

**CANADA SOCCER CLUB LICENSING PROGRAM  
— INFORMATION MANUAL VERSION 2.0**

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VERSION 2.0 - JULY 2020

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program is designed to guide member organizations throughout the country toward best principles for organizational development both on and off the field. By raising the standards of member organizations, both the daily playing environment and participant experience are enhanced; thereby improving the overall soccer system in Canada.

The primary goals of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program are to:

- ▶ Set clearly defined standards and expectations for member organizations;
- ▶ Recognize excellence in the soccer community;
- ▶ Raise the level of all soccer organizations throughout Canada; and,
- ▶ Drive change in the soccer system.

To achieve these goals, the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program takes a principles-based approach. Principles provide direction but not detailed prescription, allowing organizations to develop and select the methods by which they will operate based on their available resources and unique situation and context.

The principles of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program are grounded in the values being established for the Canadian soccer community to guide the behaviour of all organizations and can be utilized to inform choices, establish impacts, and drive outcomes. The Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program Principles are as follows:

1. Prioritize Fun
2. Emphasize Physical, Mental, and Emotional Safety
3. Provide Developmentally-Appropriate, High Quality Programs
4. Maximize Attraction, Holistic Personal Development, Progression, and Long-Term Engagement
5. Focus on Participant-Centred Decision Making
6. Foster Accessible, Inclusive, and Welcoming Environments
7. Act as a Good Corporate and Community Citizen

To achieve the goals and align to the principles, the Club Licensing Program requires a broader scope than simply classifying organizations into different categories. Beyond Classification, which is a traditional staple of licensing and charter programs, the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program also includes elements of Development and Appraisal.

In comparison to traditional licensing and charter programs, the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program takes a relatively unique approach. Rather than a front-loaded, input-based classification exercise, the Club Licensing Program firstly outlines the desired behaviours and characteristics of organizations with a goal of stimulating change in the soccer system by driving these positive behaviours. In addition, the back-end, outcome-based

appraisal provides organizations with clear feedback against the key performance indicators aligned to the stated principles and desired behaviours and outcomes.

The first element of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program is Classification. Classification is organized around four Pillars; Governance, Administration, Infrastructure and Technical, and a series of different categories that recognize the differences in capacity, sophistication, organization, and goals of organizations operating within the Canadian soccer system.

In order to classify member organizations, a series of categories have been established. At one end of the spectrum, foundational requirements have been developed to be considered a Canada Soccer Quality Soccer Provider. These, along with the conditions and expectations of membership, create the baseline expectations for all member organizations. At the other end of the spectrum, the Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence recognizes the highest achieving organizations from across Canada and rewards them with the Canada Soccer Approved Youth Soccer Club endorsement and associated MLS Home Grown Player benefits. Organizations achieving this licence display characteristics and demonstrate behaviours aligned with the highest expectations of governance, administration, infrastructure, and technical, support their Member Association (MA) and Canada Soccer Pathways, and participate in the highest level of competition in Canada; the Canada Soccer Player Development Program. Between those bookends, the value of additional classification and appropriateness of the requirements and expectations varies across the country. MAs have been given more flexibility to develop standards and expectations that align to their regional differences, realities, and state of readiness while incorporating the foundational requirements identified by Canada Soccer into the Provincial/Territorial Youth Club Licence.

Beyond the classification of organizations, Canada Soccer and its member Provincial/Territorial Associations have a responsibility to support development at the member organization level. Clubs and academies provide the daily training and competition environments for the vast majority of players and coaches in Canada, hence better organizations will produce better coaches and, in turn, better players. In order to support organizational development, Canada Soccer has developed a series of Organizational Profiles, which outline, in broad strokes, the characteristics and behaviours of the different categorizations of organizations in Canada. To support organizations in achieving these expectations, a series of guides outlining best practices and principles in Governance, Management and Operations, Safety, and Accessibility and Inclusion, have also been developed.

The final element of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program is Appraisal. To drive strategic and operational direction and foster a culture of growth, the review process will move toward a 360 Appraisal approach, which includes:

- ▶ **Quantitative Appraisal:** Data-based appraisal of key indicators of organizational effectiveness.
- ▶ **Self-Appraisal:** The opportunity to reflect on the things that the organization did and does well, those that can be improved, and the learnings from the appraisal period.
- ▶ **Bottom Up Appraisal:** Appraisal of member, stakeholder, and customer satisfaction.
- ▶ **Top Down Appraisal:** Appraisal of vertical alignment and achievement of standards, while also identifying areas that require development and support.
- ▶ **Peer to Peer Appraisal:** Appraisal of horizontal alignment as well as an organization's commitment to collaboration and the overall sense and health of the soccer community.

Following the initial granting of a licence through the Canada Soccer Licensing Program, the appraisal process becomes the means by which continued adherence to the standards and ongoing alignment and contribution to the overall soccer system can be measured. The appraisal process forms an essential element of the overall Canada Soccer Licensing Program.

By taking a principles-based approach to guiding the behaviour and characteristics of member organizations, supporting their ongoing development, and measuring impacts and outcomes, the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program will enhance the opportunities and experiences available to players in Canada, thereby positively impacting their personal and soccer development and long-term participation and engagement.

## SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

The Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program is designed to guide member organizations throughout the country toward best principles for organizational development both on and off the field. Member organizations play an essential role in the development of players, coaches, and officials and provide both the daily playing environment and primary contact for participants. By raising the standards of member organizations, both the daily playing environment and participant experience are enhanced; thereby improving the overall soccer system in Canada.

In developing the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program, the underlying philosophy is to take “high standards” to “best principles”. Many Provincial/Territorial Member Associations (MAs) have existing charters or standards-based programs, which provided a guide for the development of the national standards. By consolidating these programs along with those of Canada Soccer’s governing bodies, CONCACAF and FIFA, it is envisioned that the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program is vertically aligned (from FIFA through the MAs) and integrates best principles from several sources to create a standard that is both high quality and recognizes the unique Canadian soccer landscape. The following MAs are recognized for providing information on their existing standards-based programs to support the development of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program:

- ▶ BC Soccer
- ▶ Saskatchewan Soccer Association
- ▶ Manitoba Soccer Association
- ▶ Ontario Soccer
- ▶ Soccer Québec
- ▶ Soccer New Brunswick

Beyond those that contributed to this project with existing programs, the feedback from MAs and member organizations from across the country was invaluable in developing the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program and ensuring it is supported. These contributions are recognized and appreciated.

### The Soccer Club

Within the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program, the soccer club is defined as being any organization that is a member of Canada Soccer either directly or affiliated through membership with an MA that registers players and coaches and delivers soccer programming. The status of the organization as either not-for-profit or private is not relevant to the eligibility for inclusion in the Club Licensing Program, which is open to traditional not-for-profit soccer clubs, private academies, and any other soccer organization in membership.

For additional information on the Soccer Club, please refer to the Canadian Soccer Association Club Licensing Regulations – National Youth Licence.

### Goals of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program

The primary goals of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program are to:

- ▶ Set clearly defined standards and expectations for member organizations;
- ▶ Recognize excellence in the soccer community;
- ▶ Raise the level of all soccer organizations throughout Canada; and,
- ▶ Drive change in the soccer system.

The Club Licensing Program outlines best principles for member organizations across the pillars of Governance, Administration, Infrastructure, and Technical and provides support and guidance in achieving them. By meeting the licensing criteria, member organizations demonstrate their commitment to excellence, while participating players (and their parents), coaches, officials, and organizers can have confidence in the quality of the organization within which they participate.

In Canada, there has been a call for strong leadership in the development of a more standardized soccer system and consistent, actively-enforced, standards throughout<sup>1</sup> The Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program is designed to serve this purpose and guide member organizations to enhanced levels of achievement.

### Principles of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program

To achieve the goals outlined above, the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program takes a principles-based approach. Principles provide direction but not detailed prescription, allowing organizations to develop and select the methods by which they will operate based on their available resources and unique situation and context.

*“As to methods, there may be a million and then some, but principles are few. The [person] who grasps principles can successfully select [their] own methods. The [person] who tries methods, ignoring principles, is sure to have trouble.”*

— Harrington Emerson

The principles of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program are grounded in the values being established for the Canadian soccer community to guide the behaviour of all organizations and can be utilized to inform choices, establish impacts, and drive outcomes. The Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program Principles are as follows:

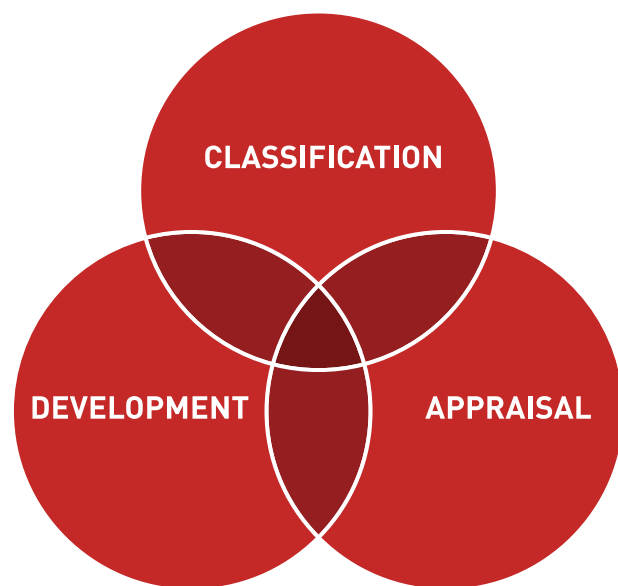
1. Prioritize Fun
2. Emphasize Physical, Mental, and Emotional Safety
3. Provide Developmentally-Appropriate, High Quality Programs

<sup>1</sup> An Analysis of the Implementation of Long Term Player Development in Grassroots Canadian Soccer, Capitis Consulting, January 2017

4. Maximize Attraction, Holistic Personal Development, Progression, and Long-Term Engagement
5. Focus on Participant-Centred Decision Making
6. Foster Accessible, Inclusive, and Welcoming Environments
7. Act as a Good Corporate and Community Citizen

### Elements of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program

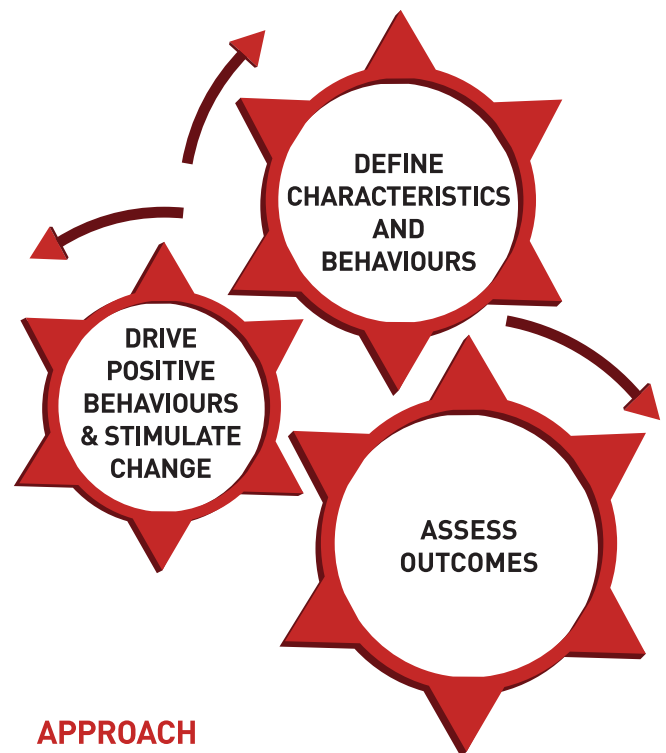
To achieve the goals and align to the principles, the Club Licensing Program requires a broader scope than simply classifying organizations into different categories. Beyond Classification, which is a traditional staple of licensing and charter programs, the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program also includes elements of Development and Appraisal, which will be described in greater detail within this document.



### Approach to Club Licensing

In comparison to traditional licensing and charter programs, the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program takes a relatively unique approach. Rather than a front-loaded, input-based classification exercise, the Club Licensing Program firstly outlines the desired behaviours and characteristics of organizations with a goal of stimulating change in the soccer system by driving these positive behaviours.

In addition, the back-end, outcome-based appraisal provides organizations with clear feedback against the key performance indicators aligned to the stated principles and desired behaviours and outcomes.



### APPROACH

- ▶ Define Characteristics and Behaviours of soccer organizations in each category.
  - ▶ Club Profiles
  - ▶ Performance Indicators
- ▶ Stimulate change by driving positive behaviours
- ▶ Assess outcomes against expectations
  - ▶ 360 Appraisal

## SECTION II: CLASSIFICATION

The first element of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program is Classification, which targets the goal of setting clearly defined standards and expectations for all member organizations. Classification is organized around four Pillars and a series of different categories that recognize the differences in capacity, sophistication, organization, and goals of organizations operating within the Canadian soccer system.

### Pillars of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program

To guide development from the boardroom, through the office, to the field, the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program outlines standards across four pillars: Governance, Administration, Infrastructure, and Technical. Model organizations are equally committed to quality in all areas of their governance and operations. Without strong governance structures and administrative systems, it is difficult to sustain high calibre technical programming.

#### Governance

Governance refers to the policies, processes, systems and controls by which an organization is run. Good governance provides strategic leadership and decision making to achieve the desired organizational outcomes in a manner consistent with the vision, mission and values of the organization.

In a not-for-profit organization, “governance must meld the passion and dedication of volunteers into a focused governance team, operating with integrity and striving to enhance the experiences of the participants, and the performance and reputation of the sport”.<sup>2</sup> Although the governance structure differs slightly in a private organization, the requirements for strong leadership, direction, policies, and controls remain essential to the success of all organizations.

#### Administration

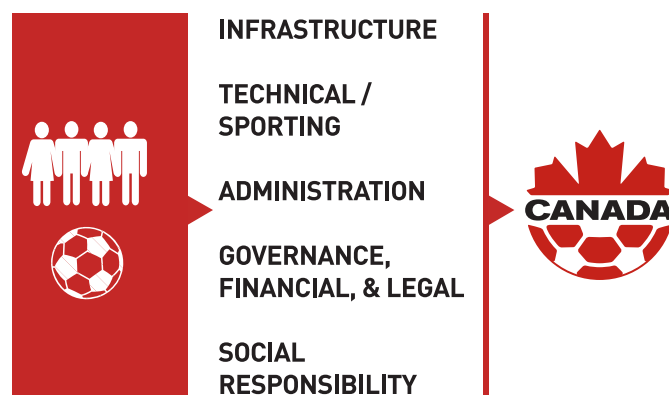
Administration is defined as the process of running an organization. This includes the management of staff, volunteer, and financial resources as well as the day-to-day operations of the organization. Strength in administration ensures an organization can meet the requirements of its governing organization(s), communicates well with stakeholders, and has the resources to deliver the organization’s strategic plan and achieve high level outcomes.

#### Infrastructure

Infrastructure includes the physical and organizational structures and facilities needed for the operation of a member organization. From a fundamental level, a soccer organization requires adequate playing facilities and equipment to deliver programming; however, model organizations also require space for administrative activities and online infrastructure. While the specific infrastructure needs may differ from organization to organization, all member organizations require adequate infrastructure to be successful.

#### Technical

The technical elements of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program address on-field programming and support. Model organizations move beyond program delivery and have created sophisticated pathways, systems, and plans for development. Criteria outline high quality technical programs and services that include intentional and developmentally-appropriate approaches to player development, support for training, certification, and development of coaches, and guidance for program development. The ability to meet ambitious standards in technical programs and services allows member organizations to access higher levels of competition and provide enhanced opportunities for their participants.

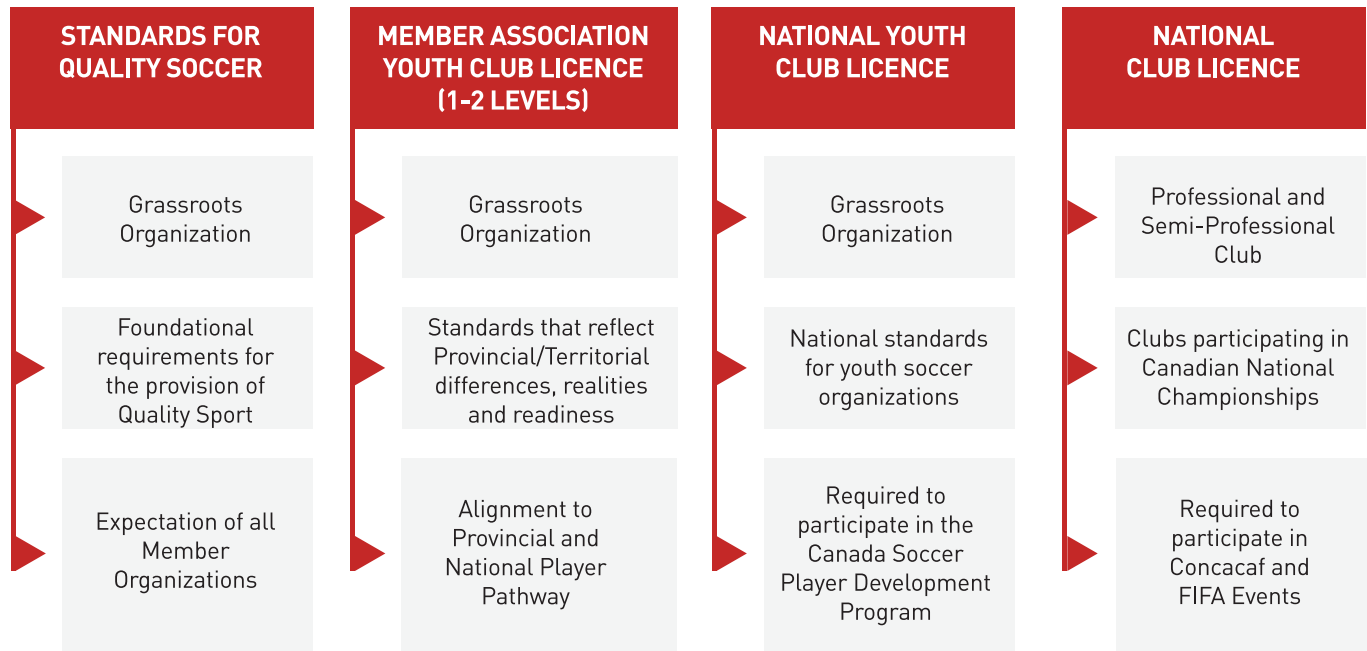


### Classification within the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program

In order to classify member organizations, a series of categories have been established. At one end of the spectrum, a series of foundational requirements have been developed to be considered a Canada Soccer Quality Soccer Provider. These, along with the conditions and expectations of membership, create the baseline expectations for all member organizations. At the other end of the spectrum and tied to access to the Canada Soccer Player Development Program (PDP) and benefits of MLS domestic player status, Canada Soccer has developed a classification that recognizes the leading organizations in Canada; the National Youth Club Licence. Between those bookends, the value of additional classification and appropriateness of the requirements and expectations varies across the country. MAs have been given more flexibility to develop standards and expectations that align to their regional differences, realities, and state of readiness while incorporating the foundational requirements identified by Canada Soccer into the Member Association Youth Club Licence.

<sup>2</sup> Pursuing Effective Governance in Canada’s National Sport Community, Sport Canada — November 2011

## Club Licensing Program Classification



### Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program Standards for Quality Soccer

The Canada Soccer Standards for Quality Soccer are designed to outline the minimum expectations of member organizations in Canada. It is expected that all member organizations provide a developmentally appropriate, safe, enjoyable, accessible, inclusive and welcoming playing environment for their participants, which differentiates it from non-member soccer and unorganized play. In order to be considered as a Quality Soccer Provider, member organizations must also be in good standing with their governing organization(s) and meet the expectations of membership.

The detailed list of requirements for the Canada Soccer Standards for Quality Soccer is available [here](#).



### Member Association Youth Club Licence

Between the Canada Soccer Standards for Quality Soccer and National Youth Club Licence, each MA has been given some autonomy and authority to develop a Member Association Youth Club Licence that aligns to their regional realities and state of readiness. Canada Soccer has developed recommended criteria for a two-tiered Member Association Youth Club Licence that can be adopted or adapted to meet the needs of each MA. In some jurisdictions, a two-tiered model is suitable; however, others may be better suited to a single classification or require nothing beyond the Standards for Quality Soccer. Should MAs choose to adapt the recommended Member Association Youth Club Licence criteria, Canada Soccer has established a series of foundational requirements that must be included and is responsible for approval of the criteria established by the MAs.

A detailed list of the foundational requirements of the Member Association Youth Club Licence is available [here](#) ([Level 1](#), [Level 2](#)).

For additional information on the Member Association Youth Club Licence in your area, please contact your local MA.



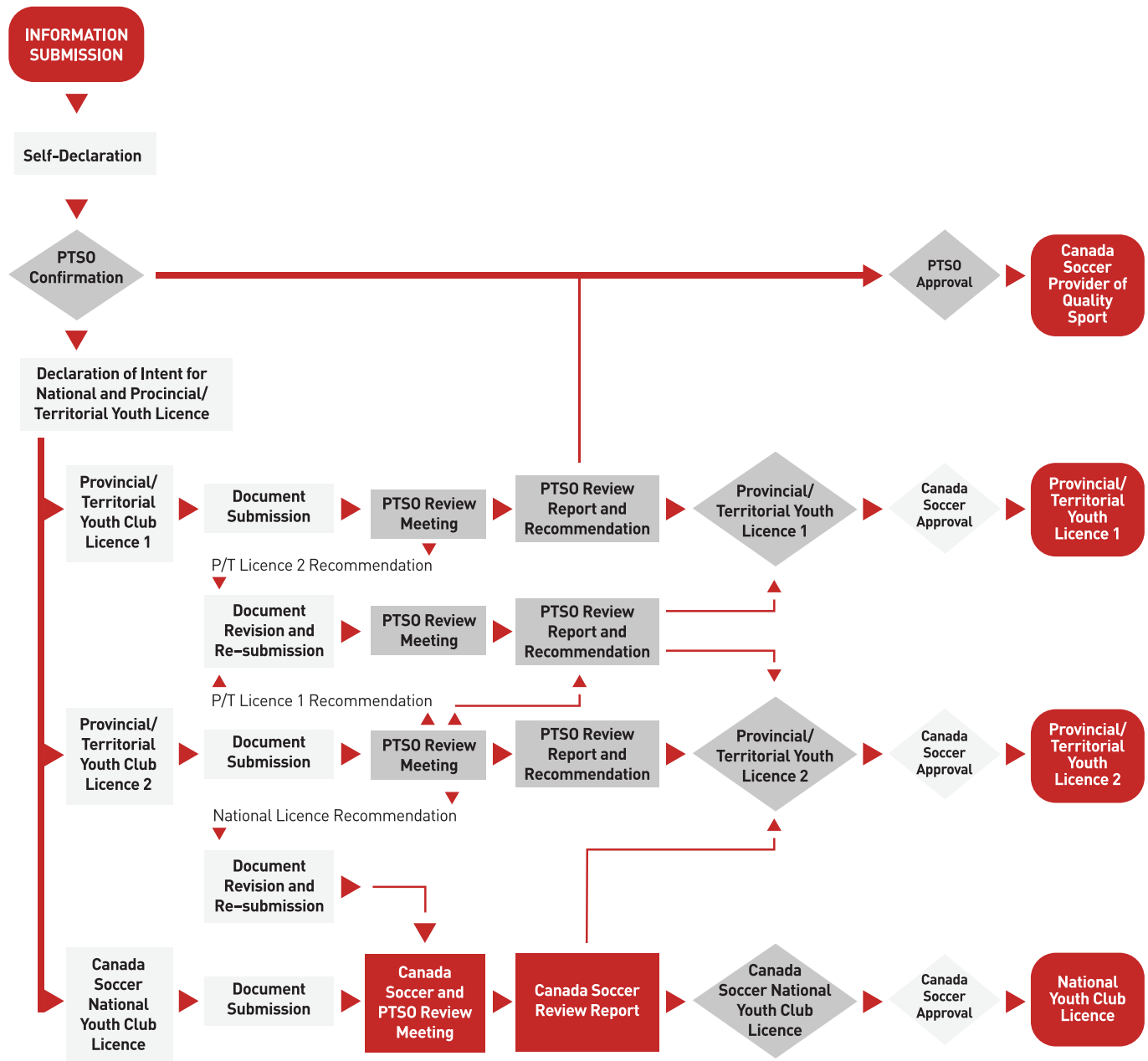
## Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence

The Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence recognizes the highest achieving organizations from across Canada and rewards them with the Canada Soccer Approved Youth Soccer Club endorsement and associated MLS Home Grown Player benefits. Organizations achieving this licence display characteristics and demonstrate behaviours aligned with the highest expectations of governance, administration,

infrastructure, and technical, support their MA and Canada Soccer Pathways and participate in the highest level of competition in Canada; the Canada Soccer Player Development Program.

The detailed list of requirements for the Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence is available [here](#).

## Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program Pathway



## Canada Soccer Club Licensing Regulations

In support of the Club Licensing Program, Canada Soccer has developed the Canadian Soccer Association Club Licensing Regulations — National Youth Club Licence, which has been approved by the Canada Soccer Board of Directors. The Regulations describe the criteria to obtain the National Youth Club Licence, as well as the regulations related to application, review, and issuing of the licence.

For additional information, please refer to the Canadian Soccer Association Club Licensing Regulations — National Youth Club Licence.

### Roles and Responsibilities

The Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program is a partnership between Canada Soccer, MAs, and participating member organizations. Canada Soccer oversees the program, including the development, review, and updating of criteria for the Standards for Quality Soccer and National Youth Club Licence and approves the criteria for the Provincial/Territorial Youth Club Licence. In addition, Canada Soccer issues the licence to member organizations meeting the required standards. Finally, Canada Soccer is also responsible for training and education about the Licensing Program and providing support and assistance to MAs on implementation and management.

The MAs play an essential role in the success of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program. This role includes development, review, and updating of criteria and organization of the Provincial/Territorial Youth Club Licence and the implementation and management of the program within their jurisdiction. Of primary importance, MAs will be responsible for confirming the registration and standing of applicant member organizations and reviewing and appraising applicants within their jurisdiction, excluding the National Youth Club Licence.

Finally, member organizations pursuing licensing are responsible for providing the required evidence that the criteria are being continually met. This includes uploading of documentation and support for ongoing assessment; including, several technical and operational visits and reviews, as well as a year-end performance appraisal.

For additional information on the roles and responsibilities within the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program, please refer to the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Support Manual.

### Benefits of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program

Beyond the intrinsic motivation to align operations to best practices and principles, the benefits to member organizations of participation in the Club Licensing Program are built around a four-corner approach: Reward, Recognition, Differentiation, and Access to Competition. These benefits will evolve over time as the soccer landscape changes and Club Licensing Program becomes more established. Although not all of these benefits will appeal or be applicable to every organization,

in support of an organization's commitment to be the "best version of themselves," they add additional value to entering into the Club Licensing Program.

#### ► Reward

At the National Youth Club Licence classification, member organizations will be rewarded with the Canada Soccer Approved Youth Soccer Club endorsement and receive the associated MLS Home Grown Player benefits. Additional rewards associated with the various classifications are also being considered and may be added to the Licensing Program over time.

#### ► Recognition

Member Organizations meeting the criteria of each classification within the Club Licensing Program will be recognized accordingly. A directory of organizations within each classification will be posted on the Canada Soccer website and organizations will receive official recognition from Canada Soccer and/or their MA, which can be posted on their website.

#### ► Differentiation

In a crowded marketplace, the use of classification within the Club Licensing Program as a means of differentiation from other programs and organizations may provide significant benefit in player recruitment. While non-licensed organizations may provide quality programs and services, in Canada, this can only be confirmed through the Club Licensing Program. This element of quality control, may also be of benefit in less densely populated areas or those with fewer programming options, as participating players (and their parents) can have confidence in the quality of the organization within which they participate.

#### ► Access to Competition

In the short-term access to competition is associated only with the National Youth Club Licence, as holders will have the opportunity to participate in the Canada Soccer Player Development Program (PDP). As the Licensing Program becomes more established and linked to competition structures beyond the PDP, the requirement to reach a specific classification may be linked to the opportunity to access certain competitions at either the Canada Soccer and/or MA levels.

### Why should we be involved?



## SECTION III: DEVELOPMENT

Beyond the classification of organizations, Canada Soccer and its MAs have a responsibility to support development at the member organization level. Clubs and academies provide the daily training and competition environments for the vast majority of players and coaches in Canada, hence better organizations will produce better coaches and, in turn, better players. In order to support organizational development, Canada Soccer has developed a series of Organizational Profiles, which outline, in broad strokes, the characteristics and behaviours of the different categorizations of organizations in Canada. In order to support organizations in achieving these expectations, a series of guides outlining best practices and principles in Governance, Management and Operations, Safety, and Accessibility and Inclusion, have also been developed.

### Organizational Profiles

To recognize differences between member organizations and encourage and reward growth and development, while maintaining an inclusive approach, the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program includes categories of recognition. The Organizational Profile outlines the general characteristics and behaviours of organizations in each category and forms the basis of the Licensing Program.

The Canada Soccer Standards for Quality Soccer is designed to be inclusive of all member organizations in good standing. The Member Association Youth Club Licence Level 1 and 2 identify a variety of best practices and principles both on and off field. Finally, the Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence outlines the highest standards of governance, administration, infrastructure, and technical within the Canadian youth soccer system.

### Organizational Profile: Canada Soccer Standards for Quality Soccer

#### General Profile

The Canada Soccer Standards for Quality Soccer are designed to outline the minimum expectations of member organizations in Canada. It is expected that all member organizations provide a developmentally appropriate, safe, enjoyable, accessible, inclusive and welcoming playing environment for their participants, which differentiates it from non-member soccer and unorganized play. In order to be considered as a Quality Soccer Provider, member organizations must also be in good standing with their governing organization(s) and meet the expectations of membership.

#### Characteristics and Behaviours

##### Governance

- ▶ Is located in Canada.
- ▶ Is a Member in Good Standing with its governing organization(s).

- ▶ Is compliant with the by-laws, policies, and directives of its governing organization(s).
- ▶ Has basic governance structures.
- ▶ Adheres to Canada Soccer Code of Conduct and Ethics.

##### Administration

- ▶ Registers all participants with its governing organization(s).
- ▶ Has basic management and operational structures.
- ▶ Distributes information from Canada Soccer and its governing organization(s) to its participants.

##### Infrastructure

- ▶ Has access to appropriate facilities and equipment to provide its programming.

##### Technical

- ▶ Provides a safe, accessible, and inclusive soccer experience.
- ▶ Provides an enjoyable soccer experience focused on long term participation.
- ▶ Operates programming that is aligned to Long Term Player Development stage-appropriate best principles.

### Organizational Profile: Member Association Youth Club Licence — Level 1

#### General Profile

The Member Association Youth Club Licence — Level 1 of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program builds on the characteristics and behaviours of an organization in the Canada Soccer Standards for Quality Soccer with a balance of expectations across the governance, administration, infrastructure, and technical pillars. The characteristics and behaviours of the Member Association Youth Club Licence — Level 1 are designed to recognize high quality grassroots, community, and competitive organizations that have developed their governance and operations. Organizations achieving the Member Association Youth Club Licence — Level 1 demonstrate their commitment to quality and to providing an enhanced participant experience.

#### Characteristics and Behaviours

- ▶ Demonstrates the Characteristics and Behaviours from the Canada Soccer Standards for Quality Soccer.

##### Governance

- ▶ Has basic governance documents.
- ▶ Is a registered legal entity, compliant with all relevant legislation and Canada Revenue Agency requirements.

- ▶ Has basic planning documents to guide the organization.
- ▶ Works in harmony, aligning values and operations, with its governing organization(s).

#### *Administration*

- ▶ Is financially viable.
- ▶ Has basic management and operational policies and practices.
- ▶ Has an identified Administrative Lead with clearly defined responsibilities.
- ▶ The Administrative Lead is committed to ongoing development and education.
- ▶ Provides financial support for Administrative Lead, Technical Lead, Technical Staff (if applicable), and coaches to pursue ongoing development, training and certification.
- ▶ Has sufficient and appropriate staff to deliver its programs
- ▶ Provides or facilitates financial support to players with financial barriers to participation.

#### *Infrastructure*

- ▶ Has an actively maintained online presence.
- ▶ Has access to facilities and equipment to provide enhanced programming.

#### *Technical*

- ▶ Operates programming that is aligned to Long Term Player Development stage-appropriate best principles.
- ▶ Has basic technical planning to guide its programs and services.
- ▶ Has an established pathway to provide players with access to opportunities for participation in Grassroots, Community, Competitive, and Development/Performance Streams.
- ▶ Has an established pathway that provides opportunities for players to continue participation in the Soccer for Life stage (senior and masters).
- ▶ Educates coaches, players, and parents about the Provincial/Territorial and National Player Pathways and Long-Term Player Development model. (RECOMMENDATION)
- ▶ Has an identified and qualified Technical Lead (refer to Category Requirements for specifics) with clearly defined responsibilities.
- ▶ Technical Lead is committed to ongoing development and education.

- ▶ Has coaches and team personnel who are properly trained and/or certified for the groups/teams with which they work and competitions in which they participate.

## **Organizational Profile: Member Association Youth Club Licence — Level 2**

### **General Profile**

The Member Association Youth Club Licence — Level 2 of the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program identifies organizations committed to achieving the highest expectations of the Grassroots, Community, and Competitive Streams and targets those with aspirations of moving in to the Development/Performance Stream. Organizations achieving the Member Association Youth Club Licence — Level 2 are making an enhanced commitment across each of the pillars, which requires significant resources to achieve.

### **Characteristics and Behaviours**

- ▶ Demonstrates the Characteristics and Behaviours from the Member Association Youth Club Licence — Level 1.

#### *Governance*

- ▶ Has advanced governance structures and documents and commits to ongoing governance development.
- ▶ Has advanced, long-term, planning documents that include measures of success.

#### *Administration*

- ▶ Is in strong financial health and demonstrates fiscal responsibility and appropriate deployment of resources.
- ▶ Is competently managed and operated and demonstrates appropriate human resource and financial management practices.
- ▶ Deploys appropriate resources toward administration and operations.
- ▶ Has enhanced marketing and communication plans and capabilities.

#### *Infrastructure*

- ▶ Deploys appropriate resources toward infrastructure access and development.
- ▶ Has a physical space as a headquarters for operations. (RECOMMENDATION)
- ▶ Has access to enhanced facilities to allow for advanced programming.

### *Technical*

- ▶ Deploys appropriate resources toward technical programs, services, staffing, and support.
- ▶ Is aligned to its Provincial/Territories and National Player Pathways.
- ▶ Has advanced technical planning documents that align to the Strategic Plan and Long-Term Player Development principles and include short and long-term goals.
- ▶ Has an Annual Plan for all programming, which includes periodized training and competition strategies and schedules aligned to the competition(s) in which it participates for the Learning to Train, Training to Train, Training to Compete, and Soccer for Life stages.
- ▶ Has a playing philosophy and training methodology and/or curriculum that is consistent with Long Term Player Development recommendations across all stages.
- ▶ Educates coaches, players, and parents about the Provincial/Territorial and National Player Pathways and Long-Term Player Development model.
- ▶ Operates advanced, year-round programming.
- ▶ Has programs that remove barriers to participation for and/or target under-represented groups.
- ▶ Has a Technical Lead with enhanced certification (refer to Category Requirements for specifics).
- ▶ Has access to an internal Learning Facilitator to deliver Canada Soccer Community Coaching Workshops for the stages at which it operates.
- ▶ Has access to a Goalkeeper Coach and provides goalkeeper-specific training opportunities.
- ▶ Has a strategy for coach recruitment, retention, development, assessment, and recognition that includes targeting women in coaching.
- ▶ Offers non-certification coach development and mentorship opportunities and provides coaches with access to appropriate support.
- ▶ Coaches are committed to ongoing development and education.
- ▶ Has a Physical Training Plan that includes stage-appropriate testing protocol.

## **Organizational Profile: Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence**

### **General Profile**

The Canada Soccer National Youth Club Licence recognizes the highest achieving organizations from across Canada and rewards them with the Canada Soccer Approved Youth Soccer Club endorsement and associated MLS Home Grown Player benefits. Organizations achieving this licence display characteristics and demonstrate behaviours aligned with

the highest expectations of governance, administration, infrastructure, and technical, support their MA and Canada Soccer Pathways and participate in the highest level of competition in Canada; the Canada Soccer Player Development Program.

### **Characteristics and Behaviours**

- ▶ Demonstrates the Characteristics and Behaviours from the Member Association Youth Club Licence — Level 1 and 2.

### *Governance*

- ▶ Has optimal governance structures, processes and policies or is committed to their development.
- ▶ Demonstrates a commitment to continual improvements to its existing governance structures/ processes;

### *Administration*

- ▶ Has advanced management and operational practices.
- ▶ Has advanced operational planning documents that align to the Strategic and Technical Plans.
- ▶ Has enhanced community engagement plans, capabilities, and practices. (RECOMMENDATION)
- ▶ Has advanced financial practices, development plans, and resources.

### *Infrastructure*

- ▶ Has access to a physical space as a headquarters for operations.
- ▶ Has access to advanced facilities to allow for the delivery of optimal developmental programming.
- ▶ Has a facility strategy aligned to Strategic, Operational, and Technical Plans.

### *Technical*

- ▶ Has a Technical Plan that aligns to the Long-Term Player Development Model.
- ▶ Has a Game Model that is aligned to the playing philosophy.
- ▶ Has Player Management Pathway and associated support mechanisms.
- ▶ Supports a holistic approach to player development that takes in to account Physical, Mental, Technical/ Tactical, and Social/Emotional development.
- ▶ Operates optimal, standards-based, programming.
- ▶ Participates in the highest level of competition available.
- ▶ Has a Technical Lead with advanced certification (refer to Category Requirements for specifics).
- ▶ Has access to Learning Facilitator(s) to deliver Coach Licensing Workshops as guided by Canada Soccer and/ or governing organization(s).

- ▶ Has a Sport Science and Medicine Plan aligned to the Technical Plan.
- ▶ Provides access to appropriate sport science and medicine expertise and support.
- ▶ Has access to appropriate technology to support player and coach development.

### Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program Guides

In support of the Organizational Profiles, a series of Guides have been developed, including:

1. [Canada Soccer Guide to Club Governance](#)
2. [Canada Soccer Guide to Club Management and Operations](#)
3. [Canada Soccer Guide to Safety](#)
4. [Canada Soccer Guide to Accessibility and Inclusion](#)

These Guides expand on the characteristics and behaviours outlined in the Profiles and address why they are important and best principles and practices for successfully implementing and achieving them at the member organization level. To that end, organizations are encouraged to use the Guides as a core reference guide in the development of their organizations.

The Guides are not instruction manuals, nor policy documents! They are aimed at helping organizations to be the best they can be, providing positive experiences for their players, coaches, match officials and volunteers. Whether an organization is striving to reach a higher category of Club Licence classification or not, all affiliated organizations are encouraged to follow the principles, directions, and standards laid out in the Guides, purely for their own benefit, and at their discretion.

## SECTION IV: APPRAISAL

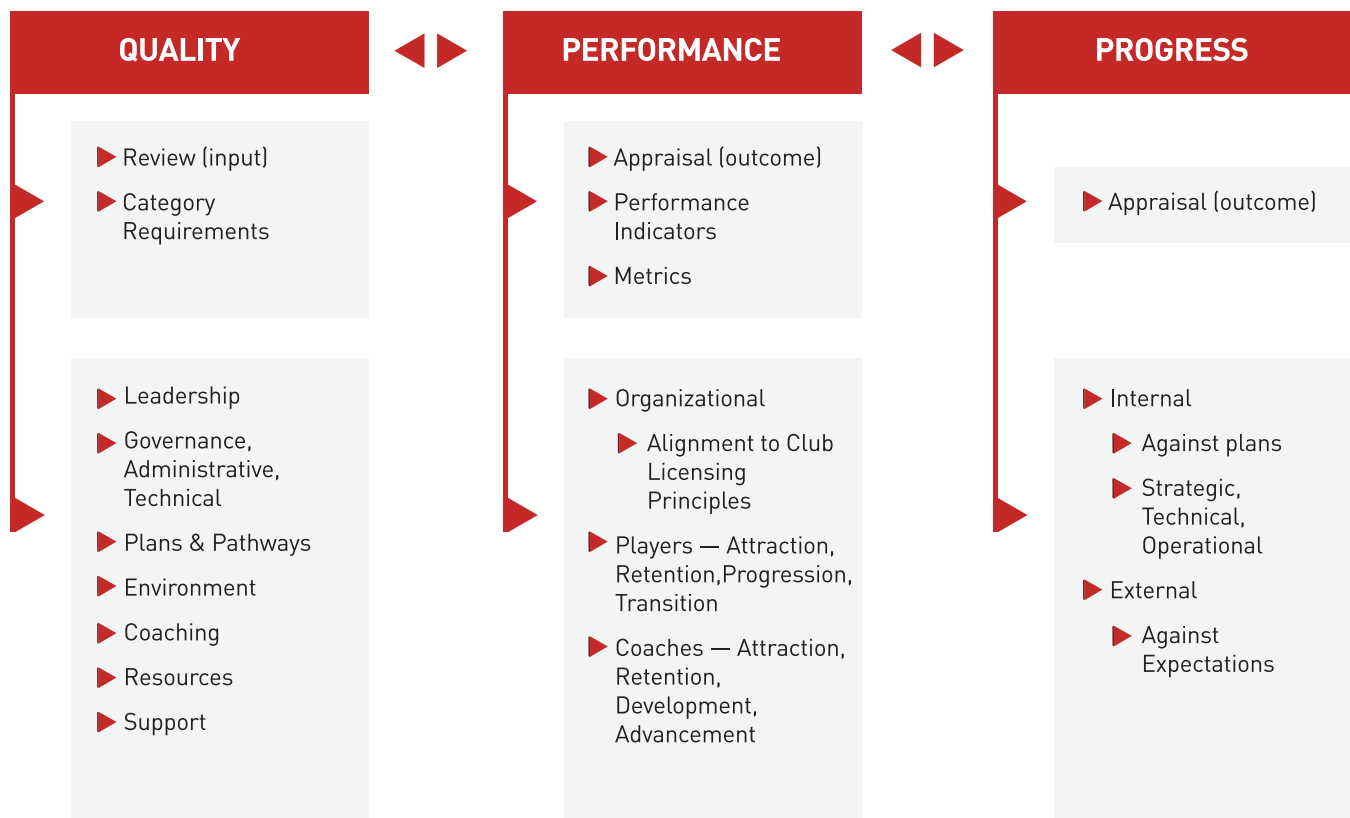
Appraisal is the act of assigning value. In general, in the soccer community in Canada, organizational review is done informally and from the bottom up (i.e. Club/Academy to District/Region, District/Region to Province/Territory, Province/Territory to National Association). Through the Club Licensing Program, Canada Soccer intends to appraise the quality of affiliated youth soccer organizations by:

1. Measuring the organizational effectiveness at:
  - a. player attraction, retention, progression, and transition
  - b. coach attraction, retention, development, and progression
2. Measuring organizational progress against:
  - a. internal Strategic, Operational, and Technical Plans
  - b. external Club Licence Action Plan

3. Evaluating alignment to the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Principles, which include:

- a. Prioritize Fun
- b. Emphasize Physical, Mental, and Emotional Safety
- c. Provide Developmentally–Appropriate, High Quality Programs
- d. Maximize Attraction, Holistic Personal Development, Progression, and Long–Term Engagement
- e. Focus on Participant–Centred Decision Making
- f. Foster Accessible, Inclusive, and Welcoming Environments
- g. Act as a Good Corporate and Community Citizen

Key Evaluation Questions:	
<b>Process Questions</b>	How is the organization attempting to increase player attraction, retention, progression, and transition?
	How is the organization attempting to increase coach attraction, retention, development, and progression?
	How is the organization implementing the Club Licensing principles?
<b>Outcome Questions</b>	How effective is the organization at player attraction, retention, progression, and transition?
	How effective is the organization at coach attraction, retention, development, and progression?
	How much progress has the organization made against the goals of the Strategic, Operational, and Technical Plans?
	How much progress has the organization made against the Club Licence Action Plan?
	How aligned are the organization’s behaviours to the guiding principles of the Club Licensing Program?



## Appraisal Process

As a developmental evaluation, the appraisal is intended to support learning, based primarily on enhancing achievement of the desired outcomes, which are designed to guide and drive desired behaviours within the soccer community. In order to ensure the necessary rigour, the evaluation will be conducted according to the appraisal schedule on an ongoing basis using a mixed-methods approach consisting of quantitative measurement of performance and progress against key indicators as well as a qualitative evaluation of the alignment of behaviours to the guiding principles.

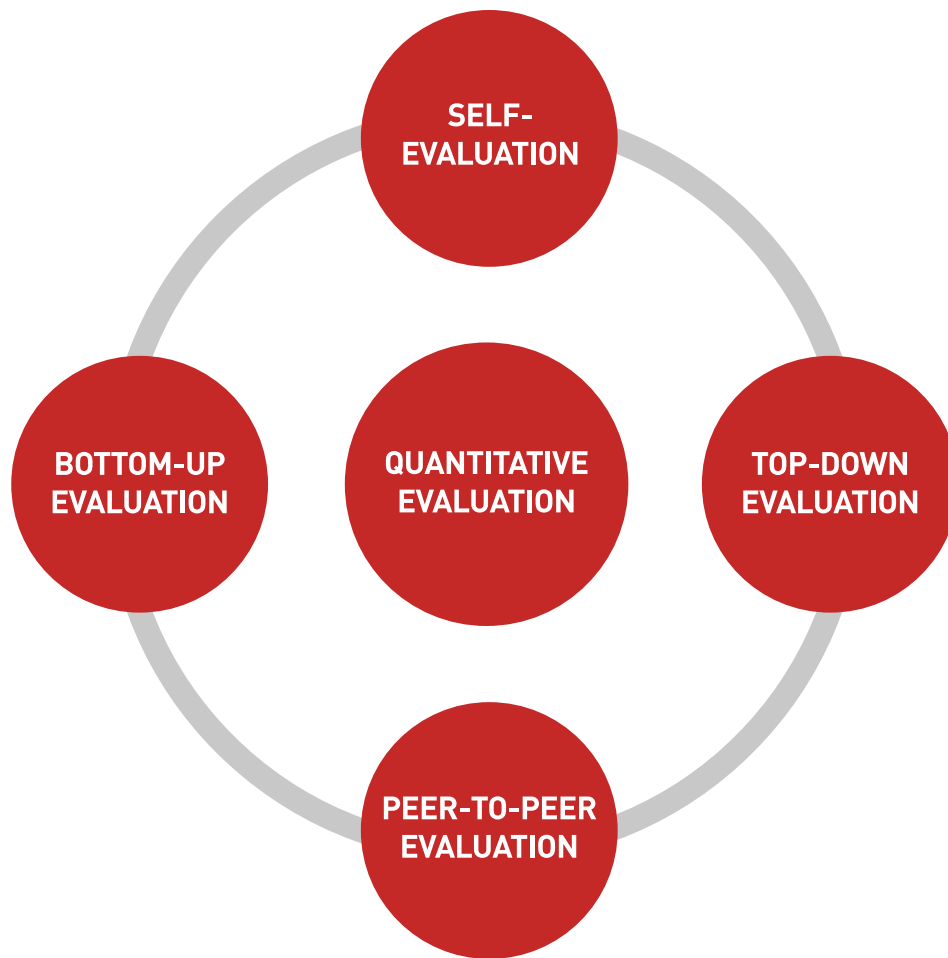
### The desired outcomes include:

1. Increased player attraction, retention, progression, and transition
2. Increased coach attraction, retention, development, and progression
3. Soccer Environments that are more;
  - a. Fun
  - b. Physically, Mentally, and Emotionally Safe
  - c. Developmentally–Appropriate
  - d. Accessible, Inclusive, and Welcoming
  - e. Focused on Holistic Personal Development and Participant–Centred Decision Making

4. Soccer Organizations that better act as a good corporate and community citizens

To gain a more detailed understanding of the organization, drive strategic and operational direction, and foster a culture of growth, the appraisal will utilize a 360° approach, which includes:

- ▶ Quantitative Evaluation: Evaluation of key indicators of organizational effectiveness.
- ▶ Self–Evaluation: The opportunity to reflect what the organization did and does well, what can be improved, and the learnings from the evaluation period.
- ▶ Bottom Up Evaluation: Evaluation of member, stakeholder, and customer satisfaction.
- ▶ Top Down Evaluation: Evaluation of vertical alignment and achievement of standards, while also identifying areas that require development and support.
- ▶ Peer-to-Peer Evaluation: Evaluation of horizontal alignment as well as an organization’s commitment to collaboration and the overall sense and health of the soccer community.



## 360° REVIEW AND MIXED METHODS APPROACH

Using a 360° survey-based approach to the evaluation of the more subjective desired outcomes described previously will allow for the monitoring of alignment to the Club Licensing Principles within the system. As outliers are surfaced, it will also identify the need for deeper dives to gain new insights, which will require the development of new tools to support enhanced evaluation.

In addition to the attempt to quantify alignment to the principles of the Club Licensing Program, this methodology also allows for the collection of qualitative data. Beyond the use of this data to support the quantitative responses

and confirm the need for additional analysis of outliers, this also allows for a more participatory approach. By identifying outcomes from multiple stakeholder groups (e.g. Parents and Players, Club Leadership, Governing Bodies, Other Clubs) and individuals within those groups, it allows for triangulation to validate that behaviour change is indeed occurring. In addition, “Triangulation is not just about validation but about deepening and widening one’s understanding” (Cohen and Manion). It facilitates and supports a more detailed analysis of impacts on different groups and individuals as well as the ability to examine both intended and unintended consequences of the intervention.



## Performance Indicators and Metrics

Performance Indicators are the measurable values that demonstrate the effectiveness, efficiency, performance, progress, and quality of the member organization. A review of performance indicators provides the required information to determine if the member organization has the characteristics and demonstrates the behaviours outlined

in the Organizational Profile. It also offers appropriate indicators of performance and provides guidance on how to achieve the desired outcomes during the licensing period. Using quantitative data from a centralized registration database, organizations will be evaluated on the following key performance indicators:

Players	
<b>Attraction</b>	New players to the sport (% of total registrations)
	New players to the organization (% of total registrations)
<b>Retention</b>	Players who return to the organization from the previous year (% of total registrations)
	Players from the previous year who have left the organization but continue to play soccer (% of total registrations)
<b>Progression</b>	Number of players progressing to Youth National Teams and NEX
	Number of players progressing to Professional Club Academies
	Number of players progressing to REX
	Number of players progressing to Provincial/Regional Team and Canada Soccer Player Development Program
	Number of players progressing to College and University programs
	Number of players progressing to Professional Clubs and National Teams
<b>Transition</b>	Players transitioning into coaching roles
	Players transitioning into officiating roles
	Players transitioning into administrative roles
	Players transitioning into volunteer roles
	Players transitioning into other roles within the soccer community
Coaches	
<b>Attraction</b>	New coaches to the sport (% of total coaches)
	New coaches to the organization (% of total coaches)
<b>Retention</b>	Coaches who return to the organization from the previous year (% of total coaches)
	Coaches from the previous year who have left the organization but continue to coach soccer (% of total coaches)
<b>Development</b>	Coaches completing Canada Soccer Community Stream Workshops
	Canada Soccer Community Stream Workshops provided by organization
	Coaches actively participating in non-certification professional development opportunities (% of total coaches)
	Non-certification professional development opportunities provided by organization

## Coaches

<b>Progression</b>	Number of coaches entering into C Licence
	Number of coaches successfully completing C Licence evaluation
	Number of coaches entering into Children's Licence
	Number of coaches successfully completing Children's Licence evaluation
	Number of coaches entering into Youth Licence
	Number of coaches successfully completing Youth Licence evaluation
	Number of coaches entering into B Licence Part 1
	Number of coaches successfully completing B Licence Part 1 evaluation
	Number of coaches entering into B Licence Part 2
	Number of coaches successfully completing B Licence Part 2 evaluation
	Number of coaches entering into A Licence
	Number of coaches successfully completing A Licence evaluation

Metrics are the standards of measurement by which efficiency, performance, progress, or quality of a plan, process, or product can be assessed<sup>3</sup>. The metrics for the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program provide the specific

measures by which achievement of the standards are attained and appraised. In order to establish appropriate metrics, first a baseline must be developed. From there, specific metrics can be developed for each of the performance indicators.

<sup>3</sup> [www.businessdictionary.com](http://www.businessdictionary.com)

## Appraisal Schedule

Within the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program, soccer organizations successfully achieving the requirements will be licensed for a period of two years. The appraisal schedule is

built around the 360° approach with more frequent evaluations at the higher categories of classification.

Category	Appraisal	
	Type	Frequency
<b>Canada Soccer Standards for Quality Soccer</b>	Objective Evaluation	Yearly
	Self-Evaluation	2 Years
	Top Down Evaluation	4 Years
	Bottom Up Evaluation	4 Years
	Peer-to-Peer Evaluation	N/A
<b>Provincial/Territorial Youth Club Licence Level 1</b>	Objective Evaluation	Yearly
	Self-Evaluation	Yearly
	Top Down Evaluation	4 Years
	Bottom Up Evaluation	2 Years
	Peer-to-Peer Evaluation	N/A
<b>Provincial/Territorial Youth Club Licence 2</b>	Objective Evaluation	Yearly
	Self-Evaluation	Yearly
	Top Down Evaluation	2 Years
	Bottom Up Evaluation	Yearly
	Peer-to-Peer Evaluation	4 Years
<b>National Youth Club Licence</b>	Objective Evaluation	Yearly
	Self-Evaluation	Yearly
	Top Down Evaluation	2 Years
	Bottom Up Evaluation	Yearly
	Peer-to-Peer Evaluation	2 Years