Ice sledge hockey originated during the 1960s when a group of people at a rehabilitation centre in Stockholm, Sweden, started to continue playing hockey despite their impairments. The sport quickly caught on, and by 1980, the city had a five-team league. The game then reached Norway, Great Britain, Canada and Estonia. Since its inception at the Paralympic Winter Games in 1994 the sport has spread widely across Europe, North America and Asia. Ice sledge hockey is played by athletes who have a physical impairment in the lower halves of their bodies. It follows the rules of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) with modifications. Instead of skates, players use double-blade sledges that allow the puck to pass beneath them, and they use two sticks that have spike-ends for pushing and shooting.

Ice sledge hockey made its Paralympic debut at the Lillehammer 1994 Games with five teams and 57 athletes and has quickly become one of the biggest attractions for spectators on the winter sports programme in all Games editions ever since. Much of this can be credited to improvements in both the quality and quantity of the resources required for the sport. Whilst already six nations with 88 athletes took part in the Paralympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City 2002, the sport has constantly grown over the years to eight teams and 117 athletes in Vancouver 2010.

IPC Ice Sledge Hockey is starting to cultivate a close working relationship with its Olympic counterpart IIHF. A memorandum of understanding between the two organisations is currently under discussion with the aim to sign an agreement by the end of 2014. This agreement outlines various areas of co-operation, such as development of emerging countries and their programmes, development of players and coaches, and sharing of best practices in areas of marketing, sponsorship and broadcasting. Many of the member nations already maintain close working relationships or are directly managed and funded by the national ice hockey federations.

VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

The sport

Ice sledge hockey is governed by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) through the IPC Ice Sledge Hockey Technical Committee as the International Federation (IF) and represents one of nine IPC sports under the umbrella of the IPC. IPC Ice Sledge Hockey developed this Strategic Plan as a sport-specific extension of the overall IPC Strategic Plan 2011-2014 and in line with the mandate of the IPC General Assembly to further strengthen the development of the IPC sports with the aim of making them self-sustainable. This strategic plan has been developed in parallel with the strategic plans of all other IPC sports following a common framework and recognising their commonalities and combined strengths, while it also carves out the sport specific long-term strategies and objectives.

The common elements which emerged from the integrated development process are described in detail in the overarching document “Overall IPC Strategic Plan on IPC-sports.” This present “Ice Sledge Hockey Strategic Plan” is an excerpt of the overall plan focusing specifically on the priorities in the area of ice sledge hockey thus taking into account its specificities and current stage of development. It has been written in a way to be a comprehensive and self-contained document in its own right.

The vision, mission and values

The strategic plan development process reviewed common and a common understanding about the vision, mission and values of the nine IPC-sports. It is also considered important to have one common reference to guide and strengthen the sports collectively. Hence here below you find the vision, mission and values applicable to all IPC sports while putting this into the context of ice sledge hockey.

Vision

- Equitable & Accessible
- Professional & Ethical
- Ethical & Accountable
- Engaging & Inclusive

Mission

To have one common reference to guide and strengthen the values of the nine IPC sports. It is also considered important and a common understanding about the vision, mission and values.

Values

- Inclusive & Accessible
- Professional & Ethical
- Ethical & Accountable
- Engaging & Inclusive

In the context of ice sledge hockey this means to develop a sustainable ice sledge hockey sport system, nationally and internationally, with successful IPC Ice Sledge Hockey competitions, and to encourage, promote and contribute to the development of IPC Ice Sledge Hockey at all levels. To promote the inclusion of ice sledge hockey as an integral part of the national handwriting federations, where appropriate, and ultimately gain self-sustainability.

Context and planning process

A plan of IPC Ice Sledge Hockey for the period 2013-2018

Key

- Strategic Plan
- IPC-ISH
- Club
- League
- National
- Continental
- World
- Paralympic

Strategic Plan 'Ice Sledge Hockey'

Internal Paralympic Committee

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IPC Ice Sledge Hockey

PRESIDENT

Executive Board Members

Advisory Committee

Vision
- Equitable & Accessible
- Professional & Ethical
- Ethical & Accountable
- Engaging & Inclusive

Mission
- Inclusive & Accessible
- Professional & Ethical
- Ethical & Accountable
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Context and planning process

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1. Paralympic Games and World Championships

Strategic priorities:
- Increase organised, IPC sanctioned play among A-Pool and B-Pool teams throughout each winter season in 2015.
- Ensure the highest quality competition and officiating at friendly matches between countries, European and Pan-Pacific Championships, World Championships and Paralympic Winter Games.
- Begin preparation for the development and implementation of a Women’s World Championships prior to the 2018 Paralympic Winter Games.
- Develop regular communication and technical reviews with the event organizers in order to promote management, presentation and improvement of the sports level of excellence.

Objectives / Outcomes:
- Each nation strives to play between 20-30 international games per season at A-Pool level and 12-20 international games per season at B-Pool level.
- High quality World Championships in A-Pool with eight teams and B-Pool with four teams in 2015 and future seasons at A-Pool level and 12-20 international games per season at B-Pool level.
- High quality World Championships for B-Pool teams in 2015 and future seasons.
- Receive and review multiple high quality competitive bids for World Championships and Qualification events.
- Increase female participation with the objective to hold a major Women’s Championships in 2019.

2. Athlete Development

Strategic priorities:
- Promote the development of increased season-long play at the national level in Europe, North America and Asia.
- Promote the development of season-long play at the club level throughout existing national leagues throughout Europe, North America and Asia.
- Increase the number of practices routine that the sport of ice sledge hockey focuses on Europe and Asia.
- Expand the Grassroots programme in Europe and Asia.
- Enhance communication with key monitoring and sponsorship partners to contribute to the funding and development of Ice Sledge Hockey. Increase funding opportunities with existing IPC partners.
- Utilise the Ice Hockey communication platforms which includes sport website, Facebook and Twitter to support Ice Sledge Hockey.
- Utilise the current communication platforms and communicate through new channels that raise the profile of the sport to a wider, global audience.
- Continue development of a commercial strategy to support national teams, member clubs and leagues in co-operation with the IPC media department.
- Support athletes with access to affordable sports equipment/ sledges through the Ottobock equipment loaner programme.
- Promote initiatives to provide for educational resources and programmes to National/Paralympic Committee (NPC) for coaches, players, officials and classifiers.

Objectives / Outcomes:
- More opportunities for athletes to experience international competition including increased classification opportunities.
- Establish classification that is supported by sports and scientific evidence.
- Better tracking of results and thus opportunities to recognize achievements based upon performance and accomplishments.
- A standardized platform will provide an increased ability to monitor competition and regulate rosters and administer discipline.
- Increased visibility and promotion of participating athletes and teams through the IPC communication platforms.
- Inclusion of four nations in Europe and Asia involved in the development of the sport in two countries that are not participating at World Championship level.
- Assess opportunities and test new competition formats for youth and development camp in 2015 and a Junior World Cup in 2016.

3. Paralympic Brand

Strategic priorities:
- Ensure visibility of the IPC Ice Sledge Hockey brand at all IPC major events and in the media / TV.
- Ensure TV broadcast and web streaming agreements and in-depth coverage for the major / TV.
- Utilise the Ice Hockey communication platforms which includes sport website, Facebook and Twitter to support Ice Sledge Hockey.
- Utilise the current communication platforms and create new platforms that raise the profile of the sport to a wider, global audience.
- Continue development of a commercial strategy to support national teams, member clubs and leagues in co-operation with the IPC media department.
- Support athletes with access to affordable sports equipment/ sledges through the Ottobock equipment loaner programme.
- Promote initiatives to provide for educational resources and programmes to National/Paralympic Committee (NPC) for coaches, players, officials and classifiers.

Objectives / Outcomes:
- Secure an Ice Sledge hockey specific sponsor by 2018.
- Raise EUR 5,000 in donor contributions by 2016.
- Increase the capacity of supervision of officials throughout the season.

4. Funding

Strategic priorities:
- Signs agreements with key marketing and sponsorship partners to contribute to the funding and development of Ice Sledge Hockey. Increase funding opportunities with existing IPC partners.
- Develop an Ice Sledge Hockey Marketing and Sales Plan following the IIHF model for uniform and in-arena advertising.
- Create a major distributor opportunity for high-health individuals or private or corporate foundations to make donations in support of Ice Sledge Hockey.

Objectives / Outcomes:
- Secure an Ice Sledge hockey specific sponsor by 2018.
- Raise EUR 5,000 in donor contributions by 2016.
- Increase the capacity of supervision of officials throughout the season.
- Increased level of officiating at inter-country exhibition games.
- Enhanced working relationships with all parties involved in the development of the sport including increased classification opportunities.
- Continue dialogue with the IIHF on the concepts and areas of cooperation.
- Enhance educational opportunities within the sport of Ice Sledge Hockey.
- Continue work towards sharing staff resources collaboratively with the IIHF.
- Create a brand development section in IPC Ice Sledge Hockey.
- Increase visibility of ice sledge hockey competitions and its high-profile athletes.
- Create educational opportunities for youth and junior athletes.
- Increase the pool of highly qualified officials to select from for World Championships and World Cups.
- Increase the capacity of supervision of officials throughout the season.
- Continue the consistency of coaching methods for officials and rule interpretations.
- Enhance the communication with key Ice Sledge Hockey communities such as with athletes, coaches and officials.
- Continue to gain the support of politicians and key decision makers.
- Support athletes with access to affordable sports equipment/ sledges through the Ottobock equipment loaner programme.
- Promote initiatives to provide for educational resources and programmes to National/Paralympic Committee (NPC) for coaches, players, officials and classifiers.
- Enhance the visibility of Ice Sledge hockey as an integral part of the national hockey federations where appropriate.