



Executive Summary – World Rowing MF Membership Fee Increase 2025-2028

For decision at World Rowing Ordinary Congress, 16th November 2024

Background

Demands and costs associated with modern sports governance, and general inflation, have been consistently increasing over the last decade. In parallel, some of the traditional revenue streams enjoyed by World Rowing and many other sports governing bodies have been diminishing or are at risk.

To ensure the continued healthy sustainability of Rowing across the world, and ultimately to adequately empower our organisation to better serve our Sport and our 159+ Members, World Rowing has undertaken a thorough review of its cost base and various revenue streams to determine measures necessary for the future of the Organisation.

Despite numerous cost-cutting measures across the Organization, World Rowing has just closed the 2023 financial year with a substantial financial loss – papers circulated ahead of the 2024 Congress –. We are forecasting another negative result for the year 2024. This review is therefore highly critical and time-sensitive as we aim to propose a sustainable budget for the 2025-2028 quadrennial.

As noted, in light of this concerning situation, many proactive initiatives have already been or are currently being carried out to allow for cost reductions and incremental revenue generation wherever possible. These have been anticipated and forecast at the 2022, 2023 and 2024 Congresses, either through the President, Executive Director and Treasurer reports or through relevant presentations.

As referenced at the 2023 Congress, the Executive Committee and Council, under the guidance of the World Rowing Governance Working Group, have been considering the current MF membership fees levels, which have been left un-modified for over 20 years. It is recommended that these must now be adjusted to better reflect:

- 1- the general cost increase associated with modern sports governance;
- 2- the levels of service provided by World Rowing to its Member Federations (including events);
- 3- the required levels of investment to support and promote Rowing across continents.

1- General cost increase associated with modern sports governance

The overall expenditure for World Rowing has steadily increased from CHF 4.1 million in 2004 to CHF 7.2 million in 2024, representing a 75% increase approximately.

Some examples of governance costs that have increased consistently over the last years and have negatively impacted the World Rowing cost base:

- Antidoping requirements, notably in relation to the increase of WADA code obligations. As example, our antidoping programme budget has tripled from CHF 185,000 in 2004 to approximately CHF 500,000 in 2024.
- Legal protection resulting from an increasingly litigious environment and the management of various cases and challenges in court and with legal counsel support.
- Para-Rowing athletes' classification and events.
- Safeguarding general coordination, awareness-building and case management.
- Financial and fiscal compliance, increase of required internal and external support, IT and Audit cost.
- Risk mitigation, management and insurance for various World Rowing activities, including an increasing number of events under direct management.
- Corporate Social Responsibility and Human Rights compliance initiatives required for good governance and compliance.
- Sustainability and environmental protection initiatives required for good governance and compliance.
- Event attribution processes.

In parallel to the above, the levels of inflation experienced over the last years have dramatically affected the World Rowing cost base.

2- Levels of service provided by World Rowing to its Member Federations (including events)

World Rowing's levels of servicing to an increasing number of MFs (159 to this day) have also been constantly increasing over the last decade. For example, significant resources have been expended in several key areas, notably the support to Sport Development through provision of various services and equipment.

In addition, World Rowing has made significant investments, including of time and personnel in the creation and management of additional competition opportunities for MFs across the three Rowing disciplines and Para-rowing.

World Rowing has considerably increased both the number of events under its direct management, and its participation at multisport events, across three disciplines, to provide MFs and their athletes with many opportunities across continents:

- Classic Rowing: various events, including U19/U23; Para Rowing and Masters.
- Coastal and Beach Sprint Rowing: World and European Championships in both formats; Olympic Games from LA28; Youth Olympic Games from Dakar 26; Mediterranean Games. In discussion: Commonwealth Games, World Beach Games.
- Indoor Rowing: World and European Championships. In planning, all expected in 2025: Olympic Esports Games, Virtual Series and Versa Challenge Finals.

3- Required levels of investment to support and promote Rowing across continents

Many areas are now in need of critical investment for the continued growth and promotion of our Sport across continents:

- Event production and broadcasting levels, including through provision of relevant data;
- Alternative viewing/digital platforms to complement decreasing linear TV audiences;
- Sports presentation and event festivalisation;
- Communications; traditional media and social media activations;
- Content production and 'storytelling';
- Media rights distribution and sponsorships sales;
- Strategic Event Attribution process;
- Corporate hospitality;
- Sport Development in emerging nations;
- Team and Athletes Rankings;
- Staffing to support the increasing workload and required levels of servicing and quality control across various initiatives.

For all the above reasons, the World Rowing Council recommends an increase of MFs memberships fees applicable for the 2025-2028 cycle, to be again reviewed at the end of 2028 for the 2029-2032 cycle. **See appendix A in following page.**

Finally, under all circumstances and due to the non-profit nature of our organisation, all incremental revenues associated with this, or any other initiative will be systematically reinvested into the support of Rowing, and subject to a regular and transparent reporting to MFs per customary practice.

The proposal, developed by the World Rowing Governance Working Group and validated by the World Rowing Council is submitted for approval at the World Rowing Ordinary Congress on 16 November 2024.

Appendix A - New Proposed Yearly Fee 2025-2029 (CHF)

TIER	# CREWS OVER LAST 4 YEARS (2021 to 2024)	MEMBER FEDERATIONS	NEW PROPOSED YEARLY FEE 2025-2028 (CHF)
1	1 to 10	AFG, ALB, ASA, BAN, BIH, BOT, BUR, CAM, CAY, CRC, DJI, DMA, FIJ, GHA, GIB, GUI, ISL, JOR, KGZ, KIR, LES, LUX, MAD, MAW, MDV, MGL, MKD, MLI, MOZ, MRI, MTN, MYA, NEP, NIG, ORF, PNG, PRK, SAM, SEN, SOM, SWZ, SYR, TGA, TKM, VIN, ARM, CMR, JAM, PAK, TTO, BRN, COL, HAI, LBN, MAS, MLT, PAN, QAT, BER, BOL, HON, DOM, ESA, NAM, NCA, SGP, VAN, ZAM, ANG, PLE, PUR, TOG, UGA, CPV, GUA, IRQ, VIE, BEN, ECU, GEO, UAE, CIV, KUW, LBA, PHI, SRI, VEN, ZIM, SUD, AZE, CUB, KSA, NGR	600
2	11-20	MON, IND, KEN, MAR, BAH, KOR, BAR, INA, SVK, KAZ	1'200
3	21-30	ALG, ISR, HKG, PAR, BUL, THA, CYP, MDA, TPA, SWE	2'000
4	31-40	EST, LAT, SLO, ARG, CHI, URU, SRB, UZB, BEL, IRI, CRO, PER	4'000
5	41-50	FIN, POR, MEX	5'000
6	51-70	NOR, LTU, TUR, BRA, TUN, DEN, RSA, EGY	6'000
7	71-100	IRL, UKR, HUN, NZL, AUT, GRE, CHN, JPN, CZE, SUI	8'000
8	>100	NED, AUS, ROU, POL, CAN, ESP, GBR, FRA, ITA, USA, GER	10'000