

CONCEPT NOTE: COUNCIL STRUCTURE PLENARY SESSION - 29 NOVEMBER 2021

This summary note has been prepared to explain the current structure and two potential other structures which are under consideration by the Governance Sub-committee and the Board.

The Board welcomes any other proposals at, or in advance of, the meeting.

Current Structure

Council is responsible for deciding the policy and strategic priorities of World Sailing. It makes the Regulations and appoints the members of World Sailing committees and sub-committees. It also decides on the location of the Annual Conference meetings. Council meets twice a year at a Mid-Year Meeting and an Annual Meeting.

Council is required by Regulation to make decisions only based on submissions or the recommendations of its committees. Council can only approve, reject or defer a submission – it can only make minor amendments to a proposal.

The committees and sub-committees report to Council (not commissions, which report to the Board). Council does not report to the AGM.

Council currently consists of 42 members: the 9 members of the Board, up to 30 members appointed by regions of MNAs (the Groups), and 5 chairs named in the Constitution (Oceanic & Offshore, Para World Sailing, Classes, Athletes' Commission and Women's Forum). Council is chaired by the President.

Issues with the Current Structure

Many stakeholders, including many Council members themselves, find the current structure inefficient, complex in its procedures, and slow to respond to the challenges of governing a sport as complex as sailing. Much of its time is spent receiving reports with little or no debate afterwards.

Council often makes policy decisions only once a year in a condensed two-day meeting. There is little time for full debate and to work on and improve proposals. Only urgent business is allowed to be considered at the Mid-Year Meeting.

Despite not reporting formally to the AGM, a historic constitutional provision has in recent years allowed the AGM to overrule Council decisions made by Regulation (but not general policy decisions). Whilst there is no issue with the MNAs having a final say, it is inconsistent that a Regulation can be changed, but not a policy decision. This also leads to a perception of a waste of Council time when it is known the MNAs will finally decide a matter the next day at the AGM.

The Governance Sub-committee has analysed the Council meetings held in 2019, 2020 and Mid-Year 2021. The figures show that Council met in total for 26.2 hours and spent this time on the following:

- General items – 21% (5.5 hours)

- Governance – 20% (5.3 hours)
- Events – 15% (3.8 hours)
- Olympics – 14% (3.8 hours)
- Administration and Finance Reports – 13% (3.3 hours)
- Technical – 12% (3.2 hours)
- Training & Development – 2% (0.4 hours)
- Para World Sailing – 2% (0.5 hours)
- Ethics – 1% (0.2 hours)

This analysis did not include 2018, where the Mid-Year Meeting met for approximately 8 hours exclusively on the selection of Olympic Events. Between them, discussion of training, development and Paralympic sailing took just 4% of the time of the sport's policy setting body. In contrast, Council spent 54% of its time on general, governance, finance and administration reports, when it is not responsible for finances of World Sailing nor governance in general (these are matters for the Board and the MNAs at a General Meeting).

In response to a World Sailing survey in 2017, more than 55% of the world's sailors went cruising on keel boats and sailing numbers around the world were declining significantly. The sailing community is an ageing population; and sailing has become less attractive to the younger generation with many compelling alternatives on offer. Furthermore, in the multiple engagements with the World Sailing community there was strident criticism that the organisation was too Olympic Games focused driven by the dependency on revenues from the IOC.

It is now very clear that not enough resource is being put into the development of our sport; in order for our sport to grow and develop, activity which positively affects Participation and Development needs equal weight, in hierarchy, time and resources. Furthermore, this reform is an opportunity to ensure that more countries representing developing areas and regions have a seat in the relevant committee.

Option A – One Refined Council

The Governance Sub-committee has considered the option of having one Council supported by two Committees: Growth of Sailing and Elite Sailing. (Names can be refined)

A Growth of Sailing Committee, with a wide remit, would focus on getting more people sailing given the competitive distractions of other sports and recreational activities. Inexperienced members of the Committee would be supported by those selected for their expertise and experience in promoting participation of youth, women, Para World Sailing and the overall growth of the sport. Presidents or representatives of the Regional and Continental Associations should also have a seat on this body. Over the last year much work has been done by the Regions and Development Committee and the Continental Associations specifically on plans for the development of our sport. When projects are fully developed, they will have real purpose (gender equality, getting the youth active, sustainability etc...) and we believe these projects are fundable through state and/or sponsor money.

If certain countries are early in their development of our sport but do have elite aspirations, this committee will have the remit of articulating / creating pathways from grass root to elite sailing.

An Elite Sailing Committee would focus on the top end of the sport such as the Olympics and perhaps other pinnacle events. Its membership would include MNA members from established Olympic nations based on qualification to the Games and from aspiring nations. In addition to MNA representatives, this committee might also include members able to represent Special Events such as the America's Cup, the Ocean Race, the Vendee, SAIL GP and Star Sailors League for example. This broader membership should be able to help promote the top end of our sport, share best practice, potentially create synergies and more opportunities for our elite sailors.

As in the two Council approach, if Council rejected a proposal made by a committee, it would be referred back to the Expert Committee for review and a fresh decision. Council would not substitute its own decisions.

There are a number of key groups which should feed into the work of both the Elite Sailing and Growth of Sailing Committees i.e. Events, Equipment, Olympic Classes, Youth and Specialist Racing (Match, Team, Radio, Expression). This could be achieved by having some or all as formal groups meeting and reporting into the committees or ensuring there is appropriate representation of these groups on the two Committees.

Option B – Two Councils

This option would see there being two Councils within World Sailing of equal standing: an Olympic Council and a Development & Participation Council.

The Olympic Council would:

- be a single specialist body focused solely on matters related to the Olympics given its importance to World Sailing;
- ensure it has members with experience in the Olympic Games but balance those members with a fair representation of aspiring or emerging Olympic nations;
- ensure efficient and effective decision-making by a reduction in size and clarifying its role and relationship to the Board and AGM;
- provide a mechanism through which the necessary parts of the decision-making process for the Olympic events and equipment are undertaken before a recommendation is made to the AGM, including removing the ability for members at the AGM to submit alternative proposals for equipment or events without that process having first being undertaken.

The Olympic Council would have three reporting committees covering Events, Equipment and Olympic Classes.

This option would ensure the majority of votes lie in the hands of MNAs which have most invested in the Olympics, whilst universality and opportunity for countries with a smaller or emerging Olympic program can be ensured by regional representation through a separate election. Olympic decisions at a General Meeting would only be by approval of Olympic Council recommendations. If a General Meeting does not

approve a recommendation, the proposal has to be sent back to the Olympic Council for further research and review.

The Development & Participation Council would:

- be a body dedicated to the non-Olympic side of World Sailing which is of equal importance to the Olympic Games;
- create a mechanism to ensure the MNAs which run initiatives, events and programmes to improve participation and development as well as those who need support in these areas, (such as smaller nations), have a say;
- increase the number of MNAs and Classes who can contribute from that which would have been the case had it remained a Committee (as now).

The Development & Participation Council would have three reporting committees covering Youth, Specialist Racing (Match, Team, Radio, Expression) and World Sailing Classes.

The majority on this Council will come from the MNAs who are not on the Olympic Council and this Council will rank equally in stature and hierarchy with its Olympic counterpart. The strategy and budget will include funding for the initiatives to develop the sport and it will focus on growing numbers in the sport both competitively and recreationally