

## IPC to begin a three-year review process of the 2015 Athlete Classification Code

- South African Paralympian Scott Field to act as independent chair of the Code Drafting Team

Following approval from the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Governing Board, the IPC is to undertake an extensive three-year three-phase open consultation review of the 2015 Athlete Classification Code.

Classification is a unique cornerstone of the Paralympic Movement and performs two critical functions: it determines which Para athletes are eligible to compete in a sport; and it groups athletes into sport classes which aim to ensure that the impact of impairment is minimised and sporting excellence determines which athlete or team is ultimately victorious.

The IPC regularly reviews its policies to remain a robust fit-for-purpose organisation and made a commitment in its Strategic Plan 2019-22 to “address the long-term challenges of classification.” While classification is a complex and ever-evolving area, improving the IPC Athlete Classification Code is seen as essential for the continued development of the Paralympic Movement.

The last review of the IPC Athlete Classification Code was in 2013 and was adopted by the IPC Governing Board leading to the implementation of today’s Code in June 2015. The Code provides policies and procedures for Paralympic classification that should be common to all sports and to the Paralympic Games.

As the final review documents will not be approved until the IPC General Assembly in December 2023, the current 2015 IPC Athlete Classification Code and accompanying International Standards remain in place and fully effective until the new Code’s implementation date. At this stage, it is envisaged that implementation will be January 2025 for summer sports and July 2026 for winter sports.

The extended timeframe for the review is based on the learnings from the previous IPC Governance, IPC Athlete Classification Code and WADA 2021 Code reviews. As well as ensuring there is appropriate time provided for member feedback, discussion and analysis, it also takes into consideration that the next year will be an unprecedented one for the IPC, as it features the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, the IPC General Assembly (including the Governing Board and Presidential elections), and the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games.

Andrew Parsons, IPC President, said: “In October 2019 I committed to the IPC General Assembly that improving classification would be my number one priority for the next two years. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenge to the Paralympic Movement in many ways, we have stuck to our promise that we would initiate a consultation process by 2021. This review of the 2015 IPC Athlete

Classification Code will be thorough and done in partnership with all our members so that together we can develop a better system.”

The Code Drafting Team has already been established by the IPC Governing Board to oversee the Review and will begin work on it immediately. It will be led by an independent chair, Scott Field. The South African swimmer, who competed in the Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004 Paralympics, will lead on presenting to the IPC General Assembly, Governing Board and Membership.

Parsons added: “I am pleased that Scott Field will chair the Code Drafting Team leading the review. Scott has fantastic knowledge and experience in the classification field. He has been on the IPC Classification Committee since 2012 and has a remarkable understanding of the Code and its purpose. As well as appreciating the challenges our members are facing in this area, he also brings a vital athlete perspective to the table. He is the ideal person to lead this review.”

The members of the Team have been selected because of their experience and knowledge of classification, and their association with the broad IPC membership. By including individuals from the IPC Governing Board, IPC Classification Committee, athletes, classifiers, International Federations (IFs), National Paralympic Committees and International Organisations of Sport for the Disabled, it ensures that many different perspectives from the membership are included.

Scott Field, Chair of the Code Drafting Team, said: “Classification is what differentiates Paralympic sports from all other sports. It ensures Paralympic athletes can achieve sporting excellence, regardless of whether they have a severe or minimal impairment.

“Underpinning classification in all the sports of the Paralympic Movement is the Athlete’s Classification Code and the accompanying International Standards. The IPC wants to ensure that these are fit for purpose in our ever-changing world. We will be calling on all stakeholders to assist in strengthening Paralympic classification by assisting us with suggested amendments to these policy documents during the review period. It is an exciting opportunity for all to play their part in creating a better, more equitable Paralympic Movement.”

The review will incorporate the following three phases of open consultation, with the anticipated timeline as follows (all dates TBC):

- April 2021 to May 2022 – Phase 1: consultation, analysis and drafting of feedback, and first draft presented and agreed by IPC Governing Board.
- June 2022 to February 2023 – Phase 2: consultation, analysis and drafting of feedback, and second draft presented and agreed by IPC Governing Board.

- March 2023 to October 2023 - Phase 3: consultation, analysis and drafting of feedback, and final draft presented and agreed by IPC Governing Board.
- December 2023 - Final draft anticipated to be approved by IPC General Assembly.
- 1 January 2024 - Final documents published, including Model Rules for the IFs.
- 2025 - New Code and International Standards anticipated to enter into force for summer sports, subject to consultation with the IPC membership.
- 2026 - New Code and International Standards anticipated to enter into force for winter sports. This will come in following the 2026 Paralympic Winter Games and apply for the start of the next winter season 2026/27. Again, this is subject to consultation with the IPC membership.

There will be regular meetings and calls with the IPC Membership throughout the consultation phases, and a series of education sessions, particularly once the final documents are published in 2024. The Code Drafting Team will also be supported by several sub-groups, who will lead on the drafting of the various supporting documents.

As part of this process, the Code Drafting Team will gather and analyse feedback through open consultation phases. This will include stakeholder feedback from the IPC Athletes' Council, IPC Medical Committee, IPC Science and Research Working Group, IPC Board of Appeal of Classification, classifiers, human rights experts, and other appropriate experts.

A web page has been created on the IPC website to provide the latest updates on the IPC Classification Code Review process:

<http://www.paralympic.org/Classification/code-review>

## Notes to Editors

### List of representatives on the Code Drafting Team and Sub-Groups for the 2015 Athlete Classification Code Review Process

Code Drafting Team:

- Scott Field (Chair)
- Tim Reddish (IPC Governing Board representative)
- Anne Hart (IPC Classification Committee representative)
- Kurt Fearnley (Athlete representative)
- TBC (Second Athlete representative)
- Tom Dielen (International Federation representative)
- Leila Marques Mota (National Paralympic Committee representative)
- Hilary Beeton (National Paralympic Committee representative)

- Rudi Van den Abbeele (International Organisations of Sports for the Disabled representative)
- Fatima Fernandes (Classifier representative)
- Jonathan Taylor QC (Lead drafter)
- Tea Cistic (Ex officio member)
- James Lancaster (Ex officio member)
- Liz Riley (Ex officio member)

The International Standard for Eligible Impairments Sub-Group:

- Jürgen Schwittai / Moran Samuel (leads)
- Sean Tweedy
- Iain Gowans
- Peter Derksen
- Jan Burns
- Viola Altman

The International Standard for Classifier Personnel and Training Sub-Group:

- Jenni Cole (lead)
- Pablo Perez
- Erin Popovich / Jürgen Schwittai
- Raul Reina
- Sharyn Gregory

The International Standard for Classification Data Protection Sub-Group:

- Daniel Cooper / Kurt Wimmer (leads)
- Graham Arthur
- Catherine Ure
- Fatima Fernandes

For further information, please contact Philip Dorward, IPC Head of Communications on e-mail: [philip.dorward@paralympic.org](mailto:philip.dorward@paralympic.org). Alternatively, please visit [www.paralympic.org](http://www.paralympic.org)

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) is the global governing body of the Paralympic Movement. It co-ordinates the organisation of the Summer and Winter Paralympic Games. The IPC's vision is to make for an inclusive world through Para sport.