

FIT FOR FUTURE STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-24

INTERNATIONAL CANOE FEDERATION



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The President's Message

Dear Canoeing Family.

It was a great honour and privilege for me to be elected ICF President. Together with all of you - my dedicated friends in our Continental and National Federations, ICF partners, our professional staff and countless supporters - we will continue to work tirelessly to promote and develop our sport.

I fully commit to working with you and building on our strengths to ensure that canoeing continues to thrive for generations to come. Our main goal remains to promote and develop our sport to a higher level. Achieving this goal is only possible with collective and progressive action taken together.

The key pillars of our management ethos are based on Innovation and Change, Engagement and Involvement, Cooperation, Transparency, and Sustainability. Our sport and our athletes must be at the heart of everything we do. We do our job for them and as officials we must do everything in our power to further improve the perception of our sport and the opportunities for our athletes.

This ethos, combined with ICF's values, will help us to continue to grow as part of the Olympic and Paralympic Movement, to foster positive discussions with all key stakeholders by leveraging our personal relationships and the assets of our sport, to increase fan engagement and active participation around the globe, to strive for gender balance in our activities and leadership, and to include as many of our disciplines as possible at Continental and Regional Games or major multi-sport events.

We all have good ideas and existing working relationships that we can contribute. The International Canoe Federation is pleased to present Fit For Future, a strategic plan that brings us together in this direction. Significant input from eight working groups led to the development of this dynamic agenda, which consists of eight pillars that will be constantly updated to ensure that the plan is a living document that we use proactively to shape our future and meet the needs of our stakeholders, including the International Olympic Committee. I invite all our colleagues in paddle sport, especially the continental federations, to help shape the development of our sport with good ideas and timely professional implementation.

Successes and progress are already being made as we work together in an atmosphere of cohesion and organisational trust.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Konietzko', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Thomas Konietzko
ICF President



1. Support athletes

Continently strengthen opportunities and support for athletes on and off the water through an athlete-centred approach across all aspects of paddle sport.

2. Strengthen governance

Build trust through good governance that ensures diversity, transparency and inclusion at all levels of paddle sport.

3. Maximise synergies

Work with National Federations and key stakeholders to develop synergies that support the global growth of paddle sport.

4. Develop globally

Strengthen support and opportunities for athletes, coaches, and officials globally and innovate to improve opportunities to increase impact of development programmes.

5. Climate positive

Activate the paddle sport community to take climate positive actions and ensure elite events and organisational practices are optimised to support global sustainability goals.

6. Celebrate emotions

Engage fans directly with athletes through powerful stories and invest in the digital growth of paddle sport.

7. Elevate competitions

Build an economically and environmentally sustainable competition calendar that maximises opportunities for all disciplines.

8. Generate revenue

Develop a commercial strategy that drives investment and partnerships that generate revenue to invest in the growth of global paddle sport.



1. Support athletes

Focus group: Athlete Safety & Wellbeing

Continually strengthen opportunities and support for athletes on and off the water through an athlete-centred approach across all aspects of paddle sport.

A) Strengthen the athlete voice and protect fair competition

1. Ensure effective athlete representation and participation in decision-making within the ICF and its members.
2. Increase investment in programmes to protect clean athletes and create a safe and fair competition environment.
3. Adopt the Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities Declaration of the IOC.

B) Improve opportunities and support services for athletes in and beyond sport

1. Maximise opportunities for paddle sport athletes through Olympic Solidarity.
2. Build an online athlete community and resource centre to support athlete development in all aspects of their lives on and off the water.
3. Raise awareness of the Olympic Movement's key athlete support programmes such as Athlete365 to the Paddle Sport Athlete Community.

C) Support athlete engagement with fans and create ambassadors

1. Recruit athletes for social take-overs and lifestyle content for key audiences such as @Olympics and @Paris2024 to increase the reach and visibility of paddle sport.
2. Share event footage directly with athletes to help them tell their stories.
3. Build a database of athlete social handles and invest in mechanisms to easily monitor the collective reach of shared content and communicate directly with athletes.



2. Strengthen governance

Focus group: Governance

Build trust through good governance that ensures diversity, transparency and inclusion at all levels of paddle sport.

A) Streamline the decision-making process through enhanced governance structures

1. Revise statutes to ensure effective, agile and transparent decision-making.
2. Create consistency across rules and clarify the process of individual entry for international events.
3. Invest in the digital transformation of financial management systems to ensure efficient reporting and tighter budgetary control.
4. Create stronger evaluation of events to provide benchmarks and clear success criteria.
5. Review and update code of ethics policies and practises.
6. Strengthen influence beyond the canoeing community.

B) Champion inclusion and gender equality in all aspects of paddle sport

1. Continue to advocate for gender equality across paddle sport, with a focus on increasing female coaches and representation of women in decision-making positions.
2. Advocate for the highest standards of human rights protection and work closely with the IOC Human Rights Unit to maintain the highest level of competency within this area.
3. Develop a paddle sport-specific transgender policy that respects the principles of the IOC fairness, inclusion and non-discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sex variations framework.



3. Maximise synergies

Focus Group: Organisational Culture & Team Value

Work with National Federations and key stakeholders to develop synergies that support the global growth of paddle sport.

A) Facilitate information gathering and sharing of best practises to support sustainable global development

1. Establish a global CRM system to improve the quality of service the ICF can provide to its members.
2. Conduct and share market research with members on a regular basis so that we all have a comprehensive understanding of paddle sport activity worldwide.
3. Establish a resource and research section on the ICF website to share best practises and guidelines from continental and national federations.
4. Inform recreational paddlers through advice from elite athletes and coaches.
5. Leverage investment in production from TV, to create coaching and training content with elite athletes and coaches.
6. Improve collective engagement in paddle sport on social media by providing national federations with access to global coaching and training content that they can share across their social media channels.

B) Build a global recreational brand and amplify awareness campaigns

1. Unite the recreational paddle sport community through a globally recognised brand that celebrates the benefits, diversity and beauty of paddle sport.
2. Create a stronger communication network with Continental and National Federations to encourage the development of shared resources and create synergies.
3. Develop challenges that inspire recreational paddlers and connect them with the best athletes in the world.
4. Deliver global campaigns that highlight the benefits of paddle sport . Campaigns should include toolkits for national federations to activate and develop localised content.



4. Develop globally

Focus Group: Sustainable Development Programme Team

Strengthen support and opportunities for athletes, coaches, and officials globally and innovate to improve opportunities to increase impact of development programmes.

A) Enhance investment in key areas of development to ensure the continued global growth of elite paddle sport

1. Invest in dedicated development managers in Africa, Asia and the Americas through dedicated development managers.
2. Support coaches from developing countries through the ICF Development Programme to increase the number of competitive athletes and participating nations at ICF World Championships.
3. Increase the number of qualified International Technical Officials.
4. Modernise the development programme through a blended learning approach (online and in person) to support the continuous development of coaches, officials and athletes at scale.



5. Climate positive

Focus Group: Sustainability

Activate the paddle sport community to take climate positive actions and ensure elite events and organisational practices are optimised to support global sustainability goals.

A) Ensure the ICF is a leader in environmental sustainability practices

1. Create a strategic sustainability plan aligned with UNFCCC.
2. Develop and implement specific guidelines to ensure sustainable event delivery.
3. Ensure sustainability is addressed as a strategic topic with event organisers during the bidding phase.
4. Include sustainable practices within the ICFs daily practices.
5. Foster a sustainable culture across the paddle sport community through campaigns that raise awareness and encourage actions to help in the fight against climate change.
6. Integrate sustainability in the sourcing of goods and services.
7. Inspire the paddle sport community to take positive climate action.



6. Celebrate emotions

Focus group: Brand, marketing and corporate communication

Engage fans directly with athletes through powerful stories and invest in the digital growth of paddle sport.

A) Create opportunities to maximise brand and marketing exposure

1. Maximise the opportunities that the Olympic and Paralympic Games offer.
2. Celebrate the highs and lows of an athlete's journey to the Olympic Games through a combination of event and athlete-generated content.
3. Develop a digital advertising strategy to increase the reach of Olympic and Paralympic content.
4. Maximise the use of the 'Paris 2024 Qualifier' label at all Olympic qualifying events to increase the event impact and connection with the Olympic Games.
5. Research and develop a global identity that is relevant to recreational paddlers.
6. Conduct comprehensive market research to understand how to meet the needs of recreational paddlers.

B) Develop a global paddling community through direct membership

1. Work with partners to develop products and services that appeal to recreational paddlers and provide an easy transition to competitive paddle sport.
2. Develop direct membership offers that provide access to exclusive content, services and discounts.
3. Build a strong social media presence around the key attributes of paddle sport: adventure, health, nature, mental wellbeing and escapism.



7. Elevate competitions

Focus group: ICF events team

Build an economically and environmentally sustainable competition calendar that maximises opportunities for all disciplines.

A) Optimise the international events calendar

1. Establish a working group to analyse the calendar of events and make recommendations for optimisation.
2. Adapt the Olympic Games qualification process to ensure that Continental Games can be selected as Olympic qualification events for LA2028 and beyond.
3. Review and strengthen the bidding and allocation process for events to ensure full continental representation.
4. Define results and ranking system requirements and streamline service providers to ensure a consistent experience for all elite paddle sport.
5. Develop a dedicated volunteer strategy to ensure that the value they bring to paddle sport is recognised.

B) Develop compelling virtual competitions

1. Formalise a set of rules for physical virtual sports competitions using kayak and canoe ergometers.
2. Work with industry experts to set standards for equipment to be used in international events and ensure fair competition.

3. Develop a long-term strategy for virtual physical sports with the aim of becoming part of the Olympic Virtual Series.

C) Develop a strategy for multi-sport Games for non-Olympic and Paralympic disciplines

1. Create comprehensive bid documents and supporting arguments to ensure a convincing case for the inclusion of paddle sport.
2. Use athletes and federations to support the bid.
3. Provide professional resources to develop a strategy and support the bid process with the relevant committee.

D) Develop guidelines to ensure best practise in event optimisation

1. Optimise event management systems (results, rankings, accreditation, ticket sales) to increase efficiency and standardise delivery.
2. Streamline communication channels and invest in effective marketing tools.
3. Develop sustainable event delivery policies and provide professional resources to support event organisers.



8. Generate revenue

Focus group: Broadcast & Revenue Generation Team

Develop a commercial strategy that drives investment and partnerships that generate revenue to invest in the growth of global paddle sport.

A) Grow the global audience through broadcast and digital engagement

1. Invest in a digital asset management system to facilitate the distribution and use of content and activate archive footage.
2. Increase focus on news distribution and ensure flexibility in production to adapt to broadcasting needs.
3. Consolidate media distribution plan and ownership to ensure effective distribution and that content used can be tracked across all media.

B) Maximise revenue opportunities through digital and broadcast channels

1. Increase broadcast distribution with dedicated professional resources.
2. Leverage Olympic and Paralympic preparations to increase sales of live products.
3. Protect the legitimate and commercial interests of ICF and its stakeholders.
4. Create a global overview of existing commercial and non-commercial opportunities for recreational paddle sport.

C) Modernise commercial offerings to create additional revenue streams and licencing opportunities

1. Define a monetisation strategy for live streaming.
2. Create opportunities for commercial advertising and promotion across all digital touchpoints.
3. Develop consistent licencing models for equipment providers.



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