

## Sport Canada Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) Planning Process

### *The 10 steps to designing LTAD Models*

The LTAD is a philosophy. It is a new paradigm of thinking. LTAD is a tool for change.

The LTAD is optimal training, competition and recovery programming with regard to development versus chronological age<sup>1</sup>. LTAD is not an elitist model but rather provides the optimal foundation for a physically active life and/or podium performances.

A Long-Term Athlete Development model will help to cultivate a culture of lifelong participation in sport and recreation by highlighting its value in improving the health and well-being of individuals as well identifying an optimal pathway for athletes from playground to podium.

This '10 step' procedure is based on the experience of planning sport-specific LTAD models with English and Irish sport governing bodies, as well as Alpine Canada Alpin, Canadian Curling Association, Canadian Freestyle Ski Association and Speed Skating Canada.

Overall the '10 steps' generally take 12 to 18 months with meetings every three month recommended. NFs are welcomed to undertake any sport-specific modifications as needed.

1. "The Buy In" Workshop #1 - Key stakeholders are invited to participate at a generic LTAD workshop, analyzing the reasons behind LTAD development and the framework of LTAD.
  - An outline of LTAD is presented to all attending (usually 1.5 to 2 hour presentation not including follow-up group discussion)
  - Sport-specific models will be outlined from other countries, if available
  - Presentations will be followed with a Q&A period and small group discussions
  - Small groups will be formed of sport specific technical experts, i.e. elite, intermediate and entry level to discuss challenges and opportunities to developing a sport-specific LTAD
  - Small groups report back in point form
  - If "buy in" happens the National Federation (NF) should appoint a LTAD Project Director, who should be a senior staff member in the NF; (junior staffers do not have the power to carry through with major decisions)
  - If possible identify a Project Coordinator who will facilitate the LTAD work at the meeting (or soon after the meeting).
    - Appointing a person as Project Coordinator who is currently working full-time for the organization slows down the process substantially
    - A Project Coordinator with proper background contracted for the project coordination for a 12-18 month will enable the process to move forward
  - Identify three groups of sport specific technical experts: elite, intermediate and entry level representing technical, tactical, physical and mental expertise. Each Work Group should number 3-5; no more than 15 individuals in total. (Think big picture vs. details)
  - The most effective method is to form a NF LTAD Work Group including;
    - Project Director (NF appointment overseeing the project)

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<sup>1</sup> Chronological is time elapsed since birth while development age refers to maturation level i.e. a 13 year old by chronological age can be 11 or 15 from the point of view of maturation or biological age.

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- Project Coordinator (contracted resource to facilitate and possibly complete technical writing for the project)
  - Elite experts<sup>2</sup> (working in a 3-5 member team)
  - Intermediate experts<sup>3</sup> (working in a 3-5 member team)
  - Entry level experts<sup>4</sup> (working in a 3-5 member team)
  - Sport Canada LTAD expert<sup>5</sup> (appointed by Sport Canada to liaise with the NF Work Group to build the model)
2. The Sport Canada LTAD expert will provide templates and examples for the project. The Project Coordinator will facilitate the NF LTAD Work Group input and development of the information.
  3. The Project Coordinator will liaise with the sport specific technical experts over a three month period. (Less than three months between meetings is not enough time to do the proper work, more than three months and momentum is lost.) Additionally during the three month the Project Coordinator will keep the Sport Canada LTAD expert informed
  4. The NF LTAD Work Group will meet approximately every three months including the Sport Canada LTAD expert. At each meeting, a page-by-page discussion of the document occurs. A combination of conference calls and Work Group meetings can facilitate the process. (Doing this process using email is very trying, 10-15 people using 'track changes' leads to chaos.)
  5. Two weeks before a NF LTAD Work Group meeting, a draft document is circulated to the Work Group as well as the Sport Canada LTAD expert.
  6. After two, three or four meetings a draft LTAD is produced.
  7. The draft LTAD is circulated to all NF board members, PSOs, major clubs and any experts in the sport plus the Sport Canada LTAD expert for review
  8. Amendments are done by the NF LTAD Work Group and a final draft is produced.
  9. Final drafts are circulated as above and amendments are done as necessary.
  10. LTAD is approved by AGM then an Implementation Manager is identified
    - Implementation will be directed by the NF's working closely with PSOs and clubs.
    - A nonspecific implementation procedure will be designed in the future.
    - Examples of the different implementation procedures can be reviewed:
      - British Swimming
      - England Netball
      - England-Wales Cricket Board
      - The Lawn Tennis Association
      - English Rugby Football Union

For further planning discuss details with Istvan Balyi, Charles Cardinal, Steve Norris or Richard Way as they are a resource for NFs throughout the '10 steps'.

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<sup>2</sup> Elite level experts are the top level coaches (national team - NCCP Level 4/5).

<sup>3</sup> Intermediate level experts have expertise with provincial teams and at the Canada Games.

<sup>4</sup> Re: Entry level experts - many counties now have a specialization which is a "developmental coach" - have expertise in motor learning, pediatric exercise physiology, developmental psychology, etc.

<sup>5</sup> The role is to act as a consultant, helping sports move forward re: the "Athlete Development Model" always keeping in mind the big picture and how all the pieces fit together.