



CEC COMPETITION & EVENTS STRATEGY TASK FORCE

PURPOSE

The CEC Competition & Events Strategy Task Force is a time-limited advisory body established to conduct a comprehensive review of the Canadian climbing competition system and recommend a future competition model that is athlete-centred, developmentally appropriate, accessible, sustainable, innovative, and aligned with CEC's Long-Term Development framework and its role as Canada's National Sport Organization for climbing.

The review will consider competition as a development tool within the broader athlete pathway, rather than solely as a series of events. It will examine how competition structure, frequency, formats, rules, qualification systems, routesetting, calendars, and progression support athlete development from local participation through national and international performance.

The Task Force will consider both CEC-delivered competitions and the broader competition ecosystem, including competitions delivered by PTSOs, gyms, clubs, regions, and other partners.

This approach reflects the principle that meaningful competition should allow athletes to test and develop stage-appropriate skills, with competition formats, rules, schedules and eligibility intentionally designed around those objectives.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Task Force will use the following principles to guide its work:

- **Athlete-centred and developmentally appropriate:** Competition should serve athlete development, with different purposes and formats at different stages of the pathway.
- **Meaningful competition:** Athletes should have appropriate competitive challenges and sufficient opportunities to apply skills, learn, progress, and experience success and challenge.
- **Long-Term Development alignment:** Competition design should align with CEC's Athlete Development Matrix and stage-specific technical, tactical, physical, psychological, and performance objectives.
- **Progressive pathway:** Competition opportunities should intentionally progress from local and developmental environments toward national and international performance.
- **Appropriate exposure:** Competition formats should provide sufficient meaningful participation and competitive exposure before athletes are eliminated from an event or pathway.
- **Equity and accessibility:** Geography, cost, facility access, gender, disability, regional capacity, and other barriers should be considered in competition design.
- **Sustainability:** The competition system must be financially, operationally, environmentally, and organizationally sustainable.

- **System alignment:** CEC, PTSOs, gyms, clubs, coaches, routesetters, officials, and other partners should have clearly defined and complementary roles.
- **Evidence-informed decision-making:** Recommendations should be informed by participation and competition data, stakeholder consultation, athlete-development principles, international practices, and operational realities.
- **Continuous improvement:** The future model should include mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, review, and adaptation.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Define the Purpose of Competition Across the Athlete Pathway

- Define what competition is intended to accomplish at each relevant stage of CEC's Long-Term Development pathway.
- Consider the appropriate balance between development, learning, participation, selection, qualification, performance, ranking, and championship outcomes at different stages.
- Identify where competition should primarily support development and meaningful exposure, and where competition should increasingly emphasize performance and results.

2. Review the Canadian Competition Architecture

- Map the current Canadian climbing competition system from local through international competition and assess whether the different levels form a coherent and progressive pathway.
- Review the intended roles of:
 - Gym/club competition → local competition → provincial competition → regional competition → national competition → international competition
 - Clarify which competitions should be delivered by gyms or clubs, PTSOs, CEC, or through partnerships, and where sanctioning or recognition may be more appropriate than direct delivery by CEC.

3. Review Competition Formats and Meaningful Competition

- Assess whether existing competition formats provide developmentally appropriate and meaningful competition at each stage.
- The review should include:
 - qualification, elimination and advancement structures;
 - minimum meaningful competition exposure before elimination;
 - number of boulders, routes, speed runs, rounds and attempts;
 - qualification and final formats;
 - field sizes and quotas;
 - age categories and competitive groupings;
 - scoring and ranking systems;
 - rules and eligibility requirements; and
 - opportunities for development-focused competition and competition simulation.

4. Review Routesetting and Performance Alignment

- Assess how routesetting contributes to athlete development across the competition pathway.
- The review should consider:
 - routesetting objectives at different development stages;
 - appropriate difficulty, complexity and movement demands;
 - progression from local through provincial, regional and national competition;
 - alignment between competition setting and the Athlete Development Matrix;
 - preparation for the demands athletes will encounter at subsequent levels; and
 - how domestic competition ultimately prepares athletes for international performance demands.

5. Review Competition Frequency, Volume and Calendar

- Assess the appropriate amount and timing of competition throughout the athlete pathway.
- Consider:
 - recommended annual competition frequency by development stage;
 - appropriate competition volume per event;
 - training-to-competition ratios;
 - competition and recovery periods;
 - domestic calendar alignment;
 - provincial and national calendar interaction;
 - international calendar demands; and
 - risks of over-competition or insufficient competitive exposure.

6. Review Qualification and Athlete Progression

- Evaluate how athletes enter, advance through, and exit different levels of competition.
- Review:
 - Regionals and Nationals qualification;
 - quotas;
 - rankings;
 - pre-qualification;
 - eligibility;
 - advancement between competition levels;
 - age-category transitions;
 - opportunities for late-developing athletes;
 - whether the current structure narrows the athlete pool too early; and
 - whether athletes have sufficient competitive opportunities before selection or elimination.

7. Review CEC's National Championships

- Assess the future role and structure of CEC National Championships within the broader pathway.

- Consider:
 - which development stages require a National Championship;
 - age categories;
 - disciplines;
 - field sizes;
 - qualification requirements;
 - event formats;
 - frequency and timing;
 - whether Boulder and Lead should continue to be hosted together;
 - athlete experience;
 - competitive purpose; and
 - financial and operational sustainability.

8. Explore a National Competition Sanctioning System

- Assess whether CEC should develop a national framework to sanction, recognize, or support competitions delivered by PTSOs, gyms, clubs, regions, multi-gym organizations, and other partners.
- Consider competition standards, rules, safety, officiating, routesetting, rankings, data collection, athlete eligibility, quality assurance, branding, and potential integration into national pathways.
- The objective should be to determine whether CEC can expand the national competition ecosystem without needing to directly deliver every competition opportunity.

9. Explore New Competition and Development Opportunities

- Identify gaps in the existing pathway and consider new competition opportunities where they serve a defined development or participation objective.
- Potential concepts may include:
 - Canadian Cup or National Series;
 - U21/Collegiate Series;
 - regional or interprovincial series;
 - development-focused competitions;
 - competition simulations;
 - recreational/open events;
 - team competitions;
 - alternative competition formats; and
 - discipline-specific initiatives.

10. Assess Equity, Access and Sustainability

- Evaluate the accessibility and long-term viability of the competition system, including:
 - athlete and family costs;
 - travel requirements and Canada's geography;
 - regional access;
 - facility availability;
 - Para-Climbing access and integration;

- workforce capacity;
- host capacity;
- event economics;
- volunteer requirements;
- environmental impacts;
- organizational capacity; and
- barriers to participation and progression.

11. Develop an International Event Hosting Strategy

- Establish CEC's strategic approach to hosting international competitions in Canada.
- The strategy should consider:
 - the purpose and expected benefits of international hosting;
 - priority disciplines and event levels;
 - desired frequency;
 - geographic strategy;
 - facility and infrastructure requirements;
 - partnerships with municipalities, governments, tourism organizations, gyms and other stakeholders;
 - financial risk and return;
 - workforce and technical legacy;
 - athlete-development benefits; and
 - alignment with CEC's broader competition pathway and High Performance strategy.

12. Develop the Future Canadian Competition Model

- Based on the review, recommend a 3–5 year Competition & Events Strategy that defines:
 - What CEC should deliver, what CEC should sanction or recognize, what PTSOs and partners should deliver, what should be modified or introduced, and what should be discontinued.
- The strategy should establish a clear national competition architecture and identify the intended purpose, target athlete population, ownership, positioning and relationship of each competition within the pathway.

REVIEW METHODOLOGY

The Task Force will use an evidence-informed and consultative process. The review should include analysis of CEC registration and competition data, competition results, athlete progression, event finances, geographic participation, host capacity and other available data.

Stakeholder engagement should include athletes, coaches, parents, PTSOs, gym owners/event hosts, routesetters, officials and other relevant partners through a combination of surveys, focus groups, interviews and targeted consultation.

The Task Force should also examine relevant competition models and practices from other Canadian sports and international climbing systems.

TASK FORCE COMPOSITION

Chair: CEC Executive Director - ed@climbingcanada.ca

Co-Chairs: 1-2 members of the CEC Board of Directors

The Task Force will consist of approximately 9–11 members representing a cross-section of the Canadian climbing system. Composition should prioritize diversity of geography, gender, disciplines, development stages, organizational size, and experience.

Target representation:

- 1–2 Athletes
- 1–2 Coaches
- 1–2 PTSO Representatives
- 1–2 Gym Owners / Event Hosts
- 1 Routesetter
- 1 Technical Official
- 1 Long-Term Development / Athlete Development Expert

CEC staff and additional subject-matter experts may participate or be consulted as required.

TIMELINE & DELIVERABLES

The Task Force will begin its work in Fall 2026 and present its initial recommendations to the CEC Board of Directors at the June 2027 Board meeting.

Phase 1 — Foundation & System Analysis - Fall 2026

- Confirm guiding principles and review methodology; confirm alignment with CEC's Long-Term Development framework and Athlete Development Matrix; map the existing competition pathway; collect baseline participation, competition, financial and operational data; and identify key questions requiring stakeholder consultation.

Phase 2 — Consultation & Competition Review - Winter 2026–2027

- Conduct stakeholder consultations, evaluate the existing system against the agreed principles and athlete-development objectives, identify gaps and unintended consequences, and examine alternative competition models.

Phase 3 — Recommendations - Spring 2027

- Develop the proposed future competition architecture and recommendations, including changes to existing competitions, new opportunities, sanctioning, roles and responsibilities, and international hosting priorities.

Phase 4 — Action & Implementation Plan - Summer 2027

- Following Board direction, develop a detailed 3–5 year Competition & Events Action Plan identifying:
 - priorities and sequencing;

- implementation phases;
 - responsibilities;
 - financial and human-resource requirements;
 - policy and rule changes;
 - education and communication requirements;
 - transition considerations; and
 - measures of success.
- The final Action Plan will be presented to the Board for approval at the September 2027 meeting, after which responsibility for implementation will transition to CEC staff and the appropriate committees and partners.

Phase 5 — Monitoring, Evaluation & Review

- The strategy should establish measurable indicators and a process for monitoring the impact of changes on athlete development, participation, accessibility, competitive quality, financial sustainability, and stakeholder experience.
- The competition model should be formally reviewed on a recurring cycle and adjusted based on evidence and learning.