

Vision for the future

One thing we must talk about at the 2010 Plenary meeting is something which has been rather lacking in the past - and that is **a long term vision**.

What are CIMA's ambitions for the future?

Of course we've got lots of problems, most of which we will discuss at the Plenary, some not for the first time. But what about big stuff? What are CIMA's biggest global long term problems which are not going to be solved overnight but which might begin to be solved if we had a long term strategy?

Summary

- Extend the Championships calendar so we know what is happening at least 3 years in advance.
- Reduce organizers costs by:
 - Being more careful in the selection of Stewards & Jury.
 - Aim to pay CIMA officials travel expenses.
 - Buy equipment such as timing systems and giant inflatable pylons.
 - Make a maximum effort towards the automation of scoring systems.
- Raise income for CIMA by:
 - Sanctioning Category 2 championships.
 - Introducing elective teams at Cat 1 championships.
 - Eventually introducing a World Ranking system, the CIVL model being a very good example.
- Make sure championships are properly filmed.
- Introduce small medals for team members.
- Is this all in line with global FAI strategy? - Yes.

1) The Calendar

The sanctioning and organizing of championships is a fundamental CIMA task. CIMA has never known more than one or sometimes two years in advance where championships will be. This is not at all satisfactory; it should be at least three years.

It should be known at least 3 years in advance where championships will be.

2) Reluctance by NAC's to bid for championships.

Of course it is simple to say we should know where things will happen in 3 years time, but it will never be solved while organizers are reluctant to bid for them in the first place. We saw no bids for EPC 2010, WPC 2011 is at risk, our future calendar is not exactly packed with definite bids.

It is not because there is lack of demand from pilots; while overall numbers have been gently declining in microlight championships, numbers in some classes are still very healthy. Overall numbers in Paramotor championships have been consistently increasing.

The primary reason is probably the sheer expense of organizing championships. It is very difficult to do it on entry fees alone, so only organizers with access to government subsidy or at least some external sponsorship can justify the risk of making a bid, or they may end up paying for some of the massive work they do themselves, possibly personally. (yes, there is at least one instance of this actually happening).

Only a few nations can make government subsidized bids, sponsors are difficult to find, so nobody makes bids.

What can we do to raise organizer's income or reduce his costs?

Suggest organizers raise the entry fee? No. Some teams get government or NAC subsidy, but many don't. In these unfavourable economic times governments and NAC's and pilots are all under pressure. This might work for paramotors but it would be deeply unpopular, entries to microlight championships have been consistently falling so it could be a bit like pressing the self-destruct button – actually we want to find ways that entry fees can be reduced AND an organizer gets more income.

Reduce CIMA's sanction fee? No. This is 10% of entry fee, so about EUR 40 per competing pilot. This is almost CIMA's only income. Almost the entire CIMA expenditure is on medals and the expense of sending the CIMA President to the conferences he is obliged to go to and represent CIMA. Since the President represents CIMA rather than a NAC, if this was taken away the only alternative would be for him/her to pay this himself. At present CIMA's budget more or less balances, so there is little or no scope to reduce sanction fees.

Realistically, even removing the entire sanction fee would still not really solve an organizer's problems, and furthermore CIMA is under pressure to pay a new 20% tax on its sanction fees from FAI Central which might well force it to RAISE sanction fees quite significantly to stay solvent.

Immediate action

Another way of looking at it is by asking "what are an organizer's biggest expenses" and the answer to that is simple - the biggest single expense is the cost of bringing FAI officials to oversee a championship - monitor, jury and stewards. At EMC 2010 Sywell this was 25% of the entire expenditure.

Since CIMA appoints the officials, this is something which is under CIMA's direct control.

A jury is essential (even if it didn't have any protests to deal with at Sywell, this was the first time it's happened in 42 championships).

But we must:

1. **Economize on stewards** (were 3 necessary at Sywell? - simple answer is no)
2. **Appoint officials who don't have to travel so far to get to a championship** (could there have been an alternative to a transatlantic fare at Sywell? - answer probably yes).

Can we do more than this?

This is where the long term planning comes in.

A look at what [other FAI commissions](#) do reveals many of them pay all FAI officials expenses at championships.

We must make this a priority long term ambition - **CIMA must pay for its officials travel and accommodation at championships**. This will significantly reduce the financial burden on organizers and encourage more of them to bid for championships.

Of course right now CIMA can't possibly afford it. Most other commissions have much greater sanction fees, this is their 'tradition' but as already discussed above, unacceptable for CIMA.

The exception is CIVL, the HG & PG commission. They have devised a business model where they sanction category 2 events. The sanction fee is one entry fee or EUR 20, whichever is greater, and in return CIVL provides a World ranking. This has been a huge success, pilots want to participate in ranking events, encouraging more and more organizers to register. They now have something over 350 ranking events per year and it represents the largest proportion of their income. So much that they are able to subsidize category 1 events.

We can do the same. **CIMA must raise funds from sanctioning category 2 events.**

It won't happen overnight, and it needs a long term determination and a lot of work to do this, but we should **make a resolution now that this is what we want to do.**

Let CIMA start on this now!

A start can be made immediately with the Continental League Cup proposal by Poland. This is an excellent idea. It will not raise much in its first year, but Oak trees grow from Acorns and CIMA has absolutely nothing to lose. It will force CIMA to start collecting results data in a systematic way and processing them into results tables. This has all the potential to develop into a full-blown World ranking system.

CIMA must get this Continental league Cup idea running as soon as possible.

And all CIMA delegates must make an effort to ensure their 2011 national championships participate in it.

Manufacturer's teams / elective teams

This is an idea first tried at WPC / WAG 2001 but the idea was never developed after that.

- A look at any Paramotor or Microlight magazine shows that in their advertising manufacturers are quick to claim the success of pilots flying their equipment in CIMA sanctioned championships even if they are not actually supporting any of those pilots. Certainly neither CIMA nor the organizer get anything from this, and yet it is they who provided the platform in the first place.
- F1 shows us that a 'constructors championship' is at least as important as the drivers championship.
- The idea of 'elective teams' is contained in the Continental League Cup proposal.

So consider a similar thing at Cat 1 championships with an entry fee, payable by the team 'owner' to the organizer based on the number of competitors in the team, and CIMA receives a proportion of this in sanction fees.

Basically CIMA and the organizer are adding value by offering 'official' recognition of a team's success and receiving extra revenue from something they already have which does not consume much in the way of extra resources.

It is entirely optional for pilots to be member of an elective team, and does not confer any extra rights to enter a championship, in other words pilots must still be a member of national teams entered by their NAC as usual, but once entered they can be invited by owners of elective teams to also be a member of that team.

To have any value this idea must be a FAI / CIMA thing and not just a trophy awarded by the organizer so would need to be formalized in S10 / Local regulations. Ideally there should even be FAI medals. (not presently known if such a thing is possible).

Write a proposal for 2011 Plenary for introduction in 2012

Media

We all know that CIMA Sanctioned events, especially Paramotors are potentially quite sexy for TV. This is a 'chicken and egg' situation in as much as it is difficult to convince TV people we actually do do interesting things without some decent examples to show, and since 2007 we have been completely denied the possibility to make them by the FAI deal with Flying Aces.

Things do now seem to be changing and it looks like there will be more available options from 2011 onwards but we are still waiting for some terms and conditions to be released by FAI.

With TV coverage comes sponsorship and with sponsorship comes funding. It is therefore in the interest of everyone to make sure that future CIMA sanctioned events are filmed and those films are distributed as widely as possible.

Make sure championships are properly filmed, and the films are widely distributed.

Small FAI medals

There is a recognized demand for the 'small' FAI medals from competitors in winning teams at CIMA sanctioned championships; quite likely all team members contribute to the team success but only the team leader goes away from the championship with anything to show for it.

This is not an easy problem to solve and is [discussed in detail in a separate paper](#), but there is a demand and it is therefore CIMA's duty to try to find a solution to everything which can possibly make competitions more attractive to everyone concerned.

CIMA must find a way to introduce small medals for members of winning teams in Cat 1 Championships.

Longer term goal

Once CIMA has learnt how to collect results - and, crucially, organizers have learnt how to submit them, then the opportunity arises to extend the whole system into a World Ranking system. This could take on board other types of competitions or even simple things like distance flights like those pioneered at xcontest.org

CIMA Should expand this into a World Ranking system.

3) Equipment

About the only hardware we started Paramotor championships with were ski slalom poles and traffic cones. They have now become much more technical; electroKick timing, and now the giant inflatable pylons which totally transform the 'look' of precision tasks into something really interesting and exciting for spectators to watch.

The acquisition of this kit is yet another new burden on organizers.

It is extremely unfortunate that a secret deal between FAI EB and the WAG Turin organizers made in early 2010 to trade equipment in lieu of sanction fees omitted to include any of the pylons, timing equipment or electroKick systems used in our competitions there. It could have, but it seems nobody thought of it, and it could not be re-negotiated after it became public knowledge.

A disastrous lost opportunity, because **CIMA must own this sort of equipment for hire to competition organizers.**

Of course this needs funding: All the more reason to get a series of Category 2 championships going as soon as possible.

4) Scoring systems

If you don't have scores, you don't have a championship. They are 'mission critical'. It has been acknowledged the organizing team at EMC 2010 Sywell did a good job in producing rapid accurate scoring, but they were a hugely experienced team. Before the scorer can even start his work an organizer needs 'solid' task design, good briefings, efficient management out on the airfield and accurate flight analysis.

Unfortunately, the job has become so technical it is an almost impossibly daunting task for potential organizers of future championships to imagine how they could do it themselves. So they don't.

The solution is 'track-in, score-out' systems. Plug a flight recorder in, out comes a score. At Sywell there was a significant amount of 'self service' when it came to downloading loggers, so in theory it could be possible for a pilot to get a score without the intervention of a scorer at all! Suddenly the whole thing may appear less daunting to organizers and they will become more willing to run championships.

Achieving this is not at all easy, but we may be closer than you think.

The trick is to approach the problem from behind:

Instead of designing a nice task, and then giving it to the analysis and scoring people to figure out how to get a score out of it, the competition director instead chooses tasks from a new and very precise catalogue which have had the analysis and scoring software pre-configured and tested. Someone will still have had to enter all the basic information like turnpoints, gates Etc. to suit the location, but so long as the Director does *exactly* as instructed and does not amend *anything* in the task description then it should work as promised - track in - score out.

There's nothing to stop a competition director from continuing to design his own super-imaginative tasks, but he will still have to write the brief and

probably have to analyse and score it in a more 'traditional' manner.

With these new style 'precise' tasks, the briefing sheet, the flight analysis and the scoring is already done. All a competition director has to do is follow its instructions to the letter, and make sure things are properly organized out on the airfield.

This is not going to all come immediately, at first it won't work perfectly, and there will only be a very limited number of tasks it will work with. But it is coming.

CIMA must encourage and assist this as much as it can.

One significant problem in this totally automated system is the interface between logger and pilot. Neither the MLR or the Air-Observer have download software which is suitable for this 'self-service' type of arrangement, a lot of manual intervention is required. They are also very slow to download, especially the Air Observer.

CIMA must consider a new specification for 'approved' loggers which these 'older' loggers will not meet unless their download software is upgraded. This is the responsibility of the manufacturer and there is a significant risk it won't be done. In other words they will become obsolete and pilots will have to replace them. However - relative to the cost of the typical competing aircraft, the cost of the new generation of 1 sec, big-memory, USB-2 loggers is insignificant and a small price to pay for the potential benefits.

Global FAI Strategy

Before CIMA does any of the above it must ask if it is in accordance with global FAI strategy.

What is global FAI Strategy? This was laid out in some detail at the 2010 FAI General Conference in two reports.

- The FAI Strategy Task force report.

[STF Task Force report](#)

- A Strategy presentation by the General Secretary.

[SG Strategy report](#)

Both of these reports range wider than the objectives laid out here, they are very much along the lines of 'FAI must do more than just competitions and records'. This is all very good, but they still establish that competitions and records remain the backbone of FAI business, and if CIMA doesn't have them any more because organizers can't find the funds to organize them, then CIMA is nothing much more than just a name.

The global strategies do however encourage things which we do already do, be environmentally friendly, for example. It was CIMA competitions where four stroke engines first started appearing, in both Microlights in the late 1980's and in Paramotors in the mid 2000's - because CIMA's competition rules encouraged them. More recently CIMA introduced a whole new raft of classes for Electrically powered microlights and Paramotors - and it is good to see World Records being claimed in them.

They encourage increased participation in Asia - we had one WPC in Asia already in 2007, and are actively encouraging more.

They encourage increased participation by Women, and we have had special provisions for all-female crews and more recently medals for them.

In conclusion CIMA's objectives are in line with FAI Strategy. Yes it would be nice to start ranging wider, but we need to sort out the core activities first.