

Always Moving Forwards

Strategic Plan 2021–2024

ICF Vision

Inspire people to pursue a lifelong passion for paddling

Leadership

To take responsibility of the collective ownership of the sport and show initiative by utilising best practices.

Excellence

To pursue high standards for all the ICF's activities.

Integrity

To consistently act in accordance with high ethical values and demonstrate mutual respect and honesty.

Equality

To act with fairness, impartiality, justice and inclusiveness with regard to race, gender, religion, ability, age, national or ethnic origin.

Inspiration

To act with enthusiasm, passion and pride with the desire to excel in our activities.

About the ICF

The International Canoe Federation (ICF) is a non-profit organisation that is a highly respected Olympic international sports federation. It is the worldwide governing body for the sport of paddling recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF), Global Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).

It seeks to provide leadership and a sustainable framework for global development of paddling sports. This includes the delivery of international competitions pursuing a universal set of rules based upon core ethical values and mutual respect applying equally to all its members.

The ICF Headquarters is located in Lausanne, Switzerland under the responsibility of the Secretary General.



ICF Disciplines

| Disciplines with Board representation | Disciplines shared with other IFs | Disciplines with MOU with other federations |
|---|---|---|
| Canoe Sprint (Olympic) Canoe Slalom (Olympic) Paracanoe (Paralympic) Canoe Marathon Canoe Polo Wildwater Canoeing Canoe Freestyle Canoe Ocean Racing | Dragon Boat Stand Up Paddling (SUP) | Waveski Surfing World Waveski Surfing Association Va'a International Va'a Federation |
| Disciplines without Board representation | Disciplines with an MOU and shared with other IFs | |
| Canoe Sailing | Rafting World Rafting Federation | |

ICF structure



The ICF is made up of the national federation members who elect a President and a Board of Directors to run the organisation. There are currently 167 national federation members.

A smaller subset of Board members form the Executive Committee, which is used between Board of Directors meetings to aid decision making and ensure the direction of the organisation is progressing the way the national federation members and the Board of Directors require.

Alongside the ICF headquarters professional staff there are technical committees for the sport disciplines which advise and carry out specific tasks related to the events, rules of competitions and general athlete welfare.

ICF Board of Directors composition

The management team consists of a small professional and highly dedicated staff, the Executive Committee (ExCo) and 30 members of the Board of Directors (BoD). The BoD members are extremely important in providing direction and constructive feedback to shape the direction of the sport.

• Executive Committee

- President
- Vice Presidents x3
- Treasurer
- Continental Presidents x5
- Chair Canoe Sprint
- Chair Canoe Slalom
- Athlete Chair
- Secretary General
- Board of Directors
 - Remaining Discipline Chairs x6
 - Medical & Anti-doping Committee Chair
 - Remaining Continental Representatives x9

Elected by Congress Elected by Congress Nominated by their Continent



Elected by Congress Elected by Congress Elected by Congress Elected by continental associations Elected by Congress Elected by Congress Elected by athletes' committee Recruited and appointed

Success from previous strategic plan

- Increased number of headquarters staff including specific roles in competition management and development
- ✓ Rules reformatted and standardised across all disciplines
- ✓ Discipline specific operational requirements created
- ✓ Innovative new competition formats introduced including YOG global qualification, extreme canoe slalom, SUP and short distance canoe marathon
- Ethics and safeguarding policies created and implemented
- ✓ Governance improvements resulting in an increased score on ASOIF governance survey



Current situation - opportunities

Paddling as a recreational activity

The advantage of canoeing over many other sports is the diversity and the range of activities that can be done with a boat and a paddle. Generally paddlers participate individually or as part of a club or other group activities.

The impact of Covid 19 has meant more people searching for activities in the outdoors and trying to attain personal wellbeing. This has seen a surge in popularity globally for paddling activities.

Paddling is probably the largest mass participation based water sport worldwide after swimming. To benefit from this, the ICF must connect and be associated with the large resource of recreational paddlers worldwide. This should include promoting safe and environmentally sustainable practices. Environmental awareness and social impact are key issues for clubs and individuals for this sport.

The ICF as a business

The business opportunity for the International Canoe Federation is to expand its product on all types of broadcast and social media. Media and TV exposure are paramount in engaging the general public and enthusiasts to maintain the sport at an international level. The aim is to remain as an Olympic sport and determine the best events to promote the sport of canoeing on a global level.

The ICF's main products are the events and athletes that are controlled under ICF rules. Therefore the marketing strategy for the ICF is defined with the broadcasting strategy as a main commodity for attracting sponsorship. The ICF focuses on extending broadcasting reach and viewership rather than broadcasting sales and then searching for corporate sponsorship that would like to benefit from that broadcasting exposure.

Europe is the key driver for the sport. In the past few years the ICF has seen a more active approach to paddling in both the USA and China. This excellent start can now be translated into popularity and media exposure in those territories.

Current situation - challenges

Paddling as a recreational activity

The scope of the sport allows millions of paddlers worldwide to engage with the water and the environment, and Covid-19 has accelerated the popularity of all forms of paddling. Capturing specific data on demographics and connecting with the recreational community proves challenging due to the breadth and richness of the sport.

The ICF is one of the largest multi-disciplined Olympic sports. One of the key challenges for the ICF is how to balance the continued growth of the Olympic/Paralympic disciplines with the non-Olympic disciplines to ensure they remain popular and accessible to all. This also means that financial resources can be limited to meet all these needs. The focus on a small number of strategic targets is required to not overstretch the organisation's limited resources.





The ICF as a business

Competitive paddling has also seen growth over the last few years. Development in Americas, Asia and Africa has progressed but high level competition and growth is limited across these continents.

It is anticipated that many new members will be appointed to the ICF BoD in 2021, who may lack experience of ICF governance and procedures. These incumbent personnel will need to be educating in their roles and responsibilities for their first term in office to keep the momentum and progress made from the previous strategic plan.

As the sports world and media consumption are rapidly evolving and changing, remaining relevant and interesting are imperative, including adapting to fit the desires of the audience and the participants. Mission: The ICF provides global leadership to enable, inspire and activate people in the pursuit of participation and excellence in paddling activities.

Global Development

A. Build closer relationships with Olympic Solidarity, Paralympic funding bodies and paddling manufacturers

B. Increase the global spread of talent in Olympic and Paralympic disciplines

C. Increase the number of countries participating at ICF world championships in non-Olympic disciplines

D. Activate dormant canoeing countries

Worldwide Exposure

E. Connect with the recreational paddling community to improve the visibility of the sport worldwide and promote the PlanetCanoe brand

F. Build a global platform for content distribution

G. Create innovative media production and distribution to attract larger audiences to the sport

World Class Events

H. Ensure the maximum medals and maximum athlete quotas are maintained for the Olympic Games and increase medals and athlete quotas to achieve gender equity at the Paralympic Games

I. Ensure top quality world level events in canoeing, standardised across all disciplines

J. Effectively test and evaluate new and innovative events and competition formats

K. Consolidate ICF event calendar through quantitative and qualitative analysis of existing and future competitions and formats

Best Practice Governance

L. Increase the number of paddling influencers in major decision making bodies.

M. Refine ICF governance objectives and provide clear protocols and procedures for decision making within the ICF

N. Communicate more effectively and frequently with stakeholders

O. Lead by example on sustainability

P. Implement anti-doping programmes to keep canoeing clean across all levels and disciplines A. Build closer relationships with Olympic Solidarity, Paralympic funding bodies and paddling manufacturers

To achieve this we will

- Identify a specific liaison person for working with Olympic Solidarity and the IPC
- Regularly review funding opportunities available inside and outside of the sport
- Educate national federations how to find and apply for suitable funding programmes
- Make templates for NFs and encourage them to apply for funding opportunities, assisting when necessary
- Create closer connections with partners that have links in the recreational market
- Strengthen relationships with paddling manufacturers

- Increase the number of Olympic solidarity or externally funded Paralympic projects by at least one, year on year between 2021 and 2024, where the funding is directed specifically to canoeing
- At least three national federations per year to apply for funding outside of canoeing and Olympic solidarity
- Form partnerships with at least two manufacturers linked to the recreational market

Global Development

B. Increase the global spread of talent in Olympic and Paralympic disciplines

To achieve this we will

- Strengthen systematic and scientific youth and senior talent identification programmes
- Implement an online training and performance tracking programme for TIP athletes and their coaches, with regular follow-up and assistance from TIP coaches
- Make high performance education information from leading experts free and readily available through the ICF communications channels, such as webinars, seminars and video content
- Target and support specific countries in each continent with potential to further develop high performance athletes or programmes
- Implement objective evaluation of each ICF development project
- Formalise level 1 and 2 coaching qualification for canoe slalom
- Create youth Olympic development programmes and pathway competitions to prepare for 2026

- Increase the average number of national federations reaching the final in Olympic/Paralympic events at senior World Championships in 2022-2024, compared to the 2017-2019 period
- Train level 2 and 3 canoe sprint coaches in at least 20 countries by the end of 2024
- Increase the number of canoe slalom coaches involved in programs trained by ICF TIP coaches compared to the 2017-2019 period
- Increase the number of countries participating in YOG development programmes compared to the 2018 YOG global qualification competition

C. Increase the number of countries participating at ICF world championships in non-Olympic disciplines

To achieve this we will

- Increase basic education programmes for coaches in countries where canoeing is a developing sport
- Encourage multi-disciplinary youth development and crossparticipation of athletes in multiple disciplines
- Educate countries on introducing new disciplines to their national federation, and provide online content to support their growth
- Conduct talent identification camps prior to World Championships to support the attendance and participation of countries with developing canoeing programmes

- Increase the average number of national federations at the non-Olympic world championships for each discipline (continental qualification competitions for canoe polo) in 2022-2024, compared to the 2017-2019 period
- Increase the average number of athletes competing at the non-Olympic world championships for each discipline (continental qualification competitions for canoe polo) in 2022-2024, compared to the 2017-2019 period

Global Development

D. Activate dormant canoeing countries

To achieve this we will

- Create an activation plan which can be implemented in any country, including an operating manual and template for administration, management and activities for national federations
- Work with continental associations to identify countries with potential to develop canoeing programmes
- Identify personnel within the country to lead the project
- Promote politically within the country conducting the programme.
- Identify and fund personnel within the continent who can attend the country to assist with the education of personnel and implementation of the plan
- Organise donation of equipment to assist with the programme where necessary
- Conduct regular follow-ups and ensure that athletes and coaches from these countries are included in ICF TIP programmes

- Finalise the activation plan by the end of 2021
- Implement the programme through the respective continental association in one country per continent by the end of 2023
- Have a self sustaining programme continuing for two years after the implementation of the programme in at least three countries
- Include representatives from at least three of these countries in a world championship for at least one discipline

Worldwide Exposure

E. Connect with the recreational paddling community to improve the visibility of the sport worldwide and promote the PlanetCanoe brand

To achieve this we will

- Create specific projects with their own budget to connect with the recreational paddling community and attract them to follow the PlanetCanoe social media. For example:
 - Create safety regulations for SUP to be distributed with SUP equipment
 - Introduce a website and app for booking of recreational paddling related trips
 - Create a campaign for the production of evergreen digital content with basic information about how to paddle, equipment, safety etc.
 - Introduce a central, searchable database combining past and live results, including an app to access this information
- Create partnerships with brands that have links in the recreational market
- Build uniform brand identity digitally and at events
- Keep up-to-date with global social media trends and adapt to new platforms in various markets when considered necessary and viable

- Increase social media followers by
 - 10% year on year on facebook
 - 20% year on year on Instagram
 - 20% year on year on YouTube
- Increase followers on Huya year on year
- Put in place three separate projects, each with their own business plan and strategic objectives, targeted at connecting with the recreational community, by the end of 2022. Promote and manage the projects throughout 2023-2024 with thorough analysis of the strategic objectives to evaluate whether they have performed as desired
- Identify brand awareness measures and complete a benchmark exercise for future comparison

Worldwide Exposure

F. Build a global platform for content distribution

To achieve this we will

- Obtain long term agreement with media partners that ensure good exposure and reliability for the sport
- Provide media content in an adaptable format for easy uptake by media outlets
- Give potential programme examples to media outlets to aid in the packaging of canoeing products
- Promote own channels of distribution of content
- Consolidate media distribution plan and ownership to ensure that all media uptake of content can be tracked including live streaming
- Connect NF Media personnel with ICF and build global network for sharing and distributing content
- Explore other partners involvement in ICF media strategy plan (eg. suppliers, manufacturers, sponsors, private events etc)
- Explore the potential to expand to a paid platform to cover costs

- Complete the technical setup of the platform prior to the start of the 2022 competition season
- On-board 30 national federations to the platform by the start of the 2023 competition season
- Increase year on year the number of media outlets who connect at least three times per season
- Increase year on year the number of content downloads for repurposing and distribution
- Connect at least one external partner to the platform project

Worldwide Exposure

G. Create innovative media production and distribution to attract larger audiences to the sport

To achieve this we will

- Consistent timing of events and regular content production that allows to build a story for viewers and provides regular news
- Ensure all competition schedules are suited to TV and streaming
- Analyse and decide timing of competitions for maximum possible media exposure
- Explore territory by territory media agreements and exposure including expanding markets such as China
- Create new innovations to enhance understandability and presentation of the sport
- Modernise, standardise and enhance TV graphics
- Cross-promotion of major multi-sport events where canoeing is included
- Maximize rights holder advantages as a strategy for selling TV coverage
- Invest in content creation teams at events and resource more staff to ensure consistent quality content at each ICF event
- Focus funding on one to two disciplines annually for major innovative projects which advance the sophistication and technology and modernise the sport. Sustain these projects independently for example by earning income from a licencing programme eg GPS tracking for marathon, ISO rating for polo helmets

- Increase social media reach, engagement and video views on facebook, Instagram and YouTube year on year
- Increase website users, sessions and page views year on year
- Improve at least one place in overall sport on social rankings year on year
- Improve TV reach / audience as measured by each broadcaster
- Retain existing media agreements and search for additional contracts

H. Ensure the maximum medals and maximum athlete quotas are maintained for the Olympic Games and increase medals and athlete quotas to achieve gender equity at the Paralympic Games.

To achieve this we will

- Obtain IOC template for measuring Olympic sports performance
- Utilise Olympic Games statistics and construct detailed measurements for assessing each event
- Meet with IOC technical staff regarding assessment of Olympic sports
- Determine roadmap for improving in all areas of the aforementioned measurements
- Create plan to tackle measurements where ICF is weak
- Complete objective research and analysis regarding the events on the Olympic and Paralympic programme
- Target events in all disciplines that could be considered for Olympic and Paralympic Games inclusion

- To have confirmed the at least the same number of medals and athlete quotas for the LA 2028 Olympic Games as for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games
- To have additional medals and athlete quotas for the LA 2028 Paralympic Games compared to the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games
- To achieve gender equity for both medals and athlete quotas for the LA 2028 Paralympic Games
- To exceed key performance indicators according to the IOC templates for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games compared to the Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020 Games

I. Ensure top quality world level events in canoeing, standardised across all disciplines

To achieve this we will

- Develop Covid-19 guidelines for all ICF events to ensure health and safety of athletes are protected, and that the continuity, uniformity and quality of competitions are maintained throughout the pandemic
- Assess previous events and determine best practices for each discipline in hosting events
- Reduce complexity and obligations by creating simple operational requirements for all events, updating these annually based on feedback and learning from the previous year's events
- Create monitoring and assessment processes for events and evaluate each competition
- Document contingency plans for unforeseen circumstances
- Develop technical official pathways and remote education and updating programmes to increase the number and quality of international technical officials around the world

- Sign-off by all technical committees on operational requirements by the end of 2021
- Agreement by every organising committee six months prior to each competition to follow the documented operational requirements
- Evaluate each competition by one month following the competition. Each competition should meet a minimum of 80% of the minimum standards, and there should be at least a 90% adherence overall each year
- Increase the number of internationally accredited technical officials by at least 10% in each discipline by the end of 2024
- Increase the percentage of technical officials under 50 years of age year on year between 2022 and 2024
- Make available an online technical official training programme for each discipline by the end of 2024

J. Effectively test and evaluate new and innovative events and competition formats

To achieve this we will

- Test new events and formats with broadcast professionals and independent spectators to evaluate excitement, saleability, fun and ease of understanding of the competition format.
- Revise and re-test formats to improve broadcaster and fan interest
- Set minimum specifications for new formats to progress to World Championship level of competition
- Evaluate each new discipline / event format for potential inclusion and promotion in different settings eg. beach games, urban games, X-games

- Test at least two new formats of competition by the end of 2024
- Proceed at least one new format to be included in the rules by the end of 2024 (2025 rules) by meeting all of the required assessments and benchmarks
- Increase the number of disciplines included in multisport events by the end of 2024

K. Consolidate ICF event calendar through quantitative and qualitative analysis of existing and future competitions and formats

To achieve this we will

- Determine a minimum viability standard for level 1 & 2 competitions including athlete and NF attendance, media interest, cost versus benefit for ICF and host, and NF interest.
- Assess the number of countries and athletes attending competitions based on discipline and level
- Evaluate the media interest (social, TV and otherwise) and spectators attending each competition
- Review the cost versus benefit for each competition
- Survey national federations to determine interest in sending teams to competitions including funding availability and level of the athletes sent to each competition
- Consolidate the competition calendar for consistency across years, disciplines, levels and formats
- Consider multi-discipline "paddling festivals" to maximise resources and cross-promote multiple paddling disciplines
- Work with continental associations to develop competition consistency and aid athlete and discipline development

- Ensure all level 1 & 2 competitions on the ICF calendar are viable by the end of 2022
- Ensure name, level and consistent requirements of level 3-4 competitions and include this in the 2023 version of the rules

Best Practice Governance

L. Increase the number of paddling influencers in major decision making bodies.

To achieve this we will

- Have ICF represented in all major decision making bodies
- Ensure ICF voice is heard during discussions on Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Conduct programmes to identify, educate and support people from the paddling community with leadership potential to apply for governance positions in organisations such as NOCs, athletes' committees and multi-sport event organisations or organising committees
- Consider opportunities for feedback on ICF processes from IOC members or other outstanding sports management professionals to enhance links across sports and improve ICF professionalism
- Promote gender equality, diversity and inclusion in sport and in positions of leadership

- Have at least one ICF Board member in a decision making position in international sport by the end of 2024
- Identify and support at least five people from the paddling community with leadership courses, further education and application to governance positions within sport but outside of canoeing by the end of 2024
- Obtain at least the minimum standards within the ICF regarding gender equality, diversity and inclusion as set out by the IOC

M. Refine ICF governance objectives and provide clear protocols and procedures for decision making within the ICF

To achieve this we will

- Implement meeting protocols for ExCo, Board and committee meetings
- Document roles and responsibilities for each position in the ICF and reinforce accountability
- Implement governance policies in line with business and ASOIF governance best practices
- Create and apply working protocols for members and staff
- Review and revise ICF statutes to meet best practice
- Implement induction and governance education programmes for ICF Board members
- Encourage and assist national federations to create their own safeguarding policy and processes

- Improve the ICF's score in the ASOIF survey by at least five points in each iteration
- Revise and implement further governance policies for the ICF by the end of 2022
- Roll out governance best practice policies for member national federations by the end of 2023. Have at least 20 national federations agreed to implement these best practices by the end of 2024
- Have at least 20 national federations with their own safeguarding policy and specific contact person by the end of 2024

N. Communicate more effectively and regularly with stakeholders

To achieve this we will

- Create consultative groups to understand all aspects of canoeing, for example athletes, chief executives and Presidents of NFs to provide feedback to the ICF Board of Directors and to shape the member forums
- Utilise the feedback from consultative groups in the decision making processes of the ICF
- Create online forums, workshops and seminars to discuss canoeing topics with all stakeholders on a regular basis
- Build platforms for discussion and exchange with stakeholders
- Initiate specific group workshops for media, TV, technical aspects of canoeing, sponsorship, safeguarding etc.
- Publish more information behind the reasoning of ICF decisions

- Create at least two consultative groups by the end of 2021 and hold two meetings per year from 2022 to 2024
- Hold at least one member forum each year between 2022 and 2024 with specific relevant topics and agendas
- Publish reasoned decisions for all major discussion items on ICF matters, and on matters as requested by the consultative groups

Best Practice Governance

O. Lead by example on sustainability

To achieve this we will

- Partner with sustainability and environmental organisations to promote sustainable paddling practices throughout the wider community
- Evolve and improve the ICF sustainability event tool kit through workshops with relevant environmental and sustainability organisations, national federations and continental associations
- Ensure that the ICF sustainability event tool kit is a go-to resource for all organising committees of ICF competitions, continental associations and national federations
- Educate organising committees on the importance of sustainability issues and ways to ensure the guidelines are followed
- Conduct meetings online whenever possible to minimise non-essential travel

- 100% of ICF competition organising committees committed to following the ICF sustainability event tool kit by 2024
- For 80% of those organising committees following the ICF sustainability tool kit to achieve "completed" on at least 75% of items from 2022
- Conduct selected ICF meetings online throughout the strategic plan period, including technical committees, ExCo/Board, Congress and consultative groups

Best Practice Governance

P. Implement anti-doping programmes to keep canoeing clean across all levels and disciplines

To achieve this we will

- Include in the ICF rules the requirement for all athletes and athlete support personnel to complete anti-doping education prior to competing in ICF level 1-3 events
- Introduce an independent panel through the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) Anti-Doping Division (ADD) for the first instance hearing for all adverse analytical findings
- Collaborate with national anti-doping agencies (NADOs) to share intelligence on targeted testing and registered testing pool athletes to coordinate more efficient planning and testing
- Remain up to date on the latest global anti-doping advancements and stay ahead of the game with education and testing

- Minimum 90% compliance with anti-doping education for all required competitions
- Presence of anti-doping stand for at least one world championships each year
- Remain compliant with World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) standards as they evolve

Financial plan

The ICF financial strategic starting point in view of its experience of the impact of Covid-19 is to have at all times a minimum of €5 million in reserves

Revenue and expenditure therefore should be equivalent to €5.5 million per two year cycle from 2021 – 2024. However, should the Tokyo Olympic Games not take place and no funding is provided by the IOC, this expenditure should be reduced to €2 million per financial period

Based on approval of the strategic plan and confirmation of the Olympic funds available for the four year cycle:

- The ICF financial budget should be created with a view of achieving the KPIs indicated in this strategic plan for the period 2021-2024.
- Based on the strategies and plans formulated, costings calculated, and revenues projected the ICF can develop a set of financial reports for the duration of the strategic plan.
- Investment and resources needed to fulfil this business plan should be kept to realistic values with the key factor being to finance a dedicated workforce that activate the BoD's strategy and direction.

Implementation plan



- The President and the Board of Directors agree that the ICF's strategic plan requires regular assessment and review in order for the ICF to stay effective and efficient in an ever changing sports landscape.
- Each department should produce an annual operational plan by the end of Q1 each year (Q2 in 2021 following the Congress), incorporating steps towards achieving each of the strategic goals as outlined in the strategic plan and financial requirements. Each plan should include clear allocation of responsibility and accountability for each goal and a method and timeframe for assessment.
- A benchmarking report with existing data for future comparison and review of the strategic plan will be created by the end of Q2 2021.
- Additional training and personal development for staff will be made available throughout the strategic plan period, with the aim to retain as many of the headquarters staff as possible until 2024, as the working experience is of high quality within the group.

Evaluation plan

- To ensure the ICF's strategic plan continues to provide a sharp focus and remains responsive to change, it should be formally reviewed and updated every ICF Board meeting and at any other time deemed necessary
- This should be a fixed agenda item for the Board of Directors. The Board should report on the progress and review the strategic plan in collaboration with the Secretary General
- Six monthly internal review of the departmental operational plans with progress towards achieving the strategic goals and KPIs
- The financial performance should be evaluated annually compared to the progress made on the related strategic plan with the budget reviewed every two years (2021-2022 and 2023-2024)



Healthy

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Trendy

Rewarding

Engaging

A multi-disciplinary, dynamic sporting lifestyle with attitude in a natural environment

STELLAR

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Challenging

Exciting