INTRODUCTION

The Arctic Winter Games is the largest northern multi-sport and culture event. These Games include participation from Alaska, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Northern Alberta, Nunavut, Greenland, Nunavik, Quebec, Yamal, Russia and Sápmi.

The Arctic Winter Games combine athletic competition, cultural exchange and social interaction between northern contingents. Athletic competition features sports that enjoy worldwide popularity alongside the ones more closely associated with winter climates. The Arctic Sports and Dene Games are activities which evolved among the people of the circumpolar region. Cultural participation of performing and visual artists highlights talents from both the host and participating regions. Achieving individual goals, winning Ulus, breaking records and earning standing ovations are always a thrill; but in the end, it is the participating cultural exchanges and social interaction that make the Arctic Winter Games a unique event.

The Arctic Winter Games provide a vehicle for sport and cultural development, while building lasting legacies for everyone involved. There is tremendous social benefit for the area hosting the Games. Key findings from social impact studies conducted include:

- The Arctic Winter Games provide for “strengthening of cultural awareness and understanding” across the north.”
- The Arctic Winter Games “help develop pride in being northern.”
- The Arctic Winter Games, including the selection processes and training leading up to the Games, “have life-long positive impacts on people and the communities of the North”,
- Increase “community pride and involvement, enhance self-esteem, enhance healthy lifestyles, develop role models and volunteerism.”

The Arctic Winter Games serve to develop stronger economic and social ties between participating units. They also provide international exposure to the region in which they are hosted.

The Games provide significant economic and community development opportunities for hosting regions. Economic impact studies show that traditionally, the Arctic Winter Games create significant economic activity, through money spent by visitors and host communities.

Relationships are created in communities that last a life-time. Volunteers work together and gain significant skills which are used long after the Games for other community activities.

This showcase of northern sport and culture provides the opportunity to promote the diversity of the North. For individual participants, the exchange allows them to compete, perform and share talents with each other, the host community and media.
The Arctic Winter Games provide youth in remote northern communities the opportunity to prepare, train, and compete against youth who face similar social challenges, such as having limited or no local opportunities to compete or the ability to travel to distant competitions. Providing Arctic Winter Games competition at trials or at the Games provides equal caliber sporting opportunities and is a key factor in building self-esteem and confidence in youth in remote areas.

The Arctic Winter Games remains true to the grassroots principles established at its inception. These Games involve as many athletes and cultural participants as possible through the Games and team trials. The Games provide a forum of competition for developing Northern athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers. This Strategic Plan outlines the vision, mission, guiding principles, values and strategic direction for the Arctic Winter Games.

ARCTIC WINTER GAMES STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION

The Arctic Winter Games promotes the exchange of cultural values and relationships through friendly competition, social interaction and volunteering in the circumpolar region.

MISSION

As stewards of the Arctic Winter Games the International Committee promotes the values symbolized by the three interlocking rings of the Arctic Winter Games logo:

* Athletic competition
* Cultural exchange, and
* Social interaction.

The International Committee provides leadership through the implementation of policy and the promotion and marketing of the Games, thereby building effective partnerships to address the needs of host communities, international partners, and the Games sponsors.

GOVERNANCE

The permanent partners of the Arctic Winter Games include the governments of Alaska, Alberta, Greenland, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Yukon.

Political Leaders responsible for the Games provide policy direction to the International Committee in the areas of:
- Size and scope
- Hosting rotation
- Long-term planning
- Contingent participation in the Arctic Winter Games
The Arctic Winter Games International Committee is responsible for implementing policies and providing leadership to the Games. These responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

- Promotion and protection of the Vision, and Values of the Arctic Winter Games
- Selection of host sites
- Selection of sports
- Development of sport technical packages
- Establish and monitor hosting standards
- Provide regular guidance and direction to hosting

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES**

- The Arctic Winter Games bring together young athletes to participate in friendly competition and to share cultural values from countries and regions across the North.

- The Games promote the development and benefits of sport and circumpolar cultures.

- The development of young athletes is the primary objective of the Games.

- Participation in the Games is intended to promote skill development, self-confidence and self-esteem in the athletes, cultural participants and officials.

- Arctic Sports and Dene Games are a unique and essential element of the Games.

- Promotion of cultural understanding and harmony is important to the Games.

- The Games provide motivation for young athletes to develop active and healthy lifestyles and to make choices that could lead to the pursuit of personal excellence, and provide the opportunity for participants to develop socially and culturally.

- The Games provide an inspiration and motivation for coaches, officials and for volunteer development

- The Games provide a major vehicle for community development and volunteer involvement.

**VALUES**

The Arctic Winter Games International Committee believes in the values of:

- Fairplay
- Access and equity
- Integrity
- Respect for self and others
- Partnerships
• Personal growth
• Community enhancement
• Cultural diversity awareness and understanding

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

• The significance of the Games as an instrument for sport development is paramount. However, community development, civic pride and cultural celebration are also recognized as important and desirable outcomes.

• The sports and events in the Games program must be practiced in most of the jurisdictions (in at least four contingents), and should benefit sport development in each contingent.

• Youth participant development needs and their care and comfort are central to the decision-making of the Arctic Winter Games International Committee.

• Equity and access are supported throughout all aspects of the Games and the Games movement.

• Standards for facilities will be defined by the Arctic Winter Games competition requirements.

• The Arctic Winter Games should utilize the human and financial resources of the private sector, while respecting the principles and values of the Games.

• In keeping with the vision of the Arctic Winter Games, sport selection for each Games will be made based on a balance of interests of the permanent partners and on the Games interests.

• Volunteers are the foundation and integral to the success of the Games.

• Cooperation with governments, sport organizations, host societies and the corporate sector are essential to the success of the Games.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Using the Arctic Winter Games Vision, Mission, Principles and Values, as the foundation, the following strategic directions and associated goals will guide the operations of the International Committee.
1. **Strengthening the development of northern athletes and fostering youth participation**

As a unique international circumpolar sport competition, the Arctic Winter Games will be the venue where developing athletes from across the north meet to enhance their athletic skills and to share their respective cultures. Trained coaches who believe in and promote Arctic Winter Games’ values and operating principles will guide athletes. The Games will include sports and events to ensure that the Games are a staging ground for developing athletes to improve their athletic skills and to develop personal values and traits that will enhance their ability to succeed.

More specifically, the Arctic Winter Games International Committee will:

1.1 Facilitate and support, through each Host Society, the delivery of a high quality international competition involving developing athletes in the north.

1.2 Facilitate and support, through each Host Society, an event that celebrates and shares our unique and important cultural diversity.

1.3 Provide for an appropriate mix of sports that reflect activities that are popular in the participating units, while ensuring that certain arctic sports and activities are retained to safeguard the uniqueness of the Games.

1.4 Enhance the quantity and quality of coaching available to athletes in all units.

1.5 Enhance the quality and quantity of technical officials in sport throughout all units.

1.6 Provide for participation opportunities for both genders as athletes, coaches and officials at the Games and leading up to the Games.

2. **Provide Support to Host Societies**

The Arctic Winter Games International Committee recognizes the central role that Host Societies play in planning and delivering successful Games. The International Committee is committed to supporting each Host Society to ensure the most efficient and effective organization of the Games by transferring knowledge and expertise acquired from previous Games.

Therefore, the Arctic Winter Games International Committee will:

2.1 Ensure the clear definition of roles, responsibilities and obligations of the host society that are central to the Arctic Winter Games.

2.2 Work with the host society to enhance and update the range of support materials, technical documents, resources and services provided to each Host Society.
2.3 Promote the incorporation of legacies from the Games in areas such as facilities, volunteers, sport and community development in host communities.

2.4 Work collaboratively to ensure that each host society successfully addresses the care and comfort needs of the participants by abiding to a set of minimum hosting standards for the Games.

3. **Promoting the Benefits of the Arctic Winter Games**

The Arctic Winter Games provide lasting legacies to everyone involved. For athletes and cultural participants, the Games provide an opportunity to come together to compete in friendly competition and experience cultural values from northern regions around the world. For sport, the Games provide a vehicle for sport development. For host communities, the Games provide an opportunity for community development, confidence building and pride. For governments, the Games enhance the establishment of effective partnerships in order to improve the lives of people of the north, while promoting unity and cultural understanding.

In this regard, the International Committee will:

3.1 Work in partnership with each Host Society to encourage the development of joint marketing/sponsorship plans to maximize private sector support for the Games for both the short and long term.

3.2 Develop tools to promote the benefits of the Games and work effectively with all key stakeholders to ensure that the benefits are understood.

3.3 Work collaboratively with the host society, major television and media outlets to ensure that the Games are broadcast over the widest possible area.

4. **Safeguard the Future of the Games**

As stewards of the Games, the International Committee provides leadership and implements policies to safeguard the future of the Games.

In this regard the International Committee will:

4.1 Integrate a strategic planning process that includes input and participation from all key stakeholders.

4.2 Develop and update policies that reflect the impacts of the changing environment.

4.3 Ensure that the structure and decision-making process reflect the stewardship role entrusted to the International Committee.
4.4 Ensure that the Committee is a responsive, professional, and well-managed organization.

4.5 Ensure that the Committee’s financial resources are well-managed and are sufficient to successfully carry out the Committee’s mission over the short and long term.

4.6 Set minimum hosting standards that will balance the care and comfort of the participants, and meet the requirements for hosting a high quality international sport and cultural event.

5. Participation Limits

5.1 The Games are limited to a maximum of 2000 participants.

5.2 Where participation limits allow, additions to existing permanent contingents or the addition of other circumpolar guest contingents will be considered.

5.3 In the years when the Games are to be hosted in smaller communities, other options such as satellite venues will be explored to ensure the highest number of sports are included in the program and athlete care and comfort is the highest priority.

5.4 The continued participation of guest units will be re-affirmed on a per Games basis subject to the guest unit satisfying all the required elements of participation as directed by the Arctic Winter Games International Committee.

5.5 New guest units’ requests will be reviewed based on eligibility and in consideration of participant limitations.

6. Hosting Arctic Winter Games

The benefits from the Arctic Winter Games are acknowledged and shared by all participating contingents and key stakeholders.

In this regard the Arctic Winter Games permanent partners agree that

6.1 All permanent partners of the Arctic Winter Games will have opportunity to be involved in hosting the Games once in each rotation.

6.2 The preference is to host the Arctic Winter Games with one Host Society in a site where all participants can be accommodated as this provides for the best experience for athletes and cultural performers. This is also the most economical means of hosting the Games.
6.3 Satellite communities will be considered on a case by case basis.

6.4 Split Games involving two separate jurisdictions with two different Host Societies will be considered where no other option exists to host the Games. The Arctic Winter Games International Committee will develop an appropriate set of parameters outlining conditions under which a split Games format may be considered. The care and comfort of participants is of prime importance.

**Hosting Rotation**

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