



INTERNATIONAL CANOE FEDERATION

International Canoe Federation Corporate Strategic Plan 2008

Strategic Direction

As 2008 is an Olympic year and allows for changes to the ICF Statutes, it was proposed and agreed to define a Corporate Strategic Plan for the International Canoe Federation in light of the need to augment change and improve the organisation on many levels.

ICF Vision

To establish the ICF as a medium level Olympic Sports Federation with professional staff in an efficient organisation to carry out the services for its members in an appropriate fashion. The ICF should be a prominent player in relation to paddling sports at all levels in the world.

ICF Mission

To progress the sport in a new dynamic fashion that can entice new participants to the sport, increase television and other media interest, provide a platform for sponsor acquisition and to develop Sport for all concepts for canoeing.

ICF Main Objectives

The ICF main objectives are to:

- Promote and raise awareness of canoeing around the world at all levels;
- Streamline the Olympic and World Championship programmes in order to be more attractive as a media entity;
- Provide a canoeing package suitable for attracting sponsors and licencees;
- Create and promote athletes to provide suitable media interest stories;
- Own the sport and act as a suitable guardian to its development;
- Provide high level services to National Federations;
- Provide high level services to ICF event organisers;
- Diversify into sport for all such as eco-tourism and paddleability;
- Provide ICF certification mechanisms for canoeing entities.





ICF Headquarters Structure

Under the direction of the ICF Secretary General the Headquarters staff should be professional in nature. The staff must reflect the qualities needed to achieve the ICF main objectives and given the resources and responsibility to execute their work.

The main areas of work and corresponding staff titles are:

Field of Work	Responsible Staff
ICF Strategic Plans and Implementation	ICF Secretary General
Marketing	ICF Secretary General
Broadcasting	ICF Secretary General
Sport Technical Requirements	ICF Technical Director
Sport Development	ICF Technical Director
Sport Operational Services	ICF Sport Operations Officer
Statutes and ICF Operations	ICF Sport Operations Officer
Media Relations	ICF Media and PR Officer
Communication and Website	ICF Media and PR Officer
Financial Operations	ICF Administration Officer
Headquarters Administration	ICF Administration Officer
Sport for All Projects / Certification	ICF Administration Officer
Legal Services	ICF Sport Projects Co-ordinator
Anti-Doping Programme	ICF Sport Projects Co-ordinator

The fields of work are not limited to the titles and generally involve larger scope than identified. The fields of work need to be developed methodically and effectively to allow ICF Headquarters to grow at a responsible rate and in a manner that is conducive to providing high quality service to its clients.

ICF Strategic Implementation

Reporting to the ICF President and the formal Board structure, the ICF Secretary General will carry out the strategic plans and implement the decisions of the ICF Board and Executive Committee.

Efforts will concentrate on:

- raising the profile of the sport Internationally;
- ensuring the sport is modern and appropriate for worldwide audiences;
- attract sponsors and suppliers to the Federation;



- Obtain suitable broadcasting opportunities to develop the sport;
- managing and ensuring a professional headquarters team fulfil its duties;
- good financial management of budgets;
- effective and efficient use of the Development Programme funds.

Broadcasting opportunities can only be expanded on once the ICF have a credible package to offer to networks. It is clear that a highlights package or magazine is the most appropriate and attractive. The largest issue is how to do this cost effectively. Production costs are high for most canoeing events so the investment needed maybe significant. By using existing contracts or local broadcasters the ICF could find ways to reduce costs and only have to pay for editing and distribution.

It is clear for ICF that some work needs to progress in this area even if it does not work, some trials must be completed in 2009.

Sport Technical Requirements

Reporting to the Secretary General this role must ensure that the competitions around the world operate at a specific level of expertise. Standards and processes must be in place to ensure that athletes and coaches can expect the same level of competition around the world.

The technical requirements must involve the evolution of rules that reflect the goals and objectives of the sport. Rules need to be consistent and robust against challenges from all angles.

Marketing of the sport is essential and there are several areas that can be explored. The main factor though is that without a base Media strategy and with little broadcasting infrastructure in place it is difficult to levy significant sponsorship for this sport. However, outlining a marketing strategy can help in directing the focus of the Federation to achieving appropriate goals in sponsorship.

Sport Development

Development is an important aspect to the ICF. The goal would be to incorporate all Development work into the ICF Headquarters where it can be independently operated and results assessed. The Board of Directors and the Executive Committee must lead with direction and general policy provision for the Development Programme.

The Development Programme must maximise the money that it has to expand the base of canoeing and also to improve the standards around the world of competing athletes.

The Development strategy should be expanded to include potential operations such as, regional training centres, elite centres of excellence and also partnership with relevant bodies to promote canoeing.



Sport Operational Services

Reporting to the Secretary General this role needs to be further developed within the ICF. Relationships with event organisers need to be expanded and built on a more formal base. Contracts need to be more detailed on what is expected from each party. Operational manuals need to be created by the ICF to replace the Organisational Manual as these are somewhat out of date.

The Operational Manuals would specify necessary tasks, set quality benchmarks and timelines for organisers. The manuals would enable organisers to develop the event in line with the requirements of the ICF but would also mean that the ICF would have an existing structure on which they could evaluate the progress of the event management.

The event operational services vary from Olympic Games down to national championships, therefore, standardisation is required for each level of competition.

ICF Statutes and ICF Operations

The ICF Statutes should be maintained regularly to ensure that canoeing is a modern and relevant sport. It is important that the Statutes keep pace with the sport world but also that changes or potential changes in the sport of canoeing can grow.

The ICF needs to professionalise its relationships with its clients and stakeholders. Areas of development must include the relationship with organising committees and also the National Federations. It is imperative that the ICF creates stronger links with the organising committees and oversee more actively the progression of work for events. Building guides for items such as accreditation, ticketing, marketing, transport, look and image etc. etc. are essential to ensuring set standards are maintained for competitions.

In addition, providing structured support to NFs on all sport related matters should be a long term goal. Eventually having a dedicated staff member to take care of NF issues would be a good target.

Media Relations

The ICF is in desperate need to develop a structured and goal orientated Media strategy. Without a Media strategy the ICF cannot improve exposure systematically about its own sport and nor can it realistically attract sponsors to the sport. The media component needs to engage all media and attract people to the sport by providing content that connects on different levels across a variety of potential groups. Areas that need to be concentrated on are:

- A substantial media database and network for information dissemination
- Building media relationships with electronic, printed and TV organisations



Without a good media strategy and without linking the sport to the general masses that do not understand or have had little exposure to the sport there is little chance of growth for the Federation.

Broadcasting agreements and networks need to be setup. The ICF has to pay more attention to what works for TV both in the sport and also with regards the technical requirements of TV. It is important that ICF works with broadcasters over scheduling and also the look of the sport to improve its attractiveness to TV networks and audiences.

Communication and Website

The ICF website and communication strategy has been primarily focused on information giving to clients. The need to change objectives is borne from the need to develop the ICF to a wider audience. Communication should be focused on:

- The excitement of the sport
- The uniqueness of the sport
- Creating interesting stories and personalities
- Raise interest on ICF events and encourage spectators to attend
- Raise awareness of the different disciplines
- Raise awareness on recreational aspects of canoeing around the world

The ICF website is to undergo a dramatic change and hopefully include several new technological innovations such as: podcasts, live TV streaming, highlights of events, photo gallery, forums for athletes and National Federations and Blogs from athletes and coaches.

Financial Operations

The ICF finances are currently in a healthy state. However, it is prudent to re-examine the working practices of the Headquarters and the relationship with ICF Treasurer. Over time it would be prudent to:

- Bring all financial transactions within the ICF HQ except for the ICF President account;
- Amend the Treasurers role to include investment portfolios, auditing the Headquarters, overseeing financial policy with Headquarters, budget preparations and ensuring financial good practices;

The professional expansion of the ICF will mean an increase in budget and expense. This use of funds should have a long term strategy and be checked against ongoing budgets.



Headquarters Administration

The ICF staff generally are not Swiss natives and as the working language is English it is important that administration is dealt with effectively. Certain procedures are needed to be in place for the ICF to continue to function effectively. Administration at local levels and within the building is time consuming and necessary. There are many rules that apply to a company in Switzerland and it is important that the ICF abides by these. A fulltime member of staff is required to deal with these issues and this person must be a French speaker.

Sport for All Projects / Certification

It is clear that the ICF needs to strengthen its base involvement with canoeing generally. Most International Federations have links with their core grass root organisations. ICF does not have any real connection with the majority of people participating recreationally with canoeing.

Creating certification programmes and building links with non governmental organisations to promote ICF within the canoeing world and also try to link ICF with projects around the world to raise some income but also to improve the ICFs image within the canoeing world.

The ICF should assess if the development of disabled canoeing is sufficient to warrant an attempt to be included in the Paralympic Games. Whilst this may not increase exposure for the sport generally it would certainly enable ICF to levy media exposure to another aspect of canoeing.

Legal Services

The main issue relating to legal services is the ICFs contracts with organising committees for events and the congress. It is clear that the ICF needs to have a specific contract for world championships and less sophisticated contracts for smaller events so as not to impede the development of those disciplines.

Anti-Doping Programme

The ICF currently has a sophisticated Anti-Doping Programme. The programme has worked well and is in a good position in relation to other Federations. It is important that changes to the WADA Doping Code are implemented by the Federation but also that a systematic information channel is opened to the National Federations. The ICF needs to produce more educational material and conduct more work on the educational side of Doping to athletes, coaches and National Federations.

Olympic Programme

The ICF needs to have a long term strategy of activating their programme through the Olympic involvement. The canoeing disciplines need to be tailored to maximising



audience and TV ratings as well as showcase the dynamic and youthfulness of the sport. There are several areas that need particular attention:

Sport Presentation - This needs to be dynamic and to be modern including music, audiovisual aspects and also be entertaining. The audience must have an experience and go beyond just the sport. Commentary must be first class as many spectators have never been to canoeing event. The style and show of the event must then be carried into world championships.

Gender equity – Whilst the ultimate aim would be to get to complete equity it should be done in small steps where the quality of events does not suffer for the sake of adding female events. Between Games, development of one event should be concentrated upon so that it can be considered for inclusion.

Events - Slalom is generally well accepted, however it is clear that more use of the venue needs to be proposed to the IOC. This could be in the form of new events or disciplines. Bearing in mind the ICF is unlikely to gain any new athlete places. For Flatwater, the programme needs to be changed to be more dynamic and more receptive to the modern audience. There needs to be a direction to the strategy for Flatwater on number of athletes, qualification system, distances and the events. Making the event more exciting must be a priority.

The Organising Committees of the Olympic Games need to be canvassed to help support Canoeing and to put pressure on the IOC to progress the sport.

Media Strategy

A strong media strategy needs to be activated inside the ICF. Several tasks need to be accomplished to realise the complete media inventory needed.

The ICF must:

- Compile a promotional package to showcase the sport
- Build a photographic library
- Update its website and modernise it including footage of events and appeal to a larger audience
- Build athlete and coaches database
- Profile athletes and teams
- Build stories around the sport
- Showcase the disciplines
- Showcase tourism canoeing
- Build relationship with media entities around the world and supply with information
- Have National Federations report on events in their country for media
- Create Media stories that are relevant and interesting beyond the techniques of sport
- Create celebrities out of the athletes
- Improve the exposure of the sport and show how dynamic and exciting it is



The media strategy should have a direction and target at least 200 media outlets around the world. It is important to collect information as well as disseminate. It is vital that reports and suitable photographs are completed for events around the world by the National Federations from which the ICF can build an image and media interest.

Building personalities and stories - Although part of the media strategy this is key to the popularity of canoeing around the world and particularly the Olympic Games. The ICF needs to generate personalities and interest through the media. These stories can build up a profile and showcase the sport. Time and effort needs to be spent to achieve these objectives but it can certainly lift the sport into the limelight.

Business Plan and Marketing Programme

The ICF relies heavily on being subsidised by the IOC and the monies from the Olympic Games. Whilst the financial situation is relatively good the ICF must try and find other revenue streams. The ICF needs to build up relationships with sponsors, partners and suppliers in order to grow the business and ensure the sport remains in a good financial situation.

Most sports rely on sponsors being attracted due to the amount of exposure the sport has internationally. Canoeing starts at a very low base with little TV and media coverage. The ICF needs to have convincing arguments to engage sponsors and suppliers to invest in the sport.

The Marketing programme should be realistic and achievable. A systematic approach to obtaining sponsors should be endorsed and followed including:

1. Determine the worth of the sport
2. Profiling International companies that fit the philosophy of canoeing sport
3. Understand the requirements of having a Marketing programme
4. Outline the levels of sponsorships and what the client gets for the money
5. Define the benefits for the sponsor
6. Devise hospitality programmes and client events
7. Determine the Federations needs in terms of Value in Kind and cash
8. Establish a reporting scheme to sponsors to show them how their investment is contributing to the sport
9. Maximise media outlets with Press releases, TV opportunities etc.
10. Once having obtained sponsors its imperative that relationships are built and maintained in order that future agreements can be achieved with the same company.

TV and media outlets for promoting the sport of canoeing must be used as sponsors will gauge their investment according to the amount of exposure they can achieve. The ICF needs to invest some money into production of TV or at least editing of footage in order to try and develop the exposure of the sport. The number of countries that broadcast tv and web based footage is a critical indicator for sponsors



to consider their investment and for ICF to ensure that the sponsors get maximum exposure for their brand through the sport.

Future Perspectives

To progress the ICF and to move forward the professionalism of the organisation some ideas that are more long term that should be considered.

- The Olympic Disciplines of Canoeing Chairpersons should be replaced by professional staff employed through the ICF Headquarters.
- Consideration of full time coaching development staff that will be in the field in different continents to progress the sport. This can be done with agreements with ICF Continental Associations and the NOC Continental Associations.
- Instigation of a professional team from the ICF to run major events to ensure the Organising Committees deliver at a designated level of service.