The context of biathlon and cross-country skiing is 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 the nine sports under the umbrella of the IPC. The IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing have developed the Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing Strategic Plan in a sport-specific translation of the overall IPC Strategic Plan 2013–2014 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 IPC sports with the aim of making them self-sustainable and strengthening the sports collectively. Hence here below the vision, mission and values applicable 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 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 focusing specifically on the priorities in the area of biathlon and cross-country skiing thus taking into account that sports’ 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 2013, 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 with the free technique for a total race distance between 0.6 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, sponsor-ship and broadcasting.

Many of the member nations already currently have close working relationships or are directly managed and funded by their national federations. The inclusive nature of biathlon and cross-country skiing at all levels. To promote the sports of biathlon and cross-country skiing to all eligible athletes.

Cross-country skiing

Cross-country skiing first appeared at the 1976 Paralympic Winter Games in Innsbruck, 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 technique. Cross-country skiing is practised by athletes in 24 countries. The Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games counted more than 150 competing athletes, compared to 126 at the first Paralympic Winter Games in 1976.

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

Context and planning process

The strategic plan development process revealed common and a common understanding about the sports, mission and values of the nine IPC sports. It is also considered important to have one common reference point and strengths 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.

Vision, mission and values

The strategic planning process revealed common and a common understanding about the sports, mission and values of the nine IPC sports. It is also considered important to have one common reference point 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.

Vision

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 the biathlon and cross-country skiing at all levels. To promote the sports of biathlon and cross-country skiing to all eligible athletes.

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 the biathlon and cross-country skiing at all levels. To promote the sports of biathlon and cross-country skiing to all eligible athletes.

Mission

Organise competitions as part of a global calendar of events and to reach their full potential and dreams.

Provide a platform for para-athletes to regularly practice and improve their 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.

The overall aim of the Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing Strategic Plan is 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.
**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 programmes attract to athletes and National Paralympic Committees (NPCs), as well as to the public and television audiences.
- Implement an athlete support system that ensures visibility of all events, promotes the participation of top-ranked athletes, and representative participation of all genders and impairments from around the globe.
- Ensure regular communication and technical reviews with the world organisations in order to promote management, presentation and communication of the sports at the highest level of excellence.

**Objectives/outcomes**
- Build a programme for the above mentioned competitions which features highly competitive events which appeal to spectators and media.
- Increase the number of licence athletes to at least 75 per cent.
- Organise an integrated athlete competition schedule featuring major competitions, including European Cup/Continental Cups, North America, South America and Asia.
- Ensure that the total number of competition visits to the athletes increases among licensed athletes and at major competitions.

**Paralympic Brand**

**Strategic priorities**
- Develop an integrated and cross-country skiing marketing and sales plan outlining clear revenue targets. Curve out new sponsorship packages building on the World Championship and World Cup competition 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 partners.
- Use broadcast visibility and guarantee to further promote sponsors and sales initiatives.

**Objectives/outcomes**
- Secure at least one biathlon and cross-country skiing specific sponsorship agreement.
- Ensure sufficient and world wide visibility of IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing.

**Strategic Partnerships**

**Strategic priorities**
- Provide quality support and service to World Championship and Paralympic Winter Games. Enhanced focus by biathlon and cross-country skiing in the development of European Events, Asia and Soviets and Heritage.
- Provide on-going support to existing classifiers as well as to map the regional development and use of classifiers.
- Establish a routine to finalise the sports technical agreements and classifications.
- Use the Sport Technical Committee where appropriate to develop key partnerships with NPCs and NFs to ensure regional competition management support.
- Enhance the visibility of biathlon and cross-country skiing with focus on East Europe, Asia and the Southern Hemisphere.

**Objectives/outcomes**
- Establish a fair classification system which is supported by athletes and other volunteers in accordance with the competition and athletes.
- Develop an integrated athlete classification system for the Games and use of synergies and alliances between IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing has a presence on the FIS/IBU website.
- Enhance the visibility of events at major competitions and use of synergies and alliances in budgets and resources.

**Organisational Capacity**

**Strategic priorities**
- Provide knowledge and education resources and programmes to NPCs, for coaches, technical officials and classifiers.
- Sign agreements with key marketing & sponsorship partners to contribute to the funding and development of IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing.
- Use broadcast visibility and guarantee to further promote sponsors and sales initiatives.
- Secure at least one biathlon and cross-country skiing specific sponsorship agreement.
- Ensure sufficient and world wide visibility of IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing.

**Objectives/outcomes**
- Establish standard competitions with a consistent definition of classification.
- Establish a pool of highly qualified classifiers and a network of other partners in accordance with the competition and athlete development plans previously outlined.
- Reach a 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 training methods and role interpretations.
- Enhance communication with key classifiers and cross-country skiing officials, coaches, and national organisations.

**1. Paralympic Games and World Championships**
- Strategic priorities
  - Ensure that the 2014 and 2016 Paralympic Winter Games and 2015 and 2018 IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing World Championships event programmes attract to athletes and National Paralympic Committees (NPCs), as well as to the public and television audiences.
  - Implement an athlete support system that ensures visibility of all events, promotes the participation of top-ranked athletes, and representative participation of all genders and impairments from around the globe.
- Objectives/outcomes
  - Build a programme for the above mentioned competitions which features highly competitive events which appeal to spectators and media.
  - Increase the number of licence athletes to at least 75 per cent.
  - Organise an integrated athlete competition schedule featuring major competitions, including European Cup/Continental Cups, North America, South America and Asia.
  - Ensure that the total number of competition visits to the athletes increases among licensed athletes and at major competitions.

**2. Athlete Development**
- Strategic priorities
  - Produce a long term competition schedule for four years in advanced 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 advanced regional structure and including Europe Cup/Continental Cups (North America, South Asia and Southern Hemisphere).
- Objectives/outcomes
  - Establish a fair classification system which is supported by athletes and other volunteers in accordance with the competition and athletes.
  - Develop an integrated athlete classification system for the Games and use of synergies and alliances between IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing has a presence on the FIS/IBU website.

**3. Paralympic Brand**
- Strategic priorities
  - Organise an integrated athlete competition schedule starting in season 2014/2015 showcasing to a global audience the performances and adds 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 global audience.
- Objectives/outcomes
  - Create a brand development section in the biathlon/cross-country skiing marketing with plans for further growth.
  - Engage other partners who can carry the brand message for biathlon and cross-country skiing, such as marketing partners, the Olympic IFs or its federations and with National Federations.
  - Ensure visibility of the cross-country skiing and biathlon brands at IPC major events such as European Cups, World Championships, Paralympic Winter Games.

**4. Funding**
- Strategic priorities
  - Develop an integrated and cross-country skiing marketing and sales plan outlining clear revenue targets. Curve out new sponsorship packages building on the World Championship and World Cup competition 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 partners.
  - Use broadcast visibility and guarantee to further promote sponsors and sales initiatives.
- Objectives/outcomes
  - Secure at least one biathlon and cross-country skiing specific sponsorship agreement.
  - Ensure sufficient and world wide visibility of IPC Biathlon and IPC Cross-Country Skiing.
  - Establish standard competitions with a consistent definition of classification.
  - Establish a pool of highly qualified classifiers and a network of other partners in accordance with the competition and athletes.

**5. Organisational Capacity**
- Strategic priorities
  - Provide quality support and service to World Championship and Paralympic Winter Games. Enhanced focus by biathlon and cross-country skiing in the development of European Events, Asia and Soviets and Heritage.
  - Provide on-going support to existing classifiers as well as to map the regional development and use of classifiers.
  - Establish a routine to finalise the sports technical agreements and classifications.
  - Use the Sport Technical Committee where appropriate to develop key partnerships with NPCs and NFs to ensure regional competition management support.
- Objectives/outcomes
  - Enhance the visibility of events at major competitions and use of synergies and alliances in budgets and resources.

**6. Strategic Partnerships**
- Strategic priorities
  - Build on the concepts and areas of collaboration outlined in the working agreement for the delivery of all opportunities in detailed follow-up and project work.
  - Continue dialogue with the NPCs on the concepts and areas of collaboration in order to facilitate signature of agreement/ framework memorandum of understanding.
  - Develop key partnerships with NPCs and IFs to ensure regional delivery of the Biathlon and Cross-Country Skiing Strategy plan.
  - Use the Sport Technical Committee where appropriate to partner with those partners who respond to deliver development opportunities for biathlon and cross-country skiing.
  - Support with the Athletes Foundation as well as appropriate external organisations/nations/NGOs to strengthen development initiatives.
  - Leverage expertise and resources of partners such as NPCs, LOCs and host cities in the staging of major competitions.
- Objectives/outcomes
  - Establish a standard competitions with a consistent definition of classification.
  - Establish a pool of highly qualified classifiers and a network of other partners in accordance with the competition and athlete development plans previously outlined.
  - Reach a 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 training methods and role interpretations.
  - Enhance communication with key classifiers and cross-country skiing officials, coaches, and national organisations.

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