



# **MEMBERSHIP RECOGNITION AND REVIEW POLICY**

## Table of Contents

1. Purpose.....	3
2. Principles .....	3
3. Membership Categories .....	3
3.1 Full Membership.....	3
3.2 Associate Membership .....	3
4. Full Membership Criteria .....	4
4.1 Governance & Legal Status.....	4
4.2 Recognition .....	4
4.3 Operational Capability .....	4
4.4 Governance Standards.....	4
4.5 Digital Presence .....	4
5. Evaluation Process .....	5
5.1 Initial Review.....	5
5.2 Detailed Assessment.....	5
5.3 Executive Board Determination .....	5
6. Ongoing Compliance Review .....	5
7. Multiple Associations / Competing Claims .....	6
7.1 General Rule .....	6
7.2 Scenario A: Replacement Following Exit of Existing Member .....	6
7.3 Scenario B: Government-Appointed NGB vs Existing Full Member .....	6
8. Pickleball Autonomy Requirement .....	7
9. Associate Membership Management.....	7
10. Transitional Arrangements .....	7
11. Appeals & Fair Process.....	8
12. Final Authority .....	8
Appendix 1 – Characteristics of Pickleball Autonomy .....	9

## **1. Purpose**

This Policy establishes a **clear, transparent, and consistent framework** for:

- Admission of **Full Members** and **Associate Members**
  - Ongoing **review and validation of membership status**
  - Resolution of **conflicting claims to national governance**
  - Ensuring compliance with EPF By-laws and governance principles
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## **2. Principles**

All membership decisions shall be guided by the following principles:

- **One Country – One Governing Body**
  - **Autonomy of Pickleball as a Sport**
  - **Democratic Governance and Transparency**
  - **Non-Profit Status**
  - **Alignment with EPF Statutes and Objectives**
  - **Fairness, Consistency, and Due Process**
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## **3. Membership Categories**

### **3.1 Full Membership**

Granted to a National Pickleball Association (NPA) that:

- Is recognised as the **sole governing body** for pickleball in its country
- Meets all EPF By-law criteria in addition to those contained within 4 below under Full Membership Criteria.
- Demonstrates sufficient **pickleball-specific autonomy and capability**

### **3.2 Associate Membership**

Granted to:

- Organisations or clubs **in the process of forming a national association**
- Entities in territories where **no recognised Full Member exists**
- Organisations temporarily under **review or transition status**

**Conditions:**

- Must support the formation of a national governing body
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- Must comply with EPF by-laws
  - Maximum duration: **3 years** (unless extended by Executive Board)
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## **4. Full Membership Criteria**

Applicants must:

### **4.1 Governance & Legal Status**

- Be legally registered and **non-profit**
- Demonstrate administrative and operational capability for pickleball
- Have a constitution aligned with EPF principles

### **4.2 Recognition**

- Be recognised by EPF Executive Board as the **sole governing body**

### **4.3 Operational Capability**

Including but not limited to:

- Number of registered pickleball players
- National and international event organisation
- Certified coaching and referee programmes for pickleball
- Dedicated pickleball facilities
- National team participation
- Development programmes (schools, clubs, etc.)

### **4.4 Governance Standards**

- Democratic election processes
- AGM minutes and financial transparency
- Corporate governance oversight to be exercised through a separate legal entity/committee specifically dedicated to the administration and management of pickleball affairs.

### **4.5 Digital Presence**

- Active website and/or official social media channels

## **5. Evaluation Process**

All applications for Full Membership shall undergo:

### **5.1 Initial Review**

Administrative validation of submitted documents

### **5.2 Detailed Assessment**

Based on:

- By-law criteria
- Appendix 1: **Pickleball Autonomy Characteristics**
- Comparative analysis (if multiple applicants exist)

### **5.3 Executive Board Determination**

Decision categories:

- Recommend the approval of Full Membership to Members
  - Grant Associate Membership
  - Defer pending further information
  - Reject with reasons
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## **6. Ongoing Compliance Review**

The EPF reserves the right to:

- Conduct periodic reviews of all members
- Request updated documentation
- Reassess membership status where concerns arise

Failure to comply may result in:

- Downgrade to Associate Membership
- Suspension or removal

## **7. Multiple Associations / Competing Claims**

### **7.1 General Rule**

Only **one Full Member per country** shall be recognised.

### **7.2 Scenario A: Replacement Following Exit of Existing Member**

Where:

- A Full Member ceases activity or exits
- A second association emerges

**Process:**

1. **Assessment of both entities**
2. **Grace Period for Unification** (recommended: 3–6 months)
3. If no resolution:
  - Removal of non-compliant entity
  - Appointment of qualifying organisation as:
    - Full Member, or
    - Associate Member (if criteria not fully met)

### **7.3 Scenario B: Government-Appointed NGB vs Existing Full Member**

Where:

- A historically recognised EPF Full Member exists
- A **government-appointed National Governing Body (NGB)** emerges (e.g. Tennis Federation)

#### **Step 1 – Dual Recognition & Unification Phase**

- Both entities recognised temporarily
- Deadline 1 set (recommended: 3–6 months)
- EPF may offer mediation (non-binding)

#### **Step 2 – Associate Membership Transition**

If no unification by Deadline 1:

- Both organisations become **Associate Members**
- Deadline 2 set (maximum 6 months)

#### **Step 3 – Final Determination**

At end of Deadline 2:

- Original Full Member loses status
  - Government-recognised NGB evaluated for Full Membership based on:
    - EPF criteria
    - **Pickleball Autonomy Characteristics (Appendix 1)**
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## **8. Pickleball Autonomy Requirement**

Recognition of any organisation (including government-appointed bodies) requires demonstration of **genuine pickleball autonomy**, including:

- Independent pickleball programmes and expertise
- Dedicated development structures
- Qualified coaching and officiating pathways
- Active player base and competition structure
- Strategic development plan for pickleball

### **Important:**

Government recognition alone **shall not be sufficient** for Full Membership.

Refer Appendix 1 for further characteristics of Pickleball autonomy

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## **9. Associate Membership Management**

- Associate Members must actively work toward Full Membership eligibility
  - Must demonstrate progress annually
  - May be removed if:
    - Acting against EPF interests
    - Failing to progress toward national structure
    - Breaching EPF by-laws
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## **10. Transitional Arrangements**

To address historical inconsistencies:

- EPF may initiate **retrospective reviews** of existing Full Members
  - Where deficiencies are identified:
    - Corrective action plan required
    - Timeline set for compliance
    - Possible reclassification if unresolved
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## **11. Appeals & Fair Process**

- All decisions must be **reasoned and documented**
  - Affected organisations shall have:
    - Right to respond
    - Reasonable time to remedy deficiencies
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## **12. Final Authority**

The **EPF General Assembly** retains final authority on:

- Full Member recognition
  - Full Member Status changes
  - Interpretation of this policy
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## **Appendix 1 – Characteristics of Pickleball Autonomy**

An organisation shall demonstrate:

- Compliance with Official Pickleball International Rules
- Legal and administrative capability specific to pickleball
- Responsibility for all pickleball activities
- Dedicated pickleball courts
- Clearly identified Pickleball Registered player base
- Democratic governance processes
- Financial transparency
- EPF-aligned bylaws
- Pickleball Event hosting capability
- National team participation
- Refereeing by EPF/USAP credentialed referees
- Pickleball Coaching conducted by coaches with Internationally recognised Pickleball coaching qualifications.
- Dedicated Pickleball coaching programs for physical education teachers
- Active separate Pickleball digital presence
- Structured Pickleball development plan
- Individual Pickleball player registration system