

## The ICF Secretary General's Report BoD Meeting, Cape Town, South Africa 2015

### **Olympic Qualification System**

The two Olympic Qualification events at the World Championships were both held in the summer of 2015. Both events had extensive media coverage and interest.

For Canoe Sprint Qualification the ICF has been challenged in the Court of Arbitration (CAS) by the Italian and British canoe federations and National Olympic Committees. The complaint is based on the ICF's interpretation of the reallocation of double up athletes.

The CAS case has involved a redirection of human resources from normal ICF activities and financially the cost will be significant for the ICF even if the case is won.

The legal arguments are ongoing so deadlines are not confirmed at this time. The ICF was given a 40 days extension by CAS to present its arguments meaning the CAS panel will be ready to hear the case sometime in 2016.

The continental qualifications have started and the ICF Headquarters has given information to all Continental Associations on who and which athletes can compete in the qualifiers.

### **Financial Situation**

As discussed at the last Board meeting, the CHF to Euro exchange rate was likely to impact the ICF's budget for 2014-2016. Unfortunately, this has been the case and both the budget for ICF Headquarters and ICF TV has gone over budget due to this adverse exchange rate.

We have cost cut as much as we could without affecting services but it is still not enough to offset the exchange rate difference.

### **ICF TV**

Production for 2015 went very well, although the financial situation has impacted operations and meant some costs cut for TV production.

Eurosport was the major taker for ICF events in 2015. Other live takers are stable and for both Olympic World Championships we had

approximately 10 national live takers for each, which is encouraging.

The issue of the ICF Competition Schedule continues to adversely affect our ability to showcase our sport properly and this will continue in 2016 where two World Cups are on the same weekend in May and three ICF events are held on one weekend in September 2016.

Eurosport has seen some key staff changes in the last couple of months and a new strategic direction for broadcasting sport. Unfortunately, we have lost our key contact and it is at this stage unclear if Eurosport will show our events in 2016.

Eurosport's new direction will be to have content more related to each national territory. We do not know what effect this will have on Canoeing but we are in discussions with them on how our partnership will work going forward.

## **Social Media**

The ICF launched its new website before the World Championships in 2015. For both Canoe Sprint and Canoe Slalom World Championships the website was dedicated to these events. The statistics will be presented elsewhere to the BoD but the overall impression is that it was a successful venture. The website development is on-going but feedback so far has been positive.

We have seen significant increases in users of the ICF Youtube, twitter and facebook accounts in 2015, however, this could still be improved and lessons have been learnt on how we can expand this reach even further.

## **Marketing**

Tridem, the ICF Marketing Company, has been to several ICF events and met many ICF BoD members. They have made contact with many companies now on behalf of the ICF. A large percentage of these companies have shown no interest in canoeing as the sport does not match their marketing strategies. There are a few contacts that have shown interest and the company is following these up.

## **ICF Event Manual**

As per the IOC's Agenda 2020, the ICF Headquarters started to compile and to assess an event operations manual for ICF events. This will be a complete guide to bidding and hosting ICF events. The ICF staff have analyzed the majority of summer Olympic Sports Event manuals and using best practices are formulating this manual for the ICF.

*Always moving forward*

The manual will result in the event contracts being substantially reduced in length and be generic legal documents for all ICF events.

### **ICF Headquarters Analysis**

At a recent meeting of International Federations in Lausanne we had the opportunity to discuss staffing of Olympic IFs. I thought it may be of interest to highlight this topic as a discussion point for the BoD.

Many of the IFs in our Olympic group have expanded their professional staff in the last year or so and as a result the ICF now has the smallest professional staff of all Summer Olympic Sport Federation by a long way. For example, Modern Pentathlon has 11 staff, Hockey has 25 staff and Rowing has approximately 15 staff.

Completing a preliminary look at what the ICF is lacking in resources compared to other IFs there are a total of seven full time roles missing from the ICF Headquarters. Compared to other IFs the ICF is missing two technical managers for the sport disciplines, two administration staff for stakeholder relationships and for sports, at least one media staff member, one event manager and a dedicated Paralympic staff member.

Clearly, the ICF is not in a position to agree to these positions in the short term but if we want to progress on similar lines as other IFs then in the future this issue will need to be tackled or else the ICF risks falling behind other Federations.