

# WORLD ROWING 2017 REVIEW PROJECTS 2020 OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION SYSTEM

## Background

The start of the new Olympic cycle and decisions made at the 2017 Extraordinary Congress in Tokyo present a number of opportunities to review key areas of our sport. Four specific review projects for 2017 were identified at the Extraordinary Congress:

1. Rule 36 – World Championship Programmes
2. 2020 Olympic Qualification System
3. Lightweight Rowing
4. Para-Rowing

## Purpose of the review

In October 2017, the FISA Council must submit to the IOC for its consideration FISA's proposed Olympic Qualification System for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. The objective of this review is to prepare a proposal (or proposals) for the Qualification System, taking into account input from various stakeholders and bearing in mind the way in which qualification opportunities impact funding and development opportunities for national and continental federations.

The IOC Executive Board decision on the events to be included in the rowing programme and the athlete quota for the 2020 Olympic Games will dictate the parameters within which the qualification system proposal must be considered, insofar as this decision determines the number of events, which events and how many athletes will be included in the rowing programme.

## Guiding principles

1. Given that the IOC Executive Board decision on the Olympic Programme will be taken on 10 July 2017, this review must make certain assumptions for the 2020 Olympic rowing programme. It therefore bases the analysis and scenarios on the 2016 athlete quota and on the Olympic programme proposal submitted to the IOC by FISA that was selected at the 2017 Extraordinary Congress, being seven boat classes per gender and a total athlete quota of 550 split equally between men and women.
2. The Qualification System should support FISA's statutory obligations, particularly those relating to:
  - Fairness and equality of opportunity;
  - Development of rowing in all its forms; and
  - Inclusion and accessibility
3. Consideration should be given to FISA's Strategic Plan as presented at the 2015 National Federation Conference, to ensure that outcomes of the review realise greater benefits for the whole of rowing that are aligned to FISA's overall goals and objectives. Objectives of particular relevance and importance for the Olympic Qualification System review are:
  - **Universality** – Increase the number of rowing countries;
  - **Equality** – Ensure equality is integrated in all development activities, to fully integrate the principle of equality between men and women, to create specific

strategies to further develop women's rowing, and to commit to 50/50 in events and quota for men and women;

- **Participation** – Increase the sustainable participation of member national federations in leading events, including continental championships, World Championships and qualification regattas for the Olympic and Paralympic Games;
  - **Quality** – Improve the quality of rowing and coaching worldwide, by (for example) increasing the number of training camps, coaching courses offered, the number of Olympic Solidarity scholarships;
4. Rowing must have an Olympic Qualification system that appropriately weights excellence and universality; having the best athletes in the world competing for medals while also acknowledging that the more nations present at the Olympic Games or taking part in the qualification process allows for more support within the Olympic Movement, both in terms of funding opportunities and political support.

FISA's document, "Proposed Principles for Rowing Event Programmes" [Draft at 220216], proposes that:

- The Olympic regatta must include the best rowers in the world (for Excellence);
  - The Olympic regatta must include rowers from all continents (for Universality);
  - The best rowers in every country should take part in the qualification journey (for Universality);
  - A percentage of places should be established based on excellence vs. universality;
  - Small boats provide more opportunities for excellence for smaller nations in all continents.
5. The Olympic Qualification System should offer member federations two opportunities to qualify for a particular boat class at the Olympic Games. The first opportunity is at the FISA World Championships the year before the Olympics; the second opportunity, depending on boat class, will be at the Continental Qualification Regatta or at the Final Olympic Qualification Regatta.
6. Recognition is given to the importance of the continental qualification regattas for national federations to access funding via their NOCs or Olympic Solidarity.

## Terms of reference

1. This review project should propose a distribution of the athlete quota between the events and define how many of the boats in each event will qualify through the World Championships, the Continental Qualification regattas and the Final Qualification regatta, as well as the process for reallocation of unused places, taking into consideration the guiding principles above.
2. The working group will consider all scenarios as well as input from the member federations, and prepare a draft proposal to be presented to the FISA Council for their consideration at the Lucerne World Cup. Following feedback from the Council and the NFs at the Under 23 Championships in Plovdiv, a final draft must be prepared for the Council's approval and for inclusion in the Congress agenda papers as an "additional item for discussion". Following the Congress and feedback from the delegates at the Congress, the working group may be called to review the proposal one last time before the Council submits it to the IOC for approval.

3. In developing the proposal, the review should:

- Review the historical data on FISA's Olympic Qualification Systems and what have been the positives and negatives for small and large federations, and for developed and less developed rowing nations, also considering how this has affected the development of the sport of rowing world-wide and the opportunity for nations to access support to grow the sport.
- Assess how the rowing qualification system is positioned in relation to other sports' qualification systems and if learnings from other systems can help to optimise FISA's system.
- Recommend an Olympic Games Qualification System that is robust and sustainable, in that its objectives and desired effects are aligned to the longer term objectives of FISA and the development of rowing.
- Recommend an Olympic Games Qualification System that will ensure the participation of the best athletes and as many member federations as possible in the qualification process and the Olympic Games, while balancing the number of small versus medium versus large size federations, within the given constraints.
- In distributing athlete quota between the events, consider the attractiveness of the rowing programmes at the Olympic Games, for television audiences, for the media and for spectators. To this end, the rowing programme should have as many semi-finals as possible.

### Timeframe

Please consult the [2017 Review Projects page](#) on the World Rowing website for the timeline of the review process: