

Chapter 2.1

Structure: making the plan work

Benefits of this chapter

The right structure can drive your strategy

The structure of your National aquatics Federation is meant to complement goals and objectives. It can serve as the foundation for your federation's culture and therefore affects employee's behaviour, performance, motivation and cooperation. In order to be your structure to be the most effective; it should be flexible, encourage employees creativity and effectively utilise the skills and abilities of all your staff.

Choosing the right structure is essential when establishing your federation's aquatics strategy. It is not obvious to all federations that a well designed structure is the driving force of their strategy.

This chapter will provide you the answers and take a closer look at why your federation should set up a structure, how you can do it and who should be involved.

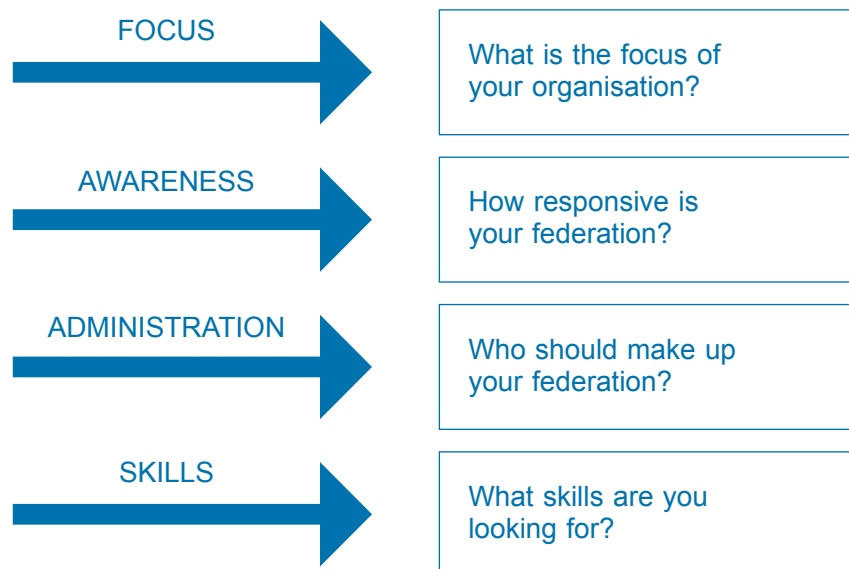
Introduction

Identifying the right structure can be a challenge. However, when you do choose a structure that is best suited to the way your federation wants to operate, you can greatly benefit from protecting your assets, reducing costs and become a winning aquatics federation.

When deciding on your structure there is always a few important questions to consider:

- Focus – What is the focus of your federation?
- Authority – How capable is your federation?
- Control – Who are the leaders within your federation?
- Skills – What important skills does your federation have?

Diagram 2.1 a



Getting started

Key considerations for setting up your structure:

1/ Focus – What is the focus of your federation?

Your structure must deliver your strategy. This means is that your focus needs to be centred on creating an impact in relation to your strategic objectives.

It is essential to remember that your federation's structure must follow your strategy – not the other way around. The strategy you decided upon (see Chapter 1 for more information) must guide the structure you choose. Therefore, setting up the structure should only begin after your strategy has been developed. Remember, developing and defining your mission, goals, and objectives will help you stay focused. To deliver your strategy, it is important to establish a clear focus that will not be distracted by other agendas or policies within your federation.

After your structure is set up and launched, remember to keep promoting it both internally and externally. Internal promotion of your aquatics structure to your staff will ensure that it gets the necessary support and creates unity within your federation. Promoting your structure externally to your members and partners will bring recognition and build credibility to your federation from an outside perspective. Serious aquatics federations have a serious structure. Promoting your structure will help enhance a positive image of your federation.

2/ Awareness – How responsive is your federation?

Awareness is a crucial point to running an efficient organisation. This will determine the decision-making competency of your federation in a situation; it can tell if your federation can react in a flexible and efficient way.

Your federation must be set up within a legal and political framework that allows flexibility and swiftness in the decision-making process. Taking into consideration the external structures such as population, urbanisation, customs, tradition, religion, moral, ethical values as well as genetic characteristics; all these factors can help define the structure of your federation.

As an aquatics federation, each of these factors can be influenced by the level of support and involvement of your government, both at the local and federal level, and with your partners. These relationships and partnerships can contribute to the success of your federation, they are networks which you can access and draw from in order to further develop your federation. This aspect of partnerships will be further discussed in Chapter 8.4 – National partnerships.

3/ Administration – Who should make up your federation?

Your organisation's leaders should be people with relevant motivations and suitable background who can help drive your federation towards its goals and objectives. The main task of your management team will be to oversee the implementation of the strategy and to provide the necessary leadership and support. It is also recommended that your leaders should have the experience and be committed to the long-term vision of your federation to ensure a level of stability.

Your staff works in many important and often multiple roles. They should be motivated and organised in order to keep the day-to-day activities moving along. This will ensure that you get the strong support you need to focus on the long-term strategy for your federation. Your organisation's staff should be made of members with strong skills.

Your organisation's executive board or board of directors, usually referred to as "the board", is made up of elected or appointed members who mutually oversee the activities of an organisation. The specifics of their duties and responsibilities vary depending on what is delegated to them by the by-laws found within your organisation. If such by-laws or "the board" do not exist, depending on the size of your federation this may be a valid area to include within your structure.

4/ Skills – What are the important skills and experience sought after when assembling the team for your federation?

Many federations are relatively small and rely heavily on a few managers and support staff, therefore it is vital that they have the right mix of abilities and experience. The success of your organisation's structure will highly depend on having the necessary skills and experience in place.

Since it is rarely possible to assemble a team that possesses the right balance of skills, experience and industry know-how to be effective at all levels right from the start, you must have a strategic plan to build the capacities of your organisation in-house during the initial years of your structure implementation. It is sometimes helpful to take into consideration the structures used by other successful sports federations. The organisational structure commonly applied in other institutions within your country can also serve as a point of reference in order to create your own specialised plan.

Useful tips

Things to always keep in the back of your mind when it comes to strategic planning and structure implementation:

- Your federation's structure must follow your strategy
- There is no single correct structure; is all dependent on your strategy
- Your strategy guides your federation in terms of where to go and how to get there