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This document represents a way for the World Squash Federation (WSF) to set down and communicate its priorities and aims, under its international remit, to its Regional Federations, Member and Associate Nations and other stakeholders.

The document is designed as a strategic framework rather than a detailed set of objectives. It contains an overview of the strategic landscape, a proposed vision and mission and a set of strategic goals and objectives. It is designed as a framework rather than a detailed plan to enable WSF to remain flexible within a rapidly changing global sport environment. Having said that, underpinning every strategy should be an implementation plan, which should also be adjustable in content and priority in response to changing circumstances. Accordingly a proposed set of priority goals is also included.
VISION

Squash is a genuine competitive and recreational sport played all around the globe by men and women, enriching the spirit and values of Olympism on all levels, from amateurs to the professionals, and with the ambition to be included in the Olympic Games Programme.

MISSION

WSF’s mission is to:

- Develop squash globally for all.
- Provide effective leadership and collaboration for raising Squash’s visibility and profile, in particular via its World Championships and participation in major competitions;
- Enhance the global support infrastructure for squash, including refereeing, coaching, technical expertise and event management.
- To ensure that squash remains a sustainable and clean sport, respecting the Olympic values and contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
WHERE WE ARE

WSF is the international federation for the sport of squash and as such has worldwide responsibility for every facet of the sport other than the professional Tours.

Currently WSF has 76 Full Membership nations and a further 36 Associate Membership nations (together referred to as ‘National Members). WSF also has five Regional Federations under its auspices.

Control of policy and management comes from an Executive Board – all elected volunteers, who give time to setting the direction of the Federation.

WSF’s total income, of which the two main constituents are product accreditation fees and national membership fees is small. This sum creates limitations on the size of the WSF secretariat staff and also the funding available for activities and initiatives.

Linked to this is the reliance on voluntary support via volunteer committees rather than paid staff and departments.

Despite these limitations, WSF takes responsibility for on-going areas including representing squash internationally, rules, refereeing, coach education, media support, anti-doping, championships and technical; while also solely funding squash’s Olympic bid efforts.

INFLUENCING FACTORS

POLITICAL

The failure of the Olympic campaign, presents an element of sober reality, with Squash remaining outside the Olympic arena until we can launch another viable bid. However, Squash has benefited in many ways from the positive response to the challenges of its Olympic campaign, not least in the quality of the sport’s presentation. That said, the diversion of core resources to the Olympic campaign in recent years has squeezed WSF’s ‘normal business’ activities. Without Olympic status, lack of funding will remain Squash’s biggest constraint to realising the potential of the sport globally.

The Olympic campaign has fostered improved collaboration between the professional tours and WSF, a relationship that we need to sustain.
TECHNICAL

Technological developments have an increasing influence on sport. We have witnessed the effect of technological improvements in rackets, courts and balls, but also in broadcast opportunities through Ultra HD and, with the falling cost of broadcasting, getting the sport on new channels. The rapid diversification of media channels, particularly the growth of social media, constantly challenges conventional communication channels, but provides real opportunities to reach new audiences at minimal cost. Having said that, WSF needs to invest in ensuring that it remains at the cutting edge of new forms of communication to capitalise on the opportunities of capturing new audiences.

The application of new software such as apps will also become increasingly important to ensure we attract and retain the youth interest and new markets too. Also, as a global organisation, WSF needs to take maximum advantage of advances in communications technology; improving and embracing, more and more, open dialogue across all aspects of WSF business. Technology shouldn’t replace face-to-face meetings, but can improve how WSF works.

ECONOMIC

The turbulent state of the world economy will continue to affect our potential to grow and develop the sport, whether that be the cost and risk of new capital developments or our ability to sell the sport to new consumers (players or spectators), broadcasters and sponsors. A buoyant squash market will also encourage new coaches to enter the market and contribute to an upward cycle of sustainable growth. An economic downturn or insecurity will do the opposite, particularly in emerging squash markets.

A growing global market for squash drives growth in court, equipment and other squash-related markets and suppliers. A larger and more competitive market enhances WSF’s opportunities to negotiate sponsorship and other support.

SOCIAL

Squash has an interesting mix of mature and emerging new markets. The traditional (largely Commonwealth) markets have reached a maturity that threatens future growth and sustainability. These nations are experiencing an ageing squash population, a struggle to sustain numbers of players and therefore the vitality, viability and re-investment in courts and clubs has declined. In these nations squash can be perceived as a more traditional sport - and therefore not as ‘cool’ to young people when choosing how to spend their time and income. In developing and promoting the sport, WSF needs to ensure that squash is attractive to potential young players and new markets. The application of new technology will be key in this respect.
SWOT ANALYSIS

WSF STRENGTHS

WSF is the IOC Recognised International Federation for the sport of squash, and has 112 nations in Full or Associate membership, with a significant number of growth areas. These include growth in some potentially very large markets (e.g. USA and India), in some rapidly emerging markets (e.g. Poland), as well as some small emerging new nations (e.g. Turkey).

WSF presides over a sport which is considered an ideal current ‘lifestyle’ sport, Squash is a relatively close-knit global community in its leadership. There is a passion and unity within the sport that encourages a positive and optimistic climate. It relies on an extended network of expert volunteers who WSF can call upon, and who have very little cost beyond out-of-pocket expenses.

WSF and its five constituent Regional Federations generally have the necessary committees and commissions in place to govern the sport, working to provide the necessary infrastructure for the leadership and delivery of areas such as championships, refereeing and coaching.

The sport has a well-developed professional Tour, recently enhanced by the merger of the men’s and women’s Tours into a single body. Through PSA the sport has achieved enhanced quality, consistency and footprint of broadcast output via SquashTV. The 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games was a major success with regard to the presentation of squash and its visibility via breadth of broadcast reach.

WSF WEAKNESSES

The main constraint upon WSF comes from lack of income streams. Not ‘owning’ the professional Tours means there is no income from player memberships, event registration, player levies, broadcast, sponsorship and partnership opportunities.

The result of this, together with limited exploitation of commercial rights and opportunities, inevitably means limited funding to develop initiatives.

Similarly a small staff and the lack of funds to employ specialists, i.e. a dedicated staff member or department for each major area of business, is not possible. Instead there is a strong reliance upon committees and volunteers, which can be less efficient. Every area including the ability to show leadership and innovate, refereeing, coaching, marketing, championships and interaction, along with WSF supporting regions and nations, would benefit from increased income.

The issue of funding levels is not exclusive to WSF though, with our Regional and National Federations having to wrestle with similar funding issues.
WSF OPPORTUNITIES

The biggest game changer would be eventual acceptance onto the Olympic Games Programme, leading to greater funding, sponsorship and partnership opportunities.

Irrespective of this, there are opportunities to strengthen management in specific areas to support the general WSF secretariat administration. More emphasis on marketing and commercial facets, developing SPIN opportunities will pay dividends.

Strengthening the linkage between WSF, Regional and National Federations is another general area where attention will result in opportunities to improve the cohesiveness and quality of arrangements across the sport.

On the championship side, expanding the basket of events, exploiting their commercial opportunities and improving their integrated administration via stronger input are desirable.

Development in the areas of refereeing and coaching is also possible; building upon the standardisation and quality of courses that is already underway.

THREATS TO WSF

Although the structural elements of the sport along with a fully formed professional Tour are already in place, not getting onto the Olympics Games programme has been a great setback.

The decline of the sport in some ‘mature’ nations not being stemmed and others falling into this category, will require positive marketing and promotion action at both international and national level.

A breakdown of the WSF refereeing pyramid, whereby control may not be maintained at the upper end, while WSF must ensure opportunities that encourage a wider pool at the base.

A scandal caused by illegal wagering, doping cases or in another aspect of the sport (e.g. fun sports).
Fig. SWOT analysis WSF 2016

**STRENGTHS**
- Popularity in emerging markets
- Professional tour
- Gender balance

**WEAKNESSES**
- Olympic bid declined
- Lack of funding
- Lack of expertise

**OPPORTUNITIES**
- IOC Agenda 2020
- New broadcasting technologies

**THREATS**
- New fun sports
- Growing requirements (doping, legacy,...)
LEADERSHIP

Provide effective strategic and political leadership for the sport globally, to ensure it maximises its potential influence and development opportunities. Also to ensure WSF achieves the most appropriate balance between short- and long-term strategy and planning, while balancing the associated risks.

What will success look like?
A leadership team respected within the sport and in global sport for its robust and agile governance and leadership of Squash’s future success.

PARTNERSHIPS

Build and sustain effective partnerships with organisations and individuals with similar values and ambitions for the future success of Squash, ensuring WSF clarity over contribution and accountability of each party.

Such partnerships may include WSF Regional Federations, Professional Players’ Association, Championship and Major Games’ hosts, the IOC, sponsors, etc., but WSF may in future also need to consider less traditional partnerships.

What will success look like?
A strong and healthy network of partners and supporters committed to a collaborative approach to the long-term growth and success of the sport.

DEVELOPMENT

Provide a framework and network of expertise capable of advising and supporting the needs of new and emerging squash nations. The scope of this is likely to include the range of activities and expertise covered in goals above.

What will success look like?
Readily available suitable information and support throughout all levels of the sport.
SUSTAINABILITY

Implement a sustainability policy at the WSF and its owned events and promote sustainability with its Regional Federations and National Members, the PSA and at all other squash events.

What will success look like?
WSF is seen as a front-runner in promoting sustainability.
WSF transparently reports on its economic, social and environmental impacts according to international standards.
WSF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

GOOD GOVERNANCE

WSF should become more of a beacon and reference point where stakeholders look for effective, efficient and ethical management and administration.

Strong governance by the Board, Committees and Commissions, supported by WSF Office is essential, with a policy structure, all fed downwards and outwards within the sport and beyond.

CONSTITUTION

- Update WSF Constitution to reflect the sport and the requirements of its membership
- Integrate sustainability into the WSF Constitution according to the IOC Agenda 2020
- Look at the level and basis of WSF membership fees and its voting structure

Responsible for implementation: Executive Board

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Develop and implement stakeholder engagement plan
- Integrate with the PSA Tour
- Expand external relationships to other sports and sport governing bodies
- Integrate disciplinary mechanisms even further

Responsible for implementation: Executive Board

ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

- Fully embrace the Code of Conduct and the Code of Ethics at all levels (Board members, officials, referees, players, etc.)
- Maintain WADA Compliance
- Disseminate anti-doping information even more widely
• Improve player behaviour, knowledge of rules and understanding of match management at club team level
• Expand the reach of SPIN so National Federations use SPIN numbers as the entry basis for national events i.e. only one worldwide player registration requirement
• Ensure long-term Technical services management for the industry and operators

_Responsibility for implementation: Executive Board_

**FINANCE**

For the WSF to be able to carry out policies and initiatives greater income streams are needed. The commercial outlook and expertise to deliver this needs to be developed.

• Develop enhanced income streams to provide budgets for strategic goal delivery
• Develop a financial plan that projects income streams and costs for the whole period covered by the strategic plan
• Safeguard financial reserves
• Transparently report on finance and audit according to international standards

_Responsibility for implementation: Executive Board / Chairman, Finance_

**MARKETING**

Ensure that income streams, raised profile and quality output options are realised.

• Review the WSF’s assets, categorise, then secure partnerships for them
• Lead compilation of sports-wide structural, marketing and demographic data
• Develop the commercial value of WSF Championships
• Develop branding elements of the WSF logo
• Review Digital marketing possibilities

_Responsibility for implementation: Commercial Commission_
PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION

It is important that the Regional Federations are fully integrated with the WSF and identified as an arm of the International Federation, developing both the structure and strength of each, to the benefit of the sport as a whole.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS – REGIONS AND NATIONS

- Regional body positioning as a delivery arm of WSF to be solidified
- Each Region to appoint a link to the World Squash Media Director
- Strengthen the links and cohesiveness of uniform policy delivery with the regions and onto nations
- Encourage the formation of National Members where they don’t already exist

Responsible for implementation: WSF Office / Regional Federations / National Members

COMMUNICATIONS

- Develop communication plan to exchange as regularly, widely and effectively as possible with PSA, Regional Federations, National Members and stakeholders
- Establish and maintain communication tools (responsive website, social media, etc.) to effectively communicate with stakeholders
- Ensure regular online collection of national data
- Ensure transference of knowledge at every opportunity
- Monitor media output on a regular basis with the objective to maximise positive media output across the spectrum of communication tools

Responsible for implementation: WSF Office / Media Commission
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SQUASH

Prioritise leadership via the provision of materials and support for the continued introduction and retention of new players.

PROMOTION

- Separate development (broad based) from coaching
- Use Squash’s key traits e.g. healthy, competitive, sport-for-life
- Maintain WSF Ambassadors Programme and encourage regions to undertake similar schemes
- Put a panel in place to develop and evaluate developmental ideas
- Monitor progress on a regular basis and assess/evaluate the impact of initiatives

_Responsible for implementation: WSF Office / Coaching & Development Committee._

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Assist National Federations to ‘pop up’ temporary courts in public places e.g. beaches and shopping malls
- Support court construction and related industry innovation, including lowering the cost of court provision to aid development
- Use sustainability standards (e.g. LEED) to realize infrastructure projects
- Develop the Product and Company Accreditation programmes to ensure benchmarks and income streams
- Enlarge the pool and standard of Major Championship Directors and Referees
- Consider ball sizes and colours for developmental use
- Promote the use of faster balls by club players

_Responsible for implementation: WSF Office / Respective Committees_
INCLUSION – SQUASH FOR ALL

- Provide schools and urban programmes that are adaptable by National Members
- Develop Para-Squash
- Focus strongly on youth and affordability
- Emphasis ‘fun’ play as the priority – elite play will follow for some
- Develop and implement clear policy on safety
- Assess/evaluate the impact of initiatives

*Responsible for implementation: WSF Office / Respective Committees*

LEADERSHIP AND EQUALITY

- Widen the spread of talents in leadership roles
- More specialist managed panels “leading” than committees “reacting”
- Promote greater female involvement in management of the sport

*Responsible for implementation: Executive Board*

SUSTAINABILITY

- Evaluate and implement initiatives to reduce the environmental footprint of events
- Sensitize National Members, the PSA and other stakeholders about the environmental impact of events
- Report transparently on the sustainability impact according to the international standards of ISO 20121 and/or the Global Reporting Initiative

*Responsible for implementation: WSF Office / Sustainability advisor*
COACHING & COACH DEVELOPMENT

Ensure best practice, uniform and transferable coaching qualifications across the sport.

- Expand the WSF Coach Education Programme (CEP) featuring qualification standardisation for full Regional and National Federation adoption
- Look into every means of ensuring learning and best practice

*Responsible for implementation: WSF CEP Coordinator*

REFEREEING & REFEREE DEVELOPMENT

Address the twin aims of enlarging the pool of referees and improving the officiating standard within it.

- Develop programmes that will lead to an increased pool of qualified referees and then nurture them so that the standard improves
- Ensure continuing WSF control and coordination to support the top refereeing tier
- Improve assessment systems, spread and consistency
- Review the Rules of Squash and update them to reflect the changing needs of the sport
- Explore ways of making play more continuous at higher level

*Responsible for implementation: WSF Referees Committee / PSA Liaison*

COMPETITION

High level competitions offer a shop-window for the sport and are the aspiration for many players. The upward pathway for players needs to be clear, with National Members and Regional Federations effectively linking and managing, while enhancing PSA liaison and cooperation.

- Regional Federations and National Members to put standard match management rules in place, based upon World Championship Regulation procedures (seeding, scoring, panels etc.)
- Push for squash involvement in all Regional Games and other multi-sports events
- Provide a full programme of World Championships
• Ensure that the rights fees and requirements for hosts are balanced
• Consider ways of raising World Championship team participation levels, especially female events.
• World Championship Regulations to reflect Tour Regulation changes, where appropriate
• Increase WSF World Championship information delivery uniformity

*Responsible for implementation: WSF Office / Championships Committee*

**OLYMPIC GAMES**

Keep pushing for the inclusion of Squash on the Games Programme in conjunction with stakeholders.

• Review why the recent bid failed and how best to overcome IOC resistance to adding Squash
• Develop and implement action plan

*Responsible for implementation: Executive Board, afterwards Olympic Bid Steering Group*
The WSF strategy 2020 was discussed and approved at ____________

Date:

Signatures:

“Take things as they come. But try to make things come as you would like to take them.”

Curt Goetz