

Independent Members of the Reform and
Governance Commission of the International
Weightlifting Federation

9

February
2020

Governance Report to the:

Reform and Governance Commission of the International Weightlifting Federation

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1. Executive Summary of this Report



Executive Summary of this Report

As it has been widely reported, the year of 2020 was a convulsive and complex year which stirs up the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF), especially due to major allegations of serious corruption, bribery and other various governance problems and irregularities, those issues became evident by facts such as: having three different Presidents within the year, being the sport that received the largest reduction in athlete quota for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games and currently having temporarily suspend around 38 National Members Federation.

The current Executive Board presided ad interim by Dr. Michael Irani in order to effectively channel and address such organizational issues, appointed the subscribers as

Independent Members of the IWF Reform and Governance Commission with the general mandate of proposing to IWF evidence-based and actions-oriented recommendations to improve its overall governance framework and management operations in its immediate future.

To achieve set mandate, the Independent RGC Members prepared this Report with the aim of providing to IWF a comprehensive report showing the main results obtained from implementing the applied research methodology, all of which were taken-into account and carefully considered when drafting the proposed reforms to the Constitution, By-Laws and a series of operational regulations annexed.



2. Introduction

Introduction

In early 2020, the German television network ARD aired a documentary film titled “Der Herr der Heber” (the English translation of which is “The Lord of the Lifters”). The documentary reported on allegations of serious corruption, bribery and other various governance problems and irregularities inside the sport of weightlifting, and specifically within the International Weightlifting Federation (**IWF**).

For approximately 40 years up until his resignation in April 2020, the IWF was run primarily through its originally former Secretary and later President, the Hungarian Dr. Tamás Ajan. Upon his resignation, Dr. Ajan was replaced ad interim by the American Ms. Ursula Garza Papandrea.

During the period of her interim presidency, the IWF Executive Board appointed the Canadian, Prof. Richard McLaren, to undertake an independent investigation into the allegations reported by the German broadcaster ARD, as well as other related matters. Prof. McLaren’s team reported to the IWF and its Oversight and Integrity Commission (OIC) on 4 June 2020. That report was then supplemented on 30 June 2020. That report, provided by McLaren Global Sport Solutions, is titled Independent Investigator Report to the Oversight and Integrity Commission of International Weightlifting Federation (**the McLaren Independent Weightlifting Investigation**).

On or about 21 June 2020, the Executive Board of the IWF voted to establish a Reform and Governance Commission (**RGC**). The composition of the RGC maintained all of the members of the previous OIC and added representation from all continents. On 22 October 2020 the IWF appointed

three (3) Independent Members to the RGC: Darren Kane (AUS), Ximena Restrepo (COL) and Damaris Young (PAN), with the overall mandate of conducting a comprehensive review of the IWF’s governance structures, practices, policies, and procedures, including all decision-making positions and bodies. The purpose of the RGC being commissioned to undertake this review is to identify what changes are required to ensure that the IWF governance framework complies with the highest standards of good governance in international sport.

To accomplish this said purpose the Executive Board of the IWF approved Terms of Reference (**TOR**) establishing among other items its composition, mandate and operations of the RGC. The TOR were later amended by the Executive Board on 20 November 2020 upon the request of the independent RGC members.

In accordance with its mandate and the TOR, the independent members of the RGC have undertaken detailed research and consultation with various stakeholder groups within the sport of weightlifting, including without limitation members of the Executive Board, representatives of national federations, athletes and athletes support personnel. The RGC has also undertaken a detailed review of available documents and policies, including the current IWF statutes, materials supplied by the IWF, materials supplied by the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (**ASOIF**) and otherwise. This Report sets out the detailed results and findings of the independent members of the RGC, derived from this work.

This Report also set out the recommended strategic actions proposed by the Independent Members of the RGC to the full RGC and the Executive Board.



3. Factual Background



Factual Background

The following is a short overview of the background facts established for the purpose of setting the mandate established in the TOR for the Independent Members of the RGC:

- i. On or about 21 June 2020, the IWF Executive Board voted to establish the RGC, maintaining all members of the previous OIC and also adding representation from all continents.
- ii. On 22 October 2020, the IWF Executive Board appointed three (3) Independent Members: Darren Kane (AUS), Ximena Restrepo (COL) and Damaris Young (PAN) to the RGC.
- iii. On 25 October 2020, and introductory meeting with the Independent Members and the rest of the members of the IWF RGC took place via video-conference, subsequently the Independent Members decided to appoint Mr. Darren Kane as the Chair of the RGC.
- iv. On 31 October 2020, the RGC's Independent Members held their first meeting, agreeing in the need to propose amendments to the TOR and consequently the timeline proposed by the IWF Executive Board, in order to ensure an appropriate compliance of its mandate as per the factual realities.
- v. On 5 November 2020, the RGC's Independent Members held their second meeting, and the Chair decided to convene a meeting with the rest of the members of the RGC which was initially scheduled to take place on the 10 of November of 2020, but ended up occurring on 13 November 2020.
- vi. On 13 November 2020 the RGC's Independent Member Damaris Young (PAN) presented to the rest of the members of the RGC the content of a proposal to amend the TOR, a joint presentation prepared by the Independent Members Damaris Young (PAN) and Ximena Restrepo (COL).
- vii. On 20 November 2020, the RGC's Independent Members submitted the proposed amendment TOR for the approval of the IWF Executive Board.
- viii. On 26 November 2020, the RGC's Independent Members held their third meeting agreeing, among other things, the strategic actions of the roadmap, timeline and responsible independent member to complete each action. It was also agreed that Darren Kane would take the lead, on behalf of the RGC Independent Members, in the drafting of the proposed new constitution and rules of the IWF, such constitution and rules which will be framed by reference of the work of the Independent Members which is referred to throughout this Report, and Damaris Young and Ximena Restrepo would take lead to develop and implement the research methodology to seek for input from IWF stakeholders and analyze all relevant content with the purpose of drafting the Independent RGC Members' present Report.
- ix. On 2 December 2020, the RGC's Independent Member Damaris Young sent a "Proposed Methodology" to the rest of the RGC's Independent Members for their review, comments and further discussion for approval on its next meeting.

- x. On 9 December 2020, the RGC's Independent Members held their fourth meeting, and among other things discussed, the Proposed Methodology was approved, as well an agreement was reached in regard to the extent of the scope of the research, in order to accomplish the mandate established in the amended TOR for the Independent Members of the Reform and Governance Commission of the IWF.
- xi. On 11 December 2020, the RGC's Independent Member Damaris Young shared the updated version of the Proposed Methodology to the rest of the Independent Members of the RGC, which included: the focus group discussion guidelines, the proposed questions for the focus group discussion, the proposed schedule for the data collection, and the Google form editing link for the closed question to be send out to the IWF National Member Federation.
- xii. On 14 December 2020, the RGC's Independent Members held their fifth meeting approving the updated version of the research methodology, deliberated in regards of several pending issues and decided the short-term actions items and the responsible member to complete it.
- xiii. On 15 December 2020, the RGC's Independent Member Damaris Young sent to the registered mail list –as provided by IWF– of the IWF National Member Federation, the Google form link containing the closed questions, seeking responses from the IWF National Member Federations.
- xiv. On 16 December 2020, the RGC's Independent Members Damaris Young and Ximena Restrepo hosted the first focus group involving National Member Federation and Continental Federations, with a total of eight (8) participants, where every continent was represented.
- xv. On 18 December 2020, the RGC's Independent Member Damaris Young and Ximena Restrepo hosted the second discussion of the focus group involving IWF Technical Officials and Coaches, with a total of six (6) participants, the continent represented were Asia, America and Europe, there was no representation from Oceania and Africa.
- xvi. On 18 December 2020, the RGC's Independent Members hosted the third discussion of the focus group involving the IWF Reform and Governance Commission.
- xvii. On 21 December 2020, the RGC's Independent Members hosted the fourth discussion of the focus group involving a total of five (5) athletes, where every continent was represented.
- xviii. On 23 December 2020, the RGC's Independent Member Chair Darren Kane sent the first draft of the proposed IWF Constitution, setting the 3 January 2021 as the deadline for the rest of the Independent Members to review it and send their comments, suggestions and proposal of changes.
- xix. On 3 January 2021, the RGC's Independent Members Damaris Young and Ximena Restrepo sent out their comments, suggestions and proposal of changes to the first draft of the proposed IWF Constitution.
- xx. On 5 January 2021, the RGC's Independent Members hosted the fifth discussion of the focus group involving the IWF members of the Executive Board, except for four (4) members, all the rest were represented.

- xxi. On 10 January 2021, Dr. Despina Mavromati acting in her capacity of Chair of the IWF Ethics and Disciplinary Commission (“EDC”) sent an email to Mr. Darren Kane with the first remarks and suggestions regarding the second draft of the proposed Constitution and the operation of the EDC.
- xxii. On 11 January 2021, the RGC’s Independent Member Chair Darren Kane sent the second draft of the proposed IWF Constitution including accordingly the suggestions proposed by Dr. Despina Mavromati and Independent Members Damaris Young and Ximena Restrepo.
- xxiii. On 11 January 2021, the RGC’s Independent Members Damaris Young and Ximena Restrepo sent to the Chair Darren Kane the first draft of the proposed Governance Report of the Independent Members.
- xxiv. On 15 January 2021, the RGC’s Independent Members held their sixth meeting, to exclusively discuss matters related to the third draft of the proposed Constitution.
- xxv. On 16 January 2021, the RGC’s Independent Members held their seventh meeting, to exclusively discuss matters related to the fourth draft of the proposed Constitution.
- xxvi. On 21 January 2021, the IWF Interim President Dr. Michael Irani and General Secretary Mr. Mohammed Jalood subscribed a letter sent to the Chair Darren Kane to inform, among other things, the approval of an extension of time (to 15.02.2021) for the RGC’s Independent Members to complete their mandate as per the TOR.
- xxvii. On 28 January 2021, the RGC’s Independent Members held their eighth meeting, to discuss matters related to the sixth draft of the Proposed New Constitution and approved its roadmap for the extended period of time granted by the IWF Executive Board.
- xxviii. On 31 January 2021, the RGC Independent Members Damaris Young, sent to the other two members a proposed draft of a suggested Electoral Rules as per the request made by the IWF Executive Board Members who participated upon invitation of the Chair Darren Kane at their eighth meeting, such request which was made in accordance with section 3.5. of the Terms of Reference.
- xxix. On 1 February 2021, the RGC’s Independent Members held their ninth meeting, approving the Cover Letter, the Governance Report and the Proposed New Constitution.
- xxx. On 3 February 2021, the Chair Darren Kane via email sent to the IWF Reform & Governance Commission (RGC) the Cover Letter, Governance Report and the Proposed New Constitution as approved by the RGC’s Independent Members.
- xxxi. On 6 February 2021, the RGC’s Independent Members held their tenth meeting, to discuss the feasibility and requirement of actually recommending and proposing Electoral Rules, since the Independent Members of the RGC are of the understanding that the IWF Ethics and Disciplinary Commission presented similar rules which were shortly to be approved by the IWF Executive Board.



4. Background and current Governance's Structure of the IWF

Background and current Governance's Structure of the IWF

The International Weightlifting Federation (**IWF**) is the international governing body for the sport of weightlifting as recognised by the International Olympic Committee (**IOC**). The IWF was founded in 1905 and hence is one of the oldest international sport federations of the Olympic Movement. Weightlifting was one of the first sports included in the first Modern Olympic Games held in Athens in 1896.

The IWF is composed of two (2) governing bodies: i) The Congress, which is the highest authority within the IWF, currently composed of 188¹ affiliated National Member Federations, from five continents:

- 35 (Africa)
- 45 (Asia)
- 49 (Europe)
- 22 (Oceania) and
- 37 (America)

The Executive Board, which consist of twenty-one (21) members: the President², General Secretary Treasurer, the First Vice President, Five (5) Vice Presidents³, eight (8) members and the five (5) Continental Federation Presidents.

National Member Federations

49
Europe



45
Asia



37
América



35
Africa



22
Oceanía



¹ As reported by IWF, upon request of the Independent RGC Members, from which 38 National Members Federation are currently temporary suspended.

² Currently Dr. Michael Irani is the Interim President, appointed by the Executive Board on October 2020

³ Currently there are only four acting Vice Presidents in the Executive Board, since Ms. Ursula Garza Papandrea resigned from his position in October 2020.

Furthermore, the IWF has three (3) standing Committee: i) the Technical Committee; ii) Coaching and Research Committee; iii) Medical Committee, all composed by ten (10) members and a Chairperson, and seven (7) Commissions: i) Athletes Commission, composed of ten (10) members and a Chairwoman; ii) Development and Education Commission, composed of five (5) members and a Chairman; iii) Disciplinary and Ethics Commission, composed of two (2) members, one (1) Secretary, one (1) Vice-Chair and a Chairwoman; iv) Reform and Governance Commission, composed of three (3) Independent Members one of which is the Chairperson, and seven (7) members; v) Membership Commission composed of seven (7) members and a Chairman; vi) Women's Commission composed of five (5) members and a Chairwoman; and vii) Marketing Commission composed of seven (7) members and a Chairman.


Regarding the current IWF's paid-staff, even though the RGC's Independent Members requested the complete list of the employees and the copies of their signed working contract on 8 December 2020, at the time of preparing this Report⁴ the Independent RGC Members have not received this information from the IWF, therefore it is not possible to indicate the name, position, duties, salary or remuneration, and the type of contract between IWF and the professional, neither the composition of the administrative organisational chart. However, it must be noted that IWF staff's Ms. Timea Horvath, acting in her capacity of Manager Development & Education, responded it to our request stating that:

Hungarian employees were hired by the HOC –referring to the Hungarian Olympic Committee– and that contract ends on 31 December 2020. From January they will be hired –referring to IWF paid-staff– by a Temporary Agency.⁵


⁴January 9, 2021 at 15:18 (GMT-5)

⁵ Email sent on 18 December 2020 by Ms. Timea Horvath to the Chair of the RGC's Independent Members





5. The Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Reform and Governance Commission (RGC) Independent Members



The Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Reform and Governance Commission (RGC) Independent Members

The IWF's Executive Board decided to appoint a special Commission to revise and strengthen its Constitution, Rules and By-Laws with the intention to attain good governance principles, in consequence on 21 June 2020 voted to create a Reform and Governance Commission (RGC) maintaining all members of the previous Oversight and Integrity Commission also adding representation from all continent, and appointing three (3) independent members⁶, vetted by and including a representation from ASOIF.

On or about 21 June 2020 the IWF Executive Board approved the first version of the Terms of References (TOR) of the newly created commission, and on 15 December 2020 upon request of the three (3) RGC's Independent Members approved the amendment Terms of References (TOR).

As per the TOR, the Reform and Governance Commission is composed by the RGC's IWF members: Karoliina Lundahl (FIN), Birendra Prasad Baishya (IND), Marcus Stephen (NRU), Khalhed Mehalhel (LBA), Jose Quiñones (PER), Maxim Agapitov (RUS), and Salvatore Coffa (AUS); the RGC's Independent members:

Darren Charles Kane (AUS), Damaris Itzel Young Aranda (PAN) and Ximena Restrepo (COL), and Mr. James Carr (GBR), acting as Ex Officio Advisor (ASOIF), however, the RGC's Independent Members have had the autonomy and independence to achieve the compliance of its mandate, which is presented in the way of recommendations, a proposed Constitution including By-Laws and other rules and the Independent RGC Members Report, to be submitted to the RGC's IWF Members and the IWF Executive Board before presenting it to the IWF's Congress.

i. Mandate of the Independent Members of the Reform and Governance Commission:

As per the amended TOR, the RGC's Independent Members are expected to complete its mandate in time for its final recommendations to be presented for approval by February 28, 2021. However, if more time is required to ensure the new IWF Governance Framework meets the objective set out above, an extension of the above deadline could be agreed by the IWF Executive Board, nevertheless at the time of preparing this Report, it has not yet been requested.

⁶ On 22 October 2020, the IWF Executive Board appointed as the three (3) Independent Member to Darren Kane (AUS), Ximena Restrepo (COL) and Damaris Young (PAN) to the Reform and Governance Commission.

The general mandate of the RGC's Independent Members consists of:

1. Conducting a comprehensive review of the IWF's governance and management structures, practices, policies, and procedures, including all decision-making positions and organs to identify what changes are required to ensure that the IWF Governance Framework complies with the highest standards of good governance in international sport.
2. Seeking input from IWF National Member Federations, and other key stakeholders of the IWF.
3. Following its review and consultations, propose a draft amendment to the IWF Constitution and By-Laws, the IWF's rules of ethical conduct and related disciplinary rules and regulations as necessary to reflect the changes that has been identified and are required to improve the IWF Governance Framework and presents such to the RGC's IWF members and IWF Executive Board for approval and presented to the IWF National Member Federations in the respective Congress for its approval.
2. The 2020 IWF's Governance Evaluation made by the Governance Task Force (GTF) established by ASOIF;
3. The input and recommendations given by the IWF Members to the IWF and the RGC's Independent Members;
4. The information gathered by the RGC's Independent Members from the revision and study of several relevant documents to accomplish the mandate;
5. The overall conclusions of the RGC's Independent Members;

In particular, as per the mandate, the work performed and the creation of this Report and the proposed draft amendment to the IWF Constitution, By-Laws, and other regulations, has been based on:

1. The misconduct alleged in the ARD documentary and/or identified in Professor McLaren's report "*McLaren Independent Weightlifting Investigation*";



6. Aims and Objective of the Report

Aims and Objective of the Report

The primary aims and objectives of the Independent Members of the RGC in preparing this Report are:

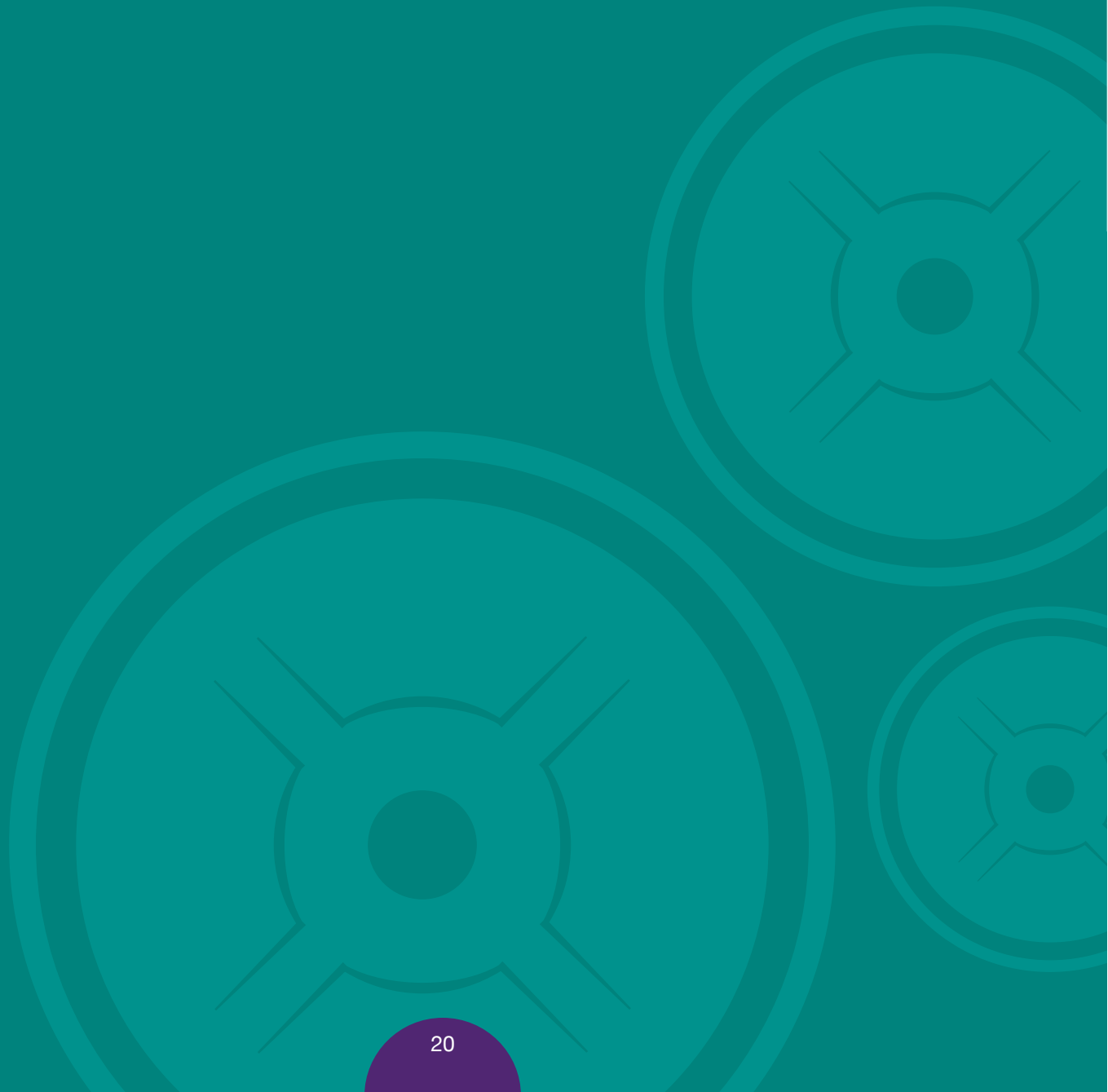
1. To identify the misconduct alleged in the ARD documentary film and / or in the McLaren Independent Weightlifting Investigation;
2. To put in the hand of IWF governing bodies, including the RGC and the Executive Board, a report that can be consulted when in the decision-making processes, since it reports results derived from:
 - i) The input obtained from the IWF National Members Federations, athletes, Executive Board members, and others key IWF stakeholders;
 - ii) The study and analysis of the IWF's Governance Evaluation made by the Governance Task Force (GTF) established by ASOIF; the written submissions made by eight (8) IWF National Member Federations containing proposals to change the IWF Constitution; the WADA Investigation into IWF and the sport of weightlifting; as well as other relevant documents and available literature in regards of good governance in sport.

As a result of applying and implementing the RGC's Independent Members' approved research methodology to carry out this investigation, which has allowed obtaining indicators derived from a reliable diagnosis;

3. To recommend and propose – by means of a reform to the Constitution, By-Laws and operational regulations of the IWF – control mechanisms and other measures to minimise the risk of repetition of the misconduct alleged in the ARD documentary film and / or in the McLaren Independent Weightlifting Investigation, and to strengthen the ability of IWF to address any such allegations in the future efficiently and with the utmost integrity. Such proposals have been made upon the base of the results and indicators derived from the diagnosis obtained from the implementation of the research methodology applied to seek for input and gather information, as well as all the relevant documents and publications that have been reviewed and analysed by the RGC's Independent Members, in order to accomplish its mandate.



7. Results and Analysis



Results and Analysis:

To seek for input, we used a quantitative and qualitative research methodology, as data collection techniques: a set of closed questions for the quantitative while the focus group discussion and content analysis for the qualitative.

It is important to highlight, that it was originally planned to also collect qualitative data through oral interviews from determined identified key stakeholders, however it was impossible for the RGC's Independent Members to arrange such video conference meetings, mainly due to the time of the year –Christmas Holidays – and the measurements implemented around the world to prevent the spread of the virus Sars CoV-2 as a consequence of the global pandemic.

Regarding the focus group, five (5) discussions of focus groups of IWF stakeholders were carried out from six (6) originally planned, each consisting of a maximum number of eight (8) people who were selected based on the stakeholder to which each participant belongs, and considering to have as much as possible worldwide representation. Each meeting ran for a maximum duration of two (2) hours, and each meeting was carried out using video-conference meeting – via Zoom – from 16 December 2020 to 5 January 2021, on different dates as the circumstances allowed to arrange it.

The data analysed and collected runs for a total of ten (10) hours and seventeen (17)

minutes of audio-visual material, collected from the five (5) discussions of the focus group held with the IWF identified stakeholders. The RGC Independent Member Ximena Restrepo (COL) served as the moderator, while the RGC Independent Member Damaris Young (PAN) served as the assistant moderator.

The Independent Member Ximena Restrepo (COL) as the moderator of every focus group used a prepared script to welcome the participants, reminded them of the purpose of the focus group and also set the ground rules of the discussion, and Damaris Young (PAN) as the assistant moderator recorded every session and took the notes of each discussion.

It should be mentioned that the discussions of the five (5) focus groups of IWF stakeholders were based on a Conversation Guide containing the focus group questions and developed during the research design phase; although the questions were oriented according to the roles of each discussion group, in all and each of the discussions were exactly the same three (3) questions, the same ones that were intended to answer the following research questions:

1. According to the perspective and based on the experience of the participating members of each focus groups, what are the main three (3) problems currently facing IWF?

⁷ It was not possible to arrange it, mainly because of the time of the year –Christmas Holidays– and the measurements implemented around the world to prevent the spread of the virus Sars CoV-2 as a consequence of the global pandemic.

2. According to the perspective and based on the experience of the participating members of each focus groups, what was that one thing, If they had the chance, they would change within IWF?
3. According to the perspective and based on the experience of the participating members of each focus groups, how could these three (3) problems currently facing IWF identified each focus groups can be solved?

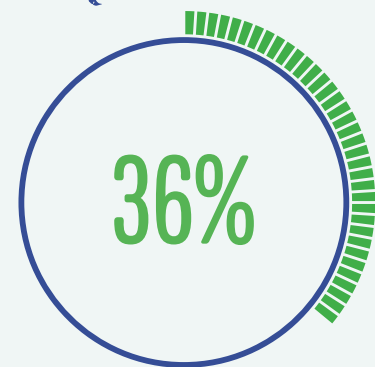
groups is shown per tables and afterward the results of the closed questionnaire sent out via Google form to all IWF National Member Federations.

Since the data collection techniques used to implement part of the research methodology of this study was focus group discussion, the units of analysis are therefore the focus groups and not the participants in each group, hence respecting the confidentiality of the participants. The names of individual participants are intentionally omitted from this Report, because the names are irrelevant individually for the purposes of this investigation. However, consent was requested and obtained from the members of the focus groups, for the limited purpose of data analysis and the preparation of this Report.

Regarding the closed questions, a set of ten (10) closed questions were sent via email by a link (using a Google form platform) to all IWF National Member Federations. A total of fifty (50) responses were received, which equates to a response rate of thirty-six percent (36%) of the total IWF current membership in good standing. The Google form was available from 15 December 2020 to 10 January 2021.

The data collected allowed us to obtain the results reflected below – first, the analysed data collected from each of the five (5) focus

National Member Federations



Response rate

1. National Member Federations and Continental Federation

Date: December 16, 2020

From your perspective and experience, What do you think are the three main problems currently facing IWF?

1. Anti-Doping:
 - The systematic abuse of banned substances from particular countries affects the whole family of weightlifting negatively influencing others and not stimulating the fair competition that needs to be addressed, and of course in terms of image and credibility.
2. There is lack of overall Good Governance:
 - There is an urgent need to have a new constitution complying with good governance standards.
 - It cannot be a one man show, we cannot repeat the dictatorship model
 - There have to be equal and fair opportunity for any sport official to become a member of the Executive Board
 - Ethical and Disciplinary Rules for the electoral process shall be applied with certainty indistinctively of the person involved or being accused.
 - The fight of power is the main reason affecting the image since the media has been used as a tool to fight for this control.
 - Terms in office for the officer must be limited.
 - Lack of good Communication: IWF does not communicate appropriately not only internally but externally.
 - IWF needs to address and start taking action to help National Federations to improve their governance and to implement mechanisms to comply with good governance standards.
 - There is a lack of clear leadership resulting in conflict of powers.
 - Organisational Culture: Same way of doing things for many years, a system that has created an atmosphere where integrity has not been valued nor required.
 - Transparency: IWF needs to be more transparent but with clear actions based on strong transparency regulations to be effectively monitored.
3. The lack of credibility of our main leaders and bad image which has resulted in a substantial reduction of the test and events in the Olympic Games, this is a major issue that needs to be urgently addressed by IWF.

From your perspective and experience, If you had the chance to change one thing within the IWF, what would that be and why?

1. The way in which IWF is managing the antidoping Analytical Adverse Result (AAR), IWF needs to be and have more present and cover the whole weightlifting world, to ensure that as a strong policy has to be: actively and efficiently fighting against doping, sending a clear message in terms of sanctioning. To change the strategy of antidoping by IWF education and more controls.
2. To regain the confidence from the IOC and the rest of the international sport community.
3. The Constitution
4. To avoid one person to be eternal in power and control positions within IWF.
5. The Communication Strategy from the IWF

From your perspective and experience, How do you think these three main problems currently facing IWF can be solved?

1. Anti-Doping:
 - More controls from National Federations and more smartly depending on the realities of every country. Isolate the countries where it is identified that doping is a clear issue.
 - Recognise the rest of the actors of the antidoping (the entourage)
 - Have a clear and strong anti doping policy that is known and in full compliance throughout the whole sport system.
 - Stronger and more effective Education programs
2. To have a diagnosis based on evidence that can really give us precise indicators to identify the issues affecting weightlifting, and to which the decision makers need to refer when taking decisions. National Member Federations shall participate and be fully involved in this process.
3. A new constitution but done taking into consideration in the evidence obtained through the diagnosis.
4. Establishing programs and actions based to help National Member Federations to improve not also their governance but their anti-doping strategy.
5. Implementing a completely new Communication Strategy not only internally but externally

2. ITO's & Coaches

Date: December 18, 2020

From your perspective and experience, What do you think are the three main problems currently facing IWF?

1. Doping:
 - Doping nations, there is an atmosphere where doping is rooted to certain nations as a "normal" but this is not a general practice in all nations, however because of those few everyone is condemned.
 - There is full lack of control from IWF to have in place an efficient control doping system
 - There is a Conflict of interest between the ones that are supposed to control and decide (IWF Executive Board members are the same one of the National Federation Executive Board being accused of corrupt practices.
 - The IWF needs to be more strict and have better control to sanction.
 - Corruption within the IWF Executive Board instead of preventing doping, it is stimulated.
 - There is an organisational culture at the Executive Board and some National Federation that stimulates instead of preventing doping. These people need to be out of weightlifting.
2. Governance:
 - Oversize of the Executive Board
 - Non-transparent regulations for the electoral process
 - In general lack of transparency in the management of IWF
 - Bad Image, lack of credibility and a very weak reputation in general
 - Corruption is a problem within IWF
 - Technical and competitions regulation need to be revised and adjusted
 - Serious problem of communication internally and externally
 - The coaches and Executive Board member of the National Federations shall not be referees, this shall be banned and/or fully prohibited
3. There is a limited quality of resources in terms of human resources, because the sport is not professional and exists insufficiency in terms of money to appeal others

From your perspective and experience, If you had the chance to change one thing within the IWF, what would that be and why?

1. Improve/Change the doping program particularly how to control throughout an external/independent entity to do the control and the management results, because otherwise our organisation and our sport will die.
2. To make it a Fair and even field of play for all the athletes and coaches
3. Promote Weightlifting around world with qualified and professional people
4. Limited the Terms in office of the key position within IWF, NF and other organisations affiliated to IWF and Kick out some of the current members.
5. Not to allow to people that are part of National Federations where doping is an issued shall not be able to have the right to appoint people within the IWF

From your perspective and experience, How do you think these three main problems currently facing IWF can be solved?

1. At the upcoming election, it shall be prohibited for candidates from "doping nations" –certain number of cases– to run for any position within IWF.
2. IWF should carry out an online election, this would help to prevent corruption since the opportunities to bribe people can substantially be reduced. It can be reconsidered for future elections.
3. The National Members Federations shall not be allowed to receive financial aid from other National Members Federations to pay their IWF affiliation fees.
4. Changing the electoral regulations for the next congress, promoting the change of the current Executive Board members.
5. There shall be a limited quantity of doping cases as a particular criteria in order for National Member Federations Executive Board to exercise their position or coaches to train, for instance, if there are a proved culture of doping (more than 10 AAR within the same National Federation) their executive board shall be immediately changed, but not sanctioning the National Federation / Coach itself because the clean athletes will be the ones suffering. There has to be sanctions to send the right message that IWF is really fighting against doping actively and efficiently.
6. There has to be much more publicity around the AAR cases.
7. The election shall not take place in March it shall be later because at this moment this is a way of guaranteeing their continuity in office as members of the Executive Board. We shall not rush in our actions, we need to have a proper diagnosis before proceeding. Many current Executive Board shall not be part of the IWF's Executive Board if they stay the good people will leave as it is happening now. The Election should not be in Istanbul but in Lausanne, since it is a way to prevent corruption practices since the IOC can be there to oversee the whole process.
8. The new candidates need to have the chance to present their proposal to their voting members.
9. There has to be a complete and radical change within IWF –in doping, governance, rules and regulations, etc–, the candidates shall be forced to present a proposal and those candidates shall present a curriculum vitae to some sort of vetting panel (independently) before allowing them to run, in addition this panel shall qualified that the candidates are cleaned.
10. There has to be much more participation of the stakeholders in the creation of the rules and regulations of the IWF.

3. Reform & Governance Commission

Date: December 18, 2020

From your perspective and experience, What do you think are the three main problems currently facing IWF?

1. Doping:
 - The management results procedure particularly the sanctioning process.
 - The abuse of banned substances from particular countries –where a culture of doping exists– affects the whole family of weightlifting negatively influencing the image, making it look as a generalise and normal practice for the whole IWF when in reality is not like that.
2. Governance:
 - Generalised lack of trust in the Executive Board members that causes a very weak Internal communication which becomes a major issue to operate appropriately.
 - Lack of an independent vetting panel which results in a lack of legitimisation.
 - The voice of the athletes are not properly heard or not heard at all.
 - Major communication problem internally and externally, there is a lack of proper dissemination of the many activities carried out by IWF, everything is eclipsed due to the doping and corruption scandal.
 - Corruption and dishonesty, the tyranny model of governance is still affecting IWF which has resulted in a lack of leadership.
 - IWF needs to implement a strategic plan to help National Members Federations to improve their governance and implement mechanisms to comply with good governance standards in sport.
 - No limitations to the terms of the IWF Executive Board members
 - Weak legal framework to properly fight, prevent or sanction misconducts within the IWF family, and the regulations we have are not properly complied.
 - Transparency: IWF needs to become a more transparent organisation, by establishing concrete actions and complying with clear regulations in terms of transparency.
 - IWF is urged to make improvements in its constitution to have a normal commercial operating bank account in Switzerland as well as to obtain insurance.
 - It is very difficult to change in the top if the bottom is the same.

From your perspective and experience, If you had the chance to change one thing within the IWF, what would that be and why?

1. The IWF Executive Board needs to be a real governing body of IWF, with clear responsibilities and duties to be performed, real involvement in the decision-making process and effective monitoring of such. There has to be a clear link between the Executive Board and the staff.
2. Ensure that the seat of the presidency is limited to 2 terms only
3. An efficient and effective anti doping program with a zero (0) tolerance policy.
4. Governance
5. The leadership of the organisation needs to change and more participation and involvement needs to be encouraged.

From your perspective and experience, How do you think these three main problems currently facing IWF can be solved?

1. Having stronger regulations for doping, to spread out the doping control all around the world of weightlifting.
2. There has to be more investment in the IWF educational programs, and try to establish collaboration with NOC's to use their platform to extend it.
3. To have a new strategic plan for IWF, which strategic lines emphasises normative, communications involving the use of Social Media, communication.
4. Establishing a new –good– governance framework, establishing strategies that can really help to change the mentality of the people involved in weightlifting.
5. The President shall not appoint the members of the IWF Operative Commission there is an evident conflict of interest.
6. Secure that we have trust in the people around IWF, the Jurisdictional bodies of IWF needs to be fully independent so they can be trusted in consequence they will gain legitimisation in regards to their decisions, f.i. ethical, disciplinary, so on.
7. Creation of common requirements that shall be maintained by the Executive Board at all times, in order for them to exercise their position.
8. Create a complete legal framework based upon a professional diagnosis of the actual situation of IWF and not just from a model constitution, clear conflict of interest regulations.

4. Athletes

Date: December 21, 2020

From your perspective and experience, What do you think are the three main problems currently facing IWF?

1. Doping:
 - The reports & investigations have negatively affected our reputation as a weightlifting family with the consequences within the Olympic Program and economically.
 - Realising that doping is really happening “cultural organisation” make sure the athletes are clean and not to make sure the athlete does not take drugs.
 - It is not fair the difference of quantity of tests depending on where the athlete lives (certain athletes from specific countries are not tested as much or at all)
 - Conditions are not equal for all athletes, athletes are treated in terms of doping depending on where are they from (country).
 - The results management in doping takes too long, it needs to be more expedite and reliable.
2. Governance:
 - The age (limit) of the members of the Executive Board and that there are no limitations of terms, which in a way leads or promotes Corruption.
 - The need to have new people to be part of the Executive Board or other organs of IWF
 - The sport is not popular because there is no exposure because it is managed the “old school” way, and engagement is not encouraged, we have not changed to the new realities that the people and actual society demands.
 - The communication from IWF does not feel to be fully transparent, there is not a press office, the communication is only restricted to the big events and not the more regional events.
 - Where is the money going? There is no way to really follow up
 - The Athlete’s voice is not heard nor taken into consideration.
 - Oversized Executive Board is dysfunctional we discuss but we do not agree things.
 - Using their position to benefit themselves, their athletes, their countries, etc.

From your perspective and experience, If you had the chance to change one thing within the IWF, what would that be and why?

1. IWF/ITA shall publish all the positive results, the AAR must be released.
2. To Change/remove all the people currently managing the IWF Executive Board and in the Committees or Commissions, make sure they are there for the sport and not for the money or the ego.
3. The mechanism to appoint the current judges have to change, there is a high conflict of interest they play different roles (judges, manager, trainers, etc)
4. The way in which the athletes are selected to do the doping tests, to implement doping intelligence, and that every country’s athletes are tested in the same quantity.

From your perspective and experience, How do you think these three main problems currently facing IWF can be solved?

1. Changing the actual leaders to ensure they cannot bribe or become corrupted.
2. Ensuring more doping tests in and out of competitions
3. Organising and/or establishing a professional press office, to publish all the good things that is happening within the weightlifting family
4. New people need to come forward to replace the current Executive Board
5. To have Athletes’ representatives within the Executive Board, Congress and most of the Commissions, these athletes shall be elected by their pair athletes, and the athletes shall have a voice and vote in the deciding IWF bodies.
6. More transparency and more information regarding what is the Executive Board discussing and deciding, provide more accurate financial information.
7. There shall be testing within a window of minimum two month prior the competition, and if the athlete failed the test, he/she shall not be allowed to compete.
8. More random testing within the IWF Competitions or sanctioned competitions.
9. Arrange the next Electoral Congress to be held in March so new leadership can come in within IWF, maybe if it is online it will be more transparent in a way there are less possibilities for bribing to occur.

5. Executive Board

Date: January 5, 2021

From your perspective and experience, What do you think are the three main problems currently facing IWF?

1. Lack of a general strategy for IWF, not having a strategic plan to manage IWF with clear goals, the IWF position within the Olympic Movement
2. Lack of overall Good Governance:
 - Need for more commitment from the Human Resource involved within IWF specially, the commissions members.
 - Process to elect people that will serve the IWF needs to be entirely changed.
 - Current Legal framework grants too much power to the position of President, we need to change this model to have more participation and have a better balance between the decision-making bodies.
 - Lack of financial transparency
 - Decision -making bodies needs to involve all members
 - Terms in office for the officer (Limited)
 - Media Campaign to discredit IWF due to the excess of power exercised by former President Dr. Tamas Ajan.
 - The long-lasting Anarchism model has an effect in the way in which IWF is organised
 - Bad reputation and lack of credibility of IWF due to the long-lasting presidency, this is currently affecting the image of IWF
 - We don't have a governance system in place to reach the goals
 - There is a lack of accountability from the Executive Board members
 - The passive approach and acceptance of most of the Executive Board members due to a personal lack of commitment or professionalism to exercise as EB member
 - Lack of criterias or prerequisites to become an eligible member of the Executive Board, that will need to be addressed before the person to gets elected.

From your perspective and experience, If you had the chance to change one thing within the IWF, what would that be and why?

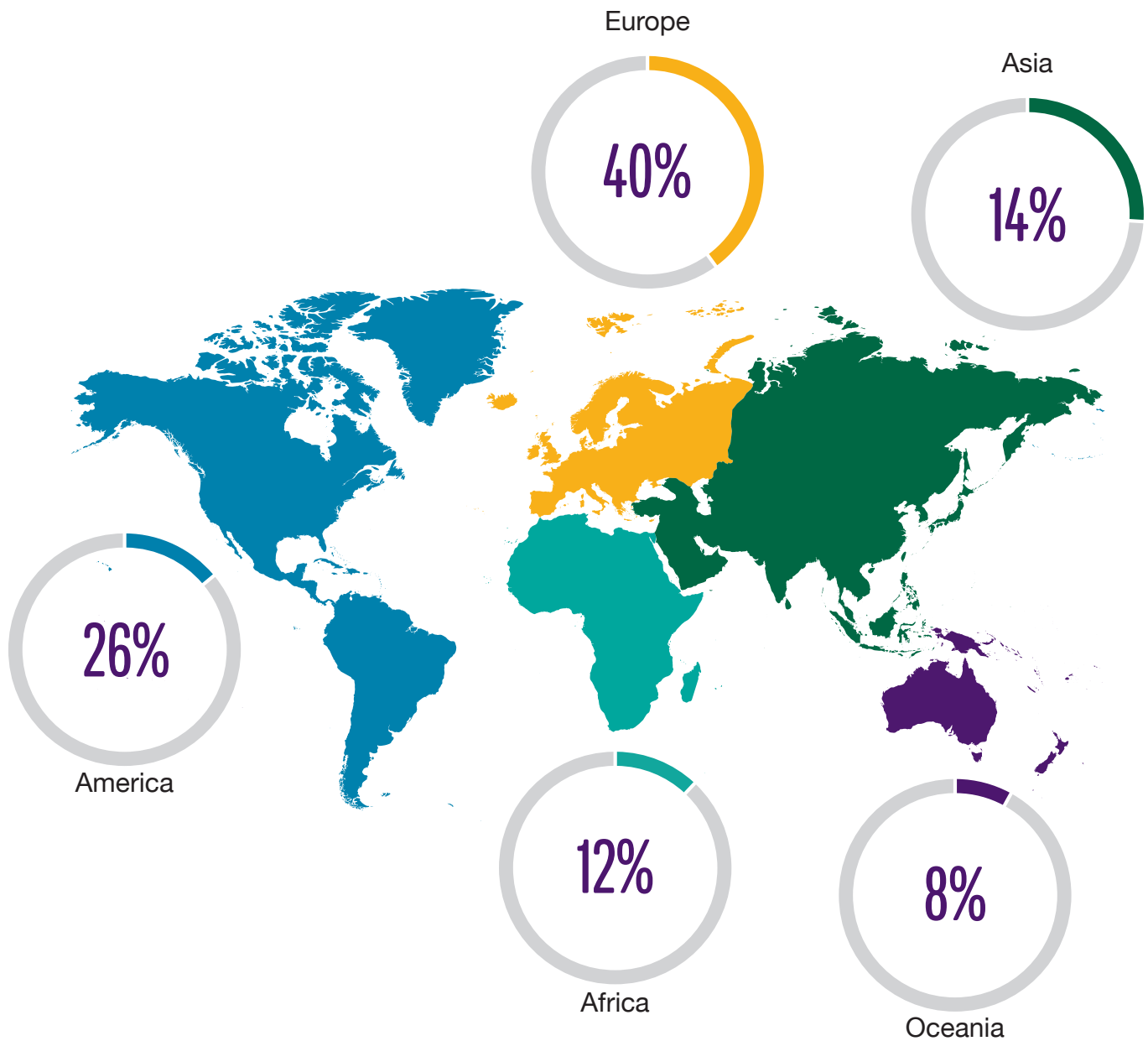
1. The Constitution, to have better governance and to prevent from having a one-man power directing IWF again.
2. To have a different governance model in which is ensured a much better balance between the decision-making bodies
3. To limit the term in office for all EB members, in order to avoid one person to be eternal in power control positions
4. To strength the conditions/criterion for people to become members of the Executive Board

From your perspective and experience, How do you think these three main problems currently facing IWF can be solved?

1. A new constitution but done taking into consideration in the evidence obtained thorough a diagnosis. (sensible make sense for the entourage and sensitive understanding the people to which is supposed to be applied)
2. The limit term needs to be extended from Executive Board to commissions and committees' members
3. Ensuring and encouraging a more active involvement (ownership) from all members in the decision-making process within IWF
4. To improve transparency within IWF as per good governance standard in international sport
5. To ensure IWF members comply with the IWF rules & regulations.
6. Implementing a Communication Strategy which emphasises the transparency
7. To organise the Elective General Congress ensuring a clear, fair and free of manipulation elections for the new Executive Board members
8. To have a diagnosis (collect data that can allow us to provide information to the new EB for them to make decisions), the current board members shall not carry out the modification process of the Constitution.
9. Gender Equity policies



Below, are the results obtained from the closed questionnaire sent out via Google form to all IWF National Member Federations:



Graphic 1:

Representativeness of the IWF National Member Federations that participated in the study (per continent)

Source: Author's own elaboration

Graphic 2:

Results obtained from the question: As representative of an IWF National Federation, do you think corruption is a problem within the IWF?

Source: Author's own elaboration



10%

Not a problem at all

4%

Rarely a problem

12%

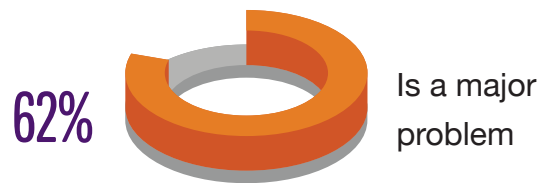
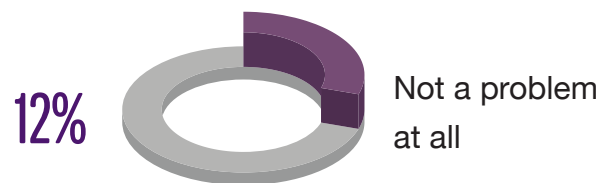
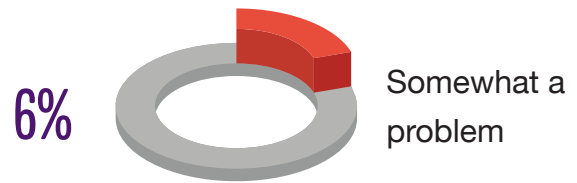
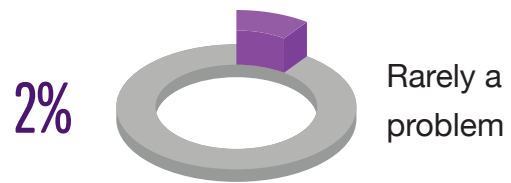
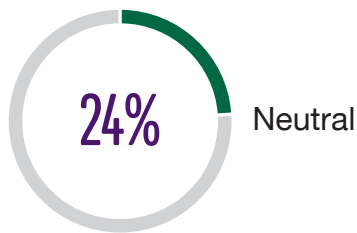
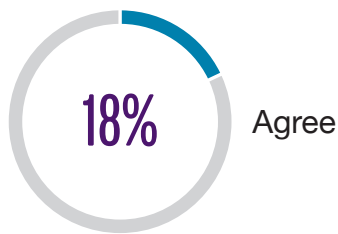
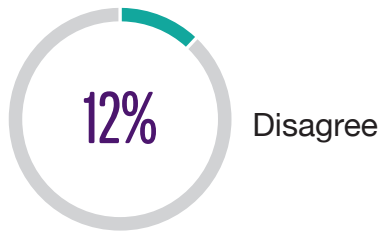
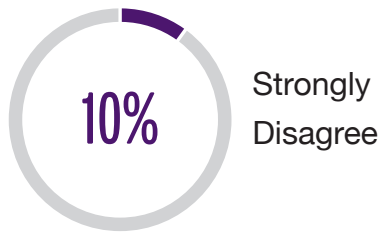
Somewhat a problem

14%

is a problem

60%

Is a major problem



Graphic 3:

Results obtained from the question: As representative of an IWF National Federation, do you think that the organisational culture of the IWF is mainly characterised for being corrupted?

Source: Author's own elaboration

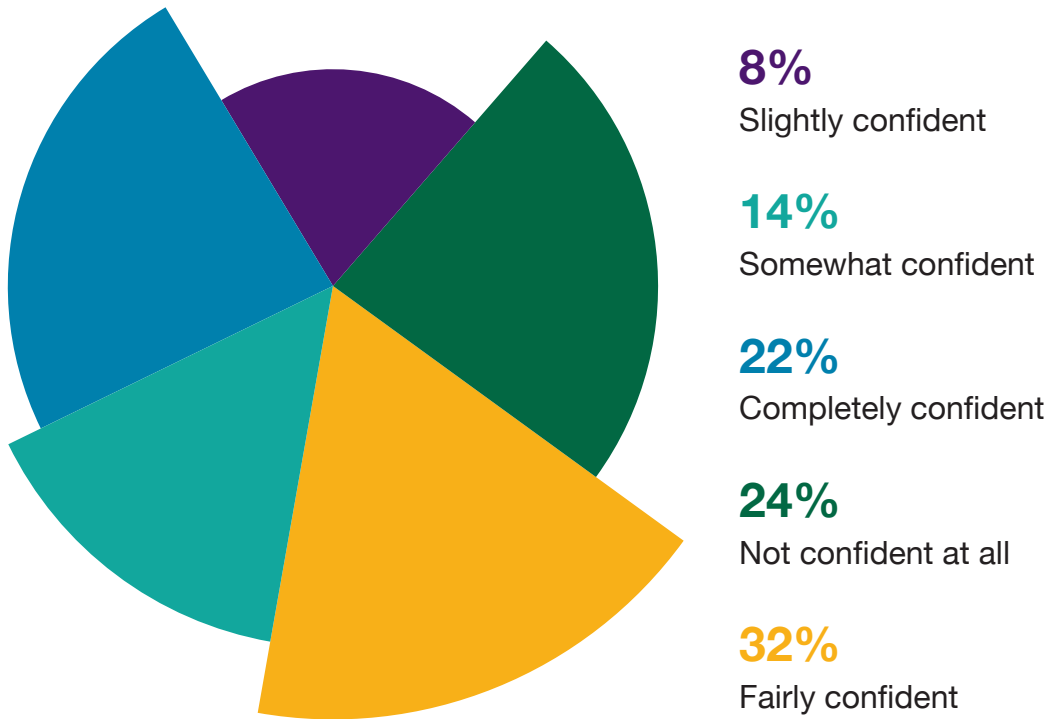
Graphic 4:

Results obtained from the question: As representative of an IWF National Federation, do you think that not having good governance is a problem within IWF?

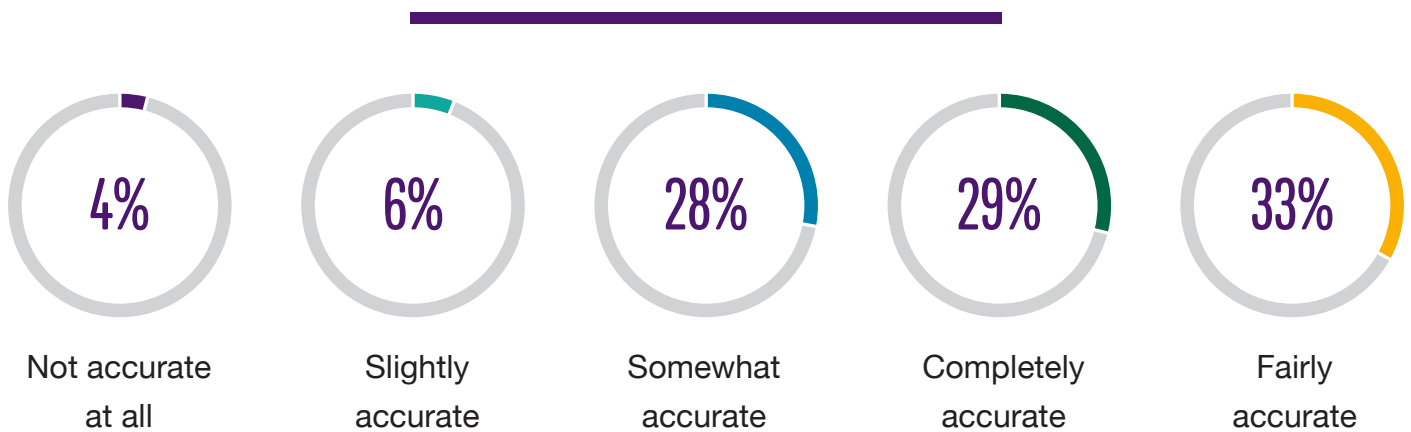
Source: Author's own elaboration

Graphic 5:

Results obtained from the question: As representative of an IWF National Federation, do you trust in the current doping control system in place within IWF?



Source: Author's own elaboration



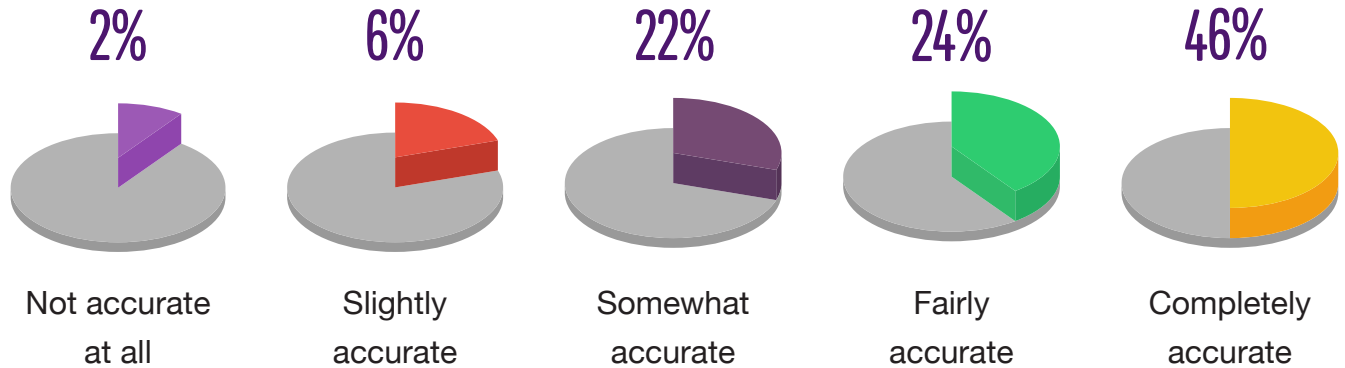
Graphic 6:

Results obtained from the question: As representative of an IWF National Federation, How would you value the accuracy of the misconduct alleged in the ARD Documentary "The Lord of the Rings"?

Source: Author's own elaboration

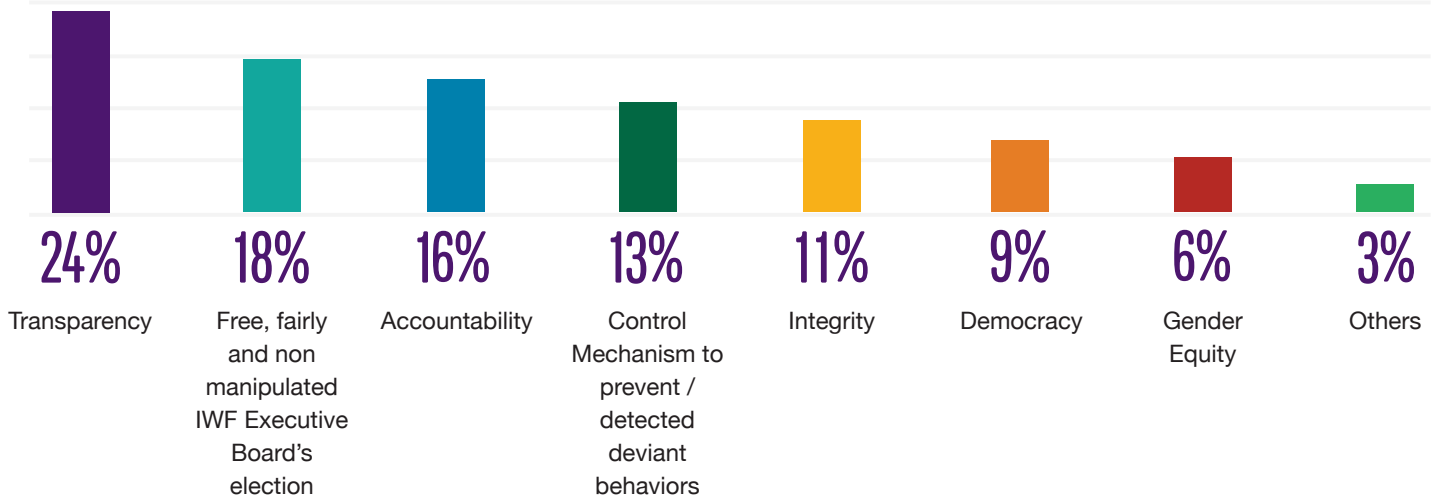
Graphic 7:

Results obtained from the question: As representative of an IWF National Federation, How would you value the accuracy of the misconduct alleged in the Professor Richard McLaren Report?



Source: Author's own elaboration

The Three (3) main major governance areas to be improved within the IWF



Graphic 8:

Results obtained from the question: As representative of an IWF National Federation, please mark the three (3) main major governance areas to be improved within the IWF?

Source: Author's own elaboration



8. Recommendations



Recommendations

The following action-oriented recommendations are made upon the basis of the results and indicators derived, from the analysed results obtained from the implementation of the research methodology applied to seek for input and gather information from the main stakeholders of the IWF, as well as all the relevant documents and publications that have been reviewed and analysed by the RGC's Independent Members, in order to accomplish its mandate as per the TOR.

The RGC's Independent Members' recommendations have the purpose of providing a roadmap of the actions to be taken by the respective IWF decision-making bodies, in order to substantially improve its current governance framework and the operational challenges faced to date.

1. The International Weightlifting Federation needstourgentlyestablishanorganisational strategy that can provide clarity, direction and focus, as well outline measurable and realistic goals for the next Olympic cycle. A strategic plan driving the organisational needed alignment, particularly focusing on restructuring the current way in which IWF is managed, the quality and efficiency of the services provided to the National Member Federations and the implementation of an overall strategic communication strategy to change the internal and external perceived negative image and reputation of IWF.
2. To repeal the current IWF Constitution and By Laws, and to thereafter replace that document with a new IWF Constitution and Rules, which establishes the following key changes:
 - i. All Executive Board positions which are elected by the Congress shall have fixed limited maximum term and a maximum age-limit restrictions imposed.
 - ii. An overall reduction of the number of Executive Board members.
 - iii. Establishing provisions for the appointment of athlete representatives to the Executive Board.
 - iv. Establishing provisions for the appointment of independent members of the Executive Board.
 - v. Establishing an Eligibility Determination Panel, which will assess all candidates aspiring to be appointed to elected positions within IWF.
 - vi. Establishing defined criteria, against which the candidacy of each prospective candidate will be measured and assessed.
 - vii. Establishing specific criteria and codes of conduct governing the Executive Board members and other participants, and rules governing the suspension

- and sanctioning of Executive Board members, National Federation Members and other stakeholders.
- viii. To Include the position of a Chief Executive Officer, and defining the duties, responsibilities and role of that position within IWF.
 - ix. To require an Electoral Congress every two years, at which half of the elected Executive Board will retire, and at which half of the elected members of the Executive Board will be elected.
 - x. Specific requirements that the Executive Board must submit for approval of the Congress, every year within the first three month of every calendar year, the audited financial report and the annual report contemplating a comprehensive review of the administrative, financial and sport activities of the IWF, and its mandatory publication at the IWF website.
 - xi. The Congress must designate the independent external auditor of the financial statements of IWF.
 - xii. All National Member Federation must send within the first 120 days of every calendar year to IWF, the signed copies of its audited accounts and annual report including a summary of their administrative and sport activities as approved by their highest decision-making body.
3. To design and implement mechanisms to present in a visual and comprehensive way to all IWF National Member Federations the content of the proposed reforms to the Constitution, By-Laws and operational regulations, as well as creating a space in which their questions and inquiries regarding the proposed changes can be responded accordingly, this shall be carried out with enough time before the celebration of the Congress convened to approve said reforms;
 4. IWF shall annually carry out an external professionally conducted Governance Review of all National Member Federations and Continental Federations and publish its results, as well as provide recommendations and establish programs to help the National Member Federation to improve their governance framework.
 5. To appoint a professional based Gender Equity Taskforce to address the challenges currently facing women within weightlifting in all roles –athletes, ITO’s, Coaches, administrators, officials, et cetera– and to provide action-oriented recommendations to be implemented by IWF to promote and enhance gender equality within the sport.



9. Conclusions



Conclusions

The anarchic and dictatorial governing model exercised by the former IWF President Dr. Tamás Ajan, who was linked for over 44 years to the Federation, has certainly not only conditioned the current IWF's governance framework and operations but negatively impacted the confidence, moral and overall productivity of most of the internal and external stakeholders within IWF. This has in turn caused manifest damage to the IWF's reputation and standing as an international sports federation.

As per shown in the results and analysis section of this Report, the organisational culture of IWF is perceived by their stakeholders as being mainly characterised for the use and implementation of corrupt practices. In fact most of the National Federations that took part in this investigation valued as fairly or completely accurate the misconducts alleged in the ARD documentary film titled "Der Herr Hebber" ("The Lord of the Lifters") and in the investigation report of Prof. Richard McLaren, referred to herein as the McLaren Independent Weightlifting Investigation.

Indeed, and understanding the natural and expected consequences and outcome of said factual realities the IWF greatly lacks of having and/or implementing good governance standards in sports for managing the organisation. As a result there is a major need to urgently approve and implement control mechanisms to prevent, detect and sanction deviant behaviors, and to reform the overall IWF governance framework providing

standards to efficiently operate by attending to the principles of transparency, public communication, accountability, integrity, social responsibility, and democracy.

In regards of the recently adopted Antidoping management system currently in place for the International Weightlifting Federation, as per the analyzed results it is noted that said changes have been positively valued by the participating National Member Federations in the study, however major improvements need to be done in terms of having an integral doping strategy that can ensure the implementation of effective and efficient doping controls and educational programs as an active strategy to deter, prevent and fight doping, as well as to assure the highest degree of certainty that antidoping regulations in force are equally applied and complied indistinctively of the conditions around the person or people involved.

Since the appointment of the three (3) Independent Members of the RGC, and as per its mandate established in the TOR, major steps have been taken and implemented in order to accomplish the objective of proposing to IWF evidence-based and actions-oriented recommendations to improve its overall governance framework and management operations. That mandate is achieved with the submission and presentation of this Report and the proposed reforms to the Constitution, By-Laws and a series of operational regulations annexed to this document in the next section.



10. Annexes

Independent Members of the Reform and
Governance Commission of the International
Weightlifting Federation

**Governance Report to the:
Reform and Governance
Commission of the
International Weightlifting
Federation**

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9

February
2020

