



ISAF Approved Training Centre

Recognition Process Guidelines

ISAF APPROVED TRAINING CENTRES

PART ONE – BACKGROUND

Introduction

The International Sailing Federation (ISAF) is aware of the difficulties faced by many athletes in accessing the level of coaching and coach support that is necessary to develop high levels of performance in the sport of sailing and in particular encouraging the widest possible competitive participation at World class events and regattas. Some Member National Authorities (MNAs) have, over time, developed effective performance coaching schemes that benefit from both funding and size to produce credible results. However, for small and emerging MNAs, the challenges faced by individual athletes can be overwhelming and prevent the development of sailors who may be capable, if adequately supported, of achieving the ultimate goal of an Olympic Medal.

Even with the potential to access funds, including through Olympic Solidarity, the aspirant athlete in an emerging MNA is faced with the difficulty of finding both capable coaches and training environments that will provide the levels of challenge and support that are necessary for their continued development. The establishment of ISAF Approved Training Centres that have been identified as being able to provide the holistic support required by athletes who have the potential to represent their MNA will help to address their need.

The purpose of this document is to provide individual Training Centres that aspire to deliver World class coaching programmes with guidelines to the standards required by the ISAF in order to achieve ISAF Approved Training Venue status.

For brevity, any references to 'Olympic' participation within this document should be taken to mean both Olympic and Paralympic. Similarly, references to 'athlete' and 'coach' or 'coaches' should be extended to include such people from any MNA and not be restricted to those from the country in which the ISAF Approved Training Centre is situated.

Requirements

In order to achieve accreditation as an ISAF Training Centre, the aspirant Training Venue will be able to deliver effective coaching programmes to athletes and provide ongoing support for, and development of, coaches. As a significant amount of development takes place during actual competition, an ISAF Approved Training Centre will also be able to demonstrate the ability to support athletes whilst participating at ISAF Sailing World Championships, ISAF Sailing World Cup events and other national, regional and International regattas.

In addition to practical performance enhancement, the ISAF Approved Training Centre will have direct access to those factors that combine to ensure the physiological and psychological well being of the athletes and coaches with whom it is working. This may be achieved from within its own resources or by well-established and formal links with external agencies. If the latter, then there should be evidence of such external agency's involvement in programme design, review and development.

As there is potentially a considerable amount of financial commitment from a number of stakeholders, the ISAF Approved Training Centre will have a proven record of success. In addition it will have an organisational structure based upon sound governance, appropriate funding and an auditable business plan.

The purpose of an ISAF Approved Training Centre is to -

- Provide an effective training and development programme for athletes and coaches, from any ISAF MNA, who are working towards participation in Olympic and World class sailing events.
- Contribute to an Increase in the number of ISAF MNAs regularly participating in ISAF events.
- Assist all MNAs with whom they are in contact to access training that will help their National Sailors qualify and ultimately attend the Sailing Competition at the Olympic Games.

In summary, the ISAF Approved Training Centre will –

- Be effective in developing both athletes and coaches throughout a specified period in their career which is anticipated will extend beyond activity in the Venue to competitive participation at World class events.
- Have the resources, either internally or through formal links with appropriate external organisations, to provide for the holistic development of athletes and coaches that ensure their safety in the broadest possible terms.
- Have an organisational structure that ensures sustainability, at least throughout the period for which support to specific athletes has been agreed.

The Accreditation Process

The aspirant Training Venue will complete a self audit using the document that is available from the ISAF Training and Development Manager. If it is considered that the Training Venue is able to meet the criteria for approval, then formal application supported by the MNA in whose country the Training Venue lies, should be forwarded to the ISAF Training and Development Manager. It is essential that Training Venues wishing to be approved by the ISAF are able to demonstrate good standing with the MNA of the country in which they are located. This will be confirmed and officially endorsed by the MNA in a letter from the 'Person in Charge' to the ISAF Training and Development Department supporting the application, which may be forwarded by e-mail to training@isaf.com

On receipt of a formal application for approval, the ISAF Training and Development Manager will appoint a Nominated Expert who will visit the Training Venue and conduct a full audit of the organisation, administration, facilities, resources, programmes and overall ability to deliver support to athletes that will meet the requirements.

The travel costs for an ISAF Nominated Expert to carry out the audit visit as well as any chargeable fee for the Expert in carrying out the work will be covered by the ISAF. The Training Venue will be required to cover the costs of suitable local accommodation, food and airport transfers for the Expert as well as any other necessary costs incurred during the visit. Each audit visit would be expected to last a maximum of 2 full days, unless otherwise stated by ISAF and agreed by the Training Venue prior to the visit.

Training Venues wishing to be approved by the ISAF will pay ISAF a one-off recognition fee of £500.00 GBP upon attaining approval. The fee confers the rights to use the special ISAF Approved Training Centre logo and covers the administrative costs of processing the recognition.

Successful Training Venues will be listed as ISAF Training Centres by ISAF. They will then be accessible to any ISAF MNA that is seeking support for its athletes. In particular, an ISAF Approved Training Centre will be a preferred venue for any athlete and MNA that is in the process of applying for IOC Olympic Solidarity Scholarships for Athletes 'Rio 2016' and 'Tokyo 2020' funding through their National Olympic Committee.

Venues that are found at the point of audit to not be up to the required standard but wish to proceed to achieve approval will receive a development plan that outlines the areas that need to be addressed in order to achieve accreditation. They may also request that an ISAF Nominated Expert be appointed to assist them in achieving ISAF Approved Training Centre status. The Training Venue would be responsible for covering the Nominated Expert's costs. In such circumstances, a separate Nominated Expert would be appointed to conduct the formal audit required to achieve approval.

ISAF Approved Training Centres will require a mandatory audit by an ISAF Nominated Expert every two years, within one month of the anniversary of initial recognition.

A significant change to the governance of the ISAF Approved Training Centre, including a change of the Manager or the 'person responsible' for the overall management of the programmes, will require a follow up visit by a Nominated Expert within one month of the identified change in order to confirm continuing recognition.

Reports of all approval visits will be written by the appointed ISAF Nominated Expert and will include their findings and any recommendations for subsequent actions. The reports will be circulated between the ISAF CEO, the ISAF Training and Development Manager, the Head of the ISAF Competitions and Events department and the Training Venue itself.

The Audit

These guidelines are intended to both set the standards that are required of a Training Venue, in order to achieve 'ISAF Approved Training Centre' status, and clarify the criteria that will be considered by an ISAF Nominated Expert when carrying out an audit of its organisation, resources and effectiveness. The audit cannot be a complete 'inspection' of everything but it will be sufficiently detailed for the ISAF Nominated Expert to be able to make a recommendation to the ISAF Training and Development Department. The ISAF Nominated Expert will exercise discretion and rely on their experience when deciding how much time they spend on specific areas.

Duration:

It is envisaged that an Approval audit will require a minimum of two full days at the Training Venue. If any further visits are required their duration will depend upon the circumstances. The duration may be extended if additional time is required because of the locality or if there are pre-determined issues that require further investigation and detailed discussion. The last half day will normally include a review of the audit with the Training Venue Manager, or person in charge.

Protocol:

To ensure impartiality of the Approval process, if an ISAF Nominated Expert undertakes any paid consultancy work for a Training Venue they will not carry out any audit visits to that Venue. If additional visits are required in order for a Training Venue to achieve ISAF Approved Training Centre status, whenever possible they will be carried out by different ISAF Nominated Experts. This maintains the rigour of the process and allows the different Nominated Experts to see, and focus on, a wider range of factors which is beneficial for the development of the process and ultimately the standard of training being delivered.

Scope:

The audit of the Training Venue will evaluate the organisational structure, programme design, programme management and the methods used to monitor and develop the outcomes. The ISAF Nominated Expert responsible for the audit will give due consideration for the culture of the country in which the Training Venue is located. This will include local laws, and the resources available but not to the extent that any of these would unjustly compromise the outcome of the audit.

Method:

As the intention is to promote the sport of sailing by making high quality coaching and holistic development available to as many athletes as possible, there has to be a flexible approach to, and acceptance of, the physical and cultural environment in which an ISAF Approved Training Centre is located and operating. Without dogmatically following a 'tick list' but in order for the approval to be equitable, the ISAF Nominated Expert carrying out the audit will use a scoring template in order to assist in both deciding whether or not the Training Venue is worthy of Approval and to produce an action plan for further improvement.

It is mandatory that practical training on the water is seen with genuine athletes. Role play using staff or other volunteers is not acceptable. Evidence of practical training carried out at other venues, ideally during preparation for international regattas, will also be required. This may be in the form of videos, photographs and testimonials of those sailors and coaches that have been involved.

PART TWO – NOMINATED EXPERT GUIDANCE NOTES

In order to recommend ISAF Approved Training Centre status to a Training Venue the Nominated Expert will seek evidence that:

- there is adequate and competent management and supervision of all training programmes related to the ISAF accreditation.
- the programmes on offer meet satisfactory physical and emotional safety standards in line with National laws and International 'Best Practice'.
- the programmes are delivered in a progressive manner by staff whose aptitude can be validated against recognised performance indicators.
- there are adequate quality control measures embedded in the programme.

The following 'list' of questions is intended to provide a framework for wider discussion rather than being an exhaustive set of criteria requiring explicit answers. The intention is to encourage a dialogue that will allow the Nominated Expert to explore the organisational culture and operational effectiveness of the Training Venue.

Responses to the questions combined with the outcome of related discussions will be 'scored' on the Audit Record sheet. The purpose of the Audit Record sheet is not to provide an empirical pass or fail. It is intended to provide a summary of the Audit that will be amplified in the full written report. The Audit Record will also serve as an aide memoire during the review of the Audit with the person in charge of the Training Venue at the end of the visit and when drawing up an action plan for the further development of the Venue.

1. Training Venue Organisation and Management

1.1 How long has the Training Venue been in existence?

It is anticipated that an ISAF Approved Training Centre will have been in existence for sufficient time to be able to demonstrate, by case studies containing training and performance records, that it has experience of supporting athletes on a structured pathway towards World class competition. Although this would normally require a minimum of around four years, consideration will be given to the way in which the Training Venue has evolved. It will be necessary to ensure that there is a development plan that is not simply the product of a single injection of funding from an individual or small group without whom the Training Venue would not function.

1.2 What is the management structure?

There should be a clearly defined organisational structure that both supports the practical activity and monitors its performance against documented standards. It is unlikely that a privately owned Training Venue that does not have a managing or steering group to which it reports would be able to achieve ISAF Approved Training Centre status. The management organisation, including reporting and monitoring systems, should be presented in the form of Terms of Reference, Articles of Association or similar documentation that is in keeping with National standards for similar organisations. In the absence of National standards, then advice should be sought from the ISAF Training and Development Manager regarding appropriate content.

1.3 How is the Training Venue funded?

Apart from direct financial support from the MNA, other sources of income from National Sports organisations and corporate sponsors can spread the 'risk' of funding shortfalls. The Training Venue may also be partially, or even fully, self-supporting through course fees and other income generating activities. Whatever the source, a robust and financially viable business plan is essential.

1.4 How long has the present 'Lead Person' been in post?

Actual length of 'service' is not critical but may indicate the stability of the Training Venue. There is also a balance between the vibrancy of a new person in post and the potential stagnation of a person who has been there for several years.

1.5 What is their job title?

Although relatively unimportant, the title is likely to indicate the level of involvement in programme design, development and delivery. The 'Lead Person' will be expected to be fully conversant with, but not necessarily involved in, the individual programmes. A detached 'Lead person' would be unlikely to be considered appropriate. It is also appropriate for the ISAF Nominated Expert to use the correct title in the final audit report.

1.6 What are the criteria for selection or person specification?

Responses to this question will help to indicate the degree to which pro-active involvement of the Training Venue management supports the operational delivery. The 'Lead Person' does not have to be directly involved in the delivery of any part of the training if it can be demonstrated that they have experience in leadership of effective teams and are supported by a suitably qualified team, which will become evident from responses to 1.9 below.

1.7 How long had the predecessor been in post?

The response, coupled with the response to supplementary questions may indicate the 'political' nature of the Training Venue management.

1.8 To whom does the 'Lead Person' report?

Although there should be an obvious line to the Training Venue management organisation, there may be other influences upon the Lead Person's ability and freedom to manage the training programmes. Some of these could include national sports organisations and the educational 'establishment'.

1.9 How many people report to the 'Lead Person' and what are their roles and responsibilities?

The response and ensuing discussion will allow the Nominated Expert to gain a good insight into both the organisational structure and the overall capability of the Training Venue. It is expected that everyone involved in programme delivery will either hold relevant qualifications appropriate to their role or be able to demonstrate their suitability by way of their background and current involvement in relevant academic research, sports sciences, performance evaluation or related areas associated specifically with athlete development. Although this query is expected to become a catalyst for a wide ranging discussion, most of the answers should be contained in an Operating Procedures document that accurately reflects what actually happens in the Training Venue.

1.10 How are programme delivery staff recruited, contracted and supported?

In addition to direct coaching activity, there is such a diverse range of other specialist support required to provide for the holistic needs of athletes that not all of these are likely to be available in-house. It is also anticipated that a number of different coaching teams may be required in order to deliver the best possible class specific training. The ISAF Approved Training Centre will be able to demonstrate that it has access to, and formal agreements with, relevant organisations and individuals in order to ensure that all aspects of athlete development can be achieved. A certain degree of contingency planning may be accepted for some areas such as health and well-being, where specific response to need is more difficult to predict.

1.11 What are the processes for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Training Venue?

There should be regular, documented reviews of all of the activities of the Training Venue. These should include the progress of athletes, lessons learned and action plans for future programme development. Without intending to either constrain or direct the process, it is expected that critical reviews would include feedback from athletes and delivery staff obtained through both formal and open reporting systems. There should be evidence, probably through case studies and changes to documented Operating Procedures, that the Training Venue has taken action in response to feedback, lessons learned and internal reviews.

1.12 What National legislation or regulations either influence or conflict with the operation of the Training Venue?

It is important for the Nominated Expert to ascertain any constraints within which the Training Venue is required to operate. These may be supportive by way of national standards required for teaching or working with young people or restrictive with regard to the operation of boats, especially powered safety boats where engine sizes may be limited or special qualifications or licencing required.

IT IS THE ENTIRE AND ABSOLUTE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL TRAINING VENUE TO ENSURE THAT THEY FULLY COMPLY WITH ALL RELEVANT APPLICABLE NATIONAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS.

2. Programme Design

2.1 Who has overall responsibility for programme design?

It is expected that a single person will be nominated to be responsible for the design of every training programme. That person would not necessarily be involved in delivery but would be the point of contact for co-ordinating resources and effecting changes in response to feedback.

2.2 How are individual athletes' training needs analysed?

There should be a formal process of evaluating the individual athletes' training needs. Whilst the natural focus will be based on current performance and future targets, their holistic development should also be taken into consideration. Factors that include domestic provision, religious, cultural and emotional needs all have an impact on preparation for training and performance.

2.3 What resources are available and included in training programmes?

In addition to practical on water training, programmes should cover a wide range of topics including, but not limited to, health, fitness, diet, preparation for competition, time management, drugs awareness and support systems. Access to, and direction from, specialists in specific areas will almost certainly be required at various stages of the training programme.

2.4 How are coaches and other technical staff recruited and monitored?

There should be a very clear process by which those involved in every aspect of the provision for athletes are selected. Comprehensive staff records should be maintained and demonstrate that there is a high level of priority given to personnel management.

A 'Table' in some form that indicates the areas and levels of responsibility of each member of staff should be available.

The ISAF Coaching Framework guidelines www.sailing.org/training/nlstp/sport_coaching_framework will be used for comparison when assessing the suitability of key Qualified / Certified Coaches operating at the Training Venue. Additional technical advisors and support staff that are not qualified or certified will be audited through 'Recognition of prior learning' and personal experience, evidence of which should be provided in the form of a detailed CV.

2.5 How are coaches allocated to athletes?

The effectiveness of training programmes will be significantly dependent upon the relationship between the athlete and their coach. This may require changes during the course of the programme in order to reflect and build upon the progress made by the athlete. There should be a clear decision making process that both allocates coaches to athletes and reviews their ongoing suitability to maintain the highest possible level of development.

2.6 What provision is made for coach development?

Whilst the natural focus is upon athlete development, there are significant and important opportunities for coach development. By raising coaching standards, there will be an ongoing impact upon the quality of training and hence the performance of those taking part in the sport at World class and Olympic events

2.7 What measures are in place for the review and, if necessary, modification of programmes?

Programme design should include periodic reviews that compare progress with explicit performance indicators. Contingency plans should also be included in the design. In addition to identifying any areas of weakness to the athletes and their coaches, the reporting system should inform both the athlete and their MNAs / National Olympic Committees (NOCs). Such reporting should include recommended actions to either address any shortfall or, if necessary, terminate the training programme.

3. Programme Management

3.1 What measures are in place to monitor programme delivery?

It is expected that programme delivery will be supervised by an appropriate person with the authority to make changes and add resources if necessary. Such supervision would normally include attendance at or involvement in a pre-session brief during which clear objectives are established together with the way in which it is intended that these will be achieved.

There should be a system of review that includes provision for effecting changes to operating procedures in response to lessons learned from unintended events and near misses.

3.2 What resources are available to athletes and coaches?

The Training Venue should either own or have unrestricted access, through formal agreements, to current, class compliant craft and equipment in sufficient quantity to allow individual and inclusive group training sessions to be run. Sharing of craft between athletes is unlikely to be acceptable.

There should be access to dry training areas ashore with provision for research into sailing related subjects. Additional, facilities for general fitness training as well as specific physical development and injury rehabilitation should also be readily available.

Other facilities ashore should provide for routine domestic needs with due regard for religious and cultural requirements.

3.3 Powered safety craft and coach boat operations.

Powered coach boats that are suited to the classes of equipment in use by athletes must be available, adequately equipped and fully serviceable. Use of powerboats in the coaching role is likely to require specific training and supervision.

As safety is paramount, the operation of powered craft will be an area of interest to the Nominated Expert who carries out the audit. In particular the effective use of all safety equipment and systems will be confirmed.

3.4 How well suited to the training is the equipment in use in the training area?

The usual training areas should be suitable for the Classes of boat in use. This includes being free of unacceptable hazards, especially other users over whom the Training Venue has no control. The training area should also be able to replicate the variety of on water conditions that are likely to be encountered at competition venues worldwide.

3.5 How are programmes adjusted to reflect individual athlete progress and overall competition targets?

It is expected that training programmes will be based on progressions that provide both targets and measurement of performance. Case studies and training records are likely to provide examples of the way in which programmes have been modified.

3.6 How are training records collated and maintained?

Linked to the responses to 1.11, there must be a system in place for providing formal reports on individual athletes to their parent National sailing organisation and National Olympic Committee. These will be in a format that meets the requirements of the Olympic Solidarity Funding programme as well as any other aspects that should be specified in a formal agreement between the Training Venue and the athlete's 'sponsors' prior to the commencement of training.

3.7 What procedures are in place to guide athletes, coaches and other staff in the event of an unforeseen occurrence?

As a minimum, there should be access to, and provision for, immediate basic life support in the event of an accident. There should also be a plan for follow up actions that protect and support the individuals directly involved, inform relatives and report to relevant authorities, including MNAs and IOCs.

3.8 How is equipment maintained?

There should be facilities and resources available to ensure that all equipment is maintained to the highest possible standard with the minimum of disruption to the training programme. Planned maintenance should also be included in the training programme as a valuable part of preparation for competition.

The availability of technically competent staff with specialist skills in the various areas of hull, rig and sail manufacture and maintenance is highly desirable.

4. Programme Review and Development

4.1 What measures are in place for the review of training programmes?

It is expected that there will be several levels of review all of which should be recorded and hence able to be substantiated during the approval audit.

Arguably the most important reviews will be those conducted with athletes at an appropriate time after each training session. Although the detail may be difficult to record, a précis of performance and progress towards targets should be maintained in some form of individual training log.

Periodic reviews of all Training Venue activity should also be conducted with reports being available to MNAs and NOCs who may wish to use the Training Venue for their own athletes.

4.2 How does the Training Venue validate performance reviews?

In order to ensure accuracy, there should be some form of external review or validation of the Training Venue. This could be by way of feedback from athletes and their MNAs, especially if they have been able to demonstrate a stepped improvement in competitive achievements.

4.3 How has the Training Venue used reviews to improve its own performance?

There should be examples of changes that have been initiated by either planned reviews or feedback from athletes and coaches.

5. Miscellaneous

5.1 How does the Training Venue promote its activities?

The use of the internet and social media whilst effective should be subject to some degree of control to ensure accuracy, equity and propriety.

In response to enquiries from athletes, MNAs and NOCs, the Training Venue should provide comprehensive information that includes –

- Programme content covering the planned coaching contact time, fitness training and sessions with additional experts in fields such as Sport Science, Nutrition, Bio-kinetics and Psychology in order to provide an holistic development package.
- Programme costs which should include accommodation, catering, equipment hire, personal protective equipment purchase, local transportation and any other areas that incur costs for MNAs and NOCs sponsoring athletes.
- Details regarding progress and performance monitoring and associated reporting.

5.2 What level of logistic planning and support does the Training Venue offer to potential users?

5.3 How does the Training Venue support the social and pastoral needs of athletes and coaches?

6. Post Audit Review

Upon completion of the audit visit the ISAF Nominated Expert will meet with the person in charge of the Training Venue to discuss their findings, raise any areas of concern or in need of action and share the recommendation that will be forwarded to the ISAF Training and Development Department.

The ISAF Nominated Expert will complete a written report that will be forwarded to the ISAF Training and Development Department. The report will summarise the findings from the audit arising from both discussions and observations. Any areas that represent new best practice of note will be highlighted as will any items on the Audit Record sheet that were annotated 'Advisory' or 'Action'.

The final audit report will be published on the ISAF website.

Removal of recognition from an ISAF Approved Training Centre

Any removal by ISAF of recognition from an ISAF Approved Training Centre would require immediate remedial action to be undertaken prior to this eventuality, within a specified period.

Failure to implement a satisfactory remedy would trigger a clearly set out statement of reasons for the removal of recognition. The Training Centre will be able to appeal and the appeal will be dealt with by the ISAF Secretariat Staff, using a selected panel of specialist ISAF Development and Youth Committee members and ISAF Nominated Experts. It is emphasised that this procedure should follow a decision to remove recognition which is well supported and with clear evidence. A decision to remove accreditation must be finally recommended by the ISAF CEO. Within the removal process, consideration should be given to a fast track suspension of recognition where circumstances are such that there are serious worries about safety or welfare of a sailor or sailors engaged in the programme (where a serious breach of one or more areas in this recognition document is evident).

SECTION 3 - Application

Process of application

Training Venues must complete the following in order to be considered for recognition by ISAF:

1. Training Venues applying for recognition must complete an initial self-audit, using the ISAF Training Centre Audit report sheet to score themselves in each of the five areas. Training Venues should use the guidelines given in the Recognition Process Guidelines document to help when completing the self-audit. This will help to identify any areas which may invite further and more detailed discussion during the audit visit by the ISAF Nominated Expert. Training Venues should also submit any promotional materials such as flyers, prospectuses / brochures and/or promotional DVDs that they feel will help the International Sailing Federation (ISAF) in the audit process.

2. Training Venues wishing to achieve ISAF Approved Training Centre status should submit a letter of intent to the International Sailing Federation outlining the type of training program that is on offer (i.e Class-specific / Multi-class, Coach Development, Paralympic or other) and the reason why the Venue wishes to be recognized. The letter of intent should clearly show full contact details of the Training Venue as well as website and social media channel links.

The formal letter of intent should be addressed to:

ISAF Training and Development Manager
C/O International Sailing Federation (ISAF)
Ariadne House
Town Quay
Southampton
SO14 2AQ
Hampshire
U.K

Or emailed to training@isaf.com

3. Alongside the letter of intent and self-audit form, a formal letter of endorsement should be provided by the ISAF Member National Authority (MNA) of the country in which the Training Venue is Located.

The formal letter of endorsement should be signed by the President, Secretary General or CEO (person in charge) of the National Sailing Federation and forwarded by the Training Venue at the same time as the letter of intent.

After receipt of an acceptable and complete application, ISAF will contact the Training Venue and make arrangements for a physical audit visit as per the guidelines in this document.

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