

ANNEX 3 IPC MISSION PLAN

IPC Mission Plan – Update from IPC President BJ Worth

To refresh our collective memories... the IPC Mission Plan is a comprehensive plan designed to build a stronger IPC by developing its sporting disciplines into events which are attractive to the athletes, to the event organizers, to the public, to the media, and to sponsors – thereby increasing participation at IPC events, increasing public viewing of IPC events, and increasing income within the sport.

In the year since the Plenary approved the IPC Mission Plan, much progress has been made toward the implementation of its various elements, which are being developed for the future benefit of the IPC. Task Force Team Leaders have diligently pursued their targeted goals, and several will present specific proposals for the Plenary to consider. Reports will be made on the progress by the following Team Leaders.

IPC Ranking System: Team Leader Srecko Medven

If other sports can be seen as an example, a well-maintained ranking system will provide several benefits for the IPC. Athletes will have a greater interest in competing, event organizers will have a greater interest in conducting competitions, and the published ranking system should stimulate media interest in these events.

Srecko has developed the basic concept for a multi-tiered Ranking System for IPC disciplines – individual and team events (Annex 3B). Prior to the Plenary, samples of competitor rankings based on recent competitions should be presented on the IPC website. Delegates should become familiar with this Ranking System, and be prepared to vote on adopting it for the IPC. Input to Srecko is highly encouraged.

Event Synchronization: Team Leader Ronald Overdijk.

Ronald will identify certain areas where format synchronization would be helpful for the IPC events, and where progress has been made in these areas.

Mondial Concept and Format: Team Leader Patrice Girardin

The 2003 Mondial in Gap, France, will consist of the World Championships in all of the IPC's summer disciplines. Patrice, who will serve as the Organizer for this Mondial, is well experienced for this role, especially due to his recent efforts as Meet Director for the World Air Games in Spain. At the Plenary, Patrice will present the preparations to date on the Mondial.

News Media Plan: Team Leader Leanne Knowles

When the World Air Games resulted in no media exposure for the IPC, during what was supposed to be our finest event ever, the IPC Bureau decided to send Leanne to the World Games, as Media Liaison Officer. Prior to arriving in Akita, Leanne worked with news media veteran Karina Willerup (now, an advisor for the IPC News Media Team), and made a multitude of contacts with international media representatives.

In Akita, Leanne followed up on these contacts, learned the trade at the international media center, worked electronically with Thierry Montigneaux at FAI to upload daily news reports to the IPC website, and did everything required to make sure that still and video images of IPC competitors were provided to her news media contacts. Her efforts resulted in world-wide coverage of the IPC events in Akita on international TV news shows. Unfortunately, Leanne will not be at the Plenary, but she has submitted her report (Annex 4A). She has included several recommendations, and is open to comments, suggestions, and questions.

Organizational Structure for Future IPC Events: In 2000, the Plenary unanimously approved a new plan by which the IPC will serve as a general contractor to supply technical support to organizers of First Category events. It was agreed that this support structure start in 2003, but the organizers of the Mondial prefer to organize this event according to a more traditional structure – and are well capable of doing so.

Therefore, I now suggest that the IPC implement this new approved structure starting with the WPC's to be held in 2004. In order for an event organizer to be able to submit a bid for a 2004 WPC, it is necessary for the IPC to establish a list of responsibilities that the Organizers and the IPC would each provide. Prior to the Plenary, a draft of these responsibilities will be placed on the IPC website for the delegates to review.

Proposal 1: In order to avoid any confusion for the IPC or for potential event organizers, and to provide the IPC with enough time to fully develop this new structure, finalize these lists of responsibilities, and prepare an accurate budget for the IPC's responsibilities, I propose that no bids be awarded for hosting the 2004 WPC until the 2003 IPC Plenary.

IPC Technical System: There are five elements to the IPC Technical System, all of which will eventually work in synergy to record, score, present, and archive the performance of competitors at IPC events. Some of these elements could be put in place right away, while others still require technology to be developed before they can be implemented. Rather than waiting until all the technology is available to implement the complete Technical System at once, it seems logical that we develop the elements in practical phases, and continue to add to the system until it is complete and fully operational.

Prior to the Plenary, a chart will be placed on the IPC website outlining the current development status for the five Technical System elements, along with the projected completion time for each. The means and projected costs for developing and maintaining each element will be presented and discussed at the Plenary. Based on decisions at the Plenary, bids for selected elements will be solicited from potential contractors.

Event Development: I may be going out on a limb here, but I believe the IPC should consider introducing a new competition discipline, in a limited fashion, which could be very useful for attracting spectators. At the World Games, the spectators were the most thrilled with the swoop landings at the Opening Ceremonies, and when the freefall competitors were making their precision swoop landings.

There are many skilled canopy pilots today who are capable of conducting a fierce but safe competition while greatly entertaining the crowd. Canopy swooping over water has been conducted safely for many years. It could be a very exciting event at a World Air Games or World Games, if the event was by invitation only for the world's highest ranked pilots, and if it was conducted within practical safety margins. The event lends itself to individual and pairs flying, and has minimal weather restrictions. Food for thought.

Development Working Group

When Odd Heimstad resigned as Chair of the Development Working Group in 2000, the IPC agreed that this working group should be temporarily suspended, and that its duties be absorbed by the Mission Plan Task Force. In the spirit of the IPC Development Working Group... and in consideration of recent re-structuring at the FAI level... I have proposed some changes to the IPC Internal Regulations in a few key areas. Following these proposals, other items regarding the IPC's future development are presented for discussion.

IPC IOC Liaison: FAI President Wolfgang Weinreich is establishing an FAI World Games Coordinating Committee to address all Olympic-related activities, and will appoint Roland Hilfiker to serve as its Chair. The FAI President will also appoint a representative to this new World Games Coordinating Committee from each of the three Air Sport Commissions which qualify for Olympic participation. This being the case, it doesn't seem necessary to retain the position of "IOC Liaison" at the IPC level.

Proposal 2: Therefore, I propose that we eliminate the position of IPC IOC Liaison, and delete any reference to this position in all IPC documents.

World Games: The IPC should, however, be directly involved in the technical aspects of the IPC events taking place at the World Games. This would include selecting the specific IPC events to be included in each World Games, establishing any deviations to the competition rules for these events, coordinating the conduct of these events on-site, and selecting the IPC athletes who will participate in each World Games.

Proposal 3: I propose that this be accomplished by expanding the WAG Working Group to become the WAG / World Games Working Group, and that the same persons be responsible for fulfilling the above-mentioned World Games functions, in addition to their WAG responsibilities. A World Games Liaison Officer should also be appointed to serve in a similar capacity as the WAG Liaison Officer.

Media Liaison Officer: Because the use of a Media Liaison Officer proved to be so successful at the World Games, I recommend that the role of the MLO be expanded to include media involvement for all high profile IPC events, including WAG's, World Games, Mondials, World Championships, and other First Category events. I also recommend that the IPC's involvement with both media outlets (news media and TV production) be brought into closer harmony at all IPC events.

Proposal 4: I propose that the responsibilities of the Media Liaison Officer (or designee) include, but not be limited to, interfacing with the news media team of First Category event organizers, writing and distributing news media releases, and providing still and video images to the news media representatives on behalf of the IPC. Although the MLO would primarily focus on news media exposure, he/she would also collaborate directly with each FAI / IPC / Organizer-approved TV production company on site – and be the key link between the IPC's Image Handling team (an element of the IPC Technical System) and the TV production companies, to coordinate the production companies' access to digital video images of the competition performances by the IPC athletes in freefall.

If Proposals 2, 3, and 4 are approved, there must be specific changes made to the IPC's Internal Regulations. These changes are specified in Annex 3A.

Athlete Profiles: Currently, the IPC has a huge archive of athlete profiles – most of which are documents filled-in by hand, which are being stored at FAI Headquarters – and not being used for their intended purpose. The FAI's Thierry Montigneaux is working with the Air Sport Commissions to find a means by which future profiles can be submitted on-line, and be automatically entered into the FAI database.

Technical Dilemma: When the IPC's competition committees and Judging Committee were originally formed, their primary function was a technical one: Write the rules, and improve the rules for their specific disciplines or judging responsibilities. Now, a great deal of their committee work seems to be concerned with non-technical topics, such as selecting event organizers, dealing with media rights, or debating the size of judging panels, numbers of rounds per competition, sanction fees, etc.

It might be more effective if the IPC had one committee or working group which addressed all such philosophical, administrative, business, and political matters – and let the competition and judging committees focus on their primary responsibility of writing the perfect set of rules for their respective communities of athletes and judges. Some of these responsibilities might be appropriate for the Event Synchronization Team. Maybe a resurrected Development Working Group could do this work. Certainly, the Bureau could address some of these topics. I do not have any specific proposals, but thought it would be important to address this issue, and see if there is a consensus of opinions among the Delegates.

IPC Controller for Judging: This new position (performed very well by Brenda Reid) was so effective during the WAG-2, that the FAI Judges in Granada recommended that this position be maintained for future IPC multi-discipline First Category events. Does the IPC want to formally establish an official position in this regard? If so, it should probably be addressed by the Plenary, so the Organizer of the Mondial can be prepared to support this position. This is a prime example of the preceding topic. This is an administrative position, but it should be filled by a top Judge – per a recommendation from the Judging Committee.

Transportation and Accommodation at WPC's: A large portion of the entry fees for a First Category event goes toward accommodation and local transportation. After spending this money in high entry fees, participants are often at the mercy of bus schedules, which can add many hours and fatigue on a competition day. Should the Sporting Code allow / require event organizers to submit bids which do not include these services? This topic is also being debated among several Air Sport Commissions, and by the WAGCC.

As the IPC re-structures the responsibilities for event organization (with the Mission Plan), it is probably a good time to address this important issue. A common thought among IPC competitors and delegation officials seems to be that event organizers should give the participants the option of full service or partial service, and concentrate their efforts on the operations of the events. This will be discussed at the Plenary.

Representative Jury vs Appointed Jury: It is not uncommon for IPC Juries to make decisions which appear to conflict with the black and white print in the Sporting Code and the Competition Rules. Most other Air Sport Commissions use an appointed Jury – usually consisting of three highly respected persons. The IPC may want to consider this as a means to allow its Jury decisions to be less emotional and political.

Judges' Travel Expenses – Who should pay?: This potentially hot topic was raised a few years ago, and a plan was proposed at that time, but it was not thought out thoroughly, and was eventually abandoned. At this time, I am not making any specific proposals or suggesting any final solutions for this dilemma, but I do think this topic merits forthright discussion, if the IPC is to maintain a high caliber of judges.

There is a basic fact, and an underlying problem, surrounding this issue. The fact is that monies for judges' travel will come from the competitors, aero-clubs, or judges – one way or another, no matter who collects the money. The problem is that not all the competitors equally share in the expenses for providing equal judging services to all competitors. Delegations providing multiple judges are paying more than their fair share for judging services, and delegations who provide no judges, are paying less than their fair share.

If each delegation provided one highly-qualified judge, this problem would not exist. (This is the current situation for the freefall videographers... but because each team needs one, the need to find the monies for the camera-flyers has never been a problem – politically.) With this scenario, every delegation would be paying approximately the same amount, and the judging panels would be filled with excellent judges.

Such a scenario, however, is a fairytale. The fairest solution would be to take the sum of all travel expenses for the judges, and divide by the number of competitors being judged, and have each competitor pay that amount. This is not practical, however, since it's not possible to assess (and collect) a fee after the fact.

But, there may be a practical solution. With a little research, it could be easy to determine the approximate cost of travel expenses that the judges paid during the last few First Category events. (It would be in the judges' best interest to make this information available.) The number of competitors (including alternates, but not delegation officials) could also be determined fairly easily from the results. With a little basic math, the cost of judging events (\$/competitor) for each of the disciplines could be determined for Europe, North America, Australia and Asia. My rough guess is that this fee is less than US\$ 100 per competitor.

If a "judging surcharge" were built into the competitors' entry fees, and each judge was reimbursed for the cost of the least expensive travel method to the venue, the total cost per delegation would be about the same as it is now – if the delegation is providing one judge. For those delegations providing multiple judges, their total costs would be reduced, and for those not providing a judge, their costs would be increased.

Since the IPC is in the process of restructuring the entry fee structure for IPC events, along with the organizer/IPC responsibilities, it would not be that difficult to set up a system to collect fees and reimburse expenses for judges' travel through the IPC. (The IPC is probably going to be contracting the services of an event administrator as it is now.) If this policy were to be adopted, I recommend keeping the financing of the judges' travel costs as a stand-alone entity until a proven formula could be developed.

If all parties wanted to try to find a solution to this ongoing problem, and were willing to be flexible for the first few events, I feel sure a practical and equitable solution could be found that is satisfactory to all.

Conclusion: The Mission Plan is moving forward on several fronts. The sponsors are not knocking on our doors yet, but we are moving in a direction that will make this much more likely in the not-so-distant future.

I encourage all delegates to review the proposals of the Mission Plan, to attend the Open Meeting of the Mission Plan Task Force, and to contribute actively to the future development of the IPC.

BJ Worth
IPC President