Strategic Intent

**Preamble**

The Association of Commonwealth Triathlon (ACT) National Federations was formed on 26th July 2014 at a special meeting that took place during the supreme performance opportunity for the Commonwealth family at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow 2014. The Commonwealth is a voluntary Association of independent sovereign states and their dependencies, which may be found on all continents and accounts for over two billion people (30% of the world’s population). The fundamental values of Association have been summarised in the Declaration of Commonwealth Principles (1971, Singapore) and reaffirmed in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration (1991, Zimbabwe).

24 NFs attended in the presence of ITU VPs Sarah Springman and Bill Walker and the ITU Sport and Anti-Doping Directors, and approved articles for anUnincorporated Association (UA), broadly based on the SEATC Constitution. A Management Committee (MC) was elected for the next quadrennial until the 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast with members Alan Beckford (JAM), David Ferrier (AUS) and Jane Moncrieff (SCO), advisors Alain St. Louis (MRI) and Sam Wickramasinghe (SRI). Luc Landriault (CAN) was elected unopposed as Treasurer, as was the organiser of the meeting, Dr. Sarah Springman (ENG), as President. Jem Lawson (ENG) was appointed as Secretary General.

Subsequently, the MC has met on several occasions to formulate a strategic plan, which will guide the Association up to the next Commonwealth Games in the Gold Coast, Australia, in 2018. The first of these was in Edmonton at the ITU World Triathlon Series (WTS) Grand Final; further discussions have been over the Skype network. The President and members of the Management Committee are most grateful for the contributions from David Sales (<http://www.firstascentgroup.com/uk-headquarters>) and Gergely Markus, ITU Director of Sport.

A number of working groups was formed from within the MC to examine and analyse the issues facing triathlon as an integral element of future Commonwealth Games. This paper draws together the conclusions reached through such deliberations.

‘Membership in the ACT shall be automatic to those National Federations (NF) that are in Membership of ITU or the Commonwealth Games Federation in promoting and developing Triathlon, Duathlon and Aquathlon in their respective countries, provided that those countries are also in membership of The Commonwealth.’[[1]](#footnote-1)

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**Purpose**

To support the ITU Executive Board to guarantee Triathlon in the Commonwealth environment as one of the core sports in the Commonwealth Games and to establish Triathlon as an iconic sport in all future Commonwealth Games.

**Vision**

For triathlon to further the objects of the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) and embody the values of the Commonwealth through establishing a pathway for athletes from all backgrounds to reach the pinnacle of competition manifested in the Commonwealth Games.

**Values**

* Ensure Fair Play
* Respect all: behave with Tolerance, Respect and Understanding
* Act with Consistency and Transparency
* Embrace Change
* Encourage High Aspirations
* Recognise Success
* Be protective of the Environment and encourage sustainable development.
* Espouse Equality in all its manifestations
* Recognise the needs of, and help, small states and territories

**Objectives**

* Actively encourage all Commonwealth (CW) nations and territories with active triathletes and National Federations in membership of ITU to become members of ACT.
* Influence the key organisations, ITU and CGF:
* CGF to adopt Triathlon as a core sport.
* ITU to look at race formats and rules to encourage fair competition, participation and completion by the maximum number of athletes in CW races and to recommend the preferred race format to the CGF.
* Consider the possibility of Commonwealth Triathlon competition for development athletes.
* Encourage friendship, co-operation and partnership among and between:
* Nations and Territories,
* Developing nations and big clubs from more developed National Federations,
* To increase the number of competing nations/territories and athletes in the Commonwealth Games;
* Take steps to optimise the development and performance of less well-developed National Governing Bodies;
* Establish development as a pathway to performance.
* Exemplify the principles of good governance.

**Governance of ACT**

ACT itself must be subject to good governance, and must be able to encourage such in all member NFs, by disseminating and sharing good practice.

### Definitions of Governance

“Governance encompasses the system by which an organisation is controlled and operates, and the mechanisms by which it, and its people, are held to account. Ethics, risk management, compliance and administration are all elements of governance.[[2]](#footnote-2)”

“Corporate governance involves a set of relationships between a company’s management, its board, its shareholders and other stakeholders. Corporate governance also provides the structure through which the objectives of the company are set, and the means of attaining those objectives and monitoring performance are determined.[[3]](#footnote-3)”

### Governance for the ACT

We need to ensure that, as an organisation, we have the right mechanisms and processes in place to meet the objective of good governance for the ACT. Such devices need to be described within the Constitution.

Policies should be developed that provide guidance for current and future members of the Executive Board as they relate to the key parameters of Ethics, Risk Management, Compliance and Administration. Some of these policies will sit within some of the specific streams; however the over-arching principles should guide the policies. All specific policies should revert back to these over-arching principles.

We should ensure that there is an opportunity for all member Federations to meet as a group, at least, on an annual basis, at the WTS Grand Final/World Championships and to hold an election meeting during the period of the Commonwealth Games. Meetings of the ACT Management Board (MC): –

* Set guidelines about how regularly the ACT MB will meet by teleconference.
* Ascertain whether it would be possible for the MB to meet face to face to finalise the strategic plan and determine when this can be achieved.

**Relationships with the International Triathlon Union and the Commonwealth Games Federation**

These are the key groups and we must foster good, two-way relationships.

* ACT recognises ITU as the World Governing Body, whose National Federation Members from the Commonwealth are automatically members of ACT.
* ACT is not a link between CGF and ITU, but rather a networking and lobbying group within ITU[[4]](#footnote-4).
* ACT wishes to engage in regular communication, dialogue, to make a contribution with ITU to Commonwealth sport and the Commonwealth NFs and to be able to exert a measure of influence.
* ACT should receive information from meetings with the CGF, feed into communications to the CGF and become candidates for attendance at CGF events.
* The link with ITU development should acknowledge the work done in the Continental Confederations.
* ACT will work to integrate activities on development with the Continental Confederations.

**Triathlon in the Commonwealth Games**

The overarching aim is to guarantee Triathlon in the Commonwealth environment, particularly now that the Commonwealth Games Federation has recommended the expansion of the number of core sports[[5]](#footnote-5), from seven to fourteen, in February 2015. Triathlon is recommended by the CGF Executive Board as a core sport. This will be decided at the CGF Congress in Auckland, New Zealand in September 2015. An important way to improve the profile of Triathlon in the Commonwealth would be for it to gain admittance into future Commonwealth Youth Games[[6]](#footnote-6), perhaps looking to 2023.

A small number of world class athletes from large and well-developed federations competed in the Triathlon competition in Glasgow 2014 with a group of aspiring (and nonetheless inspiring) athletes from smaller and, in triathlon terms, less well-developed Commonwealth nations and territories. Eligibility to compete at the highest level is a live issue and it seems likely that this will be actively considered in respect of future Commonwealth Games.

The unfortunate consequence of the performance gap between world class and aspiring athletes in Glasgow was the high attrition of the latter group, as athletes were lapped on the swim and bike courses, causing them to be withdrawn from the race.

There are two aspects to this problem:

1. The careful planning of Commonwealth Games courses to minimise the chances of disqualifying more than a handful of athletes.

* ITU technical experts to devise courses whereby lapped athletes can continue. Such action would not be unprecedented, cf Limerick ETU Duathlon European Championships in Limerick, Ireland on 17th April 2011. .
* Consideration of different event formats, such as the possibility of sprint or super sprint qualifiers and a final.

These would need the ITU technical rules governing such competition to be amended, perhaps as a temporary measure to cover the Games.

1. The up skilling and enhancement of the latter group of athletes by developing the competition framework so that they can refine their prowess in relevant, high standard and good quality **events** within the continental jurisdictions.

**Performance and Development in Events**

Within the **Performance** field there are a number of potential actions that might be put in place to try to increase the competitiveness of the ‘aspiring’ individual athletes, to raise the profile of the crowd-pleasing and highly competitive mixed team relay and to introduce paratriathlon to the Games.

Analysis of the status quo

Individual

The fields in the individual races are too small and there is lack of ‘middle ground’, i.e. there is a small number of athletes of true international class and a smaller number of ‘aspirational’ athletes, who fail to finish because of the ‘lapping’ rule.

Action: initiate regional series of events for Commonwealth federations with a view to raising the performance of potential Commonwealth athletes.

Action: initiate a ‘Commonwealth Development Championship’ in non-CWG years.

Action: investigate the possibility of qualifying rounds (Sprint/Super Sprint distance) ahead of the Standard distance final to ensure all athletes have a chance to a) finish one round, b) qualify for the final.

Triathlon Mixed Relay

A big selling point could be the Triathlon Mixed Relay (TMR), an event which does not threaten lapping DQs. Steps might be taken to raise the profile and importance of this race form in those Federations where there is a dearth of high performing athletes.

Action: Upgrade the TMR event in such races and championships described above to the extent that there may be heats and finals.

Paratriathlon

The Glasgow Commonwealth Games saw a greater integration and participation by Para-sport athletes. There will be a worldwide increase in such paratriathletes with the introduction of Paratriathlon in the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Olympic Games.

Action: Lobby for Paratriathlon inclusion in future CWGs.

Action: Include Paratriathlon in the races and championships described above.

Thought should be given to the place of multisport activities (aquathlon, duathlon and cross triathlon) at performance level.

As far as **Development** aspects are concerned, ACT contends that this must draw on the valuable development work within ITU, which has its own well established programme.

Inclusiveness should be a feature of all levels of events so that a clear ‘event pathway’ is evident.

The issue that needs to be clearly defined through development is the objectives of Commonwealth Games Triathlon Competition as a means to increase the number of participating countries.

The recommended approach to performance and development includes looking at the development components of coaching, competition and administration models.

Coaches

1. Analyse level of coaching in countries and territories with aspiring athletes.
2. Rate countries based on coaching skills and capacity to be able to improve skill sets where needed.

Events

The objective is to get athletes from the local level to Continental Cup or Continental Championship level; to create a ladder to success. Set out below are issues that need to be dealt with to meet the objective.

1. Local
   * Beginner; early talent identification.
   * Intermediate; e.g. ‘talent academy’ coaching.
   * National Championships; inclusiveness and diversity.
2. Sub-Regional Competitions e.g.: Caribbean, Africa broken into sub-regions.
   * Small Federations with no elite athletes.
   * Small Federations with 1 to 3 elite athletes.
   * Federations with 4 and more elite athletes.
3. Commonwealth recognition within regional ITU Championships Pacific Games, CAC etc.

The development of a support structure will play an important part in helping athletes improve. Such elements as medical support and mechanical expertise, as well as the provision of appropriate kit, will be necessary. There need to be competent race organisers and a community of appropriately qualified Technical Officials. The complementary multisport activities ought not to be ignored.

Building and evolving the structure provides opportunities for partnership agreements. These can be between and among National Federations, and possibly between large and well-organised clubs in the developed sector, and National Federations in the less well-developed sectors. Well-qualified and aspiring coaches from the larger National Federations could work with aspiring athletes from less well developed National Federations.

**National Federations (NFs)**

Categorisation

The first step will be to define, as best as we can, what would be a small, medium and large National Federation.

ACT’s current definition would be the following:

* Small: More needs with regard to athlete development structure, officials, coaches, etc.
* Medium: NFs with athletes on the Continental circuit.
* Large: Well-structured NFs with a consistent track record in respect of participation at major games and with athletes who win WTS medals.

Needs Analysis

Work will be undertaken to try to identify the multifarious needs of the member organisations. Initially a survey will be sent to NFs so that a snapshot can be taken of their current position within the Commonwealth. After the establishment of a basic database, further conversations will take place in order to establish more specific needs.

Partnerships[[7]](#footnote-7)

One way to help more needy National Federations is to create partnerships. It may be that the larger and better resourced NFs could take on a mentoring role with one or more less well developed associations. It may even be possible for larger clubs in the bigger NFs to share expertise and experience through special arrangements with a small NF. Such partnerships are known to have happened on an ad hoc basis. It will be our duty to get more information. We will reach our goal by knowing who needs what and what can be offered by whom and facilitating the exchange.

Governance of Member National Federations

The ACT Constitution says that:

“Membership in the ACT shall be automatic to those National Federations (NFs) that are in Membership of ITU or the Commonwealth Games Federation in promoting and developing Triathlon, Duathlon and Aquathlon in their respective countries, provided that those countries are also in membership of The Commonwealth.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

“Membership shall cease upon disbandment of the NF or upon expulsion of the member by resolution of the ACT passed by at least three-fourths of the entire voting membership of the ACT.”[[9]](#footnote-9)

The ACT should seek to promote good governance within Commonwealth member Federations, but does not have a responsibility for managing or monitoring the governance of those Federations.

**Appendix 1: SWOT Analysis, Triathlon in the Commonwealth Games**

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| Strengths:   * World beating performers in the CW * High profile sport * Fast growing sport * Attractiveness of the Mixed team relay * attractive to spectators * paying (ticketing) and non-paying (free to view) * show off city/countryside * Exciting television/viewers, Modern technology | Weaknesses:   * Indiv. race format, current race courses and technical rules militate against developing athletes * CWG race fields only competitive at high end |
| Opportunities:   * Many nations in development * Enhancing competitiveness * Diverse cultures * ITU President Marisol Casado’s (IOC) lobby for cause of mixed team relay in Olympic Games * different race formats * relay over short distances - much closer fields - no lapping rule - opportunity for the young from developing nations – more inclusive * NFs must develop women’s/girls’ participation! * ITU funding development - assist promoting presence in courses * Paratriathlon * Options with small NFs for focussed athlete programme | Threats:   * European Sports Games * Other sports take core status * inflexible ITU Technical rules may destroy opportunity to be a core sport because Commonwealth Games Associations vote against triathlon (unfortunate experiences in Glasgow) * spectator friendliness v participant experience v safe competition * size of field too small, too few NFs competitive (as developed nations) * cost of sport (especially to be competitive) |

1. ACT Constitution; Article 2, Section 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Governance Institute of Australia – http://www.governanceinstitute.com.au/knowledge-resources/governance-foundations/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development – http://www.governanceinstitute.com.au/knowledge-resources/governance-foundations/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Confirmed by ITU Executive Board at their Avignon meeting, December 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Initial indications are: 14 core sports, 5 optional sports and ‘recognised’ sports [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. http://www.thecgf.com/cyg/ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See ‘Events’ p7 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid. p1 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. ACT Constitution; Article 2, Section 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)