

Releasing the full WorldSkills Potential

Action Plan – 2008 - 2011

BACKGROUND

Since the Helsinki Competition in 2005, there have been many very significant developments in WorldSkills International, to the point where it became clear that the previous strategic planning documents guiding the organization needed to be updated and brought together in a single integrated action plan.

Accordingly, at its meeting in Bangalore, India in January 2007 the Executive Board (EB) began the process of outlining a revised strategic direction for WSI for the period 2008 - 2011. This incorporated the objectives which were agreed to between WSI and the Calgary 2009 and London 2011 Organising Committees. The overarching goal of this agreement ("WorldSkills Champions on the World Stage") is to provide competitors with an optimum environment to do their best work while making the competitions more attractive to media and visitors.

Following the EB's basic philosophy of openness and participation by the Members, the various elements of a new strategic direction have been explored and debated in various forums, including the Strategy Committee meeting in Rotterdam in March 2007, (where the Board and several members of the Technical Committee participated) and the Technical Committee meeting in Tokyo in April 2007.

In order to have the forward strategy ready for the General Assembly meeting in Shizuoka in November 2007, the EB met in July in Lostorf, Switzerland along with four invited delegates (2 from the Technical Committee and 2 from the Strategy Committee) and the Marking System Advisor who had participated in the Rotterdam meetings (see page 7).

Following its own meeting in Lostorf, the EB arranged and hosted the first ever gathering of WSI Chief Experts to advance planning for the Shizuoka Competition and also to consider the implications of the decision to stage the Calgary Competition as an integrated six day event, incorporating the 4 days of competition, associated activities and opening and closing ceremonies.

ACTION PLANNING PROCESS

This resulting document is called an "Action Plan" because it focuses directly on the actions that are proposed for adoption by the General Assembly in November 2007.

After consideration and approval by the General Assembly of this Action Plan, the Executive Board and the Secretary General will review the 2008 budget with a view to ensure the allocation of resources align with the Action Plan.

An extensive package of background documents was provided to participants at the Lostorf meeting, and these can be found at: <http://www.worldskills.org/site/public/?pageid=1094>. These outlined the changes that have occurred in WSI, the changes in the world around us, and the many WSI accomplishments and initiatives under way.

In his letter to Board members of April 6, explaining the purpose of developing the Action Plan, President Dusseldorp wrote,

"It is not envisaged that we undertake any in-depth soul searching or that such a plan will consider any substantial change in direction for WSI. What is envisaged is a focused exercise that will provide a framework to better coordinate and integrate all the initiatives under way".

Accordingly, the following paragraphs capture the outcome of the Lostorf deliberations.

MAJOR THEMES

In articulating the Action Plan, the issues raised in the supporting documentation for the meeting were grouped into broad categories to the extent that they are logically related. These six groupings are expanded on below.

- A. Branding and media relations
- B. Competitions
- C. Organisation
- D. Involving youth
- E. Environmental Issues
- F. Information technology and the internet

A. Branding and media relations

Where WSI has made the most dramatic changes in recent years, compared to its past history, is the articulation of WSI's broader mission of becoming an active promoter of the skills agenda on the global scene. In that context, the challenge of more effectively promoting the WSI brand identity and the related need for greater media exposure has become a much higher priority.

Action Goal A1

WSI will continue its efforts, working with its Members, Competition Host Members and Global Sponsor Partners, to seek greater global recognition of the WSI brand.

Outcomes to be achieved:

- Implement the "WorldSkills brand audit" to be carried out in partnership with the Calgary and London OCs to present a seamless, integrated brand for these and other WSI events and activities. Stage 1 will be completed by early 2008 and is being funded by UK Skills
- Develop the brand strategy by the end of 2008. The strategy will build a consistent understanding of what the brand means and the brand message and will focus on the legacy that WS provides to participants and to the Host Member
- Increase the number of Members who are compliant with the WSI branding guidelines by 2009 to 75% and to 100% of Members by 2011. (e.g. depiction of the WSI brand on their websites and marketing materials)
- Continue to populate the WSI Portal with success stories as our principal promotional medium
- Explore the possibilities of greater use of the internet for direct marketing and communications.

Action Goal A2

WSI will continue to work with Competition Host Members to make the Competitions more attractive to the media and the public. This is reflected in the Calgary 2009 media engagement strategy.

Outcomes to be achieved:

- Develop a detailed WSI media engagement strategy by mid 2008
- Present and market the Calgary competition as a 6-Day integrated event comprising the Opening Ceremony, four days of competition and the Closing Ceremony
- Provide information, interactive and participatory activities at the competition that will attract and engage visitors
- By 2011 have achieved full engagement of the media with WSI.

B. Competitions

While the competitions continue to improve, there are three dimensions of WSI's "flagship" activity that have particular strategic importance, since they represent a critical component of the WSI intellectual property, and provide major leverage to achieve a broad range of WSI objectives. These three priority actions also have great potential to provide tangible assistance to Members, and involve them more closely with WSI.

Action Goal B1

Continue to improve and expand the functionality and robustness of the Competition Information System (CIS) to deliver open and timely reporting which includes competitors' relative performance on a continuous basis during the Competition, and also make CIS available to Members on an "open platform" for use in their own competitions.

Outcomes to be achieved:

- Development features to include:
 - More analytical tools
 - Access to all results
 - Competitions becoming modular
 - Daily marking/reporting
 - Assessment of quality management of all competitions
- Complete all marking for the production of final results on the last evening of the Competition in Calgary

Action Goal B2

Expand the training, tutoring, and active networking among the volunteers and experts (who are the workforce of WSI) to improve their effectiveness and personal satisfaction, and to refocus and support the important leadership role of the Chief Experts.

Outcomes to be achieve:

- Increase participation via discussion forums, more meetings and networking by Experts, Jury Presidents, and Team Leaders in the build up to 2009
- Establish and reinforce relationships between the key stakeholders before, during and after the Competition
- Encourage Chief Experts to network across skill areas by sharing and developing best practices (launch and facilitate the Skills Management Team discussion forum)
- Develop training and learning resources that facilitate the goals of WSI (e.g. CIS presentation).

Action Goal B3

Review the skill categories in the Competition and, where necessary, re-design existing categories and/or develop new categories to encompass global standards and economic relevance and sustainability, and promote them accordingly.

Outcomes to be achieve:

- Increase WSI secretariat technical capability during 2008 to drive and implement the Guiding Principles for the selection and removal of skill categories
- Harness the support of the Global Sponsor Partners in conducting multinational skill audits to assure the relevance to industry of WSI Technical Descriptions
- Task the Experts to revise the Technical Descriptions to include new skill competences required, as well as exemplar curriculum and model test projects, with visual and photographic illustrations.

C. Organization

The rapid growth of WSI and the acceleration in the pace of change in the technical/social/economic environment in which it operates, poses some significant challenges to the organization in terms of not only managing growth, but the speed with which decisions need to be made to adjust to this changing environment. For example, there is a 30% increase in the number of competitors and experts participating in Shizuoka compared to Helsinki in 2005.

Action Goal C1

Constitute a new task force (including representatives from SC and TC and Host Members) on the "Future of the Competition" with a view to deciding what actions should be taken to ensure the sustainability of the Competition in a way that allows the inclusion of a growing number of Members.

Outcomes to be achieve:

- Consider and implement the task force recommendations progressively in 2009 with the aim to have a sustainable model firmly in place for 2011 and beyond.

Action Goal C2

Continue the approach of using working groups and task forces to work on specific issues, and integrate the work of the two standing committees (Strategic & Technical).

Outcomes to be achieve:

- Conduct future General Assemblies primarily in working groups which are topic focused, rather than being committee focused
- Streamline the decision making process to avoid duplication of committee work, by recognizing that many technical decisions have a strategic implication and vice versa.

Action Goal C3

Continue developing partnerships with regional competition groups to maximise the range of shared benefits from enlarged participation in skill competitions across the world.

Outcomes to achieve:

- Develop an MOU with the ASEAN regional competition with the aim to achieve brand compatible with WorldSkills as an exemplary model for other regional competitions
- Determine the relationship with EuroSkills via an MOU in consultation with WSI Members who are Members of EuroSkills
- Explore the possibility of a Latin American regional competition in cooperation with our Brazilian Member (SENAI).

Action Goal C4

Continue building the network of Global Sponsor Partners (GSP) as a mean of providing additional resources (cash and in-kind) to achieve the WSI objectives.

Outcomes to achieve:

- Build on the existing MOU agreements to increase GSP involvement on a customised basis including in-kind, marketing and other support
- Continue to build the WSI value proposition in line with the brand strategy and improvements to the Competition and related activities
- Obtain a media Global Sponsor Partner by 2009.

Action Goal C5

Improve the bidding process for future competitions beyond 2011 in a way that keeps the process within reasonable costs and maximizes the positive gains for WSI and for the bidding members. And revise the respective rights and responsibilities of WSI and the host Members through a more rigorous MOU process.

Outcomes to achieve:

- Prepare new guidelines for the 2013 bidding process which allows the EB to rate the bid proposals against agreed criteria
- Restrict Members who wish to bid for Competition events from also bidding for GA events to ensure that more Members have access to hosting WSI meetings
- Prepare the case for raising the hosting fee for Competition events in recognition of the growing service costs required for the WSI Secretariat.

D. Involving Youth

There have been very positive outcomes from past competitors involved in the inaugural WorldSkills Youth Forum in 2006 and a favourable reaction by Members to this initiative. WSI recognizes youth as its principal client group and that it needs to engage the “Net Generation” to cultivate the next generation of WSI leaders.

Action Goal D1

Continue to support the development of the Youth Forum, Champions Exchange, the Skills Portal, and other initiatives that engage young people in WSI.

Outcomes to achieve:

- Develop the goals and program for the 2008 WorldSkills Youth Forum (WSYF) in Vienna with youth input
- Populate the WSI database of Competitors in order to initiate and maintain ongoing communications (850 by 2008 and 5000 by 2011)
- Develop the Competitor Village concept as an essential part of all future WS Competitions in recognition of the value of youth not only competing, but also being together to develop mutual respect and global friendships
- Implement the Champions Exchange program based on recommendations from the pilot phase
- By 2011 have a formalized system of youth engagement with WSI’s decision-making structure.

E. Environmental Issues

The impact of regulations being enacted around the world in response to limiting carbon emissions and achieving environmental sustainability goals is affecting all sectors of the economy and consequently the skills and practices in the workforce.

Action Goal E1

WSI needs to formalize ways in which it can respond to the challenge and opportunities arising from the global attention being placed on the environment. This is an opportunity for WSI to highlight the important contribution of skills to achieving better outcomes and attracting more young people to the new “green” skill jobs that are emerging.

Outcomes to achieve:

- Stage Calgary 2009 as a “green” Competition
- Highlight and develop the sustainability practices which already exist in many of the competition categories and develop these practices in all other existing and future categories
- Create a working group to find ways to implement environmentally friendly approaches to all of WSI’s activities.

F. Information Technology and Internet

The dramatic changes in Information Technology are transforming the way in which all people and organizations communicate. These changes have allowed WSI to develop and operate as a unique “virtual” organization. WSI recognizes the importance of keeping up with the technology required to operate in this new digital environment if it is to remain a leading edge organization.

Action Goal F1

WSI will continue investing the necessary resources in its IT platform of hardware and software and in training its staff and Members to keep up to date.

Outcomes to achieve:

- Reach full engagement and utilization of all Members with all possible online tools by delivering better services and new products to help Members achieve their goals
- Ensure appropriate measurement tools are in place to gauge Member engagement, usage and satisfaction.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is a testimony to the wisdom of those Members who participated in the development of WSI's first strategic plan in 1999 that the vision articulated then has proven to be sound. It is an even greater testimony to the passion and commitment of Members that the specific objectives outlined then have largely been achieved over the past eight years.

The six point Action Plan (2008 - 2011) outlined above is a coherent and integrated strategy that will serve WSI well in the next phase of its development because:

1. Focusing on branding and media engagement is essential to achieving WSI's vision of promoting skills across the world
2. Improving the Competition will ensure WSI continues to achieve high standards of excellence and remains relevant in the global market place
3. Enabling the organisation to become more productive and efficient responds to both internal and external pressures
4. Encouraging and supporting youth participation in WSI will ensure the development of future leaders across the WorldSkills movement
5. Addressing environmental issues is now the responsibility of all organisations and represents an opportunity area for WSI
6. Staying ahead with our IT and internet technologies and services is critical to WSI's sustainability and growth

With our excellent track record in achieving the goals of the 1999 Strategic Plan, we should be confident that this new Action Plan will continue to guide WSI on a sound path of development that will provide growing value to Members and enable WSI to fully realise its potential as the global leader for youth, skills and futures.

Dated: November 2007.

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