

# IBU MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

**Date:** [Insert date]

**Review Due:** [Insert date]

## 1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy provides a framework to ensure that the International Biathlon Union (IBU), together with National Federations (NFs), Organising Committees (OCs), and delivery partners, provide a safe, respectful and supportive environment for all participants in the sport. It places particular emphasis on promoting and protecting mental health and overall wellbeing.

This policy applies to all Participants under IBU jurisdiction.

It also reinforces the IBU's obligations under the IBU Constitution (Art. 2.1(d)), the Integrity Code (Arts. 4.3 and 6), and the Executive Board decision at its 173rd meeting, which endorsed leadership on mental health and wellbeing across the sport.

## 2. Policy Statement

The IBU recognises that positive mental health and wellbeing are essential to performance, safety and integrity across biathlon. We are committed to a culture that promotes psychological safety, reduces stigma and ensures those experiencing mental health challenges are treated with respect, confidentiality and without discrimination.

This policy is underpinned by the IBU's Wellbeing Charter, Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2025–2029), and the Operational Delivery Plan, which outlines specific actions and timelines.

## 3. Definitions

**Wellbeing:** A holistic concept that includes mental, emotional, physical and social health.

**Mental Health:** A state of wellbeing where individuals realise their abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their communities.

**Participant:** As defined in the IBU Integrity Code, a Participant includes any person automatically bound by the Code. This includes:

- IBU Officials, including those seeking election or appointment
- IBU Members, including National Federation (NF) Members
- NF officeholders, staff, and organising committee members, in their dealings with the IBU
- Hosts or bidders for IBU Congresses or International Competitions, and anyone working with them
- Individuals participating in Biathlon Competitions, including Athletes, Athlete Support Personnel, referees, and other officials—from the point of selection, entry, or appointment
- Any other person who agrees to be bound by the Code

## 4. Policy Principles

The IBU commits to:

- Providing visible leadership and embedding wellbeing in its operational and strategic culture
- Tackling stigma and building literacy across all roles
- Ensuring early access to support and effective referral mechanisms
- Creating a safe, inclusive environment for all participants
- Supporting IBU staff so they can advocate for, and lead wellbeing change confidently

## 5. Implementation Commitments

### 5.1 IBU (including BIU)

The IBU will:

- Develop and maintain a central Mental Health Policy, Strategy, Charter and Operational Plan
- Deliver internal programmes to support IBU staff wellbeing and lead by example
- Coordinate education and awareness campaigns to destigmatise mental health
- Collect and share data on best practices and risks across the sport
- Map existing NF-level support and identify service gaps
- Develop a practical toolbox for use across NFs and OCs
- Provide access to training and templates, including mental health literacy resources

### 5.2 National Federations (NFs)

NFs are expected to:

- Appoint a dedicated Mental Health Point of Contact
- Conduct pre-season mental health screening for athletes and ASPs, using a tiered model based on NF capacity (e.g. currently, IOC SMHAT- where clinicians available; IOC SMHRT-1 recognition tool in basic settings).
- Ensure appropriate follow-up support and referrals for identified needs
- Map and make accessible national mental health services in local languages
- Facilitate or provide tiered Mental Health Training: Tier 1 – Certified MHFA training for doctors/welfare officers; Tier 2 – Online awareness modules/webinars for coaches and team staff; Tier 3 – Short briefings and multilingual resources for volunteers/event staff.
- Support education and awareness at national level
- Participate in annual reporting and feedback processes coordinated by the IBU
- Where appropriate, partner with their National Olympic Committees (NOCs) to share service delivery. NOCs may have existing mental health resources or staff (e.g. sports psychologists, helplines, workshops) that can ease the workload on NFs and ensure a more joined-up support offer.

### 5.3 Organising Committees (OCs)

OCs are required to:

- Develop and deliver emergency mental health protocols for IBU events, focused on immediate on-site support for staff, volunteers, and in acute cases athletes/ ASPs. Their role is operational and short-term only, with ongoing care the responsibility of NFs.
- Coordinate with NFs to ensure on-site or referral access to mental health services
- Provide clear signposting and communications to athletes and ASPs during events
- Ensure staff and volunteers receive basic mental health briefings
- Participate in post-event debriefs where mental health incidents or support were engaged

## 6. Oversight and Accountability

The policy will be overseen jointly by the IBU (Development and Sport & Event Departments) and the BIU, in consultation with external experts.

- A Mental Health and Wellbeing Dashboard
- Annual federation-level reporting and review
- Continuous consultation with athletes, staff, and key stakeholders

## 7. Review and Renewal

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier where required, incorporating learning from the strategy implementation, feedback from NFs/OCs and international best practice.