



Váci út 76
1133 Budapest
Hungary

Avenue de Rhodanie 54
1007 Lausanne
Switzerland

80 Fuchun Road
Shangcheng District
Hangzhou
China

Paddle Worldwide DXP - Request for Proposal (RFP)

Transforming the International Canoe Federation into **Paddle Worldwide**.

Issued By: International Canoe Federation (ICF)

Contact: Khush Ramesh (khush.ramesh@canoeicf.sport) or Stuart Roach (stuart.roach@canoeicf.sport)

Project Mandate & Vision

The International Canoe Federation (ICF) is the global governing body for paddle sport. We oversee Olympic, Paralympic and non-Olympic canoe/kayak disciplines, with 172 National Federations (NF) and millions of recreational participants worldwide.

The ICF is launching a wholesale strategic transformation, relaunching as Paddle Worldwide (PW), including its various digital platforms and with it, its ambitions. The current digital ecosystem—headlined by an unsupported Drupal 7 CMS, an API-first proprietary sports data platform (SDP) and siloed data systems—has had its time. This Request for Proposal (RFP) seeks highly experienced partners to specialise and build **three different groups of work** for the new Paddle Worldwide ecosystem: **first, a data capture, storage and intelligence setup**, **second, a modern, sustainable, composable Digital Experience Platform (DXP) built on headless architecture with a CMS, MAM/DAM and a modern front-end**; and finally **third, a modern CRM designed to maximise fan and partner engagement**. The primary goal is to shift the ICF from a fragmented entity to a streamlined, data-driven, media-centric international sports federation capable of exponential commercial growth over the next decade and beyond. As a partner, you're free to select any one or all the sections.

Strategic Goals

This initiative is structured for high return on investment (ROI) by mitigating risk and maximising revenue opportunities with the design and delivery of a new suite of products that will help the ICF achieve its goal of 'always moving forward' – mainly through:

1. Unifying multiple siloed systems
2. Maximising commercial value through headless solutions

Always moving forward

3. Future-proofing technology, and
 4. Replicable/fork-able codebases for international scalability
-

Vendor Qualifications

The ICF requires technology partners capable of delivering a sustainable, high-performance, and open-source-centric solution, built in phases over time. Proposals will be evaluated heavily on demonstrated experience with the nominated technology stack and complexity, essentially tackling:

(Details of each platform in the next section)

1. **Open-Source DXP Expertise:** Minimum of one successful implementation of an open-source Headless CMS platforms (e.g., Payload, Strapi) integrated with a modern front-end (e.g., Next.js, React) for web. Any app-related experience tied to a similar CMS would also be considered.
 2. **High-Volume Media Handling:** Demonstrated experience integrating a Headless CMS with cloud-native Digital Asset Management (DAM) systems (e.g., AWS S3, Azure) for handling high-volume visual asset libraries (10,000+ assets). Proposing to unify the CMS+DMS would be welcome.
 3. **Scalable & Intelligent Data Lake:** Expertise through a deep understanding of, design and delivery of a bespoke data lake capable of scaling with the ICF's ambitions; will be home to all the ICF's athlete & event performance, fan and commercial data, amongst others.
 4. **Complex Data Normalisation:** Proven experience in designing and building custom API Middleware/Normalisation gateways to reconcile and translate heterogeneous data feeds (e.g., non-standardised sports results) into a unified internal data schema – stored within the newly-created data lake.
 5. **CRM & Marketing Tech:** Demonstrated experience integrating CRM and Marketing Automation platforms with a data lake to drive personalised communication and membership programmes.
-

Ecosystem Details

We want the new Paddle Worldwide digital ecosystem consisting of highly specialised, interconnected platforms designed to prevent vendor lock-in where possible and deliver maximum performance and efficiency.

Headless CMS & MAM/DAM

This platform forms the zero-license core of the transformation, serving all editorial, commercial and, potentially, visual content. The proposed headless CMS+DAM/MAM should allow for maximum scalability/fork-ability for member continental federations, national federations and event hosts to fork and build on, as well as ensuring that content managers and editors of all skill levels are able to execute their responsibilities without needing to know how to code.

- **Core technology:** Open-source headless CMS (Eg. Payload, Strapi, etc.) that feeds a modern and performant front-end framework (Eg. Next.js, React).
- **Primary function:** To serve as the sole platform for all content, performance, commercial and visual assets for Paddle Worldwide and its various Federations. Be it through multi-tenancy or all-in-one composed packages, this setup should be distributable – if needed – to the ICF's 172 National Federations, 5 Continental Federations and all event organising committees – in the aim of reducing technical debt across the paddle world and centralising updates, security and content delivery through one CMS.
- **Key requirements:**
 - **Security:** Enterprise-grade security practices to ensure platforms are stress-and-pen tested from every angle.
 - **Bespoke Content Types:** Provide agreed-upon page, post, event, bio content type creation, with flexible modules that allow for customisation of content delivery. Additionally, provide a solution for engagement with modules like Forms, Polls and more – either built-in with the CMS, or through a SaaS setup.
 - **User Experience Considerations:** A visual editing experience for admin globally with set templates for pages, posts, events, athlete profiles and biographies, amongst others.
 - **Media Handling:** Must be integrated via API with external cloud buckets (Eg. AWS S3, Azure) to handle high-volume media, including photographs, documents, short-and-long-form video, as well as downloadable content packages in ZIPs, RARs, etc.
 - **Metadata:** Must support custom metadata models and mass tagging to manage asset rights and categorisation based on discipline, event, year, athlete, NF, etc. A proven AI-led solution in this space will be

considered, too.

- **Multi-tenancy:** Must allow for multiple continental federations to have their own editing workspace on the same CMS albeit with the relevant tenancy controls in place for bifurcation of responsibilities.

Website / App (future) Presentation Layer

- **Core technology:** Modern and performant front-end framework (Eg. Next.js, React)
- **Primary function:** To consume APIs from the CMS, DAM/MAM, OTT, data lake – and other future platforms (Ticketing, eCommerce etc.) to present a single, cohesive, and extremely fast user experience.
- **Key requirements:**
 - **Mobile-first UX:** Responsive by design and capable of smartly showing comprehensive data schemas in simple, engageable formats.
 - **Comprehensive athlete profiles:** Be the SSOT for all the athletes under the care of our federation aggregating the information from the data lake and other sources. Additionally, explore the possibility of letting the athletes modify elements of their profile themselves to make it their verified source of truth.
 - **Live centre integration:** The website must also host all live event data, results, scoring and ranking as separate content types, built for mobile and bespoke in nature.
 - **Performance:** Must be deployed to maximise speed – either on existing CDN or other – by aggressively caching static content.

OTT Platform (Video distribution)

While **not a part of this RFP**, building the API pipelines to capture information from the OTT to both, feed into the CMS and the front-end, and store user behaviour metrics from the OTT into the data lake need to be considered as part of this scope.

The ICF will confirm the specifics of this request at a later date.

The OTT will serve as the ICF's hub for all short and long-form video content including live broadcasts, VOD and stylised formats including highlights, specialised analyses and more.

Normalisation Gateway (API Middleware)

In terms of the sporting and non-sporting data needs, this platform is the single most critical investment for solving data fragmentation and enabling the long-term strategy of ICF to have a full accessible and – now interactable – data structure. Given the ICF's current state of working with multiple different event technology providers, the creation of this gateway ensures a seamless transition from this state to one for the future where – hopefully – there is standardisation of event technology. Additionally, this layer will also aid in the enrichment, mapping and structuring of all sporting and non-sporting data that is currently stored as printed or written documents. The ICF will work with the chosen partner to process the upload of these documents using proposed technology.

- **Core technology:** Custom-built API/data service (E.g., Node.js or Python API)
- **Primary function:** Firstly, to sit between the ICF's SDP and the data lake, acting as the risk mitigation and enrichment layer that guarantees the integrity of all data entering the ecosystem. Second, act as the ingestion point of non-digitised results through primarily scanned docs.
- **Key requirements:**
 - **SDP consumption:** Consume data from the current SDP JSON APIs
 - **Data normalisation:** Implement an Athlete ID mapping system to reconcile non-standard athlete IDs from external event hosts with the ICF's required "personCode". This is the sole mechanism ensuring athlete performance history (from external events) correctly links to the athlete's SDP profile.
 - **Conflict Resolution Strategy:** Detailed approach for handling data mismatches (e.g., spelling variations, duplicate entries) and a user interface or workflow for manual intervention when automated matching fails.
 - **Data ingestion:** Provide secure endpoints for external event hosts to push results data in a streamlined, non-proprietary format.
 - **Historical digitilisation:** Provide the framework to ingest and structure legacy often non-digitised records that then flow into the data lake.
 - **Enrichment Pipeline:** Must be capable of integrating, enriching, and processing secondary data streams (e.g., weather data, water temperature, future GPS/sensor feeds) to enable the calculation of advanced AI metrics like 'Relative Results' and 'Angle of Approach',

amongst others.

- **Validation Checkpoint:** Act as the technical parsing layer to validate results data from a future Refereeing & Judging Platform before it is ratified for the data lake.

Data Lake & Business Intelligence

This platform is part commercial engine, driving personalised experiences and maximising partnership ROI, and part performance engine, acting as the SSOT for all athlete, performance and event data from every single official event overseen by the ICF. Crucially, this Data Lake should serve the business intelligence tool of choice (Eg. Power BI, etc.) that ICF and Continental Federation staff can access, interact with and modify the data. If possible, building a two-way bridge to connect with the SDP and make edits there through this front-end would be welcome.

- **Core technology:** Cloud data storage (Eg. Google Cloud Storage & BigQuery)
Primary function: To act as the centralised, AIML-driven high-volume Analytical Single Source of Truth (SSOT) for all historical, current and future athletic performance, event data, detailed athlete biographies, host organising committee (HOC) data, tertiary influencing elemental data (weather, water temp., crowd, etc.), commercial partner information and requirements, fan data based on ecosystem engagement, and more. This powers all AI/ML models and Business Intelligence reporting through industry-ready tools.
- **Key requirements:**
 - **Interactable Interface:** The data lake must be structured (relational or similar schema) to support fast querying from analytical tools. Crucially, the data lake will be the analytical SSOT, while the new headless CMS-connected front end or BI tool will provide the user interface for staff to interact with and, where authorised, modify data in the underlying systems (SDP/data lake).
 - **Data Governance & Lineage:** The solution must maintain clear data lineage, tagging the *source* of every data point (e.g., 'Source: SDP', 'Source: Event Provider X'). This provenance is critical for AI model training and data integrity.
 - **Performance & event data:** Act as the SSOT for all performance, event and athlete data with a robust data schema that's NLP-interactable and API-ready to push to multiple front ends.

- **NLP-interactable Schema:** The schema must be robustly defined to be fully queryable by NLP engines (e.g., Gemini for Business). This is necessary to power AI agents for internal search (files, rules, documents) and quickly find trends in performance analytics, and most importantly be accessible and easy to use for low code/no-code users.
- **AI enablement:** Must feed structured data to enable future AIML models for personalised performance and content recommendations.
- **Monetisation & broadcast:** The data stored must include sufficient structure to sell historical and live data feeds for broadcast graphics and external sports analytics, directly fulfilling a necessity for sponsorship revenue generation.

CRM & Marketing Automation Platform

Lead the creation of a first-of-its-kind ICF membership programme online that fans, athletes (elite, aspiring, youth) and entourage members (coaches, family, medical, etc) can sign up to on the website that captures personal, marketing and commercial data of consenting users to provide a new experience with the ICF and help drive revenue-generation avenues.

- **Core technology:** Preferably enterprise-series marketing automation platforms (e.g., open-source solutions or SaaS in Hubspot, etc.)
- **Primary function:** To manage the membership programmes, automate fan communications and drive commercial revenue, tied to newly created user profiles (public & private) displayed on the website.
- **Key requirements:**
 - **Data lake integration:** Two-way sync required.
 - **Pull:** Segmented audience lists from the data lake (e.g., “Fans who watched Canoe Slalom in Germany”).
 - **Push:** Campaign engagement data (opens, clicks), read/view of content/video data back to the data lake for analysis and enrichment.
 - **Automation workflows:** Capabilities for automated email journeys (e.g., “welcome to Paddle Worldwide”, “Ticket presale for your region”, “Athlete performance notification”).
 - **Commercial data capture:** Secure forms (either through CRM or the

native CMS) and progressive profiling to capture rich personal data (interests, sports, favourite athletes) compliant with GDPR.

Paddle Worldwide eCommerce Setup

Lead on the design and delivery of a simple-to-use Paddle Worldwide eCommerce platform either built in with the CMS (e.g., Payload, Strapi) or through a SaaS (Shopify) that will host and distribute official merchandise, unique athlete-partnered items, amongst others.

- **Core technology:** Easy-to-use eCommerce store that already takes advantage of the headless CMS and MAM/DAM for storage of assets. A unified solution would represent a giant step in simplifying the ICF's workload.
- **Primary function:** To manage the preview and sale of official ICF-branded merchandise, as well as host partner and athlete-specific merchandise in the future.
- **Key requirements:**
 - **Data lake integration:** Ensure all transactions are stored in the data lake under the correct 'personCode' section.
 - **Payment processing:** Provide a seamless and simple 'browse-to-basket' experience for the user by ensuring payment options are wide-ranging and international, either through solutions like Stripe or others.
 - **Shopping support:** Dedicate a portion of the store to ensure ICF staff are capable of easily maintaining FAQs, Common Support Queries and more.

Ecosystem Overview

Attached with this RFP document is the overview of the proposed Paddle Worldwide ecosystem – as a PDF – moving forward, and the outlined boxes are our suggested development-groups for you, as partners. If you do choose to work with us on the Data Storage and Intelligence side, we would prefer a partner who does the entire block. Likewise, with the content delivery and design, we would prefer a partner who could work with us to build the CMS, DAM, frontends and the multi-tenancy structure built on the same tools that allow us to expand our outreach

through CF, NFs and Events as and when needed.

Groups of Work

The Paddle Worldwide digital ecosystem is a cohesive platform built from interconnected systems. To ensure seamless integration and end-to-end accountability, this RFP is structured around three primary 'Groups of Work,' derived directly from our proposed architectural map (see Appendix).

The ICF is not seeking partners for individual components (e.g., only a DAM, or only a Data Lake). **We require bidders to submit proposals that cover one or more of the entire groups defined below.** This approach is designed to foster deep, strategic partnerships and deliver a superior, unified experience for our athletes, fans, partners and member federations.

Group 1: Paddle Intelligence, the Data Structure

Within the architectural map: The green group; in Phase 3, parts of yellow group

This group of work forms the data foundation of the entire ecosystem. The chosen partner will be responsible for the complete data lifecycle, from ingestion and normalisation to storage and intelligence.

Key Components:

- **Data Lake & Business Intelligence:** Design and delivery of the analytical Single Source of Truth (SSOT).
- **Normalisation Gateway (API Middleware):** The critical investment for solving data fragmentation by normalising data from all sources.
- **Data Ingestion & Integration:** Building pipelines to consume data from the Atos SDP, historical archives, external event result providers, and legacy documents.

Group 2: Content, Media and Presentation

Within the architectural map: The purple group

This group covers the core platforms for content creation, media management, and the end-user digital experience. The partner will be responsible for the entire content journey, from the back-end interfaces to the front-end presentation layer.

Key Components:

- **Headless CMS & MAM/DAM:** The open-source core for all editorial,

commercial, and visual content.

- **Website / App Presentation Layer:** The primary, mobile-first user interface that consumes APIs from all parts of the ecosystem.
- **OTT Platform Integration:** While the OTT platform itself is managed by an external contractor, this partner will be responsible for building the API pipelines to consume video metadata for the front-end and feed user behaviour metrics back into the Data Lake.
- **Standardisation Model:** Implementing the multi-tenancy architecture to allow for the future rollout of websites for Continental and National Federations, as well as potentially event host organising committees.

Group 3: Group 3: Fan & Commercial Engagement

From the architectural map: The red group; in Phase 3, parts of yellow group

This group of work is focused on direct-to-consumer (D2C) monetisation and building direct relationships with our global fanbase, partners and national federations:

Key Components:

- **CRM & Marketing Automation Platform:** The engine for managing membership programs and automating fan communications.
- **Phase 3: eCommerce Setup:** The platform for selling official merchandise and other products.
- **Phase 3: Ticketing Module:** The future platform for managing ticket sales for events.

Excluded from this RFP

As shown in the ecosystem overview, the elements excluded from the mandate of this RFP are the OTT platforms and the management of the Event Results Platforms – both of which are managed by external contractors but will influence the data storage & intelligence elements as well as the content management & delivery elements. Please do consider any connected data pipelines as part of the mandate but NOT the OTT or Results platforms themselves.

Business Model & Commercialisation Strategy

The Paddle Worldwide digital transformation is not merely a technical upgrade; it is

a commercial engine designed to diversify revenue streams and reduce reliance on traditional broadcast rights. The successful partner – partners – must design the platform(s) to support the following commercial models:

Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) Monetisation

The new ecosystem will enable direct financial relationships with global fan base:

- **OTT / Video Subscription:** The OTT platform must support flexible monetisation models including:
 - **Freemium:** Free access to highlights, shows and news to drive top-of-funnel engagement.
 - **Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD):** Premium tier for exclusive documentaries, archive access, and ad-free viewing.
 - **Pay-per-View (PPV):** Ticketed digital access for premium live events or championships not covered by linear broadcast deals.
- **‘Paddle Club’ Membership:** A membership programmed managed via the CRM and CMS offering exclusive benefits (e.g., early ticket access, merchandise discounts, member-only content, personalisation options) in exchange for verifiable personal information and marketing preferences.
- **Integrated eCommerce:** A seamless shopping experience for official merchandise, athlete and partner promoted gear and digital goods, integrated directly into the content journey. (e.g., “Shop the look” from an athlete profile)

Enhanced Sponsorship Value (Data-driven)

We are shifting from ‘logo placement’ to ‘targeted activation’. The data lake and normalisation gateway are critical to this shift:

- **Audience segmentation:** The data lake must allow us to segment fans by interest (e.g., “slalom fans”, “SUP enthusiasts”), location and behaviour. This allows us to sell highly targeted digital inventory to sponsors (e.g., a boat manufacturer sponsoring the “Canoe Sprint” section only).
- **Contextual advertising:** Leveraging AI metadata to place relevant partner content next to specific static and video moments. (e.g., a travel partner ad appearing next to a “Destination Guide” piece/video on the website).
- **Data monetisation:** The clean, normalised results data (via the gateway) will be packaged as a premium API product for sale to broadcasters, fantasy

sports platforms and other interested partners.

Federated Revenue Models (B2B2C)

The platform is designed to support our Continental Federations (CFs), National Federations (NFs) and Event Host Organising Committees (HOCs).

- **Revenue share on OTT:** Capability to attribute subscriptions or PPV buys to specific regions, allow for future revenue-sharing models with NFs who contribute content.
- **Standardisation as a service (SDaaS):** Offering the 'Paddle Worldwide' CMS/Web platform to CFs and HOCs as a hosted service, potentially for a licensing fee or data-sharing agreement, reducing their technical costs while increasing our data footprint.

Phased Timeline & Implementation Roadmap

The ICF requires this rollout in a staggered delivery to manage risks and sure value delivery at every stage. Phase 1 (Foundation) acts as the critical path. **Proposals must demonstrate the ability to launch the new Website Front-End and CMS Core by June 2026 regardless of the status of the full Data Lake integration.**

Vendors must demonstrate how they will meet this deadline while building the complex backend infrastructure. All these timelines – apart from the web launch for June 2026, and sports data finalisation for Q2 2028 – are flexible and can be discussed with the ICF. **Delivering more in shorter spans of time would be very welcome.**

Phase 1: Foundations of the web & sports data

Target delivery: June 2026 (inflexible)

Discovery and architecture: Finalise technical architecture, API definitions, and cloud storage setup.

Core content platform: Deploy headless CMS (E.g., Payload, Strapi) and integrate with external cloud DAM. (E.g., GCP, S3, Azure)

Front-end initiation: Following the new branding guidelines, design and deploy a new performant front-end that will and can ingest APIs from our CMS, MAM/DAM, SDP, data lake and OTT, amongst others.

Data migration strategy: Audit, begin cleaning and migrate Drupal 7 content to new CMS. Automate pipelines for all new content on Drupal7 to also flow into CMS – for

duration of overlap.

Sports data enrichment: Audit, map and structure incoming data to current Drupal7 site and redesign the ingestion and display of it for the new CMS+frontend. Additionally, deploy a stand-alone results UI to replace the Atos iFrames and provide a modern mobile-responsive experience for our users.

Standardisation strategy: Soft launch multi-tenancy feature with the ICF's five Continental Federations, including customisation, training and documentation.

Phase 2: Integration & Intelligence

Target Delivery: Q1-Q2 2027 (flexible)

Middleware Construction: Build and test the 'Normalisation Gateway'. Connect to SDP APIs and validate the 'Athlete ID mapping' logic.

Data lake alpha: Deploy the data lake infrastructure. Begin ingesting cleaned historical data and SDP feeds and connect the lake to the ICF+partner's preferred BI solution.

Front-end development: Intensive development of the new modern web/app framework by integrating all remaining data pipelines uncovered in Phase 1, including custom CMS content types, normalised results and event data, and the OTT platform.

Membership launch: Publicly launch the Paddle Club through registration, CRM data capture and finalised data schema within the data lake.

Paddle Club (CRM) setup: Implement the marketing automation platform and define membership tiers in collaboration with the ICF Partnership & Marketing team.

Advanced AI Features: Activate relevant NLP-driven engagement possibilities with connectors linked to the data lake, CMS and OTT, amongst others.

Phase 3: Commercialisation, Sports Data finalisation, and Expansion

Target Delivery: Q1-Q2 2028 (flexible); Sports Data by Q2 2028 (inflexible)

eCommerce: Finalise design, testing and delivery of the eCommerce platform

Ticketing: Deliver the ICF's first-ever ticketing module in-line with the Marketing, Sports teams' requirements, as well as then-upcoming event hosts.

Refereeing & Judging + Anti-Doping Platforms: Will be confirmed by ICF later.

Full Federation Rollout: Offer customised forks of our CMS+front-end with the relevant API endpoints already defined to ICF NFs who agree to adopt tenancy.

Proposal Submission Instructions

All submissions must include the following:

1. **Company background:** relevant experience, case studies, key clients
2. **Technical recommendations:** across all or chosen section of work
3. **Commercial model:** fees, revenue share, partnership structure
4. **Implementation plan:** timelines, milestones & launch readiness
5. **Support & services:** B2B support including SLAs for post-launch period, security patching, end-user support, and knowledge transfer through detailed documentations.
6. **Innovation support:** recommendations for enhancing user experience and revenue

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated against:

- Demonstrated experience in similar technical and strategic setup. Sporting-related experience isn't necessarily needed; we want the best team for the job.
- Timeliness of delivery aligned with ICF-proposed timelines. For reiteration: June 2026 is a fixed requirement for the new web solution.
- Commercial approach in affordability, revenue potential and/or partnership model.
- Innovation and creativity in tackling requirements, added value services based on chosen platforms will be studied.
- Alignment with ICF values: leadership, excellence, integrity, inclusivity and passion.

In addition, vendors are encouraged to outline any sustainability measures or environmentally responsible operations they have in place to ensure alignment with ICF's values and new brand direction under the Paddle Worldwide banner.

Submission Deadline: 13th January 2026 (🎄 *Please don't work over the break*)

Delivery format: .PDF/.PPT/.DECK proposal sent via email to either Khush Ramesh (khush.ramesh@canoeicf.sport) or Stuart Roach (stuart.roach@canoeicf.sport)