Chapter 6.4
Competition and events

Benefits of this chapter

An aquatics competition brings together a large number of participants and supporters to a specific area. Because they are held at a specific point in time, a project plan with clear tasks and timelines can and should be developed.

Many aspects go into planning an aquatics competition. From the original idea and concept over developing, running and finally closing the event after the competition, there are many activities involved in the process of hosting an event.

This chapter will help your aquatics federation to identify key principles in organising an aquatics event.

Introduction

Organising and hosting a good aquatics event can be a challenge for any national aquatics federation. For an event to be successful, it is important that it part of the overall strategy and goals of your aquatics federation. Without adequate planning, the event will most likely become a one-off event that is not inline with the overall strategic objectives of your federation.

Every event brings a certain number of risks and opportunities, however by understanding the complexity and planning involved your federation can start to organise itself for success.

As you are well aware, events can be affected by a number of unknown factors, like athlete participation, participation of communities, public contributions, sponsorship involvement, etc. And are also susceptible to conditions outside your federations control like weather, politic, media etc.

Although these items can be seen as obstacles, they also provide opportunities for you federation to build partnerships and establish relationships with certain parties which can help you in the future. For example, while political factors may be an issue in the initial stages of planning for hosting an aquatics event in your country, building a relationship with key political influencers in favour of the event can help not only sway support in the present but your federation can gain a supporter for future endeavours.

Understanding and identifying the right operational principles for your federation can be helpful to successfully organise an aquatics competition.

Getting started

Deciding to put on an aquatics event
Organising a competition is very dependant on your aquatics federation's strategic plan. This is mainly due to the amount of organisation and resources involved in the entire process. The decision to organise a particular aquatics event should ideally meet the strategic objectives of your federation and fall within the available resources. Your federation should only bid for an event after you have established why you wish to bid.

> When deciding whether to organise an aquatics event,
> ask yourself if you are achieving the following:
>
> - Will this event help achieve the aquatics objectives
>   of my federation?
> - Will this event challenge the talented athletes within
>   my federation?
> - Will this event raise the profile of aquatics within my country?
> - Will this event further the development of the aquatics discipline?

Each of these items helps your federation achieve your strategic goals for your federation and aquatics in general. Hosting and organising a major event in your

country is the perfect platform to challenge your most talented athletes by allowing them to prepare for an elite competition in the comfort of their own home.

Hosting an aquatics competition can increase the visibility of a discipline which may not normally get media coverage thus gaining a higher sporting profile. Furthermore, staging an event helps your federation develop by providing the opportunity to improve and increase infrastructure, develop partnerships and generate new resources.

Organising an aquatics event

While aquatics competitions come in different sizes and different forms, staging a successful event goes through the same four phases every time. Design, development, implementation and dissolution of the event.

Designing an aquatics event

This is the starting point and is generally also the decision phase of a bid. First, your federation must decide upon the feasibility of organising the event. Does your federation have the funding and resources to be able to carry out this project? If so, then your design concept for the event must be submitted with a proper bidding file.

Developing the aquatics event

This phase involves planning. Detailed planning of tasks to be achieved in order to efficiently and successfully operate must be implemented. Keep in mind that budget planning is also a key factor in this stage, as costs, quality and time must find the right balance.

For an example timeline for a FINA World Championship please see Annex D

Implementing the aquatics event

The event has begun, however it must be kept on track. Your federation should appoint an event leader who can identify and anticipate any potential problems.

Post-event strategy

The event was a success, now what? All that is left is to do is putting together a report on the efficiency of the activities done, an evaluation of the results achieved, dissolving the team and determining what lessons your federation can learn from the event for the future.

Sport sites and more

In addition to the aquatics complex where the competitions will be held, surrounding areas and sites are just as important when hosting an aquatics competition. Many factors go into deciding where to have these sites, such as: duration of event, number of athletes expected, number of spectators, level of expected hospitality, etc.

There are some areas which are common to most events:

- Event headquarters and administration site
- Receptions sites for VIPs and sport delegations
- Accreditation sites
- Accommodation sites
- Athletes village

Useful hints

- Ensure the benefits of organising an aquatics event are inline
  with your overall strategy
- Ensure you allocate the necessary time and resources for each task
- Ensure your technical requirements are met and that additional
  spacing is accounted for