



International Olympic Committee

# **COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPANTS DURING THE OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES MILANO CORTINA 2026**

## PURPOSE AND IMPLEMENTATION

This document sets out the Key Principles for the use of Participants' Images for Advertising (as defined in the "Scope" section below) that are applicable to the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026 (**Milano Cortina 2026**), further to Bye-law 3 to Rule 40 of the Olympic Charter. It seeks to clarify what is possible during the Games Period (as defined below) and put Participants (as defined below) in a better position to work with their sponsors in a manner consistent with their rights and responsibilities under the Athletes' Declaration and the Olympic Charter.

**All Participants are permitted to promote their sponsors, and all sponsors are permitted to use Participant Images, during the Games Period, in accordance with the Principles in this document.**

It is the responsibility of all Participants to comply with these Principles. Further, organisations using athletes in their advertising, and sports federations and agents who are involved in advising athletes in relation to their advertising activities, will want to ensure that they are acting and advising athletes in accordance with these Principles. The Principles enable athletes and their sponsors to continue to run well-planned campaigns that do not seek to take undue advantage of the Olympic Games themselves.

### Roles and responsibilities

Each National Olympic Committee (**NOC**) is responsible for the implementation of these Principles in its territory. In the host countries of Milano Cortina 2026 and future editions of the Olympic Games, responsibility for the implementation of these Principles is shared between the NOC and the relevant organising committee for the Olympic Games (**OCOG**).

The legal framework may vary from country to country depending on the applicable laws, regulations, relevant case law and specific agreements between NOCs and Participants (in particular with regard to the financial support and the support in kind that the NOCs provide to Participants). As a result, the implementation of these Principles by NOCs may vary.

Each NOC will oversee compliance with these Principles in connection with advertising activity targeted at its territory. Therefore, the relevant NOC must be notified of advertising targeted at a **particular territory** in accordance with Key Principle 2, unless stipulated differently by the relevant NOC. Advertising is regarded as **targeted** at a territory if it (1) uses a Participant who represents the NOC of that particular territory, and (2) is either:

- in the local language of that territory or country, and/or
- in the case of paid media, published in media outlets targeted at that territory or country.

The International Olympic Committee (**IOC**) will oversee compliance with these Principles in connection with international advertising activity, in consultation with the relevant NOCs and OCOGs. The IOC must therefore be notified of advertising not targeted at a particular territory or targeted at more than one country.

## CONTEXT

### Ensuring Global Participation at the Olympic Games

The Olympic Games are unique. They are the only truly global multisport event and represent the highest sporting endeavour of an athlete's career. It's essential that as many countries as possible are represented from around the world.

To ensure that all teams are funded to be able to prepare for and compete at the Olympic Games, the IOC runs an international marketing programme based on the principle of solidarity: NOCs participate in, and receive revenues from, the global programme with the understanding that revenues will be shared with every other NOC in order to fund the operation of NOCs, sports development and Olympic Games participation, as well as to support the hosting of the Olympic Games themselves. This programme helps secure funding of all national Olympic teams, regardless of the individual profile, commercial or sporting success of their athletes.

In addition, NOCs run national marketing programmes within their territories to fund their operations, sports development, Olympic Games participation and other programmes. The OCOGs also run national marketing programmes to generate private funding for the Olympic Games – funding through these programmes from the private sector helps reduce reliance on taxpayer funding of the Olympic Games.

Like most sponsorship programmes, Olympic marketing programmes are based on granting exclusive rights of association with the Olympic Movement, including through use of Olympic marks and images for advertising purposes. However, part of the enduring appeal of the Olympic Games is that advertising at the Olympic Games is restricted to ensure the focus remains on the athletes' sports performances.

The implication of an association with the Olympic Games through use of athletes is particularly powerful during and immediately before the Olympic Games. Accordingly, the Olympic Charter has traditionally established limitations on the ability of athletes (and other Olympic Games participants) to use their images for advertising during the Olympic Games. These limited restrictions help to maintain the distinctiveness of official Olympic marketing programmes and so sustain the funding of global athlete participation and the organisation of the Olympic Games.

### Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities

To determine appropriate principles, the IOC has put athletes' interests first and foremost. In particular, these Principles have been informed by the Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities Declaration, a historic athlete-driven initiative, developed by athletes and for athletes through a worldwide consultation process.

Specifically, the Declaration *"aspires to promote the ability and opportunity of athletes to [...] leverage opportunities to generate income in relation to their sporting career, name and likeness, while recognising the intellectual property or other rights, rules of the event and of sports organisations as well as the Olympic Charter"* and *"encourages athletes to [...] respect*

*the solidarity principle of the Olympic Movement, which allows assistance and support to be provided among athletes and members of the Olympic Movement.”*

The Principles explained in this document have been developed in accordance with these rights and responsibilities.

## **Personal Sponsorship during Milano Cortina 2026**

The Principles are clear: athletes are able to generate income through personal sponsorships and appearing in advertising for those sponsors, and can continue to do so by being involved with well-planned advertising during Milano Cortina 2026. In addition, it is hoped that the worldwide exposure provided to athletes participating in Milano Cortina 2026 through media coverage, including the IOC’s global broadcast arrangements, can help raise their profile for years to come.

By accepting some limited restrictions on these activities during Milano Cortina 2026, athletes who enjoy personal sponsorship deals are helping to secure funding to support all national Olympic teams, regardless of the profile or success of their athletes. In this way, those athletes are helping to ensure athletes from around the world are able to participate at Milano Cortina 2026 and future Olympic Games on an economically viable basis by supporting the principle of solidarity.

In the case of NOCs’ marketing programmes, by accepting some limited restrictions on their activities during Milano Cortina 2026, athletes who enjoy personal sponsorship deals are helping to support all participants within their national Olympic team, other teams and their NOC’s other sports development programmes. These limited restrictions also support the funding of Milano Cortina 2026 and future Olympic Games at which the athletes compete, by enabling the organising committees to ensure private funding of the organisation of those Olympic Games. To recognise and to ensure continuity of their long-standing support to the athletes and the Olympic Movement, the IOC and the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (**WFSGI**) have agreed that certain sporting goods brands will be able to promote their athletes before and during Milano Cortina 2026 subject to specific conditions (**WFSGI Project**).

## **SCOPE**

These Principles apply during the **Games Period**, meaning the period from the date of opening of the Milano Cortina 2026 Olympic Village until the date two days after the Milano Cortina 2026 Closing Ceremony inclusive (**30 January until 24 February 2026**).

These Principles apply to competitors, team members, coaches, trainers and officials who are participating in Milano Cortina 2026, who are referred to collectively in this document as **Participants**. These Principles do not apply to Olympians who have competed in previous Olympic Games but who are not participating in Milano Cortina 2026 in any capacity. Nor do they apply to other accredited people, including broadcasters and volunteers.

These Principles are specific to the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026. Please consult the rules applicable to the Paralympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026 separately.

The use of **Participants' Images** includes any reference to a Participant, whether by their personal appearance, use of their image (or any representation of that image), name or sports performance (including performance at Milano Cortina 2026 and recent historical performance).

These Principles apply to **Advertising**, meaning all forms of commercial promotion, including social media and social network posts and promotions by organisations or by Participants as part of, or relating to a commercial relationship with the organisation (whether paid-for or not), as well as traditional advertising in paid-for space (including press adverts, billboards, television and radio adverts and online advertising), direct advertising, PR (including personal appearances and press releases), lending or gifting of products to Participants, on-product and in-store promotions.

### **Compliance**

The IOC, the relevant OCOG or the relevant NOC can revoke the permissions granted by these Principles, or require Advertising to be withdrawn or amended, if these Principles are not complied with. Ultimately, Participants who do not comply with terms of this document may be sanctioned by the IOC, the relevant OCOG and/or NOC.

## KEY PRINCIPLES

All Participants are permitted to promote their sponsors, and all sponsors are permitted to use Participant Images (in each case including Olympic Partners and Non-Olympic Partners), during the Games Period, in accordance with the following Principles.

### 1. ADVERTISING BY OLYMPIC PARTNERS

- a. **Olympic Partners** are those brands or companies that have sponsorship or official merchandise licensing contracts with the IOC, the Milano Cortina 2026 OCOG, or NOCs, and the official Olympic broadcasters which have been granted rights to broadcast Milano Cortina 2026 by the IOC.
- b. Olympic Partners are permitted to use **Participant Images for Advertising**, subject only to:
  - obtaining any necessary **consents** from the Participants featured,
  - the **terms of the relevant Olympic Partner's contract** with the IOC, the Milano Cortina 2026 OCOG or the NOC (as applicable), and
  - respecting the **supplementary guidelines** for Olympic Partners, which will be issued by the IOC and an NOC prior to the selection of the Participant by their NOC.
- c. Olympic Partners **may undertake Congratulatory Advertising** during the Games Period (see Key Principle 4 for more details).
- d. Advertising activities by Olympic Partners in accordance with this Key Principle 1 are not subject to any additional consents or processes, other than the normal approvals processes that may apply under their contract with the relevant Olympic organisation.

### 2. ADVERTISING BY NON-OLYMPIC PARTNERS

- a. **Non-Olympic Partners** are those brands, companies or other organisations which are not Olympic Partners.
- b. Non-Olympic Partners are permitted to use Participant Images for Advertising during the Games Period:
  - subject to obtaining any necessary **consents** from the Participants featured,
  - subject to respecting the policies of the IOC, and the relevant NOC in respect of activities incompatible with the values of the Olympic Movement or the relevant NOC, for example: prohibitions on sponsorships in connection with tobacco, prohibited drugs and other categories (e.g. gambling and pornographic or immoral businesses),

- if that advertising **does not use any Olympic Properties** (as described in paragraph (g) below), and
  - if that advertising constitutes **Generic Advertising** (as described in Key Principle 3 below) and is compliant with any Generic Advertising rules of the relevant NOC.
- c. To benefit from the permission granted under this principle, **Non-Olympic Partners must notify the IOC or the NOC of the targeted country (as applicable) of their Generic Advertising plans by no later than 19 December 2025** through a designated online platform, which is accessible via the following [link](#).
- d. This notification requirement simply enables the IOC, the Milano Cortina 2026 OCOG and any relevant NOCs to be aware of activity that is planned for their marketplace and verify compliance with these principles and the policies referred to in paragraph (b) above. Any feedback on Advertising plans will be provided within 10 days of receipt by the IOC or NOC (as applicable).
- e. For social media Advertising, it is **not necessary to provide advance notice of each individual post**, but notice must be given setting out a description of the social media Advertising plan, including the nature and planned content of the posts, by no later than 19 December 2025.
- f. To provide opportunities to athletes who may qualify for Milano Cortina 2026 after 19 December 2025, the IOC will consider Advertising plans notified after this date, so long as at least 15 days' advance notice is given through the notification platform before any Advertising is published.
- g. For the purposes of these principles, **Olympic Properties** include:
- the Olympic symbol
  - the Milano Cortina 2026 emblem, mascots and pictograms and Milano Cortina 2026 graphics
  - any NOC emblem or emblem of a national Olympic team
  - the words "Olympic", "Olympics", "Olympic Games", "Olympiad", "Olympiads"
  - the name of the host city and the year of the Games (i.e. "Milano Cortina 2026")
  - any Olympic-related words and symbols registered as trademarks and/or protected by relevant legislation in the country of the NOC which the Participant represents, or the country in which the Advertising is made available
  - the names of Olympic teams, such as "Equipe de France" or "Italia Team"
  - the Olympic motto "Citius, Altius, Fortius – Communiter"
  - all films, musical works, artistic works and designs created by the IOC, the Milano Cortina 2026 OCOG or any NOC
  - any other symbols, designs, works, words or expressions that are translations of, or which could be confused with, those listed above.

## GENERIC ADVERTISING

- h. **Generic Advertising** means any advertising of a company or brand:
- i. where the only connection between, on one hand, Milano Cortina 2026, the IOC, the Milano Cortina 2026 OCOG and/or an NOC and/or an NOC's national Olympic team and, on the other hand, the relevant marketing activity, is the fact that the advertising uses a Participant's Image,
  - ii. which has been in market for at least 90 days before the Games Period, and
  - iii. which is run consistently and not materially escalated during the Games Period.
- i. To provide flexibility for athletes also participating in other sports competitions shortly before or after the Games Period, the IOC will consider exemptions to the elements (ii) and (iii) of the Generic Advertising requirements described in (a) on a case-by-case basis, so long as element (i) is respected.
- j. Similarly, the IOC will consider exemptions on a case-by-case basis to elements (ii) and (iii) for Advertising activity that properly relates to business-as-usual advertising by brands to which an athlete is affiliated. The IOC will require information substantiating any kind of business-as-usual activity and, in any event, element (i) of the description of Generic Advertising must still be respected.
- k. For examples of Generic Advertising, please consult the Illustrative Guidance available via the Athlete365 portal.

## 3. CONGRATULATORY ADVERTISING

- a. For these purposes, **congratulatory advertising** means both:
- **supporting messages** encouraging, sympathising with or otherwise supporting an athlete or a national Olympic team in connection with their participation at Milano Cortina 2026, and
  - **congratulatory messages** praising the athlete or a national Olympic team for their achievement at Milano Cortina 2026.
- b. **Congratulatory advertising is not regarded as being Generic Advertising**, because of the intrinsic connection with Milano Cortina 2026.
- c. Congratulatory advertising may be undertaken:
- (i) by Olympic Partners at any time, including during the Games Period;
  - (ii) by Non-Olympic Partners before and after the Games Period, but without using any Olympic Properties; and



- (iii) at any time, including during the Games Period, by those sporting goods brands participating in the WFSGI Project, in the manner as set out in the framework of the WFSGI Project.

#### 4. ONLINE MESSAGES BY PARTICIPANTS

- a. **Participants may provide simple messages of thanks** on their personal websites and/or personal social media accounts to Olympic Partners and/or their personal Non-Olympic Partners, **including during the Games Period**, but their posts must:
- not include any statement or imply that a product or service **enhanced the Participant's performance**,
  - not include a **personal endorsement** of the relevant product or service (as distinct from thanking the sponsor for their support), and
  - respect the policies of the IOC and the relevant NOC relating to activities incompatible with the values of the Olympic Movement or the relevant NOC, for example: prohibitions on sponsorships in connection with tobacco, prohibited drugs and other categories (e.g. gambling and pornographic or immoral businesses), or in respect of limits on using images or videos of the athlete in his or her national Olympic team kit or any Olympic medal.
- b. **Thank-you messages to Non-Olympic Partners are limited to one thank-you message per personal Non-Olympic Partner**, posted via the Participant's social media accounts; different rules by some NOCs may apply. A single identical message, posted at the same time on a number of social media platforms, would count as one message for these purposes. Such posts (including any accompanying content) **must not suggest a commercial connection** between the IOC, Milano Cortina 2026, an NOC or a national Olympic team and a Non-Olympic Partner.
- c. Participants may **repost or share content from the IOC's, the Milano Cortina 2026 OCOG's, their national Olympic team's or their NOC's social media accounts**. However, such reposts or sharing must not include messages of thanks, or otherwise refer, to Non-Olympic Partners.
- d. It is not necessary for Participants to notify the IOC or their NOC before posting thank-you messages online, but Participants should consult with their NOC if they have any doubts as to whether the message complies with these Principles. Specific guidelines apply to the messages within the framework of the WFSGI Project, and athletes will receive relevant information in this respect.
- e. Athletes should also be aware of the influence they have over their fans' buying decisions if they promote a brand in their posts. Athletes (like other influencers) should be **honest, transparent and not mislead** their followers about whether they have been paid, incentivised or rewarded to promote a brand in their posts. This should be clearly stated when a brand is referenced in a post in any way.