

# **ICF SECRETARY GENERALS REPORT 2008**



## **Situation prior to 2008**

As you are aware the ICF had two Secretary Generals in 2007, Antoine Goetschy, who left for the International Olympic Committee and Mr Perurena who acted as interim Secretary General. I wish to thank Mr Perurena and Mr Feldhoff for their help and support in the initial months of this mandate.

It is clear to many, that this time of constant change lead to uncertainty within the ICF Headquarters. The situation was also evident externally to stakeholders that dealt with the ICF. Two staff members tendered their resignation at the end of 2007 and left in 2008.

## **Present situation 2008**

### **Staffing**

On appointment of becoming Secretary General, the first task was obviously to stabilise the office environment. Staff morale was low and the conditions that they were working in had an inefficient structure and feel about it. The ICF Headquarters was restructured with tasks clearly divided and delegated to different personnel.

Office rules were put in place and a reporting structure to the Secretary General was activated. The staff have been encouraged to participate and be part of a team that is empowered and respected. The general atmosphere and ambiance has been commented on positively both internally and from visiting guests to the Headquarters.

In total, the ICF will have lost six members of staff in 2008 and will have recruited eight in the same period. It has taken time for staff to understand how the Federation works but this has also meant new ideas and working practices can be employed to professionalise the office.

The workload and the productivity of staff have considerably improved throughout 2008 and with the new staff becoming more familiar with their roles the productivity should improve further in 2009.

## **Strategic Planning**

A Corporate Strategic Plan was presented to the ICF ExCo and BoD which was subsequently approved. This plan has been the basis for the ICF Headquarters work over the last year and will continue to be the roadmap for 2009.

The main objectives of the ICF Strategic Plan were to:

- Promote and raise awareness of canoeing internationally, including within the IOC, other International Federations, sporting media and broadcasters and the general public.
- Make elite Canoeing more attractive to media and potential sponsors.
- Promote and highlight our athletes to create personality profiles.
- Act as a suitable guardian of the sport with a professional staff.
- Provide a high technical service to National Federations.
- Develop technical expertise and know-how resources for event organisers.
- Launch ICF equipment certification programme.

Whilst none of the above objectives have been achieved in the first year, all of them have been activated to some extent. Work has progressed in all areas. The amount of work and development that has been achieved, taking into account the limited human resources is encouraging.

The objectives are still valid, however the goal is now to complete some of these goals in the next few years using the momentum that has been created.

## **Achievements 2008**

### **ICF HQ**

The main achievement has been to reorganise the ICF Headquarters and to change the general atmosphere and philosophy of the staff. The additional two members of staff have significantly improved the workload by allowing new projects to be created. Due to the increase in staff and the restructuring, the ICF HQ is now more proactive in dealing with issues rather than simply responding to requests or issues raised by stakeholders.

### **Image of the ICF**

The image of the ICF seems to have been enhanced with sports organisations (including ASOIF, GAISF, IOC, OBO, EBU, IFs, NOCs and so on). This has mainly been the result of closer working relationships and utilisation of these organisations. We have actively promoted the ICFs goals and objectives within these organisations and the feedback has been extremely positive.

There is a large amount of work still to be done in this area but we have started well. We have developed and launched in collaboration with Google, a YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) called CanoeKayakTV. The ICF HQ is using this to promote our

sport visually and ensuring that we are actually relevant and have the possibility to reach the general public that are interested in canoeing worldwide.

We encourage NFs to send their files and footage to the ICF to utilise CanoeKayakTV more. Basketball, Archery, F1 and Manchester United F.C. all use similar YouTube channels very successfully. It is a great way to promote our events and sport.

The ICF has engaged a professional company (Cordova) to redesign the look and image of the ICF. This includes various promotional statements and logos that will be launched very soon. A new website design is under construction and will be launched in the near future.

The ICF commissioned a promotional video to help in presentations of our sport. A positive brand name for the ICF has been created 'Always Moving Forward' which has been used to good effect. In addition, we have created a marketing statement: 'Canoeing is a sporting lifestyle with attitude in a natural environment'. Whilst these are small tasks these tools help the ICF create an image and identity that people can easily identify with.

In the near future, an ICF Style Guide will be created for NFs and event organisers regarding rules of how to use ICF logos, event titles and Canoe terminology.

## **TV and Media**

Before the ICF can seriously engage major sponsors we must be able to show evidence that we have a healthy TV and media coverage throughout the year. Currently, the ICF has a long running contract until 2012 with WCSN in the USA for all ICF events.

The ICF recently managed to renew the EBU contract from 2008 - 2012 with some amendments, challenging the EBU to be more proactive in selling the World Championships to their members.

In addition, this year we made an agreement with a TV Sports Distribution Company called IEC to aid us in selling the ICF World Cup events. This did not result in the success we believed it should have. However, we have learnt from this experiment and I am pleased to say that for 2009 IEC will again act as a TV distributor for the ICF World Cups and World Championships (outside of Europe).

On the Media side, the ICF has created a media contact database which will be built upon at World Championships and World Cups. During the Olympic Games, we met with many of the media and obtained their contact details and who they worked for. The goal is to have an ICF Media database where we can send information, stories, promote events and hopefully use them to write about our sport.

Inside the ICF HQ we have made a conscious effort to promote our athletes and try to develop human interest stories about them that can be used by media. This proved very successful for the Olympic Games in Beijing. In addition, we have launched the ICF database which contains biographies of athletes and also the results from competitions. This needs further development and refinement but

ultimately should become the ICFs online entries system for competitions and be updated weekly after each competition around the world.

## **Event Management**

### **Olympic Games, Beijing 2008**

The preparations and the actual Olympic Games were very successful for the ICF both from the event management perspective and also as a sporting spectacle. A team of ICF staff were present at the Olympic Games who all worked hard and ensured a very high level of administration support was given for our events. For example, the media team produced some excellent results including daily news articles and a photographic catalogue of our events.

The ICF HQ established some good working principles in line with many other sports and IFs, which should be built on in the future. The good reputation of the ICF was enhanced during the Games in terms of comments made by the IOC, Broadcasters, BOB (Beijing Olympic Broadcasting), NFs and athletes. Our goal is now to build on this and create a strong professional event management structure with defined roles and rules for the future.

Personally, I would like to thank the two Chairmen for Flatwater and Slalom for their collaboration before and during the Olympic Games in dealing with all the issues that we faced.

Work has already commenced with London 2012 and progress is moving forward under the supervision of the Chairmen and the ICF HQ.

### **ICF Congress Preparations**

A large amount of the ICF HQ time was spent on the preparations of the 2008 Congress. The preparations have been well executed by the staff. The documents and material needed for the Congress have been collated diligently and the level of detail looked at with the Italian Federation to run the Congress has been to a very high level.

I would like to thank my staff for both their valuable work in preparation and execution of tasks for the Congress and the Olympic Games this year.

### **ICF Competitions**

The ICF HQ has undertaken to amend the contracts for all ICF competitions including all World Championships, World Cups, Junior and world ranking competitions. Advice and analysis has involved several other IFs, ASOIF and IOC lawyers. We believe that these contracts will form the base and framework for standardising ICF competitions around the world.

As part of these contracts event management manuals and guides will need to be produced including broadcasting, media strategy, spectator services, accreditation,

style guides etc. These guides will hopefully help organisers prepare and execute their events to a level suitable for International competitions.

### **Equipment Certification and Licence Programme**

As agreed with the ICF ExCo and BoD, the ICF will launch a certification programme whereby all boats in ICF competitions must be certified by the ICF before they are allowed to compete. This will be done with manufacturers for our sport. So far the top manufacturers in Slalom, Flatwater and Canoe Polo have shown an interest in this project and have given their initial consent to be involved.

The aim is for the ICF to regulate the competitive boat marketplace, ensure the quality of equipment, outline a set standard to manufacturers and to showcase the best companies in the sport. The ICF may also explore this opportunity as a new revenue stream. Existing equipment already in the market can be approved in 2009 before competitions.

### **Future projects in the next two years**

In addition to the roadmap outlined in the Strategic Plan and the above mentioned programmes that have already been launched by the ICF HQ there are several new projects on the horizon for the future.

### **Event Management**

As mentioned earlier there is considerable work to be completed on the event management side for the ICF. The ICF HQ with the Chairs of the Committees would like to establish a closer working relationship with organisers of future ICF events (in line with what other sports do). By working closer with organisers the ICF can influence the standard and uniformity between events and make our sport more attractive for TV and for sponsors.

### **Youth Olympic Games**

The ICF has been very proactive with the Youth Olympic Games and with the support of the ICF President we have proposed to the IOC a radically different programme than normal. This has been enthusiastically accepted by the IOC and preparations are underway to test the format and to prepare for the Games.

There will be medal competitions for a 'head to head' obstacle slalom competition and a 'head to head' flatwater race (on a circuit not a straight course). Finally all athletes will compete as teams in a showcase event of Canoe Polo.

Additional information will be provided to NFs before the end of 2008 once the IOC has approved the Qualification System for Canoeing.

### **Anti-Doping Rules**

WADA have implemented some serious changes to combat Doping in Sport. As an International Federation we have to comply with these changes. A major part of our

work will be to introduce these new rules into our competitions by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009. We will provide the NFs with more information on the changes and any necessary support that maybe required due to these changes.

### **NF Management and Education Manual**

The ICF BoD agreed to the ICF creating an NF management manual which would help create a framework for developing NFs to manage and run their Federation effectively. With the support of the IOC Olympic Solidarity resources and in collaboration with Cecilia Farias this project will hopefully be completed in the next year and should be a great benefit for NFs.

Personally, I hope that the NFs and the members of the ICF can see the advances that have occurred in a short time at the ICF. However, there is still much to be accomplished. I hope we can count on your support in the future and work together to improving this great sport that has so much potential. We always move forward.