

Context and planning process

The sports of biathlon and cross-country skiing are governed by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) through the IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing Technical Committee as the International Federation (IF) and represent two of nine IPC sports under the umbrella of the IPC. IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing have developed this Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing 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 sports specific long-term strategies and objectives.

The common elements which emerged from the integrated development process are described in more detail in the

Vision, mission and values

The strategic plan development process revealed consensus 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 biathlon and cross-country skiing.

In the context of biathlon and cross-country skiing this means to develop a sustainable biathlon and cross-country skiing sport system, nationally and internationally with successful biathlon and cross-country skiing competitions, and to encourage, promote and contribute to the development of biathlon and cross-country skiing at all levels. To promote the sports of biathlon and cross-country skiing to all eligible athletes.

Mission
Organise successful competitions as part of a stable calendar while encouraging participation and development at all levels and promoting the core values of the Paralympic Movement

Vision

Provide a platform for para-athletes to regularly practice and to showcase their ability to their full potential and to reach their sporting pinnacle and dreams

Athlete centred

Equitable & Fair play

Transparent & Accountable

Collaborative & Engaging

Professional & Ethical

Values



overarching document "Overall IPC Strategic Plan on IPC Sports." This present Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing Strategic Plan is an excerpt of the overall plan focussing specifically on the priorities in the area of biathlon and cross-country skiing thus taking into account their 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 sports

Biathlon

Biathlon was introduced in Innsbruck in 1988 for athletes with a physical impairment, and in 1992, athletes with a visual impairment also became eligible to compete.

The events consist of a 2.0km or 2.5km course skied three or five times in the free technique for a total race distance between 6-15 km. Between the ski loops athletes shoot at five targets located at a distance of 10m. The most important success factor lies in the capability of alternating the skills of physical endurance and shooting accuracy during the competition. Athletes with visual impairment are able to aim assisted by acoustic signals, which depending on signal intensity, indicate when the athlete is on target. Since 1988 the sport has grown rapidly from 36 athletes in Innsbruck to more than 120 athletes in Sochi in 2014.

Biathlon is in the beginning to cultivate a working relationship with its Olympic counterpart IBU (International Biathlon Union). The scope of the relationship between the two organisations will outline various areas of co-operation, such as development of emerging countries and their programmes, development of athletes and coaches, and sharing of best practices in areas of marketing, sponsorship and broadcasting.

Many of the member nations already currently have close working relationships or are directly managed and funded by the relevant national federations.

Cross-country skiing

Cross-country skiing first appeared at the 1976 Paralympic Winter Games in Örnsköldsvik, Sweden. The competition is open to athletes with a physical impairment and visual impairment. Depending on the impairment, a competitor may use a sit-ski, a chair equipped with a pair of skis. Athletes with visual impairment compete in the event with a sighted guide. Male and female athletes compete in sprint, middle distance and long distance (ranging from 1km to 20km) or participate in a team relay using classical or free techniques. Cross-country skiing is practised by athletes in 24 countries. The Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games count more than 150 competing athletes, compared to 125 at the first Paralympic Winter Games in 1976.

Cross-country skiing enjoys a close working relationship with its Olympic counterpart FIS (International Skiing Federation). An agreement signed in 2011 outlines various areas of co-operation, such as sport rules, training of technical officials and sharing and exchanging knowledge and resources.



International Paralympic Committee

Adenauerallee 212-214
53113 Bonn, Germany

Tel. +49 228 2097-200
Fax +49 228 2097-209

ipcnordicskiing@paralympic.org
www.ipc-nordicskiing.org

@IPCNordic
/IPCNordicSkiing



International Paralympic Committee

Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing Strategic Plan

A plan of IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing for the period 2013-2018



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Paralympic Games and World Championships

Strategic priorities

- Ensure that the 2014 and 2018 Paralympic Winter Games and 2015 and 2017 IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing World Championships event programme is attractive to athletes and National Paralympic Committees (NPCs), as well as to the public and television audiences.
- Implement an athlete qualification system that ensures a) viability of all events, b) participation of top-ranked athletes, d) representative participation of all genders and impairments from around the globe.
- Ensure regular communication and technical reviews with the event organisers in order to promote management, presentation and officiating of the sports at the expected level of excellence.

Objectives/outcomes

- Build a programme for the above mentioned competitions which features highly competitive events which appeal to spectators and media with reasonable session lengths to promote ticket sales and television viewing.
- Increase the percentage of female participants to at least 35 per cent. Establish further athlete quotas and qualification principles at least two years prior to the competitions.
- Conduct at least three technical visits to the host cities and establish a routine to finalise the sports technical agreements with the organisers no later than 10 months prior to the start of the competition.



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Athlete Development

Strategic priorities

- Produce a long term competition schedule (for four years in advance) structure with a well-balanced worldwide spread of World Cups for top athletes, with quality assurance through IPC competition management support.
- Produce a long term competition schedule (for four years in advance) regionally structured and including Europa Cups/Continental Cups (North America, Asia and Southern Hemisphere).
- Promote and support low level competition IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing races/National championship competition and youth competition circuit.
- Increase the number of nations practising the sport of biathlon and cross-country skiing with focus on East Europe, Asia and South America.
- Conduct classification and education on at least one occasion in each region annually.
- Provide knowledge and education resources and programmes to NPCs for coaches, technical officials and classifiers.

Objectives/outcomes

- Stable competition schedule with at least six World Cups, four Europa Cups and six Continental Cups.
- More IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing competition opportunities for athletes to develop and experience international competition.
- Increased visibility and promotion of participating athletes and teams through the IPC communication platforms.
- Enable athletes of all regions to follow their own career and qualification path in order to reach elite competitions or the Paralympic Games through own achievements thus reducing wildcard needs.
- Establish a fair classification system which is supported by sports and scientific evidence.
- Increase the number of female athletes engaging in IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing by promoting opportunities for girls and women. Aim for a 35 per cent female representation among licensed athletes and at major competitions.

3

Paralympic Brand

Strategic priorities

- Organise an integrated elite competition structure starting in season 2014/2015 showcasing to a global audience the performances and abilities of the world's leading cross-country skiing and biathlon athletes in a prime environment.
- Ensure broadcast agreements and in-depth coverage for all major championships.
- Create communication platforms that raise the profile of leading athletes to a wide, global audience
- Create a brand development section in the biathlon/cross-country skiing marketing plan with targets for further reach.
- Engage other partners who can carry the brand message for biathlon and cross-country skiing, such as marketing partners, the Olympic IF or its competitions and with National Federations.
- Ensure visibility of the cross-country skiing and biathlon brand at all IPC major events such as Europa & Continental Cup, World Championships and Paralympic Winter Games.
- Utilise the IPC communications platforms which includes sport websites, Facebook and Twitter to support IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing.

Objectives/outcomes

- Create competition/event highlights in between Paralympic Winter Games and World Championships to engage the world's media in biathlon and cross-country skiing.
- Increase visibility of biathlon and cross-country skiing competitions and its high-profile athletes in order to allow for continuity and for fans to follow the sport on an on-going basis.
- Promote brand with national skiing and biathlon federations.
- Reach consistent application of brand and terminology with good understanding of commercial rights and implications.
- Measure brand visibility against initial plans. Establish a set of objective criteria to be determined.

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Funding

Strategic priorities

- Develop a biathlon and cross-country skiing marketing and sales plan outlining clear revenue targets. Carve out new sponsorship packages building on the World Championship and World Cup competitions concept.
- Sign agreements with key marketing & sponsorship partners to contribute to the funding and development of IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing. Increase funding opportunities with existing IPC partners.
- Use broadcast visibility and guarantee to further promote sponsorship and advertising sales.
- Invest additional IPC general funds in biathlon and cross-country skiing beginning in season 2013/2014 to get World Cup competition off the ground and to ensure quality management of programs and priorities.
- Use available resources from corporate sponsors, major donors, the Agitos Foundation, broadcasting and general membership to support the IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing priorities.

Objectives/outcomes

- Secure at least one biathlon and cross-country skiing specific sponsor by 2016.
- Secure appropriate sponsorship for the World Cup competition structure by 2016.
- Increase overall IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing revenues by at least 30 per cent until 2017 mainly through additional sponsors and other innovative partnerships.

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Organisational Capacity

Strategic priorities

- Provide quality service and support to World Championship and World Cups competitions. Enhanced focus by biathlon and cross-country skiing in the development of Eastern Europe, Asia and Sothern Hemisphere.
- Provide on-going support to existing classifiers while mapping out the identification of new classifiers to establish the optimal level by spring 2015. Proactively determine needs and pursue appropriate recruitment and training for classifiers.
- Cultivate a volunteer network across all regions through education; include programmes for technical officials, classifiers, competition manager, and committee contributors.
- Continue development and activation of the newly established IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing Coaches Advisory Group.
- Set up a sport-specific equipment expert group to implement and endorse the IPC Equipment Rules.
- Foster engagement with biathlon and cross-country skiing communities through social media and web forums.
- Define strategy of sharing staff resources collaboratively with other IPC sports to increase efficiency.
- Increase number of qualified technical delegates.
- Development and distribution of LOC manuals and best practices guides to future organising committees.

Objectives/outcomes

- Establish standard competitions levels with a consistent definition of IPC involvement.
- Establish a pool of highly qualified classifiers and a network of other volunteers in accordance with the competition and athlete development plans previously outlined.
- Reach a fair gender balance and regional spread with sufficient numbers of classifiers and officials.
- Increase the capacity of supervision of officials throughout the season.
- Increase consistency of teaching methods and rule interpretations.
- Enhance communication with key biathlon and cross-country skiing communities such as athletes, coaches, officials and other organisational partners.

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Strategic Partnerships

Strategic priorities

- Build on the concepts and areas of collaboration outlined in the working agreement with the FIS by leveraging all opportunities in detailed follow-up and project work.
- Continue dialogue with the IBU on the concepts and areas of collaboration in order to facilitate signature of agreement/memorandum of understanding.
- Develop key partnerships with NPCs and NFs to ensure regional delivery of this Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing Strategic plan
- Use the Sport Technical Committee where appropriate to engage with partners where required to deliver development opportunities for biathlon and cross-country skiing.
- Partner with the Agitos Foundation as well as with appropriate external institutions/universities/NGOs to strengthen development of IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing.
- Leverage expertise and resources of partners such as NPCs, LOCs and host cities in the staging of major competitions.

Objectives/outcomes

- Ensure that by 2019 IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing bid books are supported within the FIS/IBU bid documents.
- Enhance relationship to ensure that biathlon and cross-country skiing has a presence on the FIS/IBU website.
- Develop relationship to ensure IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing and FIS/IBU Technical officials' education.
- Enhanced working relationships with all parties involved in staging major competitions and use of synergies and efficiencies in budgets and resources.

