**Council of Europe International Co-operation Group
on Drugs and Addictions**

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Policy paper on strategies and regulatory options aimed at reducing risks and harms related to online gaming and online gambling

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1. Introduction

Addressing the potential risks and harms resulting from online gaming and online gambling involves considering prevention, risk and harm reduction, and treatment options. Effective policies and responses require a comprehensive framework for an integrated and coherent approach. Prevention in this field is crucial, from a general approach on the use of screens by children and adolescents, to clear guidelines for parents and teachers. Ensuring commitment and collaboration among stakeholders are crucial for attaining impact and expected results. The rapidly evolving digital landscape requires ongoing trendspotting, foresight management, and preparedness, which require innovative monitoring and the ability to make flexible adjustments or responses.

This document provides conceptual guidance to political decision-makers and policy developers who are seeking to develop strategies, action plans, and regulatory frameworks to minimise the risks and harms associated with online gaming and gambling. It complements the 2024 Pompidou Group report *Risks and harms associated with online gaming and gambling*.

2. Understanding risks and harms

2.1. Concepts of risk and harm reduction

Risk and harm reduction is an umbrella term for interventions, programmes, and policies that seek to prevent, reduce, minimise, and relieve the health, social, and economic harms to individuals, their families, communities, and societies resulting from problematic and disordered online gambling and online gaming.

2.2. Risks and harms of online gambling

Even though gambling, including its online forms, is a common and unproblematic leisure time activity for the majority, a significant minority develops problems related to this behaviour and becomes addicted (i.e., gaming disorder, gambling disorder as included in ICD 11 of WHO). In these cases, the individual loses control over gambling and severe adverse consequences that affect family, friends, and the community can be identified. For example, problem gamblers may experience consequences such as loss of employment, financial strain, or even bankruptcy, accompanied by strong psychological distress and different co-occurring mental health conditions. The risk of suicide is high. Furthermore, research shows that gambling on the internet (remote gambling and mixed-mode gambling) is associated with higher problem gambling severity than land-based-only gambling. The risk of developing addiction to online gambling is higher due to significantly increased accessibility, making it easier for individuals to engage in gambling activities online compared to land based. Moreover, the control over one's own behaviour is reduced due to increased accessibility. Simultaneously, enforcement of legal regulations is also more challenging.

Online gamblers are more likely to be male and younger than land-based-only gamblers. They are also more likely to never marry or live with a partner and have higher education levels compared to land-based-only gamblers. Additionally, there are also other risk factors in or related to the games, such as characteristics of the games, distribution and availability. Furthermore, despite its illegality in the underage population, online gambling is a common practice among adolescents, putting their mental health and well-being at serious risk.

2.3. Risks and harms of online gaming

Video gaming is one of the most popular hobbies nowadays across all genders and ages. Video games can be played both offline and online. Nevertheless, the most popular games, which have the largest player bases are played in online environments, usually by a large number of players interacting with each other in different ways. Pursued only recreationally, as a main passion or competitively, the majority plays in a harmless manner. A minority, however, experiences addiction-like symptoms leading to serious negative consequences affecting personal, educational/work-related, familial, social, and other areas of life. Similarly, to gambling disorder, gaming disorder is also recognised by the WHO as a mental and behavioural disorder.

Gaming disorder and hazardous gaming affects especially adolescents and young adults, males are more represented than females. Adolescents are particularly at risk due to age-related underdevelopment of cognitive control. Given the increasing amount of gambling elements in online games, players are not only at risk of developing gaming-related problems or disorder but also gambling disorder.

3. Developing a strategy

Developing a strategy to prevent and reduce the risks and harms related to online gaming and online gambling requires (i) formulation of a clear aim, (ii) setting strategic objectives in pursuit of the aim, (iii) specifying the actions needed to achieve the strategic objectives, and (iv) evaluating actions and interventions of the processes and outcome through a range of indicators.

3.1. Aims and expected impact

Reducing potential risks and harms associated with online gaming and online gambling.

3.2. Strategic objectives

The following strategic objectives, necessary actions and potential indicators should be considered.

3.2.1.   Raising public awareness

Objective: To achieve a balanced view of the complexity of online gaming and gambling, including their understanding as non-problematic recreational activities, the potential benefits of gaming, and the risks and harms associated with them. Increasing awareness of the differences between legal and illegal operators can decrease the social acceptance of illegal gambling websites.

Actions: Provide financial resources to create awareness campaigns for this purpose, based on international scientific literature.

Indicators: The level of public awareness among the population groups most affected by potential harms, according to longitudinal studies with representative national samples.

3.2.2.   Empowering families and educators

Objectives: Increase parents', other family members' (especially spouses and children), and educators' understanding of the potential risks and harms associated with online gaming and gambling. Increase their ability to address these risks effectively.

Actions: Provide resources and tools for families and educators for effective monitoring and guidance. Create high-quality prevention materials, handbooks and tools for this purpose, based on international scientific literature.

Indicators: The amount and availability of high-quality resources and tools. Monitor metrics of usage and engagement levels with the provided resources. Evaluate the impact of resources on the proficiency of parents and educators.

3.2.3.   High-quality scientific research

Objectives: Increase the amount and quality of scientific research conducted by independent bodies.

Actions: Provide financial support for independent scientific research institutions assessing the aetiology of gaming disorder and gambling disorder, the effectiveness of prevention and treatment interventions, changes in policies and regulations, and monitoring the ever-changing trends in the field of online gambling and online gaming, as well as assessing other types of problems related to these activities.

Indicators: The amount and availability of financial resources for independent research bodies on both national and international levels; the amount and quality of research outputs (e.g., scientific papers, research reports, etc.).

3.2.4.   Prevention

Objectives: Increase the amount and availability of effective prevention programmes.

Actions: Develop and provide evidence-based, effective prevention programmes for the general population (universal prevention), for individuals at risk (selected prevention), and for those experiencing problems (indicated prevention). Providing the necessary resources for developing and evaluating such programmes is essential. Online gaming and gambling prevention should be included in general health promotion programs. The WHO provides detailed guidance documents.

Indicators: The number of evidence-based prevention programmes, their availability for different groups in need, data on the size and characteristics of the populations involved, and process and outcome evaluation.

3.2.5. Treatment

Objectives: Increase the availability of high-quality treatment.

Actions: Provide accessible and effective evidence-based treatment options for individuals with gambling and gaming problems. Support and resources are needed to develop treatment centres, train mental health professionals, provide them with the necessary tools and resources for efficient treatment and identify and develop new treatment methodologies if necessary. Establish cooperation protocols for treatment. Ensure the competence of professionals in healthcare, educational, and developmental sectors for early identification of individuals with issues related to online gambling and gaming, as well as the implementation of various interventions and treatments for the disorders.

Indicators: The number and quality of tools/resources/materials available for experts; the number and accessibility of evidence-based treatment programmes, their availability for different groups in need; process and outcome evaluation.

3.2.6. Harm reduction

Objectives: Increase the availability of harm reduction programs and measures.

Actions: Promote harm reduction measures for all online gambling/gaming products on all levels of involvement – not solely among problem and disordered gamblers/gamers.

Indicators: The availability of harm reduction measures and responsible gambling/gaming tools across all online gambling/gaming products.

3.2.7. The industry's contribution to risk and harm reduction

Objectives:. The video game industry has not recognised its responsibility for the potential harm caused by its products. Corporate social responsibility should be promoted where the industry stands to its responsibility and actively contributes to reduce risks and harms associated with their products.

Actions: Identify and regulate the industry's minimum requirements to ensure safer products. Develop and implement effective regulatory measures to control dark pattern elements and require them to introduce responsible design features in their products.

Indicators: The proportion of gambling and gaming products that ensure consumer protection by providing safer gambling and gaming practices instead of dark patterns/persuasive design elements.

3.2.8. International governmental cooperation

Objectives: Enhance international governmental cooperation.

Actions: Mobilise international governmental organisations that provide platforms for collaboration and facilitate networks for exchanging experiences and data sharing, for example GREF (Gambling Regulators European Forum). Cooperation formats already exist, most notably those at the Council of Europe for online addictions, data protection, cybercrime, and money laundering should be considered. Facilitate capacity building and mutual assistance among regulatory bodies in different countries.

Indicators: The adoption of multi-lateral political and legal instruments, aligned and harmonised national regulations, joint law enforcement operations, and campaigns.

4. Regulatory options

Different levels of regulation are possible, such as regional, national, and international levels; for example, the Digital Markets (DMA) and Services Acts (DSA) in the European Union. Given that both online gambling and gaming are accessible through the internet and thus available across borders, international harmonisation of national regulations would be beneficial. This could be achieved through enhancing international governmental cooperation (see point 3.2.8). Possible regulatory options are

listed below. In cases where information is available regarding their efficacy, we discuss those below the list.

4.1. Online gambling

- Age limits to participate in online gambling including demos without money.
- Consider blocking illegal operators by web-blocking or payment blocking.
- Consider if jurisdictions should be restricted from issuing licenses to operators with a main purpose to offer games in other European jurisdictions than where the license is given.
- Altering the structural characteristics of online gambling products (e.g., providing the odds of winning the major prize; reducing the maximum bet limit) to reduce their harmful potential.
- Requiring the obligatory use of pre-commitment systems (e.g., fixing a maximum limit on losses before the beginning of the play or for a certain time frame; fixing the time periods within a day/week when one is allowed to play) as harm prevention measures.
- Mandatory pre-commitment systems could be required below a certain ceiling, e.g., maximum loss limit. The set loss limit should apply to all regulated operators. The concept can be based on the same principles as a centralised self-exclusion system.
- Introducing effective and binding self-exclusion regimes by having centralised and unified systems of self-exclusion (i.e., volunteering to ban oneself from online gambling).
- Using targeted messages that convey meaningful information in a simple and clear way allows users to know how much time and money they spend during a gambling session and the relative risks of specific gambling products. These messages must be provided via unavoidable information screens at the beginning of every session of use.
- Limiting the non-stop availability of online wagering systems by introducing "opening hours".
- Restricting, banning or reducing the visibility of online gambling advertisements (e.g., on TV, in social media platforms, on streaming platforms, and on video gaming-related platforms) and a prohibition of direct marketing addressing self-excluded people because the principal use of gambling advertising is not only recruiting new consumers but also 'normalising' the product and associating it with enjoyable and desirable activities, especially among children and young people.
- Consider providing effective campaigns and messages to counter the stigma associated with gambling and problem gambling because stigmatisation is one of the important obstacles to treatment seeking.
- Consider a progressive tax system for online gambling based also on the potential harm and addiction Additional revenues resulting from these progressive or expanded tax regimes could be allocated to the provision of:
  - o effective social marketing around gambling harm and stigma reduction,
  - o well-resourced counselling,
  - o support and recovery programs,
  - o research funding.
- Funding gambling research from general revenue and utilising taxation from gambling operations. Gambling researchers must be independent from the gambling industry, and this should be supervised very strongly.
- Online gambling operators should provide access to de-identified data and information about their operations and products to researchers as a condition of their licensing.

4.2. Online gaming

- Consider regulations to secure that the industry:
  - o sets limits to participate in online gambling including demos.
  - o discloses the probabilities of obtaining loot box/random rewards (to reduce overspending) – this must be monitored by independent bodies because the industry could manipulate drop rate information to exploit the players.
  - o stops providing random drawing services / probability-based lucky draw features (e.g., loot boxes) to minors – requires an effective age verification system.
  - o stops using manipulative psychological techniques (e.g., persuasive
  - o stops designing elements (or so-called "dark patterns") to increase spending (e.g., giving players rewards if they log in every day, if they spend on the game for the first time or if they spend several times on the game consecutively).

- stops using/do not use artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to customise rewards, gaming experience, marketing and probability values, especially in targeting minors.
- displays in a comprehensible manner the patented methods used in the game application. The principle of these cognitive-behavioural methods must be clearly explained in the app store. A sign saying "in-app purchases" is not sufficient.
- displays the real-money value of virtual items that can be bought with in-game currencies.
- provides effective self-limiting options – allowing players to set limits to the amount of time and money they want to spend in games, as well as to set the time periods for playing (e.g., not being allowed to play between midnight and 6AM).
- provides effective parental control features - permitting parents to limit the amount of time and money their children are allowed to spend on games, as well as to set the time periods for playing (e.g., children not be allowed to play between midnight and 6AM).
- provides effective self-exclusion options (including the possibility of self-banning) – e.g., for those who wish to abstain from specific games.

- Consider taxing the industry (e.g., a specific percentage of their profits) and using these taxes to finance:
    - independent research with specific emphasis on (i) monitoring the development of trends (e.g., changes in the use of persuasive design elements and so-called "dark patterns" in video games), (ii) efficacy studies of prevention programmes and treatment methods.
    - prevention programmes among vulnerable populations, including the education of parents and educators.
    - a widely accessible, freely available treatment service network that supplies experts with the necessary tools, resources, and training to provide efficient treatment.

4.3. Applying consumer protection and product safety regulations

Consumer protection and product safety regulatory concepts can be applied, depending on national regulations, by analogy to online gaming and gambling to ensure the well-being and safety of players and customers. This is particularly relevant concerning age restrictions, labelling and disclosure, recalls and safety alerts, dispute resolution including recourse for harm, product liability, product safety testing, and prohibited content.

However, online gambling and gaming often fall into regulatory gaps where existing laws may not specifically address the digital nature of these activities. This may require additional provisions with the flexibility to adapt to changing technology and evolving industry practices, together with provisions for a regular review process for regulations to ensure they remain up-to-date and effective in addressing emerging challenges. Instead of struggling to develop catch-all regulations, it should be considered to start with regulatory 'sandboxes' to test the functionality of one specific aspect of the issue over a limited period of time as a pilot before widening or extending the measure.

Exploring analogies to the measures used for prescribed drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products can also be a valuable approach to addressing protection and public health. However, it is essential to consider the differences in the nature of these products and activities when applying such measures.

4.4. Major obstacles and challenges in the implementation of regulations

4.4.1. Online gambling

Similarly, to the tobacco and alcohol industries, the gambling industry is also opposed to the implementation of effective policy regulations because it believes that such measures would reduce their profits. Consequently, the industry is using its financial and lobbying force to impede the implementation of effective regulatory measures.

Another major obstacle is the difficulty of effectively monitoring and achieving regulatory compliance. Effective monitoring and obtaining regulatory compliance requires a large amount of resources of all types (e.g., human, financial, temporal). In addition, gambling products and industry innovations should be strictly and constantly monitored, and regulations must be frequently adjusted – another process requiring resources. Close monitoring scrutiny should be on illegal operators and unregulated platforms to limit these as far as possible.

4.4.2. Online gaming

Effective monitoring and achieving regulatory compliance in the case of video games may even be more difficult than in the case of gambling products due to the historical lack of regulation in this field and the huge number of small companies and game developers providing video games (it seems almost impossible to monitor every provider in this sector). Furthermore, video games and industry innovations (e.g., changes in the structural characteristics and game mechanics of video games, applying persuasive design elements or "dark patterns") require constant monitoring, and regulations must be frequently adjusted, requiring yet even more resources.

The industry is opposed to the implementation of effective regulatory measures by national governments because they believe that such measures would reduce their profits. The reason for this is that a considerable part of their profits comes from vulnerable players such as video game players at risk of gaming disorder, video game players with gambling problems and children. Furthermore, the industry greatly fears stigmatisation. They believe that the acceptance of gaming disorder as a mental health condition and official diagnosis stigmatises video gaming as a recreational activity and may lead to a decrease in their profits.

5. Evaluation and adjustments

- Continuous, high-quality research conducted by independent researchers to monitor and evaluate
  - current trends and innovations in online gaming and gambling-related issues
  - the effectiveness of current regulatory strategies
- Feedback from stakeholders, including parents, educators, healthcare providers, gaming and gambling communities, and industry representatives
- Regularity of strategy reviews and updates based on research findings and stakeholder feedback

5.1. Key indicators and verification sources

Reduction in problematic online gaming/gambling behaviours
- Percentage decrease in reported cases of gaming/gambling disorder and related problems.

Increase in responsible gaming/gambling practices
- Percentage of gaming/gambling operators implementing responsible gaming/gambling features.
- User satisfaction with responsible gaming/gambling tools and resources.

Positive impact on mental health:
- Reduction in mental health issues related to excessive gaming/gambling.
- Improvement in the overall well-being of individuals engaging in online gaming/gambling.

Decrease in underage online gambling:
- Percentage decrease in reported cases of underage online gambling.
- Increased effectiveness of age verification measures.

Community and stakeholder support:
- Level of support from government authorities, industry stakeholders, and the general public.
- Positive media coverage and public perception of the initiative.

Financial situation of individuals:
- Reduction in financial harm associated with online gambling/gaming.
- Implementation and proven effectiveness of spending limits and notifications in both online gambling and gaming products.

Educational impact:
- Integration of responsible gaming/gambling education into school curricula.
- Improved knowledge among students and educators about the risks and benefits of online gaming/gambling.

Compliance with regulations:
- Percentage of gaming/gambling operators in compliance with regulatory measures.
- Number of enforcement actions taken against non-compliant entities.

Accessibility of treatment services:
- Availability and accessibility of treatment services for gambling/gaming-related problems in various regions.
- Percentage of individuals seeking and receiving treatment.

Long-term sustainability:
- Demonstrated positive trends in the reduction of gaming/gambling-related issues over several years.
- Continued commitment and engagement from stakeholders.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing these indicators will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the prevention strategy, allowing for adjustments and improvements over time.

5.2. Monitoring

- Rapid assessments
- Trends spotting
- Foresight management

Appendix I – Overview of regulatory options

1. General regulatory options

Age Verification: Age verification processes to prevent underage gambling, including the use of age verification tools and identity checks.
Parental Controls: Development of parental control features, allowing parents to monitor and restrict their children's online activities.
Advertising and Marketing Restrictions: Regulate the advertising and marketing of online gambling and gaming to prevent targeting vulnerable populations and excessive promotion of online gambling and gambling offers, as well as online gaming and related offers.
Data Protection and Privacy: Ensure that customer data is protected, and operators comply with data protection regulations.
Problem Support: Set up, fund and promote services for prevention and treatment, including helplines, counselling, and support groups.
Whistle blower protection: Encourage the reporting of unethical or unsafe practices while ensuring adequate legal protection for whistle blowers.

2. Specific regulatory options

Specific for Online Gambling	Specific for Online Gaming
Licensing and regulation: Require online gambling operators to obtain licenses from regulatory authorities, which can ensure that operators meet specific criteria and adhere to responsible gambling practices. Establish dedicated regulatory bodies to oversee and enforce gambling laws and regulations. For example, the United Kingdom has the UK Gambling Commission.	**Age Ratings and Content Regulation:** Age Ratings: Implement age-appropriate content ratings to ensure that games are suitable for the intended audience. Content Moderation: Enforce regulations that require developers to monitor and remove inappropriate or harmful content within games (e.g., racist, sexist content, but also persuasive design elements or so-called "dark patterns").
Responsible Gambling Measures: Self-Exclusion Programs: Operators should offer self-exclusion options, allowing players to voluntarily ban themselves from gambling platforms for a specified period. Mandatory Limits: Set limits on deposits, losses, and betting amounts for players, to prevent excessive gambling.	**Loot Box / Random Reward Mechanisms Regulation:** Regulate the use of loot boxes and other random reward mechanisms and microtransactions, requiring transparency about odds and costs, and potentially classifying them as a form of gambling.

Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Regulations:	Online Safety and Cyberbullying:
Apply AML regulations to online gambling platforms, obligating operators to report suspicious transactions and perform due diligence on high-value customers.	Establish measures to combat cyberbullying, harassment, and toxic behaviour within online gaming communities, including reporting mechanisms and consequences for offenders.
Blockchain and Cryptocurrency Regulations: Adapt regulations to address the challenges posed by blockchain-based gambling platforms and cryptocurrency use in online gambling.	**Esports Player Welfare:** Develop regulations to protect the welfare of esports athletes, including contractual fairness, working conditions, and mental health support. Establish rules and regulations to ensure fair play and integrity within esports competitions, including measures to prevent cheating and match-fixing.

3. Challenges in introducing and implementing regulatory measures

Legal Challenges	Remedial Action
Definition and Classification: Determining what constitutes gambling or harmful content in games can be subjective, and legal definitions may not keep pace with rapidly evolving technology.	Utilize best available evidence: review research on the most recent trends in online gaming and gambling to inform evidence-based regulations. It is of utmost importance to ensure financing scientific research monitoring the ever-changing trends and innovations in both fields.
Jurisdictional Variability: Online gambling and gaming is often provided across national borders, making it difficult to establish consistent regulations, especially in cases where different countries have divergent laws.	International Agreements: multilateral and bilateral cooperation agreements, common standards.
Enforcement: Enforcing regulations across the vast and decentralized landscape of online platforms is challenging, especially when entities operate from offshore locations.	Harmonization of Laws: Encourage international harmonization of laws and regulations, especially for cross-border issues. Use of Technology: Employ advanced technology solutions, including AI and blockchain, to monitor and enforce regulations more effectively. Impose where possible available sanctions such as fines. Mutual Assistance: Promote mutual assistance among regulatory bodies in different countries to combat illegal operators and ensure compliance.

Regulatory Gaps: Online gambling and gaming often fall into regulatory gaps where existing laws may not specifically address the digital nature of these activities.	Regular Review: Implement a regular review process for regulations to ensure they remain up-to-date and effective in addressing emerging challenges. Sandbox Approach: Consider implementing regulatory sandboxes to allow for innovation while maintaining consumer protection. Adaptive Framework: Build regulations with the flexibility to adapt to changing technology and evolving industry practices.

Appendix II – Making multistakeholder cooperation work

Any comprehensive strategy to meet and deal with the legal, political, and practical challenges of introducing and implementing policies, regulations, as well as awareness raising and educational programmes, addressing online gambling and gaming should involve various stakeholders to address these challenges from multiple angles. A Multi-Stakeholder Task Force which brings together representatives from government, civil society, concerned industries and research should be set up from the very beginning of the strategy development process to create the necessary commitment and sense of ownership needed for ongoing collaboration.

II. 1. Key Principles for engaging stakeholders

Developing the strategy and/or policy taking into account the specific needs and interests of each stakeholder group will increase the likelihood of obtaining their buy-in and commitment. This requires bearing in mind the following basic principles:

- Clear Communication: Clearly articulate the goals, benefits, and expected outcomes of the initiative.
- Inclusivity: Ensure that the concerns and perspectives of stakeholders are considered and integrated.
- Flexibility: Be open to feedback and be willing to adapt the initiative based on stakeholder input.
- Transparency: Maintain transparency in all interactions, providing accurate information and addressing concerns openly.
- Demonstrate Success: Highlight successful implementations and positive outcomes to build confidence and trust.
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II. 2. Ensuring stakeholder commitment

Obtaining buy-in and commitment from different stakeholders is crucial for the success of any initiative. Here are some strategies tailored to different stakeholders:

Government Authorities:
- Research and Data: Present compelling data on the prevalence of issues and potential societal impacts.
- Policy Alignment: Show how your initiative aligns with existing policies or how new policies can be beneficial.
- Economic Impact: Emphasize the economic benefits of a healthier, more responsible gaming/gambling environment.

Game Developers and Operators:
- Profitability: Demonstrate how responsible gaming/gambling practices can enhance a company's reputation, customer loyalty, and long-term profitability.
- Industry Standards: Emphasize the importance of industry-wide standards and highlight successful case studies of companies implementing responsible gaming/gambling features.
- Collaboration: Highlight the potential for collaboration and shared resources to address common challenges.

Parents and Educators:

- Child Development Research: Share findings on the impact of excessive online gaming/gambling on cognitive development and behaviour in children.
- Educational Benefits: Emphasize the importance of a balanced approach, acknowledging educational benefits while mitigating potential risks.
- Parental Empowerment: Provide resources and tools for parents to monitor and control their children's online gaming/gambling activities.

Healthcare Professionals:
- Training Programs: Offer training programs, tools and resources to help healthcare professionals recognize and address online gaming/gambling-related issues.
- Research Collaboration: Highlight opportunities for collaboration in research and data collection to better understand the health impacts.
- Treatment Options: Demonstrate how responsible gaming/gambling initiatives can complement existing mental health and addiction treatment services.

Community and Non-profit Organizations:
- Community Impact: Illustrate how the initiative can positively impact the community and contribute to social well-being.
- Partnership Opportunities: Explore collaborative projects and initiatives that align with the mission and goals of community organizations.
- Advocacy Support: Seek support for advocacy efforts from these organizations to create a broader impact.

General Public:
- Public Awareness Campaigns: Implement targeted public awareness campaigns to inform and educate the public about the potential risks and benefits of online gaming/gambling.
- User Testimonials: Share stories and testimonials from individuals who have experienced positive changes through responsible gaming/gambling practices.
- Inclusivity: Highlight that responsible gaming/gambling practices are designed to benefit everyone and foster a safer online environment.

Media Outlets:
- News Coverage: Engage with media outlets to cover success stories, industry trends, and the importance of responsible gaming/gambling.
- Expert Interviews: Offer experts for interviews or op-ed pieces to provide insights into the initiative and its impact.
- Partnerships: Explore partnerships with media organizations for joint awareness campaigns.

Legislators and Policymakers:
- Policy Briefs: Provide clear and concise policy briefs that outline the necessity and benefits of regulatory measures.
- Engagement and Consultation: Engage in open dialogue and consultation sessions to address concerns and receive input.
- Global Best Practices: Showcase international best practices in online gaming/gambling regulation and responsible gaming/gambling.

Investors and Shareholders:
- Risk Mitigation: Demonstrate how the initiative can mitigate legal, reputational, and financial risks associated with online gaming/gambling-related controversies.
- Long-Term Sustainability: Illustrate how responsible gaming/gambling practices contribute to the long-term sustainability and resilience of the gaming/gambling industry.

Internal Team Members:
- Training Programs: Conduct training sessions to educate internal teams about the initiative and its importance.
- Employee Well-being: Emphasize how the initiative aligns with the company's commitment to employee well-being.
- Incentives: Consider offering incentives or recognition programs for teams contributing to the success of the initiative.

Appendix III – Definition of Terms

Online addiction/s

The term is used to refer to both online gambling disorder and online gaming disorder (see below).

Online gambling

Gambling is the betting or staking of something of value, with consciousness of risk and hope of gain, on the outcome of a game, a contest, or an uncertain event whose result may be determined by chance or accident or have an unexpected result by reason of the bettor's miscalculation. Online gambling is any kind of gambling conducted on the internet. It is also often labelled as remote, internet or interactive gambling.

Online gambling disorder

According to the World Health Organization, "gambling disorder, predominantly online is characterised by a pattern of persistent or recurrent gambling behaviour that is primarily conducted over the internet and is manifested by: 1. impaired control over gambling (e.g., onset, frequency, intensity, duration, termination, context); 2. increasing priority given to gambling to the extent that gambling takes precedence over other life interests and daily activities; and 3. continuation or escalation of gambling despite the occurrence of negative consequences. The behaviour pattern is of sufficient severity to result in significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. The pattern of gambling behaviour may be continuous or episodic and recurrent. The gambling behaviour and other features are normally evident over a period of at least 12 months in order for a diagnosis to be assigned, although the required duration may be shortened if all diagnostic requirements are met and symptoms are severe."

Online gaming

Gaming refers to playing video games that are played on digital devices (e.g., personal computers, gaming consoles, smartphones, virtual reality devices). Online gaming refers to any kind of video gaming conducted on the internet.

Online gaming disorder

According to the World Health Organization, the definition of gaming disorder predominantly online resembles completely the definition of gambling disorder predominantly online, only the term 'gambling' is exchanged with 'gaming' referring to digital gaming or video gaming.

Risk and harm reduction in the case of online gambling and gaming problems

Risk and harm reduction is the umbrella term for interventions, programmes and policies that seek to prevent, reduce, minimise, and relieve the health, social and economic harms to individuals, communities and societies, resulting from problematic or disordered online gambling and online gaming.

Prevention in the case of online gambling and gaming problems

All actions taken to decrease the chance of developing online gambling or online gaming disorder or problems related to online gambling and gaming.

Treatment in the case of online gambling and gaming problems

Medical care given to individuals suffering from online gambling and gaming disorder or problems to decrease their symptoms and recover their health.