CRDSC SDRCC
Centre de Règlement des Différends Sportifs du Canada
Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada

## Request for Proposals (RFP)

# Internal Appeal Processes in Canadian Sport Review and Modernization Options

The Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC) is seeking proposals from qualified individual consultants, firms or small teams to assess whether the internal appeal mechanisms and policies of Canadian sport organizations, particularly federally funded National Sport Organizations (NSOs), meet the current needs of the Canadian sport system.

The goal is to provide practical recommendations to the SDRCC and Sport Canada on the role of sport organizations' internal appeal mechanisms, how those mechanisms should be managed, and how they should interact with the SDRCC services. The recommendations will also include options for modernizing the requirements applicable to sport organizations, particularly in the context of Sport Canada contribution agreements.

The consultant will lead the assessment with support from the SDRCC staff and consultation with Sport Canada. Reports will be prepared in English; the SDRCC will arrange French-language translation separately.

Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC)
6400 Auteuil ave, Suite 245
Brossard (Quebec) J4Z 3P5

October 19 2026

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| Issuer | Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC) |
| RFP issue date | By October 19, 2026 |
| Proposal closing date | Proposals must be submitted to applications@crdsc-sdrcc.ca by November 5, 2026, 4:00 p.m. ET |
| Questions | Email questions: applications@crdsc-sdrcc.ca by October 29, 2026, 4:00 p.m. ET |
| Expected Timeframe | Appointment and kickoff during the week of November 9, 2026, agreement; preliminary report in January 2027; final report and recommendations in March 2027. |

## Background and Purpose

National Sport Organizations are generally expected to provide internal appeal mechanisms in their policies. As a condition for funding from Sport Canada, they are required to have discipline and appeal policies and procedures in place that include access to independent dispute resolution through the SDRCC. However, observations from recent years indicate that these processes vary in quality and that many organizations do not always have the actual capacity to administer them effectively.

Some organizations have amended their policies to limit or remove the internal appeal process, and others have an appeal mechanism in place but lack the expertise, resources or independence needed to implement it when a dispute arises.

This assessment will examine whether internal appeal processes remain accessible, fair and effective, respect the principles of natural justice and enable participants to exercise their right to appeal. It will also assess whether sport organizations have the capacity, resources and independence to administer these processes. The assessment will consider the implications of disputes proceeding directly to the SDRCC and identify options to improve consistency and coordination within Canada's sport appeal system.

Recommendations must address the respective roles of sport organizations and the SDRCC and inform Sport Canada's consideration of internal appeal requirements in contribution agreements. Options must be assessed objectively, without bias or predetermined conclusions.

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## Project Scope

### Current Practices and Consultation

- Review a proposed and justified sample of internal appeal policies of Canadian sport organizations, particularly federally funded National Sport Organizations (NSOs). The sample should reflect different organizational sizes, resources and appeal mechanisms. The consultant shall propose the sample and provide a rationale for its selection, which shall be subject to SDRCC review and approval. Examine grounds for appeal, eligibility, timelines, fees, procedural steps, independence safeguards and access to the SDRCC. Assess how the mechanisms operate in practice, not only how policies are written including completed appeals and, where evidence is available, matters that were abandoned, resolved informally or not pursued because of perceived barriers. Identify strengths and gaps, and explain the sample's coverage and limitations.
- Consult sport administrators, athletes and other users of appeal processes. Obtain input from Sport Canada and relevant dispute resolution professionals, such as arbitrators, mediators, lawyers and Independent Third Parties. Include perspectives from national, multisport, provincial and territorial sport organizations. Document capacity, costs, delays, decision quality, perceived independence and barriers to access.

### Comparable Models and Scenario Analysis

- Examine relevant models in Canada and internationally, including those in sport and other sectors, where relevant. Compare the minimum requirements, shared or pooled mechanisms, hybrid arrangements and increased or direct access to the SDRCC in defined circumstances.
- Assess the financial, operational, ethical, legal and systemic implications for organizations, participants, the SDRCC and Sport Canada. Explain cost assumptions, responsibilities, risks and implementation requirements for each option.

### Reporting and Recommendations

- Prepare and prioritize evidence-based findings and practical recommendations, including estimated costs, responsibilities and implementation steps. Assess each recommendation against its likely effects on future users of the appeal processes, including accessibility, timeliness, procedural fairness, independence, affordability and the ability to obtain an effective remedy. Identify data limitations and distinguish verified findings from stakeholder perceptions.

Bidders must propose and justify the assessment's scope, including the number and profiles of sport organizations selected for the review of internal appeal policies and practices, the planned consultations and the comparable models to be examined. Explain the sample's coverage and limitations, how users' perspectives will be included and what support is expected from the SDRCC staff. The SDRCC will coordinate confirmation of the NSO population and applicable requirements with Sport Canada. Bidders must identify any information or access they require from the SDRCC or Sport Canada.

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## Deliverables and Schedule

| Target Date | Deliverable or Project Milestone |
|---|---|
| Week of November 9, 2026 | Confirm the work plan, policy review scope and sample, consultations, the SDRCC staff contributions, data safeguards, review windows and exact report dates. |
| November to December 2026 | Policy review, consultations, comparative research and scenario analysis. Provide short progress updates at agreed checkpoints and flag gaps or delays. |
| January 2027 | Preliminary report with findings from the review of the selected organizations' policies and practices, identified strengths and gaps, a comparison of appeal mechanisms, an anonymized consultation summary and initial scenario analysis for the SDRCC and Sport Canada input. Explain the sample's coverage and limitations |
| March 2027 | Final report with scenario and cost analysis, prioritized recommendations, implementation steps, an executive summary, sources and limitations. Present the results to the SDRCC and Sport Canada. |

Propose exact report dates within the January and March windows and allow time for consolidated comments. Any extension of an agreed deadline requires prior written agreement with the SDRCC project lead. The fixed fee must include one consolidated review of the preliminary report, revisions for the final report and correction of errors identified during final validation. Deliver reports in editable MS Word and PDF; working comparisons and presentation materials must also be editable. Provide the revised final report in clean and tracked versions, with a concise summary of the disposition of substantive review comments.

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## Working Arrangements and Boundaries

The SDRCC will designate a project lead, provide available background materials and operational context, facilitate access to contacts and coordinate staff contributions and consolidated comments. Sport Canada will be consulted during the assessment. The consultant is responsible for the research, consultations, analysis and deliverables; the division of work will be agreed at kickoff.

The SDRCC project lead will review and accept deliverables for purposes of contract performance against the agreed scope, evidence and completeness. The SDRCC and Sport Canada retain responsibility for any policy decisions arising from the assessment. The consultant retains independence over findings and recommendations and will provide advance notice of any work beyond the scope of the mandate. Additional services may proceed only with prior written authorization, an agreed fee and a mutually acceptable schedule.

Consultations must accommodate participation in English and French. The proposal should address how this will be accomplished, including any support needed from the SDRCC. Reports and the executive summary will be submitted in English. French-language translation is outside the consultant's scope of work and will be managed by the SDRCC. The proposed fee and schedule must include a reasonable allowance for responding to substantive questions arising during the SDRCC's translation review.

## Qualifications

- Demonstrated experience in policy or program evaluation, qualitative research, stakeholder consultation and comparative analysis; ability to produce concise, practical recommendations.
- Knowledge of Canadian sport governance and appeal or dispute resolution processes, with access to the expertise needed to assess legal, procedural and financial implications.
- Ability to manage a proportionate assessment, work efficiently and collaboratively with the SDRCC staff and any advisers invited by the SDRCC, and meet the stated milestones. Identify the project lead, each person's role and availability, and any subcontractors. The SDRCC will evaluate the people proposed for this assignment.

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## Proposal Contents and Pricing

Submit a concise proposal, preferably no more than eight pages excluding CVs, references and work samples. Include CVs for all proposed individuals and at least one short, relevant work sample that may be shared without breaching confidentiality. The proposal must address:

- **Understanding and approach:** Explain your understanding of the mandate and propose a practical methodology covering all workstreams. Specify and justify the number and types of organizations selected for the policy and practice review, the planned consultations and the comparable models to be examined. Identify the consultation languages, explain how relevant evidence will be accessed and outline anticipated assessment limitations.

- **Schedule and personnel:** Provide a milestone schedule, name the proposed team members and estimate the days or hours required for each task. Confirm availability from project kickoff through March 2027 and specify the contributions expected from the SDRCC staff.

- **Relevant experience:** Describe relevant evaluation, governance or dispute resolution work and provide two references. Identify the individuals responsible for the legal and financial analysis.

- **Fees and expenses:** Quote a fixed professional fee in Canadian dollars, broken down by deliverable or workstream. Include estimated hours and assumptions regarding meetings and revisions. Show taxes and anticipated expenses separately and state the total amount payable. Itemize travel, consultation tools, transcription and other costs, indicating zero or “included” where applicable. Provide rates for any additional work authorized in writing.

- **Conflicts and restrictions:** With the proposal, disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest, including current or recent engagements, roles or relationships that could reasonably affect, or appear to affect, independence in this assignment. Examples include relationships involving SDRCC, Sport Canada, the organizations studied or relevant proceedings. Describe proposed safeguards. The SDRCC will determine whether a disclosed circumstance can be managed, requires mitigation or renders a proposal ineligible. Disclose any limitations affecting availability, subcontracting or use of the work product.

All services necessary for the proposed assessment, revisions, presentation and translation-review clarification must be included in the price. Optional out-of-scope services may be proposed and priced separately. Identify material assumptions or delivery risks and explain how they will be managed. The SDRCC may clarify or negotiate scope and pricing with one or more prospective service providers in accordance with its procurement process.

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## Evaluation and Award

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following:

- Responsiveness to the scope, deliverables and timeline of the project;
- Experience and reputation of the consultant(s) or firm in relation to the project requirements;
- Professional qualifications of the individuals assigned to the project; and
- Competitiveness of the cost and level of services provided.

The SDRCC may interview shortlisted prospective service providers, contact any references provided and seek additional references reasonably known to the SDRCC. The SDRCC reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to amend, suspend, cancel or reissue this RFP, reject any or all proposals, and negotiate with one or more proponents in accordance with its procurement process. Issuing this RFP does not obligate the SDRCC to award a contract; any award is subject to its approvals and a written agreement.

## Rights and Confidentiality

Maintain confidentiality over non-public information during the assignment and after its completion or termination, and promptly notify the SDRCC of any new or changed conflict of interest. The work plan must address informed consent, secure handling of consultation data and anonymized reporting, and explain how participants in this assignment will be recruited without allowing sport organizations to select or screen the individuals consulted. Participants must not be identified without consent; data access, retention and return or destruction will be agreed in the contract.

Proposal submissions will be retained by the SDRCC and will not be returned. Identify proprietary or confidential material and explain the requested protection. All draft and final deliverables, working papers, research memoranda, analysis notes and related materials prepared under the contract will become the exclusive property of the SDRCC upon payment. The contract will secure the SDRCC's rights to use, share with Sport Canada, reproduce, translate and publish these materials, subject to confidentiality and any disclosed pre-existing or third-party rights. The proposal must identify those rights and any restrictions; the contract must secure the permissions the SDRCC needs for these uses. Payments will be linked to accepted deliverables.

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## Questions

Questions concerning this RFP should be directed to applications@crdsc-sdrcc.ca prior to 4 pm (ET) on October 29, 2026. Responses will be shared with all interested bidders known at that time.

## Submissions

All proposals should be sent only by email to applications@crdsc-sdrcc.ca in a single PDF file no larger than 5 MB and received no later than 4 pm (ET) on November 5, 2026. Offers must remain valid for 30 days after closing. Proposal preparation costs are the bidder's responsibility.

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