about the program	√	√	x	x	√
-Description of organization and supportive measures	√	√	√	√	√
-Designing of cultural part	x	x	√	x	√
Media coverage	√	√	x	x	√
-Involving "Old Media"	√	√			√
-Involving "New Media"	√	√			√
-Involving "Social Media"	√	√			√
Feedbacks from foreign participants	√	√	√	x	√
Overall thinking on the program	√	√	√	x	√
Recommendations for or planning of future work	√	√	√	√	√

**Table 4-4: Summary of Contents of Final Reports in 2021 by NF&Is on Their Award-Winning Programs**

#### **4.5.1.2 Subjective analysis of reports with information gathered from interviews**

Report A, B, and C covered most of the points that could be found in a final report. They are clear and coherent, providing sufficient evidence the

administrators required. Since media coverage was not one of the criteria in 2021, it is understandable that Report C did not pay much attention to this area. The corresponding representative, however, described a vision to expand media coverage from “old media” to “new media” and “Social Media” in the interview.

Report D fell short of contents compared to other reports. Besides, in the interview with the corresponding representative, it was found that the actual implementation disagreed somehow with what was written in the report. The discrepancy is evidenced by sequence of activities, participant groups of each activity, and time of implementation.

Although Report E seems to have touched almost all aspects that could be found and expected from a final report, its weakness was obvious. The report was lengthy and less structured, with much redundancy that cause confusion and deviation from what was meant to present. It was not easy to extract the major points from inconsistent timeline of narration.

One highlight of Report E is that it is the only report that dedicate specific descriptions to the details of how the cultural parts of the program were designed and implemented and the feedbacks from the target group on the design although all representatives being interviewed had clear vision how they will design and merge the cultural part in their programs, be it selecting certain topics for a seminar, or telling the story of how the traditional Chinese sports were linked with how the Chinese view the world and how to manage a healthy lifestyle. The issue with other reports in terms of cultural element, either failure to mention their intention or mentioning it as a “side dish” to the regular organization work, shows the insufficient understanding of the NF&Is of GASC’s emphasis on and intention of promoting traditional Chinese culture through sports.

#### **4.5.2 Evaluation by GASC**

Wang introduced how the administrators “evaluate” the programs. At present, the administrators only examine whatever is included in the final reports submitted by NF&Is. For those reports submitted in 2021, Yuan’s team added a few lines of comments to a report and forwarded it to higher authorities for their information. Usually the comments are positive so as to encourage the NF&Is to carry forward what has been done.

Wang indicated that starting from 2022, it is required that the final reports of the programs that received financial support should be submitted together with a detailed financial report and thus Yuan’s team will examine these final reports with representatives from the Finance Department. No other change in

evaluation has been expected so far.



## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Recommendations on notice, application, and selection**

#### **5.1.1 Recommendations on the *Application Guidelines***

##### **5.1.1.1 Highlight the design of cultural exchange in the program description**

The applicants of the Award have been required to provide a “brief description” of their programs without being instructed how this part should be developed. Since the aim of the Award is to promote friendship, understanding, and solidarity through sports, it should be highlighted and emphasized from the very beginning of the application. Therefore, the administrators can regulate in the *Application Guidelines* that when submitting the application forms, the applicants shall dedicate a part of their description of the programs to how the cultural exchange of their programs would be designed.

##### **5.1.1.2 Require measurements for “expected results”**

The applicants have been asked to indicate what results could be generated from their programs in the application form. While most of the results listed by the applicants are not quantitative, it is suggested that the applicants provide a methodology describing what and how they plan to measure and criteria for the expected results. In this way, the applicants can be spurred to think carefully about the results they can really achieve instead of listing groundless expectations. These requirements can also provide clear vision for the panel in charge of selection of the feasibility of each program.

##### **5.1.1.3 Add an expression of self-fund-raising requirement**

Since the fund of the Award were only offered to less than one third of the Award-winning programs, and the granted fund only covers less than half of the budget of each fund-winning program, all Award winners should more or less raise some money on their own to operate their programs. As recommended in the interviews, it is important to specify that the NF&Is, after winning the Award, SHALL raise funds on their own, regardless of winning fund from GASC or not, to make their programs yield results as expected. With this rule in the Guidelines and its repetition in the *Notice to the Award Winners*, those persons in charge of the Award-winning programs can have more solid base for fund-raising and besides, if the person in charge apply to their NF&Is leadership for

internal financial support, their applications can be more likely to be approved.

#### 5.1.1.4 Hold workshops for different groups of NF&Is

Although most of the administrators and other NF&I representatives interviewed said the guidelines provided clear and general information on orientation and requirements for completing the application forms, one NF&I representative mentioned the *Application Guidelines* could have been tailor-made for different groups of NF&Is. To strike a balance between these views and considering it will help different groups of NF&Is to be better oriented and make plans that are both feasible for themselves and meet the expectations of the administrators, the administrators are advised to hold orientation workshops for each of the three groups of targeted NF&Is, i.e., the OSFs, the NOSFs, and Institutions. While an elaboration on the *Application Guidelines* shall be provided in all three workshops, the administrators can make different instructions according to the different functions and responsibilities of NF&Is, be it competing and training, promotion of sports, or academic and scientific research. The administrators will also have a chance to answer questions from specific NF&Is that are common within the NF&Is group.

### 5.1.2 Recommendations on the selection procedure

#### 5.1.2.1 Recommendations on the “rate form”

The Selection Panel updated its criteria and scoring system for Programs of 2023 compared to that for 2021&2022. Yet more adjustments can be made to the rate form to make it more adapted to the vision of the Award. The suggested amendments are as follows:

- Completeness:
  - “Complete the application form with no blank” can be deleted because an application should not be reviewed if there are any incomplete sections. And thus, the weight of this part (10 points) should be given to more important criteria.
  - Reducing the weight of “accurate description” and adding weight to “comparatively definite plan” because the importance lies more on the feasibility of the programs.
- Necessity:
  - Delete “Abide by laws, rules and regulations, and national and GASC policies” because an application should not be reviewed if the program violates any laws, rules, and regulation and national and GASC policies.
  - More weight given to the cultural parts of the programs and a description of designs for cultural change is added.

- Give “signature” program that included more people or activities than previous editions” 5 points which is equal to that for “newly-established program” because in the *Application Guidelines*, signature programs have equal importance with “newly-established program” and since the Award was launched not long ago, it is as wise to nurture some existing brands as to seek for new brands.
- Feasibility:
  - move 5 points from Budget to the Feasibility section, specifically to the “Description of measurement of results” per the recommendation in 5.1.1.2.

The new rate form of selection for 2023 is as follows compared to that for Programs of 2023:

Aspects	Highest Point	Criteria
Completeness	40	<del>Complete the application form with no blank</del>
	<u>5 (was 10)</u>	With accurate description of background, aim, and content
	<u>10 (was 5)</u>	With comparatively definite plan for implementation
Necessity	5	<del>Abide by laws, rules and regulations, and national and GASC policies</del>
	10	Focus on a diplomatic Initiative and aiming at deepening friendship with people in other countries, <del>preferable featuring traditional Chinese culture</del>
	5	<u>Featuring Chinese culture</u> , not limited to technical exchange
	<u>10</u>	<u>Description of special and feasible design(s) for cultural exchange (New criterion)</u>
	5	Newly-established program <del>(score 5)</del> or “signature” program that included more people or activities than previous editions <del>(score 3)</del> _
	<u>5</u>	<u>signature program that included more people or activities than previous editions (new criterion)</u>
Feasibility	5	Has enough resources for the program
	5	Reasonable planning or arrangement for the program
	5	Potential for long-term implementation and expansion of influence
	5	Include media coverage in planning
	5	Be flexible (online or hybrid) or with a plan B considering the Covid uncertainty
	<u>5</u>	<u>Description of measurement for expected results (new criterion)</u>
Budget (for those who apply for fund)	5	Has enough financial resources for the program
	<u>5 (was 8)</u>	Criteria of measurement abide by financial rules
	<u>5 (was 7)</u>	With clear description of measurement
	5	Accurate calculation

Total	100	
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Table 5-1: New Rate Form for Each Program after 2023, Compared to the Current Version with Trace Marks

In addition to the amendments to the form, it is suggested the form should be published together with the *Application Guidelines* for the reference of the NF&Is. If they see this form, they will have a clearer idea of what is valued by the administrators, what they should provide in their application, and how they should carry out their programs.

#### 5.1.2.2 Interviews with top applicants and site visits to NF&Is that apply for the 1st time

It is suggested that after rating each application and having a general idea of all applying programs, the Panel should hold interviews with the representatives of the NF&Is with programs which the Panel were about to select for the Award to double check the substantiality of their application and their ability to fulfill their commitment. The interviews are strongly suggested for those programs which are about to be given the fund to avoid any chance of incapability of implementation.

When it comes to an NF&I that apply for the 1<sup>st</sup> time or that has no record of international sport exchange programs in GASC, a site visit to the applying NF&I is suggested to the Panel with inspection of facilities, interview with stakeholders, and interviews with personnel such as HR and Finance in the NF&I in addition to that with the representative directly in charge of the applying program.

#### 5.1.3 Recommendations on the *Notice to the Award Winners*

In addition to the suggestion made in 5.1.1.3, the following suggestions were made to the *Notice to the Award Winners*.

##### 5.1.3.1 Specify on what program elements the financial support from GASC can be spent

Currently there were no specific requirements on the actual spending of the fund provided by GASC. Provided GASC will not have auditing on each NF&Is but auditing will be only carried out internally in the NF&Is, it is suggested that the administrators list out in the *Notice to the Award Winners* how and on which aspects can the financial support from GASC be spent according to GASC's financial regulations because it is regulated by GASC.

### 5.1.3.2 Enhance requirements on final reports by NF&Is

Currently the only regulation on the final reports are that each NF&I, Award-winner or fund-winner, shall submit their final reports within one month of the completion of their programs. Provided that some deficiencies have been found in the 5 reports collected from 2021 Programs, it is suggested that certain requirements for the final reports shall be listed in the Notice to the Award Winners as follows:

- The final reports shall be coherent, including but not limited to information of background, details, statistic figures, participants' feedbacks of the program.
- The final reports shall contain detailed description of the design of cultural exchange part of the programs and results achieved by these designs.
- The final reports shall contain a comparison between the actual activities and results against what the respective NF&Is promised to achieve in their application as proposed in 5.1.1.2.
- The final reports shall dedicate a part to best practice and experience, including how the program has the potential to be a signature program or how it carried the legacy from past programs, best practice and experience from the current programs that can be shared, and/or experience to be carried forward in future programs.
- A financial report on how the fund was spent shall be submitted as an appendix to the final reports by the NF&Is which received fund.

### 5.1.3.3 Require the NF&Is to survey foreign participants

One of the important measurements of a program is the feedback from the target group, which has been reflected in the evaluation of some international sport exchange programs described in the Literature Review. While the final reports by the NF&Is which completed their Award-winning programs in 2021 contained feedbacks from the international participants, the feedback was provided in a casual way as comments to a Youtube video. To gather feedback of specific information, a questionnaire should be designed and sent to the international participants. Considering this is not the usual practice of the NF&Is – none of the Award-winners for 2021 indicated they sent out questionnaires – it is recommended that the administrators provide a sample questionnaire in addition to simply asking for feedback in the *Notice to the Award Winners*. The sample questionnaire can include the following questions and the NF&Is should be encouraged to adjust the questionnaire according to the feature of their own programs.

- About skills related to a certain sport/field of academic research:

- After this program, have you increased skills related to the sport/field of academic research which the program featured? If yes,
  - How do you think the increase of the skills would benefit your life or work?
  - Did the program meet your expectation? If yes, please describe 3 things that impressed you most. If not, please indicate suggestions to the program.
- About cultural exchange:
    - Has your understanding of the Chinese culture increased?
    - What did you learn about China in this program?
    - Is the cultural part easy to understand or accept?
    - What do you think of (special design of cultural exchange)? Is it relevant to the program?
    - Out of 100 points, how would you rate the (special design of cultural exchange)?
    - Do you have any suggestion to enhance the (special design of cultural exchange)?
  - About organization of the program
    - Do you think the program is easy to access and does not require much technical support?
    - If the program is held online/hybrid, do you feel focused and related throughout the program?
    - If the program is held online/hybrid, is there any point when you felt lost? If any, please indicate.
    - Do you think the program is well organized? Please specify.
    - Out of 100 points, how much will you give to the overall organization of the program?

## **5.2 Recommendations on facilitating implementation**

The fact that almost 1/3 of the Award-winning programs in 2022 were cancelled or postponed, especially one funded program cancelled, is worrisome, which requires the administrators to take substantial measures to monitor, supervise and provide necessary help to NF&Is in implementing the Award-winning, especially funded, programs. Apparently it is not enough to mention in the *Application Guidelines* that failure to implement without any proper reason shall reduce the chance of winning Award in the future. In order to help more Award-winning NF&Is to complete their program, the following 2 measures are suggested to the administrators.

- Check the progress quarterly, i.e. in March, June, and September and find out which programs are well undergoing and which are faced with difficulties.
- Discuss with the NF&Is to identify difficulties and provide necessary support. For example, the reason why 1 funded program was cancelled was because

the local partners withdrew “for Covid sake” one month before the start of the program and the NF&I could not find a substitute. In this case, if GASC spotted this issue timely, it could help the NF&I to find another city that could host the program because GASC, as a ministerial department, could coordinate more resources than the NF&I.

## **5.3 Recommendations on evaluation and experience sharing**

### **5.3.1 Recommendations on evaluation of the programs**

Based on the requirements for the NF&Is on their final reports and the application form they submitted, the following recommendations are made to the evaluation.

#### **5.3.1.1 Standardize evaluation criteria**

For the final reports submitted by the NF&Is which completed their award-winning programs, a brief summary has been included in the evaluation by the administrators and submitted to the leadership of GASC for further review. However, it is not enough for any party to have a comprehensive view of how the programs were carried out. Therefore, it is suggested that the administrators standardize the criteria for evaluation and add a rating session in their evaluation of each program based on the final reports they received, which is quite similar to the rating session in selection.

The criteria for evaluation by the administrators are identified with reference to the requirements by the *Application Guidelines*, *Notice to Award Winners*, and recommendations made in Article 5.1 as well as best practice from international sport exchange programs conducted by international organizations and other countries/regions. A rate form for evaluation can be as follows.

<b>Aspects</b>	<b>Highest Point</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
Final report	5	The report is clear, coherent, and structured.
	5	With accurate description of details of activities with the support of statistic data
	5	With feedback from international participants
Cultural exchange	5	Implemented what has been described in application
	5	Featured Chinese culture, not limited to technical exchange
	10	Results achieved*(participants' feedback)%
Self-Evaluation	5	The criteria for self-evaluation identified in application is reasonable
	5	Focus on a diplomatic Initiative and serve as deepening friendship with

		people in other countries as described in application
	15	Achieved expected results*(self-evaluation score)%
Experience, best practice, and sustainability	10	Sustainable, has the potential to be a signature program or carried legacy from past programs
	5	Generated new experience and/or best practice compared to the previous editions of the same program.
	5	Provided experience and/or best practice to share with other NF&Is
Financial report (for those who apply for fund)	5	Meets the criteria of measurement listed in application
	8	Spending of funds aligned with financial regulations and terms in the <i>Notice to the Award Winners</i>
	7	Provides details of each spending and accurate calculation
<b>Total</b>	100	

Table 5-2: Rate Form for Evaluation of Each Program

#### 5.3.1.2 Provide feedback on the evaluation results to the respective NF&I

With the current practice, the NF&Is do not receive feedback from the administrators on their views and comments of the programs. Therefore, it is suggested the administrators not only add a rating session in their evaluation, but also provide the results and comments of each evaluation to the respective NF&Is. This will enable the NF&Is to better understand what the administrators expect from the programs, what can be improved and what can be carried forward in their future programs.

### 5.3.2 Recommendations on experience sharing among stakeholders

The administrators did not include experience sharing in the inaugural year of the Award. However, experience sharing is a very important catalyst for both the NF&Is and Administrators to brainstorm ideas on how to improve their work. Considering the limited human resource and financial resource the Administrator can coordinate, an annual workshop for sharing experiences and establishing a database of best practice are suggested for the experience sharing session.

#### 5.3.2.1 Hold annual workshop with NF&Is sharing experience

Since the administrators have conducted a briefing for applications, they can summon a similar workshop in the fourth quarter of every year when most of the Award-winning programs, especially most of the funded programs, are completed, and when most of the NF&Is are planning their activities for the next year. The invitation can be sent to all target NF&Is of the Award, whether they applied for it or not. The administrators shall brief the NF&Is on their overall evaluation of the programs for that year, and 1-2 representative from each of



the 3 different groups of NF&Is can be invited to make presentations on their experience generated from their Award-winning programs, preferable from their funded programs. After the presentations, the administrators can make a brief summary and suggestion to the work of next year.

#### 5.3.2.2 Establish a database of best practice

It will be useful for both the administrators and the NF&Is to have a database of best practice. The source of the database should be gathered from two ways: one is the experience and practice by the NF&Is which is required to be included in the final reports in Article 5.1.3.2. The other is the experience and practices from international sport exchange programs conducted by international organizations and other countries/regions. Each year, the administrators can select and publish some best practice from the database to share with the NF&Is or provide specialized instructions and guides to the Award-winners and fund-winners to better conduct their programs.

### **5.4 Recommendations on reviewing of the Award**

Considering the Award started for the year 2021 and is a comparatively new program for international sport exchange, it may face changes in the future because the world is constantly changing. Besides, the administrators want to see impacts through measurement and therefore, it is suggested that they conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Award before each of China's National 5-year Plan when major diplomatic and cultural initiatives will be identified for the next five years. Through the comprehensive evaluation and comparing the results of the evaluation against the diplomatic, cultural and sports goals listed in next National 5-year Plan, the administrators can better adjust the Award in accordance with the national policies.

### **5.5 Action Plan**

For now, the application and selection have been finished for the 2023 Award. Based on the recommendations mentioned above, the following action plan for GASC is formed.

Priority	Recommendation	Action	Lead	Resources	Timescales	Critical success factors
1	More communication with NF&Is	Hold tailor-made workshops in application and wrap-up period. Conduct interviews and site visits in selection. Share experience.	Yuan	Time HR Travel Cost	From Oct. 2022	Administrators pay more attention to the NF&Is and recognize the importance of communication and sharing experience with target group.
2	Monitor Awardees' progress regularly	Check the progress every quarter. Identify difficulties the NF&Is face. Provide support.	Wang	Time HR	Mar. Jun., Sep.	Administrators pay more attention to the NF&Is.
3	Establish comprehensive evaluation criteria	Modify selection criteria and rate form. Establish evaluation criteria and rate form. Make the criteria known by NF&Is.	Selection Panel	Time HR	Sep. 2022	Selection Panel acknowledge good evaluation help identify good applicants and provide
4	Modify documents sent out by GASC	Add specific requirements and make adjustments in <i>Application Guidelines</i> and <i>Notice to the Award winners</i> .	Yuan & Wang	Time HR	Apr. 2023	Administrators realize the importance of making requirements clear.
5	Review the Award	Conduct comprehensive review in every 5th year of the Award.	Yuan	Time Cost of research HR	2025	Administrators want to see impact through measurement.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This project has examined the listed stakeholders' view on the International Sport Exchange Programs of the year launched in 2021 and reviewed relevant documentations sent out by GASC and final reports submitted by the NF&Is. The findings, on the one hand, demonstrate the overall confidence and positive attitude towards the Award from both administrators and NF&Is, while on the other hand, substantial improvements could be made to the governance of the Award. An Action Plan was formed accordingly for the reference of the administrators with specific and detailed recommendations on notice, application, selection, evaluation, experience sharing, and review of the Award. It is particularly suggested that the administrators spare more attention in the communication with NF&Is, and monitor the progress of the Award-winning programs.

The project contributes to the current literature considering the lack of study focusing on the effective way of the Chinese government in encouraging NF&Is to conduct international sport exchange programs as well as, with an attempt, to draw comparatively proper criteria to measure the programs. With efforts in improving selection, the project finds solutions in reducing the risk of financial support being wasted by the failure of completion of certain funded programs.

One of the limitations of this project is the relatively small interview scope of 7 interviewees, though every participant of the interviews demonstrated great will of making suggestions and in-depth views, may lead to lack of objectiveness. Moreover, due to time limit, the project could only study the Award for 2021 and 2022 with little touch on the application for 2023, calling for further study and analysis in order to follow the development and evolution of the Award.

## APPENDIX A: REFERENCE

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## **APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW OUTLINES**

### **Questions to Yuan Lei, Director of External Affairs Department, Designer of the Award**

- What has been considered when designing the Award at the beginning?
- What to expect from the Award?
- What do you think of the notice and guidelines sent to the NF&Is (national federations and institutions)? Are they specific and clear? If any, things to improve?
- What do you think of the programs and application documentations submitted by the NF&Is? Are they specific and clear? If any, things to improve?
- How do you inform NF&I programs about the grant opportunity?
- Are you satisfied by the results of the programs chosen for 2021 and 2022 (those 2022 programs that are completed)? What recommendations do you have for future programs?

### **Questions to Wang Xiaoyin, Co-Deputy-Director of External Affairs Department, in charge of reviewing and selecting the programs**

- What do you think of the programs and application documentations submitted by the NF&Is (national federations and institutions)? Are they specific and clear? Is there anything you suggest to improve the application process?
- Do you think the notice and guidelines sent to the NF&Is provided enough information for them to design or adjust their programs so as to be chosen or receive the financial support? Any misleading information?
- How many NF&I programs applied?
- How are the programs selected? What are the criteria in determining whether the NF&Is receives financial support or not?
- Are NF&Is required to describe how they will measure and evaluate the programs impact as part of the application?
- What is the most important criteria or factor that leads to securing support?
- Are you satisfied by the selection criteria? Anything vague or causing difficulty in selecting? Anything to improve?
- Is there auditing on the spending of the money by the NF&Is who received it?
- What final report do those who received the Award need to provide compared to those who received the Grant? Is it the same? What is expected?
- Do they have to submit a financial report on how the money was spent? If so, how will you evaluate their reports?
- Do they need to submit any final report with data?

- Are there any limits on how many times a NF&I can apply and receive funds?

### **Questions to 2 NF&Is chosen for 2021&2022 Award but not receiving financial support in 2022**

- Why did you apply for the Award and grant?
- Do you think the guidelines provided clear and specific information of the Award and grant?
- How can being chosen for the Award benefit your organization?
- How can being chosen for the award benefit the targeted group (international partners)?
- What do you think is the cultural part of your program(s)? How do you think your program can promote the understanding and exchange among peoples or benefit the sport development of China? How did you design the cultural part?
- Do you have any challenge/questions/comments on the Award?
- Do you have any suggestions for improvements?
- Will you apply for future Award and grant?
- How are you changing or improving what you did in 2021?

### **Questions to 3 NF&Is chosen for 2021 and also receiving financial support in 2022**

- Why did you apply for the Award and grant?
- Do you think the guidelines provided clear and specific information of the Award and grant?
- How can being chosen for the Award benefit your organization?
- How can being chosen for the award benefit the targeted group (international partners)?
- How will the financial support benefit your organization or the targeted group (international partners)?
- Do you have auditing for your program(s)?
- Will you provide reports on how the money is spent?
- What do you think is the cultural part of your program(s)? How do you think your program can promote the understanding and exchange among peoples or benefit the sport development of China? How did you design the cultural part?
- Do you have any challenge/questions/comments on the Award?
- Do you have any suggestions for improvements?
- How are you changing or improving what you did in 2021?