Implementation of the Long Term Athlete and Participant Development Model in Speed Skating Canada – 2012-2013 Assessment

Overview of the Leadership and Governance Context and the Use of Implementation Strategies in the Provincial/Territorial Associations

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Research Project
This research report presents the preliminary findings of a research project whose intent was to provide a benchmark assessment which can be used to compare the year-over-year alignment of the Long Term Athlete and Participant Development (LTPAD) model with recommendations made by Speed Skating Canada (SSC) to Provincial/Territorial speed skating associations and clubs. The overall aim of the process is to provide further support to Provincial/Territorial associations and clubs in the implementation of appropriate training and competition conditions for skaters, as well as to provide baseline data that may be used by university research groups in future longitudinal analysis.

This report
The aim of this report is to provide a ‘snap shot’ of what is happening at the provincial/territorial level to inform SSC on how LTPAD recommendations are actually being implemented and assist in the planning/prioritization of future actions to be undertaken by SSC.

Methodology
Online surveys were distributed to, and completed by individuals identified as the LTPAD leaders by the thirteen Provincial/Territorial associations.

Follow-up interviews were conducted with those who had completed the online Provincial/Territorial association surveys. The interviews provided an opportunity for Provincial/Territorial associations to discuss and elaborate on the answers provided in the online survey.

Final Recommendations
Leadership and Governance
The rationale for including questions related to governance and leadership within this study was threefold. First, the McClements (2011) assessment identified concerns regarding the capacity of Provincial/Territorial associations to deliver the necessary changes in line with the LTPAD model. Second, there is a growing recognition across Canada for the need to better understand the way that sports organisations are being organized and governed (Ferkins, Shilbury, & McDonald, 2009; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007; Hums & Maclean, 2009; Sawyer, Bodey, & Judge, 2008). Third, governments are now placing significant emphasis on the importance of effective and good governance practices within the sport domain.

Summarizing the findings of the study, four major recommendations emerge:

a. Ensure that all Provincial/Territorial associations have a formal and efficient governance structure to sustain and develop the sport across the country.

b. Create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SSC and each member branch to ensure that the roles and responsibilities between organisations are clear, with a shared vision for the development of speed skating and speed skaters.

c. Ensure that support to help each province by the equivalent of at least one full time technical staff is available from SSC. The individual assigned to a given province would be accountable for the development of the sport and the implementation of the LTPAD model.

d. Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) at the branch level should include all the programs that a branch is expected to deliver on behalf of SSC, as well as those that the branches will develop as part of their contribution to the development of speed skating and the implementation of the LTPAD model in Canada.

Implementation Strategies
This research provides a first attempt by SSC to gather information on actions, other than competition changes, that have been undertaken by provinces/territories to implement the LTPAD model. The results reveal an important interest and desire to implement the LTPAD model and the many creative initiatives that sprang up in its wake. However, the most important conclusion relates to significant discrepancies in definitions and vocabulary. For the authors, these discrepancies illustrate that SSC and its branches are still at an exploratory level in the implementation of LTPAD actions. Therefore, it is recommended that SSC:

a. Discuss an accountability methodology for the implementation of the LTPAD model with all the branches and ensure that a formal LTPAD leadership mechanism is in place.

b. Provide training for branch administrators and technical leaders on the nature of sport programs and on the manner in which to conduct program development (including all the steps: Needs analysis; Program creation; Implementation and assessment planning; Implementation; and, Assessment).

c. Develop a list of well-defined optional programs and actions to be created or implemented by the branches aimed at supporting long term athlete development.

d. Provide training and tools to assist the branches in conducting member consultations and ensuring appropriate integration of member feedback into an evidence-based decision-making process.

e. Initiate program development linked with easy marketing initiatives related to the recruitment of new skaters with an emphasis on the FUNdamentals and Learning to Train stages of development in regions where there are insufficient participants to provide meaningful, developmentally appropriate training and competition opportunities.

f. Initiate a reflection process related to the relationship between a coach’s long term development and an athlete’s long term development.

Competitions

SSC has identified the importance of evaluating “existing competition structures, formats and schedules to ensure that goals and decisions are aligned with the LTPAD plan and specifically with regards to the skaters’ stage of development” (Find Your Edge, 2006: p. 41). Acting as an early leader, SSC made important changes in its national events. To ensure that the competition system is a “Good servant and not a poor master”, Provincial/Territorial associations have taken the lead to adapt provincial competitions targeting skaters in the FUNdamentals, Learning to Train and Training to Train stages.

The major recommendations emerging from the answers to surveys follow.

To support the Provincial/Territorial associations in the changes to their competition system, SSC should:

a. Place an emphasis on education with regard to the two different pathways of LTPAD: Active/Competitive for Life (represents the largest part of skaters in the 14/15+ years age category) and Excellence (represents a small part of the skaters in the 14-15+ years age category).

b. Provide skill-based races/challenges templates to assist the branches and aimed at ensuring that FUNdamentals and Learning to Train events are appropriate (and not based on laps and distances).

c. Support and facilitate a process for provinces/territories, particularly in relation to Groups 1 and 2, to ensure that skaters at the Learning and Training to Train stages have access to an appropriate number of competitions.
d. Analyse the content of the “one size fits all” competitions (including skaters from all stages), to ensure that the activity load is not too great for the skaters in the first stages of development and yet sufficient for skaters in the Excellence pathway.

e. Educate the members on the reasons why the duration and formats of some races are not recommended.

f. Elaborate a set of formal recommendations related to performance recognition at competitive events.

g. Develop additional benchmarks for evaluating the effectiveness of competitions, including the number of racing opportunities skaters receive per hour, the number of development objectives that are recognized, the number of tracks used, etc.

**Conclusion**

This research project paints a picture of the governance and leadership context, the actions undertaken to implement the LTPAD model and, more specifically, what is happening in competitions across the country. If this report is perceived as painting a negative picture of many aspects of the implementation of the LTPAD model in speed skating, it’s because the goal of the study was to provide a needs analysis and recommendations to assist SSC in its efforts to support the Provincial/Territorial associations. The goal was also to provide a ‘snap-shot’ of the training and competition environment that is currently being provided to skaters, rather than a picture of what is going well or a comparison to how things were prior to the implementation of the LTPAD model.

This does not mean that nothing is being done well. In fact, quite the opposite is true. If not the first, SSC is one of the first national sport organisations to undertake this kind of empirical assessment. Understanding that the sport, after 10 years of implementation and recognized as a leader in the field, is still at the exploratory level on many aspects of its implementation of the LTPAD model, is very revealing. It speaks volumes about the complexity of implementation and the need for more focused and directed resources aimed at ensuring the alignment and integration of programs at the club, provincial and national levels of the LTPAD model. As is often said, “Recognizing that we know nothing is a first step to wisdom”.

The enthusiasm of the SSC stakeholders and the Provincial/Territorial association representatives toward this project demonstrated an important interest vis-à-vis the implementation of LTPAD and the model’s enhancement.

If there are three recommendations to retain from this research it would be for SSC to:

1. Capitalize and build on the engagement and enthusiasm of stakeholders across the country to put forward more collaborative actions;
2. Pursue the analysis of the different needs of each Province/Territory to build strategies that are reflective of the priorities of each region and the development of speed skating in Canada;
3. Provide formal support on building effective governance and leadership in each branch. Clarity in roles and responsibilities and decision-making processes (governance) is critical to continuing and accelerating the implementation of the LTPAD model.
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INTRODUCTION

In the relentless pursuit of excellence, Speed Skating Canada (SSC) has identified the Long Term Athlete and Participant Development (LTPAD) model (or program) as a strategic priority (SSC Strategic Plan 2012-2020). In 2003, when SSC began developing its LTAD model two years prior to the publication of Canadian Sport for Life (2005), it was one of the first national sport organisations to complete its sport-specific LTPAD model Find your Edge (2006). SSC is regarded by many as a pioneer in LTAD/LTPAD implementation.

In 2007, SSC established a working group to provide leadership in the implementation of the LTPAD model. In 2008, the working group initiated the competition review process and formed the Competition and Events System Review Team whose primary responsibility was the creation of the Racing on Skates document (Racing on Skates, 2009). The central recommendations of this document were to align the competition structure and formats with LTPAD principles. As a result, many changes have occurred to national and provincial competitions across the sport. More recently, SSC conducted its first formal assessment of these changes (McClements, 2011).

In order the build upon the McClements assessment of 2011, SSC is now beginning to assess and benchmark the implementation of LTPAD more holistically (hence, the LTPAD Implementation Assessment 2012-2013). This report presents some of the initial and preliminary data obtained as part of this recent attempt to benchmark LTPAD implementation. In particular, this report describes the context and strategies that exist at the Provincial/Territorial association level to ease the implementation of the LTPAD model.

The first section explains the broader intention of the 2012-2013 LTPAD Implementation Assessment in its entirety. This is followed by an outline of the specific objectives of the Provincial/Territorial association assessment (on which this report focuses) and the methodology that has been used to obtain the data presented. The remaining sections of this report are dedicated to outlining the preliminary results and the recommendations emerging from the data.

Remarks

• The data presented within this report, and the assessment more generally, is ‘self-reported’ and is therefore more accurately a reflection of Provincial/Territorial associations’ activities rather than the ‘actual reality’ of LTPAD implementation across sport. To obtain ‘actual reality’ data would require substantially more resources (time and funding) than is currently (or even feasibly) available.

• The authors of this report are often offering their own interpretation of the ‘self-reported’ Provincial/Territorial data. As such we (the authors) take full responsibility for any opinions, views and recommendations expressed herein as our own and not necessarily the opinion of the Provincial/Territorial associations or SSC more generally.

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1 See the vignette summary below for an outline of the methodology and major findings of this previous assessment. For the full report see the following: http://www.scribd.com/doc/100306966/LTPAD-Implementation-Branch-Assessment-Report
Nonetheless, the recommendations contained within this report are provided on the basis of sound evidence-based practice and draw upon many years of experience within speed skating specifically and, more generally, the examination of LTAD/CS4L.
2011- Assessment Summary

The 2011 assessment focused mainly on the competition changes. This assessment adopted a survey approach that was inspired by Baseball Canada, to investigate "What" changes have been made and "How". A total of 38 surveys were completed by Presidents, Executive Directors and Technical Representatives of each Provincial/Territorial association. In the results analysis, McClements distinguishes between provincial associations with paid staff and those with volunteers. The following major findings are extracted directly from the executive summary:

"What?"

1. **Communications/Education:** The Provincial/Territorial associations made an excellent effort with specific strategies to communicate with clubs, parents, coaches and officials with about 80% having identified they had communicated with the specific stakeholders.

2. **Competition Structure:** For Club or regional competitions, over 83% of the Provincial/Territorial associations reported new events being offered. At the level of provincial association responsibility (FUNdamentals and Learning to Train) two-thirds to three-quarters of the Provincial/Territorial associations reported adopting the new age categories.

3. **Activities and Distances:** While the results reported by the Provincial/Territorial associations are not as strong as many would like, the challenge was to make sure developmentally appropriate longer distances, super speed, endurance and team events become part of the ongoing programs (events and training). Unfortunately, with so many changes they were likely viewed not as ideas but absolutes. There is a need for every coach to consider how to achieve the developmentally appropriate objectives related to each stage of development.

"How?"

1. **Governance:** The Provincial/Territorial associations were very proactive in their strategies to provide leadership in the quest for developmentally appropriate programs. Over half the Provincial/Territorial associations assigned a lead Board member and/or a lead staff member. While none of the Provincial/Territorial associations had an implementation committee, many assigned it to an existing committee, changed the committee structure, and some had committees collaborate. In some cases the Board was directly involved. Only 15% did not adopt any of these strategies. In a follow-up question the Provincial/Territorial associations report a rich list of strategies and one branch appropriately identified the need for a “made-in-branch approach”. The approaches were both rich and innovative and it was recommended that there be a forum or platform for Provincial/Territorial associations to discuss and share these ideas.

2. **Program Support:** The program support questions focused on funding and reporting mechanisms. While there are Provincial/Territorial associations that cannot access provincial or territorial funds, many can and have. It is important to note many Provincial/Territorial associations did not respond to this question. It is a concern that funding is neither available nor applied for and it is recommended that SSC should consider ways to assist the Provincial/Territorial associations access funds.

3. **Branch Capacity to Make Changes:** For SSC and its standing committees to provide leadership and set priorities, it is crucial to be aware of the factors that have facilitated change and factors that limit implementation strategies. The most interesting finding in this instance, is the dramatic difference between Provincial/Territorial associations with and without staff. The factors that assisted Provincial/Territorial associations with staff were the factors that limited non-staff Provincial/Territorial associations. This is not a problem that can be easily solved but the recommendations focus on the consideration of these two categories of Provincial/Territorial associations differently and of proactive measures related to branch capacity.

4. **Technology and Competition Models:** The issue of technology was only identified once in the surveys but merited comment. Developmentally appropriate skating would benefit from the appropriate technological and technical support of viable event formats. The recommendations regarding this factor focus on variable event models that are supported by suitable technology.
SSC is now undertaking an LTPAD Implementation Assessment which builds upon the McClements assessment in two ways. First, it provides a broader and more holistic examination of a number of areas that include, but are not limited to, governance and leadership, implementation strategies, and competition. Second, unlike the McClements 2011 Assessment, this assessment is intended to provide a benchmark assessment which can be used to compare year on year (we suggest bi-annually) to assess the LTPAD alignment across Provincial/Territorial associations and clubs.

To be more specific, the LTPAD Implementation Assessment 2012-2013 has two key components: an examination of Provincial/Territorial associations and, an examination of the club environment. The overall aim of the process is to help SSC provide further support to Provincial/Territorial associations and clubs in the implementation of appropriate training and competition conditions for skaters as well as provide a greater understanding of factors that enable and/or limit the implementation of the LTPAD model.

1. Club Project

The specific goal of the Club project is to provide information to SSC and its related Provincial/Territorial associations that will help them better support member clubs. The objective of this survey was to describe the training and competition environment offered to skaters in all stages of development. To this end, a survey was sent to every member speed skating club. The analysis of this data will eventually lead to 13 individual provincial/territorial reports. Some clubs may also be contacted for a follow-up discussion and provided with further guidance by a Regional Development Mentor on their LTPAD implementation. As the 2012-2013 LTPAD Implementation Assessment is the first holistic assessment of its kind, the survey will be used as a benchmark for tracking LTPAD implementation over time. Accordingly, the club surveys should be administered again in the future (i.e., two years after the completion of the provincial/territorial reports). As the club survey data comprises the bulk of the data analyzed (due to the sheer number of clubs), the club data and report will follow at a later date.

2. Provincial/Territorial Association Project

The aim of the Provincial/Territorial association project (and subsequently this report) is to describe the context in which Provincial/Territorial associations operate and the strategies that they are using to facilitate the implementation of the LTPAD model. The intention is threefold: First, describe the governance and leadership context within the provinces and territories; Second, identify the types of actions (or strategies) that have been undertaken to implement the LTPAD model; Third, describe the present competition conditions offered to skaters at all stages of development.

To achieve these aims, online surveys were distributed and completed by individuals identified by Provincial/Territorial association presidents as their LTPAD leaders. In addition to the survey data, interviews were also conducted with the representative of each Provincial/Territorial association as well as with key SSC leaders in LTPAD implementation. Not only would this allow effective data triangulation (Mayan, 2009; Yin, 1994), but it would ensure that the precise benchmarks established within this assessment reflected the original recommendations of the Find your Edge (2006) and Racing on Skates (2009) documents.

One of the lessons drawn from the interviews was the concern expressed by Provincial/Territorial associations regarding their ability to make effective comparisons between provinces and territories. Often, interviewees spoke of the difference in membership size and
context. In heeding these remarks and to address this concern, an attempt was made by the authors to group the provinces and territories. Table 1 shows the composition of the four groups created along with their respective number of member clubs and registered skaters in 2012-2013: Group 1 (1-2 clubs); Group 2 (3-7 clubs); Group 3 (14-30 clubs); Group 4 (31+ clubs), composed only of Quebec with 50 member clubs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Province / Territory</th>
<th># Clubs</th>
<th># Skaters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Newfoundland &amp; Labrador</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yukon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nunavut</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NWT</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NB</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BC</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Québec</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4968</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These groupings were primarily based upon the number of clubs operating within a province/territory. While admittedly over-simplistic, grouping in this manner does to some extent allow for more meaningful comparisons to be drawn, at least with respect to 'like-for-like' -sized provinces/territories. For some questions (typically detailed questions that required nominal answers, e.g., yes or no) these groupings were considered redundant. However, where possible, data was analyzed using these groupings.
1. Results and Discussion

Before presenting the formal results of the Provincial/Territorial association survey, it is worth briefly discussing the reactions of the Provincial/Territorial association representatives to the study. All the respondents indicated that the survey was beneficial; the “questions were fine” (Interview 7), and most respondents indicated that it did not take too long to complete (Figure 1). However, some participants did indicate the desire to provide further comments on the online survey itself.

![Pie chart showing time taken to complete the survey](image)

**Figure 1.** Time Taken to Complete the Provincial/Territorial Association Survey

A notable theme emerging from the interview process was the difficulty for some participants to gather all the requested survey information. A few participants admitted that in some, albeit exceptional, cases they “guessed” on some answers (Interview 8). Others asked their fellow colleagues for information:

- “I did talk to our Executive Director. I phoned him up for the answers of some questions.” (Interview 4)
- “I had to gather information from many people... I actually requested some of my staff, the related people in my staff to help me to answer to have more precise answers than I would be able to give myself.” (Interview 13)

Moreover, participants indicated they inherently valued the LTPAD Implementation Assessment process:

- “It just reinforced we aren’t where we need to be yet. We still have to come up with some better ways to get everybody on board.” (Interview 7)

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2 Some results are presented using percentages to facilitate the presentation of data. The authors recognize that the percentages are not necessarily representative due to the small sample size (i.e., 13 Provinces/Territories).
• “I think it could be a good reminder of what we should be doing, or could be doing.” (Interview 9)
• “When I was looking at the survey, I had probably more ideas of things that we can or should be doing... It was good to just trigger some of those thoughts.” (Interview 11)
• “I love being involved with this. What you are doing is really, really good… If you had just given me the survey, you wouldn’t get a picture about what I think about LTPAD and what’s happening in our province.” (Interview 4)
• “It made me think more about making sure what we’ve got... if we’re still on track with what we are doing. It just made me think you know: hey, are we doing this right?” (Interview 1)

If the survey requested a little of work for some of the participants, it was nevertheless generally well received. Many Provincial/Territorial association representatives looked forward to this report and the provincial reports that would follow (which would include the club information).

The sections that follow present the data obtained by the Provincial/Territorial association survey and the supplementary interviews. In line with the threefold emphasis of the Provincial/Territorial association survey previously outlined, the data is presented under three broad sections: 1) **Leadership and Governance**; 2) **Implementation Strategies**; and, 3) **Competition Reviews**. These sections loosely follow the same format. First, the sections outline the significance and relevance of the area of interest, followed by a presentation of the results. Each section is then concluded by providing an interpretation of the data and recommendations are formulated.

1. **Leadership and Governance**

The first of the three major areas that this assessment focuses on is governance and leadership. This section stems from the recognition that unless Provincial/Territorial associations have the necessary capacity, good leadership and effective governance, the implementation of the LTPAD model is unlikely to occur. The rationale for including questions related to governance and leadership within this assessment was threefold: First, the McClements (2011) assessment identified concerns regarding the capacity of Provincial/Territorial associations to deliver the necessary changes in line with the LTPAD model; Second, there is a growing recognition across Canada for the need to better understand the way that sport organisations are being organized and governed (Ferkins, Shilbury, & McDonald, 2009; Hoye & Cuskelley, 2007; Hums & Maclean, 2009; Sawyer, Bodey, & Judge, 2008); Third, governments are now placing significant emphasis on the importance of effective and ‘good’ governance practices within the sport domain.

1. **Leadership**

The McClement’s (2011) assessment, vis-à-vis Provincial/Territorial association technical directors, indicated that they lacked human resources (54%) and technical leadership (46%) or expertise (38%). Moreover, and crucially, these limitations constrained Provincial/Territorial associations to deliver the necessary changes in line with the LTPAD model; Second, there is a growing recognition across Canada for the need to better understand the way that sport organisations are being organized and governed (Ferkins, Shilbury, & McDonald, 2009; Hoye & Cuskelley, 2007; Hums & Maclean, 2009; Sawyer, Bodey, & Judge, 2008); Third, governments are now placing significant emphasis on the importance of effective and ‘good’ governance practices within the sport domain.

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3 See, for example, [http://www.sirc.ca/governance/index.cfm](http://www.sirc.ca/governance/index.cfm) under the assumption that “improving governance practices will unleash potential in the sport system” (Sport Canada, 2011: p. 1).
associations' ability to make program changes (see Table BC1 from McClements, 2011). In this research, more details are provided on the available human resources in the branches. This section provides an overview of the leadership capacity within the provinces/territories. In particular, it examines the human resources capacity of Provincial/Territorial associations by focusing on the staff, provincial coaches, volunteers and officials.

a. Staff
Table 2 shows that, at the moment of the investigation, seven Provincial/Territorial associations had paid staff and six had no paid staff. Of the associations with paid staff, all of them have at least one full-time employee and three had at least one part-time employee.

Table 2
Number of full-time and part-time employees in each Provincial/Territorial association

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province/Territory</th>
<th>Full-Time</th>
<th>Part-Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Territories</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunavut</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newfoundland and Labrador</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Edward Island</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Provincial/Territorial Coach
Five provinces/territories have an identified Provincial/Territorial coach (Figure 2). According to the interviews, the role of the provincial coach varies from one province to another. When the province is covering the expenses of a provincial coach, it is generally for the role of leading skaters in competitions. Where a provincial coach is a full-time employee, much more is expected:

- “Our Provincial Coach builds his practice plan. Then he gives that to the clubs so the clubs can build their practice plans using his as a guide. Then our Provincial Coach visits with the clubs throughout the season.” (Interview 1)
- “That whole area of coaching education and practice, practice probably would fall onto my plate, in terms of, leadership of that and hopefully make some changes as to what a practice looks like.” (Interview 4)
Figure 2. Number of provinces where there is a Provincial Coach

The authors note that all provinces with staff who did not identify having a dedicated provincial coach have either part or full-time technical staff in the form of Technical Directors and/or Sport Managers.

c. Volunteer Leadership

Table 3 shows a significant variation in the number of volunteers engaged in the leadership of Provincial/Territorial associations. The Board of Directors roster varies from 5 to 11 across associations. These are within a normal range, with some provinces/territories with larger boards indicating that their composition formally includes all member clubs. Three associations within Group 1 see their volunteer leadership concentrated within the Board of Directors, while across other provinces and territories there are significant variations in the number of individuals engaged in technical and administrative committees. There are two notable data points: Alberta’s Technical and Administrative committee(s) is composed of a single person; Quebec appears to have no administrative committee(s).

While it is clear that volunteer leadership is essential to the delivery of sport programs, what is not known in considering these results is whether or not the size of technical and administrative committees is a function of the availability of qualified volunteers or, determined by the needs of the organisation for effective operations. Is there a relationship between these structures and the staff capacity of each organisation? What are the mechanisms used to appoint or elect individuals into each role? Most importantly, what can this information tell us about a Provincial/Territorial association’s ability to fulfill its role in the implementation of the LTPAD model (as discussed in section 2.1.2)?

Table 3
Number of volunteers in each province
1. Role of the Provincial/Territorial Associations in LTPAD Implementation

In order to develop athletes effectively through a delivery system, Martindale, Collins and Dubney (2005) emphasized the importance of defining clear roles and responsibilities. Similarly, if the LTPAD model is to be delivered effectively, it is important that all levels of delivery are clear about their respective roles and responsibilities. This section compares the perceptions of the Provincial/Territorial association representatives against the perceptions of the principal stakeholders of LTPAD implementation within SSC, as the latter’s perceptions relate to the Provincial/Territorial associations’ role in the implementation of the LTPAD model.

a. Perceptions of the Role of Provincial/Territorial Associations

The Provincial/Territorial associations surveyed were asked to describe the role of their Provincial/Territorial associations with regards to Long Term Participant and Athlete Development. Their answers were as follows:

• “Our Provincial/Territorial association is actively seeking ways to offer appropriate level activity, practices and competitions appropriate to stage of development of the skater.”

• “We have been trying to behave as the leader/initiator of the greater actions taken in the province to implement LTPAD and also trying to motivate our administrators, coaches, and other actors of our sport to implement the model. Over the past three or four years, as such leader, our association has taken the steps to implement the principles of LTPAD in major sectors of activities of speed skating in the province and has also tried to contribute to the same in Canada. We also guided our clubs and members in their training and thinking related to the LTPAD principles’ implementation. We created a working group whose mandate was to address the implementation of LTPAD in Competitions and Athletes Development Training Structures.”

• “Through our various committees and through the role of Technical Director, the Association implements programs that are in-line with LTPAD principles.”

• “The Provincial/Territorial association is the leader in this role as we implement the changes that are then accepted by the clubs.”

• “Supported coach education, attendance at seminars to discuss LTPAD, dissemination of SSC information on LTPAD, revamping of competition format to better suit LTPAD, set-up of smaller tracks on practice ice surface.”

• “The Technical Committees established which LTPAD concepts could be implemented (age grouping, distances) and how (changes to competition calendar, racing series division). The support of the Board of Directors was required to introduce changes to the province. The Association coordinated an open dialogue between clubs and committees to address as many needs as possible. Education and awareness about LTPAD: the Association has provided support documentation to help families understand the changes being made, raise awareness about on-line resources, presentations have been held at some clubs, distribution of resource materials (DVDs, booklets).”

• “Play a role in set-up of competition format, training camps, coaching training.”

• “Completely following guidelines of SSC to the best of our ability.”

• “We are a very small organisation so the role is minimal.”

• “Collected information on LTPAD; Disbursed info to clubs; Assists with putting in new track distances; Supports club efforts to implement new age groups and distances.”
• “We followed LTPAD from a very early stage. We adopted our competition format the same season as SSC, including age categories, and have continued to trial and experiment new racing events. We have had some education sessions for parents (e.g., a "booth" at provincial championships) and coaches (at the coaches’ retreat).”

• “We are very ahead in LTPAD. Our competitions were done under the new format in the first year that it was introduced (100-meter track, etc.). We have ability and fun meets for the younger skaters. Our government is very supportive of LTPAD and gives grants to provincial and city organisations for LTPAD efforts. In the past we have used this money to organize educational days or activity days depending on what we feel is needed.”

The answers in the survey were varied and centered mostly on competition circuits and the dissemination of information. Some provinces also identified a role in athlete training and the education of coaches and administrators.

During the follow-up interview, participants were asked if their answer corresponded to what they are actually doing or if it was related to what they think they should be doing. Most indicated that it was both, but that in an ideal world where there would be no barriers, their role would be to facilitate or lead the implementation in competition and training. Here are some examples of answers received:

• “Help the clubs to adapt the LTPAD principles to their context…”

• “Take the lead to fulfill changes and to educate the members on the principles…”

• “Lead the setup of the competitions …”

• “Look on what is happening and react to the observations and to the questions, like in the club…”

Three participants also underlined the importance of coaches’ education by saying that the Provincial/Territorial association should develop the coaches at an early age, support coaches’ education and ensure that coaches’ training includes specific education on the LTPAD model.

Most of the participants from Group 1 and Group 2 related their answer to the fact that they have very few clubs. For those representatives, it is difficult to implement the LTPAD model in the manner that SSC recommends because of the lack of skaters and/or the lack of capacity within these Provincial/Territorial associations. As one participant said “LTPAD principles are the same for everyone across the country… but it’s really different from Provincial/Territorial association to Provincial/Territorial association because we have different needs.” (Interview 4)

b. Perceptions of SSC LTPAD Leaders Regarding the Provincial/Territorial Associations’ Role in LTPAD Implementation

When asked about the role that the Provincial/Territorial associations should play in the implementation of LTPAD model, the SSC LTPAD leaders placed a lot of importance on leadership. They believe that Provincial/Territorial associations should:

• “Make sure they are in leadership position in their province/territory – read the status of their province/territory and find their own implementations strategies.”
• “Have a dedicated person for all LTPAD implementation process (planning, implementation and assessment).”

From the perspective of SSC leaders, it is also important that all Provincial/Territorial associations take the time required to “understand the LTPAD principles in depth” so they can “commit, become accountable and ensure their members are”.

In the view of SSC stakeholders, making sure that an individual or group takes formal leadership of LTPAD implementation would help the Provincial/Territorial associations develop strategies to:

• Ensure the delivery of programs and clinics for the development of coaches and officials
• Provide resources to coaches
• Provide technical leadership/support to clubs
• Ensure the growth of the sport
• Organize and coordinate the competitions structure
• Organize and coordinate a clear pathway for skaters
• Address provincial teams and structures for skaters at the end of the Training to Train stage
• Connect with clubs and coaches and ensure they are committed
• Remain connected with SSC, contribute to understanding and provide feedback
• Share with other Provincial/Territorial associations
• Ensure clubs are attractive
• Recognize the work of coaches and club administrators
• Ensure that resources for parents are available

1. LTPAD and Mission Statements

Reflecting on the mission [statement] of their respective Provincial/Territorial associations, most of the participants said that LTPAD principles are not formally integrated in their mission but that a link to the LTPAD model is present:

“Well, our mission is to develop speed skating in the (Province/Territory). There is a link there. It doesn’t speak to LTPAD, though I mean it’s a very collective holistic type of mission statement.” (Interview 8)

Three participants said they have not looked at their mission [statement] closely or they don’t have a formal one but that the LTPAD principles should be tied to it.

In one province, the representative saw a very close link:

“It’s what it’s all about. It’s in our words and we are trying to live. We are trying to be that organisation where there’s opportunity for physical literacy and being competitive/active for life. Then we also recognize that there are some people who want to pursue excellence and high performance.” (Interview 6)

Table 5, (page 19) shows that three Provincial/Territorial associations indicated they have changed their mission statement to reflect the active implementation of the LTPAD model. None of those three mission statements includes LTPAD in a formal way. There is no formal recommendation from SSC regarding the mission statement of the Provincial/Territorial associations, i.e., should a Provincial/Territorial association’s mission [statement] formally include the LTPAD principles? At the moment, the authors haven’t formulated an opinion.
However, the Provincial/Territorial associations appear to take the position that formal recognition is unnecessary.

In considering roles and responsibilities, this is an area that the authors feel merits further exploration and discussion between SSC, its member branches and clubs, so as to ensure complementary mission statements consistent with the principles of the LTPAD model.

A mission statement is a statement of the purpose of a company, organisation or person, its reason for existing. The mission statement should guide the actions of the organisation, spell out its overall goal, provide a path, and guide decision-making. It provides "the framework or context within which the company’s strategies are formulated." (Wikipedia - Mission Statement, 2013).

1. LTPAD and Programming

When participants were asked about the link between the LTPAD model and the programs offered by their Provincial/Territorial association, most of the participants spoke about how they are changing the structure and format of competitions to align with the LTPAD recommendations. No other specific program seems to exist to support LTPAD implementation. Most of the participants had difficulty identifying programs available within their Provincial/Territorial associations.

In association branches made up of one or two clubs, participants were relating Provincial/Territorial association programs to training programs offered at the club level by saying that they were trying to align with their skaters as coaches: "When you talk about program, I guess. I'm picturing practices on ice and off ice". In one province of Group 3, the participant said:

"There should be a strong link. I don’t think we are there yet. We are putting out information and the resources, but we haven’t approached each club on a one by one basis… It’s coming down from the Provincial/Territorial association, the clubs, but haven’t been getting a lot back and forth." (Interview 7)

In summary, Provincial/Territorial associations do not seem to be clear on what a program is, nor do they know what kind of programs they could/should develop to implement/support LTPAD programs.

1. Decision-making Process

In the survey, the participants were asked "What are technical program and athlete funding decisions based on in your Provincial/Territorial association?". Table 4 shows the number of Provincial/Territorial associations using each type of proposed decision-making process. The comments show that other decision-making processes also include: "Available funding through Government sources"; "Consultation with members"; and, "Recommendations from the training centers and their coaches to our elite program coordinator". One association answered that "there is no athlete or technical program funding in the Provincial/Territorial association".

Some questions must be raised to discuss these results. First, section 1.3 of this document shows that most of the Provincial/Territorial associations had difficulty identifying programs offered by their Provincial/Territorial association, but 12 of 13 participants described a decision-
making process about the programs. One of the two questions may have been misunderstood, or some concepts may have been unclear to the participants. It is possible that the term ‘program’ is not clear and/or the meaning of ‘Gathering evidence from the members’ and ‘Gathering evidence from research’ needs to be clarified for the next assessment. For the participants in this study, gathering evidence from research could mean conducting a scientific study (or hiring someone to do it), or reading scientific papers. Gathering evidence from members has been done in two ways: informally, by getting feedback from spontaneous discussions, emails etc.; and, formally, with a planned strategy using an online survey, working groups, meetings, etc. Other answer choices seem to be clear and one may be added next year: Funding of Government (Interview 9).

Table 4
Number of Branches Using Each Type of Decision-making Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Branches using each type of decision making process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racing on skates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find your Edge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidences members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations of committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations of the Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendations of the President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation of the Technical Director</td>
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Trying to clarify the decision-making process during interviews led to an interesting understanding on how decisions are generally arrived at in Provincial/Territorial Associations. This year, most of the technical decisions have been taken in four ways. The most popular way, chosen by five Provincial/Territorial associations, is through the work of committees. The committees are composed of volunteers and often under the leadership of a representative of the provincial association. For one province where the committees are lead by staff members, “Initiatives related to LTPAD from volunteers at the provincial level are quite uncommon. They are waiting more of this from the provincial… that the professional staff. Because the staff is considered the leader…” (Interview 13). For the Provincial/Territorial associations where this strategy has been chosen, it is a great advantage to have the same person sitting on each
committee. This person ensures the cohesion of the recommendations that go from the committees to the board.

Two Provincial/Territorial associations of Group 3 chose to go through large consultation processes with their members. The reported processes they used this year to make decisions related to competitions are reported at section 2.2.2, as they are not regular processes being used, rather they are specifically implemented for changes to competitions.

In one branch of Group 2, the decisions go directly to the board: “Our Board is as big as our number of clubs. We have six board members and then an executive of four positions on top of that… everybody has an equal say… we have to work together to make things work.” (Interview 8). In that particular branch, the president is taking the lead to make the needed research and present information or propositions: "Everyone works and many times, committee members have several hats on so their volunteer duties are coming secondary… but we all enjoy it when we get together… it’s quite team oriented and people are really good about listening to each other". The situation is similar in another branch of Group 1. The strategy of having one person from each club on the board seems to work really well for them, and it may be a part of a solution for other branches where the decision-making process is less inclusive.

In some provinces or territories (N= 4) from Groups 1 and 2, the decision-making process seems less clear. The participants from three of those Provincial/Territorial associations are all involved as leaders at the provincial and the club levels. For them, it is often a case of "too many hats" (Interviews 2 and 10) and they get the two levels confused: "It’s all one hat for us… We’re both a branch and a club" (Interview 11). During the interview, the participants showed some difficulty talking specifically about the branch. For example, one said: "You are trying to separate the coach and the branch but I am not sure that there is [a distinction]… They’re blurry lines in our world here" (Interview 11). In another branch, most of the decisions lie on the shoulders of the participant: "If I see something that I think, based on LTPAD that should be changed, I don’t have another coach, really to talk about with. I can bring it directly to the board members and say this is probably what we should be doing, want to do that and yeah: here we go!” (Interview 5). For most of the participants, the fact that the club and the branch is the same organisation is an advantage and "…it can be effective for decision-making because you don’t have many persons to discuss with" (Interview 5). In the same vein, another stated, "Even though we want that to change, we worry about the added complication that will pose in terms of getting things done.” (Interview 11). If this situation can ease the decision-making process, it can also be a disadvantage for the development of speed skating in the province. For example, if the budget is the same envelope for the club and the branch, as is the case for at least one province, it may become tricky to invest in the development of new clubs.
Recommendations – Leadership and Governance in the Branches

In conclusion, the perception/understanding of the role of the Provincial/Territorial associations in LTPAD implementation appears unclear to survey/interview participants. Their answers were varied, but there seems to be a consensus on the idea that the Provincial/Territorial association should take a leadership role in the implementation of the LTPAD model. However, the manner in which they should lead remains unclear. For example, it would certainly be helpful if the SSC Leadership were to compare its perceptions on the role of the Provincial/Territorial associations and that of SSC regarding LTPAD implementation. Defining a clear ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ or any other simple document specifying roles and responsibilities in each dimension of LTPAD implementation may ease the decision-making process at all levels.

Since the publication of *Racing on Skates*, SSC has placed significant emphasis on changing competition formats and structure. A clear mandate has been given to the provinces and nearly all of the Provincial/Territorial associations have taken the lead and aligned these programs (as indicated on page 19). In that light, it is not surprising, that most of the participants’ answers related to changes to competition structure. If SSC wants the Provincial/Territorial associations to lead the development and implementation of other programs or strategies, it is recommended that the same kind of strategies that were used for competition restructuring be used again, namely: define the changes that need to be done; develop an action plan; and then, clearly define realistic roles, responsibilities and support mechanisms for implementation. A list of programming options could also help Provincial/Territorial associations in the creation of new initiatives.

Considering the variety of decision-making processes among the branches, it would be important for SSC to support the creation of effective leadership and decision-making structures within the branches. Sport Management literature may be useful to provide guidance on the types of governance that could be adopted. The Club Excellence program may also provide concrete strategies that could be implemented at the branch level. It appears to be particularly important to support the branches where the actual decision-making process is not clear. If there is no formal leadership in place, it will be very difficult to implement the LTPAD model or, for that matter, sustain core operations aimed at ensuring the long term viability of speed skating in Canada.

While not definitive, the data suggests that each Provincial/Territorial association faces different needs in implementing the LTPAD model and, as such, it is recommended that SSC work with each province/territory or self-identified region to define their priorities in terms of LTPAD implementation and adapt the offered support required accordingly.

2. LTPAD Implementation Strategies

Research regarding LTPAD implementation in sport associations is sparse. However, in her Ph.D. study, Charest (2012) described 64 different strategies used by 24 different sport federations in the province of Quebec. The 64 strategies fit into five categories: Awareness strategies; Action oriented strategies; Education strategies; Management strategies; and, Recruitment strategies. One of the most important recommendations of the research was to ensure that branches are using various strategies, carefully selected from all five types of strategies (rather than just one or two types) and adapted to the realities of the sport and province/territory, in order to promote and support the actions taken by the clubs. In speed
skating, a significant number of action oriented actions have already been implemented by virtue of the changes in the formats and structure of competitions. However, we know very little about other actions that may have been undertaken within branches.

To gain an understanding of action taken, Provincial/Territorial associations representatives were asked in the survey if one or more of the actions presented in Table 5 had been undertaken in their province.
Table 5
Number of Provinces/Territories Using Each Proposed Strategy

- No action have been undertaken
- Revised competition structure
- Revised athlete programs
- Competition realignment
- Consultation meeting
- Assigning LTPAD implementation to another person
- Assigning LTPAD implementation to a member of the board
- Assigning LTPAD implementation to an existing committee
- Assigning LTPAD implementation to an existing employee
- Organisation of planning meetings
- Creation of an LTPAD Implementation Committee or Working Group
- Employment of a part time technical employee
- Employment of a full time technical employee
- Revision of Mission, Vision or Values
- Budget Re-organisation
As shown in Table 5, only one province reported that no action had been undertaken. The most popular strategies were: the revision of the competition structure (N=12); competition realignment (N=9); and, the revision of the athletes’ programs (N=9). The interviews showed some confusion about the definition of the strategies. For this reason, this section discusses all of the actions (apart from those related to competitions) using the data collected during the interviews. The actions related to competitions are discussed in detail in section 2.3.

1. Revised Athlete Program

It’s apparent, that at the provincial/territorial and branch levels, the understanding of what constitutes an action to implement the LTPAD model remains unclear. The survey results show that the revision of athletes’ programs is one of the most undertaken actions, while section 2.1.4 shows that only a few Provincial/Territorial association representatives were able to identify programs linked to LTPAD. Therefore, we must be very cautious about drawing conclusions. In the interviews, three participants reported a total of six athlete programs that were unrelated to competitions. Those programs are described below.

- **Revising dry land training eligibility** (Interview 10) – “A lot of the changes that we implement like training camps are run at a provincial level … I changed a bit of who I would include in that dry land training. I used to have pretty much an open book. I would run an appropriate program for any age kids. I kind of put a cut-off at about the ten year old, ten, eleven, so the Training to Train group and up, is when we got into specific dry land training. Before that, I would allow some younger kids to participate in dry land.”

- **Revising summer camp schedule** (Interview 10) – “I also made changes in the Training to Train age group [at the summer camp] not to have them as specifically involved in speed skating. Just allow them the opportunity to still train in speed skating, but compete in paddling and play soccer, just not as intense year-round training for speed skating. Kind of making the choice at 15 if you want to decide to train for speed skating full year, that’s fine at 15, but at 14 we should be doing other things.”

- **Revising high performance development program eligibility** (Interview 6) – “It used to be if you were 13 and you made it to the Canadian Championships you were entered into the program, but sometimes 13 year olds made it to the Canadian Championships because there was just nobody else to go. They weren’t necessarily developmentally appropriate to be in the program. Now it’s based on time standards and based on whether you went to certain like, developmentally appropriate competitions like in the long track. We just did a little restructuring there … This year, based on last season’s results we had way too many skaters in the high performance and the high performance development program. It was way too easy to get in and there were some skaters in the programs who are not high performance skaters. They’re probably like some of them are probably competitive for life skaters. That’s not really appropriate for them, because we’ve suddenly given them this idea that they’re high performance skaters and some of them are not even skating full time they’re going to school and so it just got a little mixed up.”
• **Revising provincial team support eligibility for Junior ISU and +** (Interview 9) – “One was the provincial team support program where I think I mentioned it briefly that it … We changed the way that they would receive their funding and it was not based on their ranking, for example, for the province but based on the level they were at. Just because you’re ranked say one slot ahead of someone didn’t mean you’re necessarily going to get more funding. There were categories for the levels of support; if everyone fit all into the same category, they’d all get the same level funding. It was based more on what their needs were, not what their rank was and also the way they could use their support money to fund themselves was also based on what their needs were at, not what their ranking was at.”

• **Replacing the Development team support by Coaching support in clubs** (Interview 9) – “We used to have something called a Development Team and that was for skaters that were within 115 percent of an age class record and that did start at very young ages. They’d receive a jacket and instead of doing that; again, those dollars were put into more coaching support for clubs so I could work with their coaches and rather than identifying performers in comparison to others in their age class, we had a Badge Program that outlined certain levels and times for certain distances so that the skaters can progress through those times. It didn’t matter how old they were as long as they had something else to progress to and aim at the next level. We went to recognition with a Badge Program … There’s a progression from each level of the Badge Program, it’s an equal step and the next step from the top level of the Badge Program would be the Development Team for our junior skaters. Then it goes up to Provincial C, B and A Team; instead of a progression there, there’s always something next to aim for.”

• **Revising local training centers program** (Interview 13) – “It’s more on the structure. How do we give our support to organisations that work on the athlete development concrete on a yearly basis? Clubs, centers and all that stuff. We had actually a centre recognition and support program which is … a centre that is recognized. They had to apply to this program, the association program and be recognized and when they are recognized they get the financial support and technical support. That program became year after year almost a ghost program. We were not delivering much more than a check and it was not going anywhere. It was due anyway. We had to do something with that. I was not comfortable, it was going nowhere. While doing it why not come more with more closer LTPAD? … There were two stages needed different … well with different needs that were addressed. Seeing that SSC was moving [with a RTC], we just saw that as an opportunity and we gathered with SSC to work on that field. The stage three (Training to Train) was more at our level so we decided to work on it afterwards. We wanted to work both at the same time but it was too much for our capacity.”

A few Provincial/Territorial association representatives reported that actions related to programs had been undertaken. No new program seems to have been developed, but at least the six programs presented above have been reviewed to align with the LTPAD principles. Three of the six consisted of revising skaters’ eligibility to avoid early specialisation.

2. **Consultation and Planning Meetings**
Consultation and Planning meetings are discussed together because, here again, the interviews showed that different definitions were being attributed to these meetings by the Provincial/Territorial representatives. In the survey, seven participants reported on the use of each of these strategies.

a. Consultation

Consultations are designed to capture the feedback and recommendations provided by the members. As outlined in section 2.1.5, two Provincial/Territorial associations included formal consultation meetings in this year’s decision-making process (Interviews 6 and 7). The consultations were described as follows.

Consultation Process 1

“I just sat there with all my resources and any books that I had, anything, some videos and just answered questions and talked to parents and listened to their concerns. That was great because what I learned was that — looking back what I was doing from coaches before was not — I thought that that feedback was representative of the skaters and their parents, and it wasn’t, because the feedback that the parents were giving me was not the same feedback that the coaches are giving me... When I came home from that weekend I didn’t really know what to do with all the recommendations that I heard from people, because sometimes if one person was saying yes the other person was really strongly saying no about the same topic. I was hearing both ends of the spectrum and all over the place and not what their coaches were thinking. It was just a lot of information to sort through... I also did a little mini-workshop at our AGM this year had some posters up. Had some posters for Learn to Train. I put some information on posters and left out markers and just asked anybody at the AGM to scribble on the posters, cross things out, add their input anything like that. That's some interesting feedback from there.” (Interview 6)

Consultation Process 2

“Over the past, the branch, as a whole, and the technical committee had tried to implement changes. In order for our bulletin, the members have to accept and approve and [be] onboard with it. We met a lot of resistance and the bulletins were rejected. We were somewhat stuck... This year, we approached the clubs three different times over the summer as we were creating this bulletin and said, “Here’s draft one that we’re proposing. How will this affect your club? What do you like? What don’t you like? What problems do you see that you might not be able to implement this?” Each time they came back with their feedback and we’d shift and adjust to try to accommodate and make it the least painful possible. By the third time … and we decided beforehand it was only going to be three times we’d go back to the clubs. By the third time, most of the recommendations from the clubs had been taken into account and we were able to create a bulletin around that. Everyone seemed quite reasonably content with this final draft... Being a little more back and forth and really engaging all the clubs, was a good decision this year.” (Interview 7)

The consultation processes described here seem to have been very useful to help the provincial associations arrive at a consensus with a large number of members.

In the interviews, participants reported the use of consultation meetings on six occasions. The three examples of consultations that are the closer to the formal definition follow:

• “Last night, we had a coaches’ meeting that basically the provincial coach was doing two things: One, he was reminding everybody what the principles of LTPAD were, but also asking them how it was going and what resources they need to implement it.” (Interview 4)
• “We’ve also done group sessions at camps where we’ve brought all the parents into a meeting room to discuss the implementations of LTPAD. We meet with the Provincial Program parents on a regular basis to let them know about the LTPAD and how it’s affecting the programming. … It was more for the feedback on the competition formats... just what are your concerns with it, what do you like about it, about the programming and the changes that have been coming, the distances, the skating, the training – just getting whatever feedback we could from the parents to help us make better decisions.” (Interview 1)

• “Then “consultation meeting was for members about LTPAD”. Besides the consultation by emails, we also had spent back in the summer, the members of the technical committee; there’s about seven of us and we’re all from different clubs, and we’re all from very large clubs actually. We had each gone out to meet with our own club membership and any surrounding clubs that could join us… That was a little bit different; a little more one-on-one, which I think was useful. The one I went…, we were only meeting for about two and a half hours, whereas [the other] group was a whole day almost. I think people found, again, that appreciative that there was somebody they could speak with face-to-face and get their message across.” (Interview 7)

Four of the six consultation strategies were in fact described as information sessions. (Interviews 4 and 8). For example, participants said:

• “They probably helped us with that, just getting the jargon and getting the idea. I know that Speed Skating Canada had put out some kind of a PowerPoint and we went through that and stuff, yes. [It’s more a session for ] information, I would think.” (Interview 8)

• “[Name of the person] spoke at the Canada Cup at lunch about LTPAD, and previous provincial coach has similar meetings at a camp to get people on board about what it is. Not really a consultation meeting per se, but more an informative… to get everybody on board. About a year later there was another similar at a meeting where people talked.” (Interview 4)

The sixth consultation strategy was described as club visits where “it was some information sharing initially and then it shifted more into implementation and then working with the coaches”. (Interview 9)

b. Planning Meetings

Planning meetings are designed to elaborate procedures aimed at the implementation of actions. In the survey, seven Provincial/Territorial representatives reported using them. When they were asked to describe the strategy, different definitions emerged from six of the participants. For four of them, planning meetings happen at the provincial committee level (Interviews 13, 1, 4 and 9). The participant in Interview 2 reported an activity that would better fit into the consultation category.
• “We’ll kind of have a meeting to discuss athlete development, a LTPAD, and... say, “Here’s where we’re going forward. What do you think of this and what do you think of what’s been done so far?” Then the members can kind of ask questions on anything. I’ll be there or other committees might not be there but I’ll be there to kind of help answer any questions that’s not specifically athlete development related.” (Interview 2)

The sixth participant who reported on planning meetings in the survey said that, in the end, it won’t happen.

In conclusion, it’s important to be cautious while analysing the data from the survey because what may be a consultation or a planning meeting doesn’t appear to be the same for everyone.

About consultation, one participant said: “…well consultation, information it’s always not clear if it’s... in amateur sport when you consult sometimes you’re not sure if you really consult or inform. Especially when you come to specific really technical stuff like early development or some very specified competition matters, sometimes you want to consult but you just end to inform, make a consultation when there is no question there is no really new information feedbacks because the people they don’t have the knowledge so it’s hard for them to really give feedbacks.” (Interview 13)

3. Assigning LTPAD Implementation to a Specific Person or Group

The results of the survey show that a number of provinces assigned LTPAD to a specific person or group:
• 7 provinces assigned the LTPAD implementation to an existing committee;
• 5 provinces assigned the LTPAD implementation to a member of the board;
• 4 provinces assigned the LTPAD implementation to an existing employee;
• 3 provinces created a LTPAD implementation committee or working group;
• 1 province assigned the LTPAD implementation to another person.

Actually, six provinces devoted staff to the LTPAD implementation and nine found volunteers to do it. Of the thirteen Canadian provinces/territories, seven provinces are combining leadership of staff and volunteers to LTPAD implementation, while three rely on volunteers for the task and three do not appear to have assigned LTPAD implementation to a specific person or group. Two new full-time and two new part-time positions appear to have been created this year to facilitate the implementation of the LTPAD model across the country.

A quantitative analysis may suggest that the Provincial/Territorial associations devoted a lot of human resources to LTPAD implementation. However, according to the interviews, there is a lot of redundancy in those numbers. In other words, many of the roles are played by the same person. Should LTPAD implementation be the responsibility of everyone or of one person collaborating with different groups? It may depend on the specific context of each branch, but it is the opinion of the authors that accountability should be part of the discussion when looking at governance in all the different branches. The authors also note that, fundamentally, the delivery of sport programs and the long term development of participants should be part of the core business of all provincial/territorial sport organisations.
4. Budget Re-organisation

Three provinces implemented changes in their budget to facilitate the implementation of the LTPAD model.

- “We were overspending, and a lot of stuff was being put on personal credit cards. We had to wait a long time to get reimbursed. Now, with the help of our treasurer, we have reached a state of financial stability and accountability so that we always have money in the reserve from year to year. We try to accumulate a budget surplus and we have been doing that for the last seven or eight years. We had at one time some athletes that, if circumstances had been right, they probably could have advanced to a very high level maybe even national team. Of course, circumstances didn’t allow that. But at that time, if we had had the money, we would have probably been able to finance those athletes going to more meets or possibly going to school ... someplace where there’s a higher level of commitment and stability and continuity.” (Interview 12)

- “The length of our competitions that sort of thing all had to be budgeted and changed. Coaching development, more sessions for the coaches, including club development and club mentoring with our Provincial Coach. We’ve just looked at where we needed to put money to make sure that we were still able to educate and do these things that need to be done.” (Interview 1)

- “The provincial team how it was supported, we allowed flexibility, in terms of, support oriented team members, so that they could receive support in areas that they needed rather than dictating to them, this is how you’re going to spend your money, or you going to these competitions, or you go to these competitions. We allow them to use the funding based on what their individual needs were. Recognizing that, as you move further up a chain, the individual needs do start to vary. That was one of the budget changes. I guess, even the fact that they hired me, spending resources into someone to help implement LTAD. That was probably a big change. One of their bigger changes, I suppose. Then spending money on coaching development. I think, in the past, some of the support for the younger skaters ... they bought them jackets at young ages, identifying athletics at young ages, for what they call the Development Team, and taking that away and replacing those dollars with support to go toward coaching development. Just shifting it toward more coaching development for the younger ages.” (Interview 9)

Budgeting is a reflection of organisational priorities. Thus, it is surprising to see that only three Provincial/Territorial associations specifically identified adjusting their budgets as an action undertaken to implement the LTPAD model. In the opinion of the authors, in order to effectively implement the LTPAD model, all Provincial/Territorial associations should be carefully reviewing their budgets to ensure that there are sufficient resources in place to support priority items that encourage athlete development (e.g., program development, team funding, coach and official education and retention, etc.).

5. Other Actions Undertaken

During the interviews, some Provincial/Territorial association representatives described actions they undertook that were not covered in the survey. Actions that were undertaken by provinces to increase or enhance coaches’ development opportunities, change the governance structure, do some marketing, search for donations, and establish relationships with a school to create a new club are described below.
a. Increasing or Enhancing Coaches’ Development Opportunities

Four provinces have identified specific actions related to the training of coaches. Two reported on club visits that allow mentoring to the club coaches by an experienced coach. (Interviews 8 and 9)

“Part of that is me interacting with the coaches and talking to them about skating, and getting them to talk to me about techniques, so I can understand what level they're at, and part of it is getting them through the certification process... Definitely in the first year especially, a lot of my time was spent talking about LTPAD and what it was. It was some information sharing initially and then it shifted more into implementation and then working with coaches, and then more recently; now it’s being more specific and targeting tactical developments. That was my thought on... What I found to be one of the most effective ways to first, get everyone up to speed. Make sure they understood what LTPAD was all about and then getting down to working with the coaches, it was to go into each club as much as I could to work with that specific group and talk about very specific situations... It was for me to get an understanding of where each club was at in terms of coaching and programming and even their membership. And, at the same time, to provide information at first on what they could be doing or should be doing; so, it was both. It was both for me to learn where they're at and to provide some information going in, not knowing where they're at, but giving them base information and to hopefully quickly adjust it to a level that it did look like they were at already... This year the club visit is being very specific and targeting coaches and assistant coaches or parents that go and help on the ice. A program that outlined a very specific program for tactical development and how the parents can help on the ice with the drills so that's a program that I've been working on this year and that's coaching; not of skaters but more coaching.” (Interview 9)

Another province is trying to get more coaches certified:

“I think it would just bring some stability to the coaching. It would bring educated coaches. Also you can flaunt that because really without certified coaches we can’t really... it's tough to sell to a lot of the public... To develop those athletes I think you want the educated coach. The more you have, if people are busy, then you can share the load right up to the last... You build up a little group of coaches that can share the load and I think you have a well implemented program.” (Interview 3)

The fourth province has hired outside coaches to deliver training camps for skaters:

“We are kind of by ourselves out here, is that I do bring up outside coaches from typically Calgary is where they tend to be coming from, to do weekends with us, in kind of a camp situation, and then it benefits to lead the skaters and things, but also for our coaches to pick up whatever information and techniques they can from the coaches, and so kind of a mentoring service situation in that regard, I guess.” (Interview 5)

It is likely that the four provinces described above are not the only associations where actions related to coaches’ development have been undertaken. Results of the survey show that an important number of resources have been used to help the coaches learn about developmentally appropriate training (Table 6).
Actions related to coaches’ development appear to be as important for the members as are the actions related to competitions, because all of the branches reported using coaching development. It would be important to know how coaches relate coaching development to the role of the coach athlete development. From the data collected in the survey, the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) is the resource most in use (N=12 provinces). However, it doesn’t appear to be perceived as efficient, since only five respondents (42%) said it was one of the most efficient resources. At the opposite end of the spectrum, mentoring is perceived as being highly effective. Seven of the ten Provincial/Territorial associations (70%) reported using mentoring and rated this strategy as one of the three most effective.

b. Changing Governance
In two provinces, changing the governance structure was reported as an action to facilitate the implementation of the LTPAD model.

- “He’s [the president] tried to restructure our governance along LTAD lines. He’s actually made our committees, instead of having competitions’ committee, and officials’ committee, instead of having those committees our committees are named according to the LTAD groups, there’s an Active Start and a FUNdamentals and a Train to Train. That’s actually the new names of our committees so we’ve actually restructured all our entire governance based on that. I’m not sure how well that’s working, just yet.” (Interview 4)

- *So they really had no Executive and I can remember when they had the meetings, at the AGM, nobody would show up. I would show up, another parent would show up and basically that was it… It was only last spring, no, for last year’s season; I think we had a full Executive. I managed to put together a full Executive of parents. This year, same thing, I’ve got a full Executive but they really haven’t got in the habit of doing anything...
That doesn’t sound like much but that’s a huge step after not having an Executive to nailing down the third Sunday of every month. I think that’s a big improvement.” (Interview 3)

As discussed in section 2.1.5, we don’t know yet to what extent the different decision-making processes are effective to facilitate the implementation of the LTPAD model. However, ensuring that there is a well-defined and functional structure to ease its implementation in each province should be a high priority for SSC.

c. Marketing
One Provincial/Territorial association representative (Interview 3) described a number of marketing activities. The Association produced/distributed posters and the representative reported:

• “I’m a newspaper junky so I call newspaper all the time and tell them what’s happening and get a picture in or make sure our results.”

• “I just keep T-shirts on the kids, water bottles with [Club Name] on it. All those marketing gimmicks that I can get out to the kids.”

• “I’ve got bumper stickers for parents and athletics says [Club Name], no speed limit. I’ve got the circle with speed limit behind it and crossed out no speed limit. So we’ve got bumper stickers and water bottles out there and just hitting the streets, letting people know we’re out there.”

• “I have signs on my van, window signs that have the same thing; [Club Name], everybody welcome and speed skating logo. Both windows in my van have that. I thought the best way to do it was to be a driving billboard. On top of my van I’ve got the cross country speed carrier, the Thule and same thing I got a big deco on there [Club Name]. Everything that I drive is all decked out in speed skating.”

This type of action appears to be very original. No other province reported something like it, and based on the authors’ experience, SSC is not doing this kind of marketing either. Such marketing activities may be interesting ways to recruit new skaters.

d. Searching for Donations
The same Provincial/Territorial association where a lot of marketing activities have been undertaken reported significant efforts to find some funding:

"Another aspect as well, in fact I built a display box. I had people donate material to build a display box. We never had one down at the arena. I was asking for hardware to slide the glass. I got the glass donated by one company and then Buddy wasn’t interested really. He was saying no and I said I got [Name of a company] to donate the glass; “He did, did he?” He was a glass company as well. He said, “I’ll tell you. I’ll give you the hardware.” He gave me the top of the line rollers and locking system. When I heard that, then I went out looking for wood and I pitted one company against another.” (Interview 3)

The participant also asked for $100 from sponsors in order to show their logo on his poster. It seemed to be very efficient because “…the poster was down at the designer, people were calling me to see if they still get their logo on.”
If this strategy seems to have been efficient for the participant, it is important to note that this Provincial/Territorial association is part of Group 1. The money that was raised “went to the club because the club is the Provincial/ Territorial association”.

e. Establishing Relationships With a School to Create a Club
Another interesting action that has been undertaken to recruit new skaters is the establishment of relationships with schools. The Provincial/Territorial association where this strategy was reported is using it to create a new club:

“There’s a little town about not quite an hour from here where I would like to start the next club because an hour away is easier to deal with… That’s been in the making for a year and a half where I’ve contacted the Phys. Ed. teacher at the school and trying to get her interested in putting games for money because I know they’ve got funding for programs so I’m trying to make it speed skating. If she can get money to buy some skates for a school program then…” (Interview 3)

In Quebec, a “Sports-Études” program also exists. The program provides athletes with some adapted school programs that allow for some training time. However, this government program has been created for athletes involved in the Excellence pathway. It is not meant to recruit new skaters.

**Recommendations – LTPAD Implementation Strategies**

This research provides a first attempt by SSC to gather information on actions, other than competition changes, that are undertaken in the Provincial/Territorial associations to implement the LTPAD model. The results reveal an important interest in LTPAD implementation and the many creative initiatives related to LTPAD that have been undertaken. However, one of the most important conclusions relates to the important number of interpretations regarding the definitions of terms and their usage. For the authors, it illustrates that SSC and its branches are still at an exploratory stage with respect to LTPAD implementation actions. Few strategies, other than action oriented activities, seem to have been implemented. Strategies that are not action oriented are primarily in the realm of recruitment or educational (regulatory) actions. Only a few are actually new. Furthermore, participants in projects do not appear to be clear on what a program is and how to implement it.

In light of these conclusions and according to the results of the study, it is recommended that SSC:

1. Discuss LTPAD implementation accountability with the leadership in all branches and ensure that a formal leadership and a clear understanding of decision-making processes is in place.

2. Educate the leadership of branches on what a program is and how to develop programs. (This process must encompass all steps: Needs Analysis; Program Creation; Implementation and Assessment Planning; Implementation; and, Assessment.) The process should also take into account program delivery where the delivery of SSC-owned programs is delegated to branches, e.g., Coach and Official Education.
3. Create a list of well-defined optional programs and actions to be created or implemented by the branches to support long term athlete development.

4. Educate the leaders in branches on strategies that will enable them to consult their members effectively.

5. Initiate program development related to the recruitment of new skaters.

6. Develop easy marketing initiatives aimed at recruiting new skaters, e.g., car stickers, posters, etc.

7. Initiate a reflection on the relationship between the long term development of coaches and that of athletes.

3. Competitions & LTPAD

6. General Overview

As an early adopter of LTAD principles, SSC has identified the importance of evaluating “existing competition structures, formats, and schedules to ensure goals and decisions are aligned with the LTPAD plan and specifically with regards to the skaters’ stage of development” (Find Your Edge, 2006: p. 41).

The 2011 assessment leaves no doubt that changes have occurred and significant efforts have been expended to align them with the recommendations of Racing on Skates (see summary of competition results on the next page). However, the assessment provides only a limited understanding of the competition environment that has resulted from the changes and efforts expended. To fill this gap, this section begins with an overview of the present state of competition across Canada. The later part then offers a more specific stage-by-stage breakdown of the current competition conditions for skaters across the nation.

All the data presented and conclusions drawn are made from comparing the Provincial/Territorial association responses to the Racing on Skates (2009) “stage by stage development appropriate program recommendations” (pp. 33-51). The Racing on Skates recommendations were considered the benchmark recommendations that should be reflected in competitions.
Skill-Based Events

- **83%** of Provincial/Territorial associations reported that in all-points competitions they included developmentally appropriate skill-based events.
- **36%** of Provincial/Territorial associations reported that the **100m pursuit** event was run during two-thirds or more of the provincial competitions.
- **54%** of Provincial/Territorial associations reported that the **400m** event was run during two-thirds or more of the provincial competitions.
- **18%** of Provincial/Territorial associations reported that the **3000m points race** event was run during two-thirds or more of the provincial competitions.
- **36%** of Provincial/Territorial associations reported that **relay** events were run during two-thirds or more of the provincial competitions.
- **9%** of Provincial/Territorial associations reported that the **10 minutes (2 person) relay** event was run during all competitions.

* In a similar fashion to this report, these percentiles are drawn from the number of provinces/territories (i.e., 13).*
a. Number of Competitions

Table 5 (p. 16) indicates that 12 of 13 Provincial/Territorial associations have now undergone (albeit to varying extents) a review of the structure and formats of their competitions. This, in itself, is a positive finding. It is noted that the Provincial/Territorial association that has not undergone any changes to the structure and format of its competitions reported organizing no competitions and therefore no need to modify existing structures.

As an overview, Table 7 presents the number of competitions offered in each group of Provincial/Territorial associations. As this table is more reflective of the number of skaters and competition circuits within the Provincial/Territorial associations, it is difficult to draw comparisons. However, remarks are provided below on the results.

![Table 7: Number of Competitions by Stage (grouped)](image)

**Remarks**

- While *Racing on Skates* recommends that there be no competitions at the Active Start stage and a few at the FUNdamentals stage, a large number of competitions are organized in each group. Section 2.3.1 gives an overview of the nature of competition for skaters in those stages of development. It is not known if these competitions are specifically offered for participants in these stages or are integrated into events for participants in other stages of development. Based on the authors' knowledge of speed skating, it is likely that in most instances, participants in Active Start and FUNdamentals take part in the same competitions as those in the Learning
to Train stage. What's not measured in this chart is the number of informal racing opportunities that are offered to participants within their club and at club-based competitions (known as “mini-meets”) and that are recommended, particularly for skaters at the FUNdamentals stage.

- The authors did not anticipate that any Provincial/Territorial associations would indicate organizing a large number of competitions beyond the Learning to Compete stage of development; as such, competitions are generally international events or within the purview of Speed Skating Canada. It is likely that such events are in fact events for Competitive for Life participants.

- Group 3 shows a high number of competitions until the Training to Train stage. This is consistent with stages where Provincial/Territorial associations are responsible for organizing competitions and a majority of competitive skaters participate in speed skating.

- Generally, very low numbers of competitions are reported for Active for Life skaters. This is of some concern, given that this stage represents a large part of SSC’s membership. This finding may be exacerbated by Provincial/Territorial associations being ‘unclear’ about the characteristics of skaters within this stage. If this is the case, educating the members of Provincial/Territorial associations and their coaches on the manner in which to define an Active for Life skater should be a priority for SSC. This is particularly important because it would suggest that if skaters are not classified in the Active for Life stage, they are being reflected inappropriately elsewhere (i.e., other stages) by Provincial/Territorial associations (most likely in stages related to the Excellence pathway). Nonetheless, this finding suggests that, in regard to competition, the Active for Life stage warrants further attention by SSC.

While this data provides a good overview on the number of competitions offered to skaters across the country, a more detailed analysis is required. Tables 8 to 11 present the number of competitions offered to skaters at all stages in each group of Provincial/Territorial associations.

Table 8
Number of Competitions Offered in Provinces of Group 1

![Graph showing the number of competitions offered in Provinces of Group 1](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Start</th>
<th>FUNdamentals</th>
<th>Learning to Train</th>
<th>Training to Train</th>
<th>Learning to Compete</th>
<th>Training to Compete</th>
<th>Learning to Win</th>
<th>Training to Win</th>
<th>Active for Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
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### Table 9
**Number of Competitions Offered in Provinces of Group 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Nova Scotia</th>
<th>Northwest Territories</th>
<th>New Brunswick</th>
<th>Saskatchewan</th>
<th>Manitoba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Start</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentals</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to Train</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training to Train</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to Compete</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training to Compete</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to Win</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training to Win</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active for Life</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 10
**Number of Competitions Offered in Provinces of Group 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Alberta</th>
<th>British Columbia</th>
<th>Ontario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Start</td>
<td>1314</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentals</td>
<td>1314</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to Train</td>
<td>1314</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training to Train</td>
<td>1314</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to Compete</td>
<td>1314</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training to Compete</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to Win</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training to Win</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active for Life</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 11
Racing on Skates recommends the following number of competitions for the different stages:

- **Active Start**: 0 competition
- **FUNdamentals**: 0-6 competitions
- **Learning to Train**: 4-8 competitions
- **Training to Train**: 5-9 competitions
- **Learning to Compete**: 7-10 competitions
- **Training to Compete**: 8-12 competitions
- **Learning to Win**: 8-10 competitions
- **Training to Win**: 8-10 competitions
- **Active for Life**: No recommendation

Based on the data in Tables 8 to 11, it would appear that most Provincial/Territorial associations in Groups 1 and 2 are not currently providing access to an appropriate number of competition opportunities to their skaters. The number of competitions offered in the Provincial/Territorial associations of those groups goes from 0 to 3 and 1 to 9, respectively. The number of competitions is the same across most stages, leading the authors to conclude that participants in all stages compete within the same competition(s). Where there exists a low level of skaters, the Provincial/Territorial associations invite skaters of all stages to the same competition. With significantly different racing formats recommended in the FUNdamentals and Learning to Train stages of development, as compared to the Training to Train and Learning to Compete stages of development, the authors would suggest that further reflection is necessary to ensure that participants are accessing appropriate competitions. Specific actions aimed at dealing with this problem may include: developing more racing opportunities where branches have the greatest number of participants; and, developing strategies that provide support to athletes in more advanced stages to participate in competitions outside of their province. At the same time, in areas where participation numbers do not provide a sufficient pool of athletes to create meaningful, developmentally appropriate competitions for participants, within reasonably confined geographic areas, skater recruitment and retention need to be high priority actions to facilitate the implementation of the LTPAD model.

In Groups 3 and 4, the numbers appear to be consistent with the global overview provided in Table 7: most of the competitions organized by the Provincial/Territorial associations target the
skaters at the first stages of development. While it is known that many other competitions do occur within the provinces throughout the season, with only one competition reported, Ontario seems to have opted for its Provincial Championship.

b. Race Duration

One of the limitations of the McClements Assessment was that it did not examine the extent to which Provincial/Territorial associations were offering races that were developmentally appropriate in regards to race duration. In light of this limitation, a question was added to the survey to examine the extent to which Provincial/Territorial associations believed they were offering various race durations in accordance to those appropriate at various stages. According to the *Racing on Skates (2009)* document, the following race durations should be used at given stages:

- **Active Start**: n/a
- **FUNdamentals**: 0-30 secs
- **Learning to Train**: 0-45 secs/ 10 min+ (continuous skating)
- **Training to Train**: 0-60 secs / 2.5 min+
- **Active/Competitive for Life**: No recommendation
- **Other stages**: International requirements

*Racing on Skates (2009)* made use of race durations as the primary reference for the development of distance recommendations. Most of the literature associated with exercise physiology draws its reference points from durations of effort and not physical distances, because the latter ultimately represent arbitrary references used to form the basis of competition. By using the duration frame of reference, the authors of *Racing on Skates (2009)* were seeking to provide a constant reference for defining activities that could evolve with the speed of participants. The ‘duration’ approach could also be readily adaptable to varying track sizes and the introduction of new and innovative event formats while providing developmentally appropriate racing opportunities.

Table 12 provides a look at current racing opportunities throughout Canada based on the duration of effort required for participants, with recommended race durations highlighted in red. In considering the data in this table, it is important to remember that no formal recommendations for race duration are made beyond the Training to Train stage and, as such, the highlighted durations are based on the common durations of events in Short Track and Long Track at the international level.
While it is necessary consider this information in a stage/branch specific context to fully understand the racing opportunities afforded to participants, this table highlights the important elements for SSC to consider. Effectively, inconsistencies can be found with regard to the self-reported offering of developmentally appropriate distances in Table 13 and actual competition offerings based on duration of effort recommendations. It also suggests a need for better education or formal guidance with regard to program delivery, particularly through the Active Start, FUNdamentals and Learning to Train stages of development in order to align competition offerings with events that are in the best interest of the long term development of skaters.

c. Race Type

Table 13 shows the number of Provincial/Territorial associations offering each type of races, with the Racing on Skates recommendations highlighted in pink.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race Type</th>
<th>AS</th>
<th>FUN</th>
<th>L2T</th>
<th>T2T</th>
<th>L2C</th>
<th>T2C</th>
<th>L2W</th>
<th>T2W</th>
<th>A4L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Distances</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriate Distances</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skating Clockwise</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill-based Races</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Races 5 min+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Individual Pursuits</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While there has been adoption of some of the recommendations, it is far from universal, particularly in relation to the integration of skill-based events. The adoption of events that promote the development of physical literacy (skill-based events, relays and clockwise skating) is also particularly limited. It is worrisome to note that these recommendations are not being implemented in all Provincial/Territorial associations. SSC needs to understand why this is happening and develop appropriate strategies to address this gap. One interview respondent noted that “it’s not speed skating anymore.” Is this observation the result of poorly designed/implemented activities or an attachment to a traditional notion of speed skating competitions?

There also appears to be some carry forward of events that were intended as developmental tools to reinforce technical development and promote physical literacy into the later stages of development. While such events may not be inherently bad for athletes in later stages of development, what is the effect of such a transposition on the perception of skaters relative to the sport? How does this affect their development if they wish to pursue high performance sport?

In relation to this data, one observation (based on the authors’ knowledge of the implementation of the Racing on Skates recommendations) is that the greatest alignment with recommendations is in the Training to Train stage. This is where SSC has been most engaged and has provided the greatest number of resources to support Provincial/Territorial associations in developing their formats. It is likely that specific resources and guidelines for racing formats in the FUNdamentals and Learning to Train stages of development are required.

7. Stage-by-Stage Analysis of Competition

In light of the preceding broad-brush overview of competition appropriateness, the remainder of this section goes deeper and examines the extent to which Provincial/Territorial associations have aligned competition across the specific LTPAD stages. The description is provided only for the Active Start, FUNdamentals, Learning to Train and Training to Train stages, as most of the recommendations of Racing on Skates are focused on these stages of athlete development. From Learning to Compete, no specific recommendations or counter-indications are provided, as the athletes at that stage should have reached the necessary maturity to participate in any type of event with appropriate preparation.

a. Active Start

The objective of the Active Start stage is to learn fundamental movements and link them to play. According to Racing on Skates (2009), there should be no competition during this stage of development. As previously stated in this section, some competitions are proposed in most Provincial/Territorial associations. Thus, it is interesting to take a closer look at the conditions offered to skaters in the 0 to 6 years age range in those competitions.

Tables 14 and 15 show the types and duration of races offered to the skaters at the Active Start stage. By comparing the two tables, it is possible to conclude that all the proposed races rely on
speed and endurance: two physical qualities recommended for this stage. However, long races may be demotivating for skaters aged between 0 and 6 years. Furthermore, though some Provincial/Territorial associations organize races to encourage skill development, more than 30% offer traditional racing distances to skaters that are not designed with fun in mind.

Table 14
Number of Provinces Offering Each Type of Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Race</th>
<th>Provinces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Distances</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Distances</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skating clockwise</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill-based Individual races</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill-based relays</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Races 5min+</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Pursuits</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15
Number of Provinces Offering Each Duration of Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration of Race</th>
<th>Provinces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-30 sec</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-45 sec</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-60 sec</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-90 sec+</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 min</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 to 10 min</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min+</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16 shows that most of the provinces are offering recognition to Active start skaters based on time and age. Four provinces are offering multiple rewards.

Table 16
Types of Recognitions Offered to the Skaters at Competitions in Each Province
b. FUNdamentals

The overall objective of the FUNdamentals stage is to learn all fundamental movement skills and build overall motor skills. Hence, the purpose of competition at the FUNdamentals stage is to “provide a fun environment in which young skaters can race primarily in skills-based competitions” (Racing on Skates, 2009: p. 34). At this stage, between 0 to 6 competitions are recommended for skaters. Tables 17 and 18 show the types and duration of races offered to the skaters at the FUNdamentals stage.

Table 17
Number of Provinces Offering Each Type of Race
Table 18
Number of Provinces Offering Each Duration of Races

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Provinces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-30 sec</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-45 sec</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>45-60 sec</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>60-90 sec</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>90 sec+</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-6 min</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 to 10 min</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 min+</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
By comparing the two tables, it is possible to say that most of the proposed races rely on speed, as is recommended for this stage. Some skill-based races are still offered to the skaters, but most of the races appear to be based on distances. As in the Active Start stage, and even more so, long races are offered to the skaters. Furthermore, some participants are required to perform in races of 60 to 90 seconds duration. These require very intense efforts from young participants and are beyond a duration where it can be reasonably expected that participants will maintain effective technical execution at high intensity.

Table 19 shows that most of the provinces are offering at least two types of recognition to skaters in competitions. The recognition strategies vary more than at the Active Start stage, but recognition for ‘Placing’ (with gender, age category or speed groupings) appears to be the type most used.

Table 19
Types of Recognitions Offered to the Skaters at Competitions in Each Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Skill - Ranking</th>
<th>Skill - Gender</th>
<th>Time - Gender</th>
<th>Time - Achievement Standard</th>
<th>Placing - Gender</th>
<th>Placing - Speed Grouping</th>
<th>Skill - Age</th>
<th>Time age</th>
<th>Placing - Gender</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prince Edward Island</td>
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<td>Newfoundland and Labrador</td>
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<td>Yukon</td>
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<td>Nova Scotia</td>
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<td>Saskatchewan</td>
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<td>Alberta</td>
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<td>Ontario</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Group 1                   | Group 2         | Group 3        | 4 |

**c. Learning to Train**

The overall objective of the Learning to Train stage is for the participants to learn overall sport skills. Hence, the primary purpose of competitions at the Learning to Train stage is to “reinforce the development of physical literacy, critical skills and self-esteem through participation in fun races” (Racing on Skates, 2009: p. 36). At this stage, between 4 to 8 competitions are recommended for skaters.
Tables 20 and 21 show the types and duration of races offered to the skaters at the Learning to Train stage. Here again, the two recommended physical qualities at this stage are endurance and speed. The majority of provinces are offering the recommended types of races, though many are also organizing relays that see skaters race within durations of effort that are not recommended. Some skill-based races are still offered to the skaters, but the percentages decrease for the benefit of individual pursuits and races of five minutes and more. A large number of the races appear to be based on distances and are mostly reported as appropriate.

**Table 20**

**Number of Provinces Offering Each Type of Race**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Race</th>
<th>Number of Provinces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Distances</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Distances</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skating Clockwise</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill-based Individual</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill-based relays</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Races 5 min+</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Pursuits</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Table 21**

**Number of Provinces Offering Each Duration of Race**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration of Race</th>
<th>Number of Provinces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 sec</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>45 sec</td>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 sec</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 sec+</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 sec</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 min</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min+</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Racing on Skates
Table 22 shows that most of the provinces are offering at least two types of recognition to skaters in competitions, with Quebec using exceptionally varied strategies. The recognition for 'Placing' (with gender, age category or speed groupings) is frequently practiced and some time achievement standards are beginning to be used in three provinces.

### Table 22

Types of Recognitions Offered to the Skaters at Competitions in Each Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Skill - Ranking</th>
<th>Skill - Gender</th>
<th>Skill - Age</th>
<th>Time - Gender</th>
<th>Time age</th>
<th>Placeing - Gender</th>
<th>Placing - Speed Grouping</th>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Prince Edward Island</td>
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<td>Newfoundland and Labrador</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
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<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
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<td>Ontario</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### d. Training to Train

The overall objective of the Training to Train stage is for participants to build an aerobic base, develop speed and strength toward the end of the stage, as well as further develop and consolidate sport-specific skills. Hence, the primary purpose for competitions is to consolidate sport-specific skills and develop the 5 S’s (skill, speed, strength, stamina, and suppleness). At the end of this stage, when the skaters have reached their Peak of Height Velocity (PHV), they generally make the choice to pursue their involvement in the sport, either in the Active/Competitive for Life or in the Excellence pathway (throughout Learning & Training to Compete and then to Win). At this stage, 5 to 9 competitions per year are recommended for skaters. Some skaters, heading for the Excellence pathway, should participate in National competitions, as organized by SSC or specific national/international event organizing committees.

Tables 23 and 24 show the types and duration of races offered to the skaters at the Learning to Train stage. Here again, the two recommended physical qualities at this stage are endurance and speed. A large number of the provinces are offering the recommended types of races, though many are also organizing relays that see skaters race within durations of effort that are not recommended. Some skill-based races are still offered to the skaters, but the percentages decrease for the benefit of individual pursuits and races of five minutes and more. A large number of the races appear to be based on distances and are mostly reported as appropriate.
Table 23
Number of Provinces Offering Each Type of Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race Type</th>
<th>Number of Provinces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Distances</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Distances</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skating clockwise</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill based individual races</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill based relays</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Races &gt;5min + Individual Pursuits</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 24
Number of Provinces Offering Each Duration of Race
Table 25 shows that for this stage of skaters, most of the provinces are offering at least two types of recognition to skaters in competitions. British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario join Quebec by using varied strategies. Recognition for ‘Placing’ and Time are often both used to reward skaters and some provinces are still recognizing skills.

**Table 25**

Types of Recognitions Offered to the Skaters at Competitions in Each Province
Recommendations – Competitions

The data collected throughout the survey in regard to the structure and formats of competitions provides a great picture of the performance opportunities offered to the skaters across the country. However, more data and analysis are needed to understand which opportunities are really taken by the skaters in each Province/Territory. The Club project should be revealing in this matter. The conclusions that can be drawn from the present research are broader but no less important.

The fact that no tendencies have been observed in relation to race distances and duration is an important concern. Education should be offered to the members in relation to the reasons why the duration and formats of some races are inadvisable.

Looking at the results, it is evident that the race formats have changed across the country, but a large number of “one size fits all” competitions appear to be in place in different provinces. This may mean that the same competition load and the same race format can be offered to skaters at different stages (e.g., Learning to Compete skaters performing in skill-based races and Active Start skaters performing in laps and distances). Although “one size fits all” competitions may be seen as the only way to provide more racing opportunities in some provinces, they can be hazardous because skaters at the first stages (i.e., in the Active/Competitive for Life and the Excellence pathways) may be dealing with inappropriate loads. Education on the different pathways may be a solution, but some provinces (particularly from Groups 1 and 2) may need support to find appropriate racing opportunities for their skaters.

In the same perspective, it is worrisome to see that some competitions are offered to Active Start skaters all across the country. Moreover, those competitions don’t seem to be based solely on
skills but also on laps and distances. The recommendations offered in the last paragraph may help, but some provinces also evoked a need for skills-based activities templates.

Finally, it is interesting to see the variety of performance recognition strategies offered to the skaters at events. There appears to be no consensus in and across the stages. SSC should provide recommendations on rewards and performance recognition, based on the objectives of each stage of development. The different Provincial/Territorial contexts should also be considered in those recommendations, as some males and females are racing together, as are some skaters from different stages.

CONCLUSION

This research project paints a picture of the governance and leadership context, the actions undertaken to implement the LTPAD model and, more specifically, on what is happening in competitions across the country. If this report is perceived as painting a negative picture of many aspects of the implementation of LTPAD in speed skating, it’s because the goal of the study was to provide a needs analysis and recommendations to help SSC in its efforts to support the Provincial/Territorial associations rather than portray what is doing well. This doesn’t mean that nothing is being done well. In fact, quite the opposite is true. SSC is probably the first National Sport Organisation to undertake this kind of empirical assessment. One must understand that, after 10 years of implementation, the sport is still at the exploratory level on many aspects of its implementation of the LTPAD model. As is often said, “Recognizing that we know nothing is a first step to wisdom”. The enthusiasm of the SSC stakeholders and the Provincial/Territorial association representatives toward this project demonstrated an important interest vis-à-vis the implementation of LTPAD and the model’s enhancement. If there are three recommendations to retain from this research it would be for SSC to:

1. To bank on the engagement and enthusiasm of its stakeholders across the country to put forward more collaborative actions;
2. To base further actions on an analysis of the different needs of each Province/Territory;
3. To provide formal support on building effective governance and leadership in each branch.