

MEAL Program Report

Arab Sports Games
Algeria 2023

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Acknowledgments

The WADA team composed to support the 2023 Arab Sports Games included Sameh Elray (Africa Office Manager), Kenny Lee (Asia/Oceania Manager) and Valentin Capelli (Sport Movement Relations and Major Events Anti-Doping Legacy (MEAL) Program Manager). The team would like to thank the Union of Arab National Olympic Committees (UANOC), the National Anti-Doping Commission of Algeria (CNAD), the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) for the 2023 Arab Sports Games (LOC), as well as the National Anti-Doping Organizations (NADOs) from Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia for their contributions to the Games' Anti-Doping program.

In this regard, the team is grateful for the continuous efforts undertaken by the UANOC leadership. Specifically, the UANOC Medical & Anti-Doping Commission Chairperson, Dr. Mohammed Saleh Al Konbaz, Deputy Chairperson, Dr. Zakia Bartagi, as well as all the other esteemed Commission members. The team would also like to express its gratitude to the representative of the National Anti-Doping Commission of Algeria, as well as the LOC, Dr. Nabila Cherifi.

Finally, the team would also like to thank all the different members of the Sample Collection Personnel (SCP) team, the Athlete Engagement team, as well as the volunteers for their invaluable contributions to the quality of the Games' Anti-Doping program.

Executive Summary

In March 2023, the UANOC Executive Committee announced that Algeria would host the 13th edition of the Arab Sports Games from 5 to 15 July 2023, after a long period of inactivity for the event since 2011.

Consequently, the relevant commissions were composed for UANOC, the Major Event Organization (MEO), as well as the LOC. Immediately after assuming the position, the UANOC Medical & Anti-Doping Commission Chairperson reached out to WADA to request support for the event. Despite the challenging timing of the request, it was agreed that WADA would provide guidance and assistance through the MEAL Program.

The short lead-in time for preparations, as well as the fact that the MEO had been inactive for over a decade, posed significant challenges, but the dedication of the relevant officials allowed for the MEAL Program's intervention to produce tangible results. Generally, the Program's intervention was aimed to support the development and implementation of the Games' anti-doping program, the capacity building of the relevant stakeholders involved, as well as the strengthening of their long-term anti-doping legacy.

In order to accomplish this, a Pre-Games Coordination Committee composed of representatives from the relevant organizations was established. The members included officials from the MEO (UANOC), the LOC and host country NADO (CNAD). The list of members representing each organization can be found later in the report.

As part of the support offered through the MEAL Program, WADA attended the Coordination Committee meetings and was present at the Games to provide guidance on several program areas. This intervention proved to be very fruitful, as it directly enhanced the quality of the Games' anti-doping program, while simultaneously increasing the capacity of the different organizations involved.

Nonetheless, the team would like to make important recommendations to ensure that some of the issues encountered during the Games are avoided going forward. This includes the need to ensure efficient communications and distribution of responsibilities between the MEO and LOC, the critical importance of utilizing existing resources and legacy within host countries for events, as well as the need to further support and encourage cooperation between different anti-doping organizations to strengthen the world anti-doping program.

Please consult the table in the following pages for a summary of the interventions, achievements, and legacy, as well as the recommendations of the MEAL Program intervention.

Program Area	Intervention	Achievements	Recommendation
Coordination between stakeholders	<p>Constitution of Coordination Committee for the Games</p> <p>Weekly meetings held between the relevant stakeholders</p>	<p>Efficient communications maintained between the different stakeholders in the lead up to and during the Games</p>	<p>Maintain the Coordination Committee model due to the effectiveness it has demonstrated.</p> <p>Ensure adequate and sufficient representation by LOC and NADO to avoid overload of responsibilities.</p> <p>Ensure that transparent and efficient communications are undertaken between the different stakeholders to agree on practical plans and actions.</p>
Rules and Regulations	<p>Review of anti-doping rules to ensure that all provisions are implemented.</p>	<p>Provisions of anti-doping rules implemented during the Games.</p>	<p>Ensure that provisions in the rules can be implemented in practice prior to their adoption</p>
Testing	<p>Sub-Committee constituted to develop Risk Assessment (RA) and Test Distribution Plan (TDP)</p> <p>WADA provided assistance through relevant templates and support during meetings.</p> <p>Encouragement to include participation of international DCOs to strengthen Games' anti-doping program.</p> <p>Facilitation of purchase of sample collection kits and signing of agreement with WADA accredited laboratory</p> <p>Follow-up to ensure that UANOC Anti-Doping Administration & Management System (ADAMS) account is activated.</p>	<p>RA and TDP developed.</p> <p>224 urine tests conducted, 179 In-Competition and 45 Out-of-Competition.</p> <p>Five international DCOs present during the Games.</p> <p>Sample Collection kits purchased in advance of the Games.</p> <p>Agreement signed with WADA accredited laboratory in Doha, Qatar for analysis of samples collected during the Games.</p> <p>UANOC ADAMS account activated.</p>	<p>For Anti-Doping officials operating only within the scope of NADOs, consult relevant resources and documents for preparation of RA and TDP for MEOs</p> <p>Ensure that local SCP with prior Major Event experience is included as an active part of the testing program.</p> <p>Maintain participation and presence of experienced international DCOs due to the concrete added value that they bring to the testing programs</p>

Results Management	Support provided in constitution of Results Management Panel, in line with the provisions of the UANOC rules.	Results Management Panel constituted for a four-year term with members from six different UANOC member countries. Four potential Anti-Doping Rule Violations managed by UANOC according to relevant provisions of anti-doping rules.	For future events, contact members of Results Management Panels and TUE Committees well in advance of the event to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities as well as what is expected from them. Publish all relevant information regarding the composition of their Results Management Panel and TUEC on MEO website for clarity and consistency.
Therapeutic Use Exemptions	TUE forms and process documents revised to ensure alignment and coordination with anti-doping rules. Support provided in constitution of TUE Committee (TUEC), in line with provision of anti-doping rules.	Approved TUE form and process published on UANOC website in advance of the Games. TUEC constituted for a four-year term with members from five different UANOC member countries.	For both the Results Management Panel and TUEC, ensure that the members are active in the period between events to ensure that they remain updated and operational.
Confidentiality	Templates provided to assist with development of Declaration of Confidentiality and Conflict of interest.	Declaration of Confidentiality and Conflict of interest developed and signed by all relevant stakeholders within the anti-doping program.	Develop an efficient Data Privacy policy in advance of future events to ensure that all individuals can complete and sign the relevant forms and documents prior to being involved in the anti-doping program.
Education	Material and modules provided from Anti-Doping Education and Learning platform (ADEL) to assist with Pre-Games education and awareness programs	Athlete Engagement program conducted in five different locations with participation from athletes' of 1064 individuals from 22 different delegations.	Publish the relevant modules and material from ADEL on the MEO's website, and to make their completion mandatory for participation. Ensure that efficient education and awareness programs are organized, even if with limited financial means

Project Overview

In this report, we will first outline the initial situation for the Games' anti-doping program prior to the intervention of the MEAL Program, we will then provide an overview of the Program's methodology and activities, and in conclusion we will provide a summary of the achievements of the intervention as well as the recommendations for the way forward.

State of play prior to the project (Mid-May 2023)

- **Coordination between stakeholders**

- Before the start of the MEAL Program's intervention, no contact had been undertaken between the UANOC and LOC's respective Medical & Anti-Doping Commissions.
- This led to several miscommunications, including the LOC taking the initiative to organize training for SCP without input from UANOC. This would lead to several difficulties in practice, as many of the SCP trained were in cities far from the competition sites, which added an extra challenge for the logistical coordination.
- Despite the fact that the UANOC Medical & Anti-Doping Commission was composed of experienced officials who are active in different Anti-Doping Organizations, the LOC Medical & Anti-Doping Commission had not consulted with them to receive advice or recommendations on the preparations for the anti-doping program.

- **Rules and Regulations**

- UANOC was in the process of developing anti-doping rules for the Games. However, the rules were directly adopted from the MEO Model Rules, and no specific planning had been made to consider how the practical implementation of certain provisions would take place.

- **Testing**

- No specific RA or TDP had been developed.
- Communication had not yet been established to determine the needs for SCP from the host country.
- Provisions had not yet been made for the recruitment of international SCP to support the testing program.
- No steps had been taken to purchase the relevant sample collection kits or to sign an agreement with a WADA accredited laboratory for the analysis of samples collected during the Games.
- UANOC had not activated their account on the ADAMS and did not have trained personnel able to coordinate the relevant activities on the system.

- Results Management

- An independent Results Management Panel had not been composed to address any potential Anti-Doping Rule Violation (ADRV), as outlined in the adopted rules.
- No trained personnel had been assigned to conduct the initial review of potential ADRVs.

- Therapeutic Use Exemptions

- No TUE application form or process had been developed and declared in-line with the Code and International Standard for Therapeutic Use Exemptions (ISTUE) by WADA.
- A TUEC had not been composed to evaluate and decide on TUE applications, as outlined in the adopted rules.

- Confidentiality

- No policies, procedures or documents had been developed to ensure the confidentiality of the information related to the anti-doping program.

- Education

- Contact had not been made with participating countries to ensure that pre-Games anti-doping education is provided to all participants.
- Relevant material and courses on WADA’s ADEL had not been shared with participants.
- Communication had not yet been established to determine the needs for Education Officers from the host country.

Methodology of intervention and activities

- Coordination between stakeholders

- As was the case with previous MEAL Program interventions, WADA suggested establishing an Anti-Doping Coordination Committee to oversee the preparations, developments, and implementation of the program.
- With an initial meeting on the 8 of June 2023, the Coordination Committee was composed of the following representatives:

Name	Organization	Title
Dr. Mohammed Saleh Al Konbaz	UANOC	President – Medical & Anti-Doping Commission
Dr. Zakia Bartagi	UANOC	Vice President – Medical & Anti-Doping Commission
Dr. Nabila Cherifi	LOC – CNAD	President – Anti-Doping Sub-Committee – Medical & Anti-Doping Commission
Dr. Hanaa Amir	UANOC	Member – Medical & Anti-Doping Commission
Ms. Nadia Al-Shamali	UANOC	Member – Medical & Anti-Doping Commission
Mr. Sameh Elray	WADA	Manager – Africa Office
Mr. Kenny Lee	WADA	Manager – Asia Office
Mr. Valentin Capelli	WADA	Manager – Sport Movement Relations

- The Coordination Committee led to fruitful and active discussions between the different stakeholders, which allowed for a better alignment of priorities and coordination of activities.
- Due to the fact that the organization of the Games and contact with WADA were undertaken only three months before the start of the event, it was agreed that weekly Coordination Committee meetings would be held instead of the usual bi-weekly format.
- The frequent and intensive interactions allowed for the relevant stakeholders to discuss the developments and agree on the way forward for the anti-doping program. Despite the different participants' busy schedules and competing priorities, they managed to maintain consistent and active participation, which was instrumental to guarantee efficient preparations for the Games.



The 2023 Arab Sports Games Anti-Doping Taskforce in Algiers, Algeria

- Rules and Regulations

- Following pertinent discussions at the Coordination Committee meetings regarding the practical steps that will be undertaken to implement certain provisions, UANOC finalized the adoption of the anti-doping rules for the Games, after receiving confirmation of their compliance to the World Anti-Doping Code by WADA.

- Testing

- After discussing the issue at the Coordination Committee, UANOC composed a Sub-Committee under the Medical & Anti-Doping Commission tasked with developing the RA and TDP. The Sub-Committee was chaired by Dr. Hanaa Amir and included experts from three different UANOC member countries.
- Following discussions with WADA, the Sub-Committee contacted the relevant International Federations and certain NADOs to receive intelligence and recommendations to strengthen their testing program. This was the first time in history that such practice had been implemented at the Arab Sports Games.
- Despite the fact that many of the Committee members were very active within their NADOS, many of them did not have extensive experience in developing a RA and TDP for Major Events. Accordingly, WADA provided guidance and assistance through the provision of the relevant templates, as well as support during the Coordination Committee meetings.
- It was agreed that international DCOs would be recruited to strengthen the quality of the Games' testing program. Accordingly, five international DCOs were recruited from four different UANOC member countries. Their presence proved to be critical to the success of the program, as they managed to remain operational during the time where the national SCP experienced logistical issues.
- Guidance was provided to finalize the purchase of sample collection kits and the signing of an agreement with a WADA accredited laboratory for the analysis of samples collected during the Games.
- In addition, UANOC managed to activate their account on ADAMS, and recruited an international expert to assist with the coordination of operations on the system during the Games.

- Results Management

- After discussions at the Coordination Committee meetings, UANOC managed to compose an independent Results Management Panel to address potential ADRVs, as per the provisions of their approved and adopted anti-doping rules.
- The Panel was nominated for a period of four years and is composed of experts from six different UANOC member countries.
- Two members of the Medical & Anti-Doping Commission were trained in conducting the Initial Review process for all potential ADRVs. WADA provided the necessary material and templates to facilitate the training.

- **Therapeutic Use Exemptions**

- As per the provisions of their approved and adopted anti-doping rules, UANOC managed to compose a TUEC to evaluate and decide on incoming applications.
- The Committee was nominated for a period of four years and is composed of members from five different UANOC member countries.

- **Confidentiality**

- Despite a delay in the process, UANOC developed a Declaration of Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest. Which was communicated to and signed by all relevant stakeholders within the anti-doping program. WADA assisted by providing relevant guidelines and templates to develop the document.

- **Education**

- WADA strongly recommended that a specific section on anti-doping is created on UANOC's website to publish relevant ADEL modules and courses to encourage participants to complete them before the Games. After several follow-ups, a section was created on the LOC's website shortly before the start of the Games.
- The LOC and CNAD made efforts to organize an Athlete Engagement booth at the Athletes' Village. WADA offered to provide support with the production of material for the Games, however a concrete proposal was never sent by the LOC for review and approval.

Achievements and legacy

- **Coordination between stakeholders**

- Once again, the Coordination Committee model proved to be very fruitful and productive in order to obtain tangible cooperation and streamlined communications from the different stakeholders.
- All of the Coordination Committee members managed to have daily in-person meetings during the Games to discuss the developments and necessary actions for the anti-doping program.
- Despite maintaining regular contact with the MEO in the lead-up to the Games, the LOC did not feel comfortable sharing certain challenges related to the implementation of the program once the event started. This led to certain miscommunication on a few issues but was eventually addressed after an in-person meeting was organized.

- **Rules and Regulations**

- Following the discussions held at the Coordination Committee meetings prior to the Games, UANOC managed to develop concrete methods to implement the provisions included in their anti-doping rules and guide.

- Testing

- As result of the fruitful discussions at the Coordination Committee meetings, and the intelligence received from several International Federations and NADOs, UANOC managed to develop and implement an efficient RA and TDP.
- Overall, 224 urine tests were conducted, 179 In-Competition and 45 Out-of-Competition.
- Despite initial logistical difficulties regarding their transport and accommodation, the local SCP managed to deliver efficiently on the implementation of the Games' testing program.
- In 2022, Algeria hosted the Mediterranean Games in Oran. WADA, through a MEAL Pilot Project, managed to support the event through various activities, including the training of SCP. During the Arab Sports Games, several of those individuals managed to play a pivotal role in leading the program due to their experience with similar sized events. Their contributions were critical as they managed to guide and support the Chaperones and less-experienced DCOs.
- Nonetheless, in several instances, it was noted that the LOC did not want to utilize certain individuals that were trained and had relevant experience during the context of the Mediterranean Games. While there might be other reasons for this, it was still unfortunate, as it would have presented an additional opportunity for those individuals to capitalize on the capability developed at the previous event.
- The five international DCOs proved to be a very important asset to the Games' testing program. In particular, during the time where the local SCP were experiencing logistical challenges, the international DCOs managed to ensure that the testing program remained operational.
- Following the initial discussions held at the Coordination Committee meetings, the relevant sample collection kits were purchased and delivered, and the agreement was duly signed with the WADA accredited laboratory in Doha, Qatar.
- With regards to ADAMS, UANOC managed to activate their account in advance of the Games, and the international expert managed to coordinate the process on the system.

- Results Management

- Following discussions at the Coordination Committee, the UANOC Results Management Panel was duly constituted, however the full information regarding its composition was never published on the UANOC website.
- At the time of writing this report, UANOC is prosecuting four potential ADRVs. If needed, the cases can be referred to the Results Management Panel.

- Therapeutic Use Exemptions

- All of the relevant information and forms regarding TUEs were published on the LOC website in advance of the Games.
- No TUE applications were received during the Games. However, the structures established should remain operational for future events.

- **Confidentiality**

- UANOC managed to circulate the Declaration of Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest documents to all relevant stakeholders involved with the anti-doping program for the Games. It was agreed that this would be done for all future events as well.

- **Education**

- Several modules and material were shared with UANOC to assist with Pre-Games education. However, they were never published or sent to allow for participants to consult and complete them before the Games.
- Despite having limited resources for material and giveaways, CNAD and the LOC managed to develop and implement a robust education and awareness program. Utilizing the Play True Quiz as well as other resources provided by WADA, an Athlete Engagement booth was set up at the five different athlete accommodation centers and was visited by 1064 participants from 22 different delegations.



Algiers Athlete Engagement booth during the Games

Recommendations for future editions

- **Coordination between stakeholders**

- Due to the high level of success that the model has presented so far, it is recommended to maintain the Coordination Committee structure, specifically for similar sized events, to allow for fruitful discussions between stakeholders.
- It is recommended to have more than one representative from the LOC and the NADO to ensure availability and avoid having too many responsibilities for one individual.
- Through the Coordination Committee model, it is strongly recommended to have open conversations between the different stakeholders in order to ensure that an accurate and realistic way forward can be determined on all pertinent issues.

- **Rules and Regulations**

- While the development of Code compliant rules is an essential step for any anti-doping program, it is as equally important to ensure before their adoption that the provisions of those rules can be implemented by the relevant organizations. It is therefore recommended to consult internally with the relevant stakeholders prior to finalizing the adoption of anti-doping rules.

- **Testing**

- Preparing a RA and TDP for a Major Event can vary significantly from a NADO. As such, it is important to consult the relevant resources and templates when developing those testing documents.
- SCP that has previous experience in Major Events continue to exhibit leadership skills that are essential for the success of the testing program. As such, it is strongly recommended to ensure that SCP with Major Event experience is afforded opportunities to contribute to the testing program.
- International and experienced SCP continue to prove that they constitute an addition to anti-doping programs. As such, it is recommended for MEOs to ensure that budgetary provisions are made for their presence going forward.

- **Results Management & Therapeutic Use Exemptions**

- When composing a new Panel or Committee, it is recommended to ensure that all relevant information is published on the Anti-Doping Organization's website for clarity and consistency.
- It is strongly suggested for UANOC to ensure continuous communication with the Panel and Committee members in the period between events to ensure that they remain active and up to date with the latest developments.

- **Confidentiality**

- Due to the sensitive nature of the information shared as part of anti-doping programs, it is strongly recommended for all Anti-Doping Organizations to develop relevant and efficient Data Privacy policies, and to ensure that all relevant documents and declarations are signed and completed by all relevant individuals before the start of preparations for the anti-doping program.

- **Education**

- The sharing of relevant modules and courses from ADEL has proven to be an effective tool to encourage the organization of Pre-Games education. Accordingly, and to further solicit participation, it is strongly recommended for MEOs to publish the relevant courses and documents on their websites, and to make their completion mandatory for individuals participating in a Major Event, including athletes, coaches, and medical professionals.
- This event has proven that even with limited financial means, Anti-Doping Organizations are still able to implement creative and interactive awareness and education programs. As such, it is strongly recommended for all Anti-Doping Organizations involved with a Major Event to ensure that education and awareness programs are implemented.