# Creation of a strategic framework for global development of ice hockey

Aku Nieminen

## Acknowledgements

# Abstract

| Author(s) | |
|---|---|
| Aku Nieminen | |

| Degree Programme | |
|---|---|
| Sport Development and Management | |

| Thesis Title | Number of pages and appendix pages |
|---|---|
| Creation of a strategic framework for global development of ice hockey | 90 + 16 |

The International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) is the international governing body of ice hockey and inline hockey. Among many responsibilities and objectives, one of the main tasks of the IIHF is to develop ice hockey on a global scale. The IIHF has 74 Member National Associations which can benefit from the development programs of the IIHF. These development programs have the purpose of assisting and supporting the National Association in the domestic development of ice hockey in their countries.

The objective of this research, which in fact changed during the development process, is to create a strategic framework for the global development of ice hockey. The strategic framework is to illustrate a vision statement, a mission statement, values, strategic focus areas and strategic priorities. It shall serve as a succession plan of the current IIHF Development and Coaching Committee and to be potentially utilized by the same Committee in the following term. Other objectives include the evaluation on the benefits of using this sort of development process with other IIHF Committees and the self-development of the researcher. The research questions relate to the strategic framework, value of the current IIHF programs and their enhancement, suggested methods of measuring success and to the evaluation of the process itself.

The research method is action research. The researcher actively takes part in the creation of a strategic framework designed for the global development of ice hockey and for the use of the IIHF Development and Coaching Committee. In addition to being involved in the process, the researcher observes, reports, assesses and reflects it. This action research is supported by other, more traditional, research methods such as questionnaires and is conducted in cycles which consist of planning, action, observation and reflection.

The research resulted in the creation of the strategic framework which contains all of the intended content. It also provided suggestions on how the process should be continued in the future cycles. It proposes ways to enhance the current programming and points out findings which can be used in the future processes. The results also show how beneficial the process is for the self-development of the researcher.

| Key Words | |
|---|---|
| Strategy, Strategic Framework, Action Research, Ice Hockey, Sport Development | |

# Table of Contents

# 1   Introduction

The International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) is the international governing body of ice hockey and inline hockey. It features 74 Member National Associations which have the role of governing ice hockey in their countries. IIHF's mandate and objectives consist of numerous different areas including overall governance of the sport, management of international player transfers, creation of the ice hockey rulebook, officiating guidelines and running IIHF World Championships in five different categories. One area of responsibility is the global development and promotion of the sport. Through a program called National Association Assistance Program, the IIHF approach and philosophy for the global development is based on assisting and supporting the National Associations in their domestic operations concerning development. IIHF has a number of Committees which are to provide recommendations to the IIHF Council. The development of ice hockey is under the mandate of the Development and Coaching Committee.

The research problem in this study is the challenge of ensuring accountability, delivering more results, showing and measuring success and illustrating value of the National Association Assistance Program. The objective of this research is to create a strategic framework for the global development of ice hockey. As the process has been continuous, the aims and objectives have altered as per the outcomes of the discussions, meetings and actions.

The purpose of the strategic framework is to illustrate a vision statement, a mission statement, values, strategic focus areas and strategic priorities. Another purpose of the framework is to serve as a succession plan from the current IIHF Development and Coaching Committee to the next one. The research also evaluates whether the development process of a strategic framework would be beneficial for other IIHF Committees and how that process could be enhanced. Lastly, the researcher aims for personal development through active participation in the process.

The literature part solely focuses on strategies and the different areas within strategic processes. The sections included are strategic analysis, the roles and impact of people and leadership and fundamental statements such as mission statements, which provide the basis for the strategy. There are also sections for strategy development and implementation, both consisting of areas which contribute to the task.

The research method is action research. As such, the research consists of many cycles; each being dedicated to a step forward which contains different phases. The researcher actively takes part in the development process with the aim of creating enhancement through planning, action, observation and reflection. The most contributing factor to the outcomes is participation in and reporting of the relevant discussions, actions and meetings experienced during the process. The action research is supported by some other, more traditional research methods and therefore questionnaires are also used to collect relevant data. Typically for action research, the researcher does not work alone and the efforts are based on team work.

## 2   Purpose, methodology and relevance

In this action research, the researcher actively takes part in the creation of a strategic framework designed for the global development of ice hockey and for the use of the IIHF Development and Coaching Committee. In addition to being involved in the process, the researcher observes, reports, assesses and reflects it. The researcher evaluates whether a similar process would be beneficial for other IIHF Committees and, in the case of being beneficial for others, whether the process should be repeated or modified. Lastly, through active involvement and research, the researcher aims to enhance his vocational and personal skills.

### 2.1   Purpose and objectives of the research

Action research is a continuous process. Consequently, the actual objectives and aims of this study have altered as the work has progressed. The research problem has remained the same while the approaches and solutions have transformed.

The initial purpose of the study was to create a global ice hockey development concept or a program which consists of data collection and analysis and concrete tools to utilize such intelligence to establish National Association long-term development plans. However, during the process, it was decided that it would be more beneficial to take a step back and strategize the global development of ice hockey before proceeding to design audit tools and development programs.

Therefore, the main objective of this research is to plan and produce a strategic framework for the IIHF, and more specifically for the IIHF Development and Coaching Committee, to utilize in the global development of ice hockey. The purpose of this strategic framework is to define the vision, the mission, the values, the strategic focus areas and the strategic priorities. It shall also provide suggestions on how the finalized strategy is to be built and implemented as well as how progress can be monitored to define the areas where the execution of the plan is working, where the pitfalls are and whether the activities have actual value and provide return to the investment.

As action research is merely a process, another objective of this research is to report on the strategy development process, evaluate how it has progressed, criticize it, appraise it and also to assess whether such process is suitable and recommendable for other IIHF

Committees. This evaluation will provide suggestions on the application of the process in the future and, if it is deemed to be beneficial for others, to look for areas of improvement.

Self-development of the researcher is a fundamental part of action research and therefore it naturally is one of the objectives of this research. The personal goals of the researcher include gathering relevant information about strategy development and implementation, developing relevant skills and a mindset of strategic thinking, identifying ways to include strategic processes to daily work and how to design and use models and tools which address these processes and their goals.

The objectives of the research can be summarized as follows:

- To plan a global ice hockey development strategy framework for the use of the IIHF Development and Coaching Committee.
- Evaluate the complete development and planning process to determine whether it is beneficial for other IIHF Committees to use as such.
- Enhance the professional skills of the researcher.

## 2.2 Research questions

The aim of this research is to seek answers to valuable and correct questions related to the planning and activities of the IIHF Development and Coaching Committee. The research questions are setting the basis for the strategy development process and thus play a key role in determining what the end-product should clarify and whether the research has been successful. The research questions are typical questions relating to leadership and supervisor work, making them relevant to action research.
(Kananen 2009, 13)

The research questions are:

1. What are the vision, mission, values and strategic priorities of the IIHF Development and Coaching Committee?
2. Are the current IIHF development programs suitable and valuable for the use of IIHF Member National Associations and if needed, how can those be enhanced?
3. What are the suggested methods, metrics and tools for the IIHF to utilize to measure success and show value of the development programs?
4. What kind of process has the development of the strategic framework been for the IIHF Development and Coaching Committee in practice and how could such be enhanced in the future?

## 2.3 Research methodology

The research method is action research. As usual and following the characteristics of action research, also quantitative and qualitative features are used. These empirical sub-studies serve the purpose of providing necessary data for the development process of a strategic framework. These include questionnaires which are used to gather information of the current situation to assist in the strategic analysis and process-reporting, observations, activities and reflection.

Also, there are three reasons which make this research a typical action research. The research relates to the daily work of the researcher as do the research problem and target of this study. This is described more in details in section 2.5 of this document. Also, the researcher does not work completely alone during the research. In a continuous process aiming for a change, many phases of the research include co-operation with other people from relevant positions and utilization of their contributions to the development process. Lastly, the researcher reports on the development process, evaluates it and makes concluding recommendations.

## 2.4 Scope

This research will cover the development and planning process of a strategic framework for the development of ice hockey which includes a vision, mission, values, strategic focus, strategic priorities and the suggested action steps. The end result will give the necessary tools to proceed to the creation of the strategy. This research will also provide suggestions on how the strategy should be implemented and how progress should be measured.

This process serves as one cycle of action research where the action taken relates mainly to planning. The finalized strategy, its actual implementation, evaluation and reflection are not within the scope of this research. This research focuses solely on the development process of a strategic framework which is to assist the IIHF Development and Coaching Committee in the creation of a finalized strategy.

## 2.5 Role of the researcher in the development of the strategic framework

The researcher and the author of this text works in the Sport Department of the IIHF with the job title Sport Manager. Among other areas of responsibility, the researcher manages the IIHF development and coaching programs and therefore works closely with the IIHF

Development and Coaching Committee on a daily or at least a weekly basis. Management of the programs includes designing, planning, executing and reporting on the programs and respective projects as well as financial responsibilities such as budgeting and cost management. The researcher has worked for the IIHF for over eight years but has been responsible for development programs for a little less than three years.

The researcher is actively involved in the development process of the strategic framework. The process is led by the Co-Chairman of the Development and Coaching Committee, who together with the researcher report to the Committee Chairman and the IIHF Sport Director. The researcher's role and duties are to assist the relevant people involved by operationally driving the overall process. This includes managing operations of the process, providing relevant data and analyzing it. Through the learning during this research process and with the knowledge gained, for example, on strategy development and implementation processes and models, the researcher assists in creating a concept which can be put forward as a Committee succession plan. The involvement also includes communicating and linking the parties involved and considering how the new concept and strategy would fit into the available financial and human resources.

## 3    International Ice Hockey Federation

The purpose of this chapter is to indicate the validity of the research. It is to provide a general overview of what the IIHF is, how is the IIHF structured and what are the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of the organization. More importantly, to clarify the relevance of this part to this research, this chapter explains the role of the IIHF to the development of ice hockey globally and how this task is presented and emphasized in different publications.

The IIHF is the world governing body of ice hockey, established May 15, 1908 in Paris France. The Membership of the IIHF consists of National Associations from 74 different countries. The responsibilities of the IIHF include governance of international player transfers, rulebook for ice hockey, officiating guidelines and running IIHF World Championships in five different categories which are men, women, juniors under-20, juniors under-18 and women under-18. The IIHF also organizes European Club competition. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2016.)

The very beginning of the IIHF Statutes and Bylaws provides an overview of the main objectives of the organization:

> The International Ice Hockey Federation is dedicated to the worldwide growth and development of ice hockey and Inline hockey, providing exemplary leadership and governance by diligently observing the principles of democracy, fairness, solidarity and transparency for it Member National Associations
> (International Ice Hockey Federation 2014, 2).

The International Olympic Committee recognizes the IIHF as the only governing body for international ice hockey.  The IIHF has a number of Statutes, Bylaws, Regulations, Codes and Rules to govern the game. No discrimination is allowed and the IIHF is strictly neutral in politics, racial, gender and religion-related matters. The IIHF serves as a Trustee to the Member National Associations and is a non-profit organization. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2014, 12-13.)

### 3.1    Legislative and executive bodies and IIHF Council

The legislative bodies include the General Congress, Annual Congress, Semi-Annual Congress and Extra-ordinary Congress. Council Members and National Association with

full Membership status may vote in the Congresses. Executive bodies include the Council, Executive and Finance Committees and Directorates. The IIHF Council consists of the President, three Vice-Presidents, each assigned to represent different continents, and nine Council Members. The General Secretary is a member of the Council without the right to vote. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2016.)

The seats in the IIHF Council are selected every four years through a democratic process of voting. All of these positions are decided in IIHF Annual Congresses based on an election. The voters are representatives of the IIHF Member National Associations with a full membership status. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2014, 31.)

The IIHF Council has a number of responsibilities. These include observing and enforcing the Statutes, Bylaws and Regulations and ensuring that Member National Associations comply with the IIHF rules. They also appoint Committee Members and review Committee proposals through which they initiateproposals for the Congress whose decisions they are to consequently execute. Other responsibilities include overseeing budgetary and financial matters, approving agreements, controlling the Championship Program and Olympic competitions, employing the General Secretary, instituting and observing principles and practices of good governance and all other arising duties which are not specified in the Statutes and Bylaws. The operational Committees of IIHF shall be chaired by a Council Member who is appointed by Council. Council also determines structures, activities and mandates of the Committees. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2014, 30-31 & 38.)

## 3.2 Committees

The IIHF has 13 operational Committees. The titles of the Committees reveal the areas of their focus. The IIHF Committees are:

- Athletes Committee
- Competition and Inline Committee
- Coordination Committee
- Development and Coaching Committee
- Event Committee
- Facilities Committee
- History Committee
- Legal Committee
- Medical Committee
- Officiating Committee
- Social and Environment Committee
- Women's Committee

(International Ice Hockey Federation 2016).

There are also two consulting groups, which specialize in the areas of strategic consulting and player safety. In addition, the IIHF has a Disciplinary Board. Except for the Disciplinary Board and the Appeal Board, Committees are to provide recommendations to Council. These recommendations shall be within the mandate of the Committee. The Chairman of the Committee, with the assistance of the General Secretary, proposes the members of the Committee. The proposal is subject to Council approval. Each Committee shall also have an executive secretary from the Office. Each Committee Member has a vote and a majority is required to reach a decision. The Chairman may also invite specialists but they will not have the right to vote. The Committee reports its activities to the Congress and Council on annual basis. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2014, 38-39.)

## 3.3 Office

The IIHF office consists of 28 staff members plus one external staff member. The office, led by the General Secretary, consists of five departments. The five departments are administration, marketing and communications, event, sport and IT. The Office job titles include Directors, Managers and Coordinators. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2016.)

The General Secretary needs to ensure that the IIHF office operates effectively and efficiently following good governance practices. The task includes the establishment of the organization so that the objectives of the IIHF are fulfilled. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2014, 37.)

## 3.4 Mandate, objectives and mission

The IIHF objectives, among other things, discuss the growth and the development of the game, governance, good order and integrity. The objectives, and thus the mandate, are discussed in the IIHF Statute 2.

> The objectives of the IIHF are:
> - to legislate for and govern the activities and operations of the IIHF in compliance with good governance principles.
> - to govern, develop and promote ice hockey and inline hockey throughout the world;
> - to develop and control international ice hockey and inline hockey;
> - to promote friendly relations among the Member National Associations;
> - to operate in an organized manner for the good order of the sport;
> - to maintain the integrity of the sport in relation to international competition;
> - to organize and control international competition; and

- to promote and actively participate in the fight against the use of Doping and Competition Manipulation in ice hockey and inline hockey. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2014, 11.)

The second statute also clarifies that the IIHF will take all necessary measures to ensure a number of matters, which include event organization, legal and regulative processes, international player transfers, marketing and media matters as well as anti-doping, are handled correctly and in good order. This section also discusses the development of young players, coaches and game officials, even further emphasizing the importance of the development of the game and the role of the IIHF on delivering that. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2014, 12.)

The IIHF mission statement is very similar to Statute 2. It indicates that same topics relating to governance, control, development and promotion of hockey, promotion of friendly relations between the Member National Associations and operation in an organized manner for the good order of the sport. There are no vision or values statements made available through the website. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2016.)

The IIHF also has Minimum Participation Standards which are outlined IIHF Bylaws 402 and 403 and include a number of areas that need to be in order before a Member National Association is eligible to compete in the IIHF World Championship Program which includes five different categories with a number of divisional events. Development of the game is emphasized in these rules as well. To qualify to enter into these Championships, the Member National Associations must ensure that they have an operational development program with a certain number of participants, depending on the category to which they wish to participate in. These development programs should be targeted to Learn to Play recruitment program, coach education, game official development. On top, there needs to be a program which targets one of the following areas: player recruitment, administration education, team manager education, equipment manager education or a program which address goalkeeping. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2014, 47-48.)

## 3.5 Development programs

The IIHF Sport Department has a partnership with the IIHF Member National Associations to grow and to develop the game of ice hockey globally. National Associations are provided with resources for organization and operation of educational programs to be operated domestically. The IIHF aims to assist the countries with their development programs and therefore the IIHF does not seek to operate any programs within these nations. The Na-

tional Associations themselves are responsible for providing programs to their own membership. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2016.)

The IIHF website provides a philosophy, mission statement and a vision for growth and development of the game. These discuss partnership with and support to the Member National Associations, educational material for all Members to be used as the core or a supplement to their programs and education of the membership within the National Associations. The vision discusses a library of educational materials for coaching, players, administrators and officials and that the IIHF will discuss each country's needs to provide the best possible assistance. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2016.)

The Programs outlined are Coach Development, Official's Development, Junior Hockey Development, Medical Development and Administrator Development. The IIHF provides manuals for a Learn to Play recruitment Program and an online resource called the International Ice Hockey Centre.  The IIHF co-operates with the International Ice Hockey Centre of Excellence, located in Vierumaki, Finland, to use research and education to develop the game. Also, Haaga-Helia Degree Programme in Sports and Leisure Management students (later referred to as students) are a part of these projects to have a practical working environment and therefore assist the IIHF in conducting the work related to the development of ice hockey. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2016.)

The IIHF also operates Hockey Development Camps. The camps are used as platforms for launching IIHF development and education programs. These are to support the National Associations in the operation of their own programs and the IIHF might grant subsidies for programs that are operated domestically. This is part of the IIHF National Association Assistance Program. The Programs featured at the Camp are player, team coach, goalkeeper coach, team manager and equipment manager development. In addition, the camp has an education program for administrators and a National Association Learn to Play Program. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2016.)

The camp goals include developing partnership between the IIHF and the Member National Associations, education, development and skill enhancement of future leaders of ice hockey throughout the world, encouragement of fair play and respect, providing necessary tools to assist the National Associations to meet the IIHF Minimum Participation Standards, providing theoretical and practical sessions for improvement, providing practical examples of the IIHF development program, aiming at personal growth and development of all participants and promoting international friendships and relations. The IIHF Develop-

ment and Coaching Committee, along with IIHF Instructors and Mentors, guide and lead all of the programs. (International Ice Hockey Federation 2016.)

# 4 Strategy

The objective of this chapter is to familiarize the researcher with the relevant areas of strategy development and implementation. To be able to contribute to and to be able to learn from the development process of a strategic framework, the researcher needs to understand the different areas and processes which are fundamental and impact the process as a whole. It is also important to acknowledge what needs to happen after the strategic framework has been designed. Therefore, this chapter discusses strategies in general, strategic processes, people and their role in the process, strategic analysis processes, important statements serving as the foundation of the strategy as well as strategy development, implementation and measurement.

There are a number of ways to describe what a strategy is or what it is for. Providing one single definition is impossible, especially as strategies are used for a number of purposes. BusinessDictionary.com (2016) provides two definitions. The first is "A method or plan chosen to bring about a desired future, such as achievement of a goal or solution to a problem" (BusinessDictionary.com 2016) and the second is "The art and science of planning and marshalling resources for their most efficient and effective use". (BusinessDictionary.com 2016). McKeown (2012, 4) gives a short and simple meaning to it "Strategy is about shaping the future". Kourdi (2015, 3) gives a more specific definition for business strategies: "Business strategy is the plans, choices and decisions used to guide a company to greater profitability and success".

Strategy, as a word or an act, is nothing new. The word strategy was first used in Athens 508 BC to describe the art of leadership and it originates from the word *strategos* which means general or a person who leads an army. Art of War by Sun Tzu, a book which outlines different principles for leaders to follow in order to win, is still being purchased today despite its creation over 2200 years ago. Corporate strategy, as an area of strategizing, started to become more known when strategy books began to appear for business leaders in 1950's. In 1960's, the relationship between strategy and organizational structure was examined and there were efforts to give direction to managers to plan a more successful future. The approaches ranged from extremely detailed planning, a stream of individual actions as well as mathematics with an emphasis on a detailed analysis with clear models. (McKeown 2012, xxv-xxvii.)

Practicing strategic management has become more and more important also in sport organizations. This is due to the importance of sport organizations in society as well as their

changes towards commercialization. It is important that strategic management and environmental analysis are adapted as per the distinct needs of the sport organization. This is to ensure continuity in development. (Bester 2012, 11535.)

When focus is directed on strategy, it will indicate where a specific unit or a group of businesses can increase success as well as the areas where performance is weak or not delivering the expectations. It will provide detail on the areas where a business is generating revenue and what are the reasons for it. It also provides guidance on where the resources should be concentrated, especially in relation to human resources, actions and finance. (Kourdi 2015, 3.)

Utilizing strategies is highly beneficial. The development and implementation of the strategy ensures that resources are concentrated to the most important customers. It helps to highlight how to increase profits through product extension development, product mix changes and price and cost-cut adjustments. Strategy helps in the development of a firm's internal organization as it shows where managers' business skills need to be added or enhanced. It also illustrates where productivity should be improved and why particular activities have been successes or failures. (Kourdi 2015, 4.)

The emphasis in acknowledging the need for sufficient resources applies to sport organizations as well. With the development of sport organizations, the programs become more complex and such causes changes in the need for resources. This also has an influence on the structure of the sport organization. The task of being a developed sport organization causes demands and effects on the size of the organization and the specialization that is required. (Minikin & Robinson 2011, 223.)

The task of a strategy is to provide answers to basic questions which, despite being basic, are very powerful when in terms of directing a company or an organization towards the direction that it should be heading to. If these questions are not answered, the operations as a whole might be in jeopardy or at least at poor and illogical level. The basic questions are from McKeown (2012, 167) illustrated in figure 1.

Figure 1. The basic (powerful) strategy questions. (McKeown 2012, 167)

Many factors and features influence whether the strategy will be useful. For a business strategy to be successful, it needs to be relevant to its employees, shareholders and customers. The strategy needs to take current realities and future trends into account but it also needs to increase profitability and value while meeting any other goals that have been set. The context of the strategy will determine its success; a point which is often forgotten. It needs to have a sufficient amount of flexibility to cope with the altering circumstances while, on the other hand, it needs to be detailed, continual and consistent to guide the decisions of the people. This all combined is a carefully created balance. The challenge is to comprehend the complex web of altering priorities, objective, preferences and concern that are quickly developed by a number of parties including people, institutions and societies. (Kourdi 2015, 49.)

It is important to have a strategy which is strongly based on innovation and agility of the organization. As long as bureaucracy and inflexibility are avoided and entrepreneurial thinking is emphasized, the strategy will move with the times and ensure that it works in the practical work life. Strategy in the past was a matter which business professional could design completely isolated from others, purchase from external consultants or to communicate from the top of the hierarchy to the bottom. However, nowadays strategies are joint efforts, dynamic, flowing and continuous. (Kourdi 2015, 15; Verschoor 2015, 12.)

For the purposes of understanding what a strategy is, it is worth-while to acknowledge what strategy is not. Strategy is not a vision or mission statement as those do not explain where the organization is going or how progress will be made. It is not a goal, budget or a business plan as goals more serve as aspirations and a document which is solely a budget or business goal does not suffice despite contributing to it. Strategy is not a data analysis as strategic choices should be created first and then refined and explored with the data analysis. More so, strategy is a combination of all the elements mentioned above. (Kourdi 2015, 7.)

## 4.1 Strategic processes

Forming strategies is a process which consists of many phases, many of those involving decision-making. Strategies are streams of decisions and actions. Some decisions are very formal and while others are very informal. Some will end badly and some well. Some open new doors and opportunities while others close them. Every company has been started with a decision which has then been followed by numerous big and small decisions. Determining whether a decision was smart is only possible after the decision has been made. It is important to acknowledge that making decisions solely based on rationale and without any subjective thinking will not be possible as one will never have all of the required data available for the decision-making. (McKeown 2012, 70-72.)

No permanently excellent companies or industries exist. The world constantly changes and staying on top of important things as part of the business operations is crucial. To enhance the quality of success, one needs to acknowledge the actions that led to positive difference and then understand how to systematically replicate it. Also, dramatic change programs will not be successful in turning something good to great. From the cases studied, the good-to-great transformations were not done quickly and it was never the case that a single matter would have made such change possible. It was more about choosing a direction and consistently investing efforts to follow the chosen path. (Kim & Mauborgne 2005, x; Collins 2001, 14.)

Blue ocean strategies, which seek to find new market areas, provide a different process. The strategic sequence of a blue ocean strategy consists of four steps. One can only move forward to the next step if the questions can be answered with a yes. If the answer is no, then respective step should be rethought again. The steps, or the questions, are about buyer utility, price, cost and adoption. These steps question whether there is exceptional buyer utility, whether the price is accessible, whether the cost target may be at-

tained to profit at one's strategic price and finally, what the adoption hurdles are and whether those are addressed before they occur. If the answer is yes to all of these steps, the idea is a commercially viable blue ocean idea. (Kim & Mauborgne 2005, 118.)

Strategic planning as a whole involves a number of stages. All of those include an accurate analysis process and lead the decisions on operational matters which can be rather detailed. The first part of the process is the definition of the purpose. After all, there should be a purpose to any action. Then one needs to go through and explain the advantages the company has. If the advantages are not clear, there is no point in entering the world of business. Finally, rather naturally following the definitions of purpose and the advantages, the organization needs set the boundaries and thus the scope of the strategy. These steps include prioritizing and budgeting, giving a greater deal of operational guidance. (Kourdi 2015, 127.)

The processes themselves bring many gains. The strategy development and implementation processes enable managers to have a better understanding of their customers and competitors. An understanding of customers is the ground basis of a sound strategy. This comprehension is dynamic, allowing the company to develop its products and approaches in line with the changing preferences of the customers. Customers are the most important stakeholders. If a strategy does not provide benefits to customers and result in greater appeal to them, it will not be successful. (Kourdi 2015, 3 & 5.)

One part of decision-making, referred to in the beginning of this section, is the selection of the right approach. The approach-selection should involve a number of steps and decisions. It all begins with the gathering of the right information. This is followed by development of market awareness. Following these steps, equipped with relevant information, the consequent action steps need to be decided on. Once those have been determined, the process needs to be finalized with risk assessment and critical thinking. (Kourdi 2015, 36.)

A strategy should never be written on a stone and thus be seen just as a single task to be delivered before crossing it over on the "to do" list. A clever strategy leads to progress through learning its lessons and adapting to new opportunities rather than being one-size-fits all. It is important to note that the journey is equally as important as the destination. A strategy is not only about the product and market structures; it is essentially about the way that the company operates and about the decisions that the company makes and will make. The accelerated rate of changes has made the cycles of strategic processes and

renewals shorter than just being an annual exercise to be conducted. These need to be on-going activities. (Kourdi 2015, 124; McKeown 2012, 4-6; Verschoor 2015, 16.)

Solely just managing strategic processes is no longer sufficient. Companies need to harmonize their skills adaptively and flexibly to guide the strategic actions. This will be crucial in a chaotic situation, which is very typical for a process of change. Once the strategy has been formed and planned, organizations need to be able to react to unexpected events, view those as opportunities and see how those can open new possibilities to the old plan. Planning alone is not sufficient as one is not able to know what the future brings. For a strategy to be effective, it should be adapted throughout the year. Strategy needs to be a perpetual process instead of a dead document. It is about adapting to circumstances to achieve the objectives. The strategy should anticipate the threats, challenges and opportunities. (Verschoor 2015, 12; McKeown 2012, 27-29 & 109.)

## 4.2    People and leadership

Strategies give a lot to the operational people involved. A business strategy gives a guiding view of the future which is to influence the decisions, priorities and working ways of the employees. Strategy should provide the meaning and purpose required to enable employees to like what they do. Through commitment, engagement, productivity and creativity, people work better if they believe in what they are doing. This is an intangible and valuable contribution which is often forgotten by those who set the strategy. (Kourdi 2015, 4.)

Stakeholder maps assist in understanding how to involve different stakeholders with the business strategy. Through the mapping process, one must identify who are the principal players and influencers, what their roles are and what is their participation in the business process and how do they interact with one another. Stakeholder maps help in understanding the holistic, big-picture view of the principal influencers of an organization, identifying inside and outside sources of power and interest, including internal teams and functions plus the ones outside such as clients, strategic partners, industry groups and media. They also help in recording the effects and interactions of the stakeholders with the system and with each other, identifying potential sources of support and conflict as well as planning plus managing initiatives and change-management programs. (Kourdi 2015, 80-81.)

Choosing the right people to be involved in the process of change should be the first step before heading to defining the new direction, vision and strategy. Deciding who, before deciding what, has far greater value than to begin the process of change and then try to

convince the people that have joined to agree with the direction and to be motivated to push it forward. With the right people, there will be no need for motivation or guidance; they will be motivated to pursue the best possible results. Having wrong people involved will not bring results regardless of how good the vision is. (Collins 2001, 41-42.)

A learning approach to the strategy is important. It means engaging as many people as possible with the strategy so that they can adapt what they do support the purpose. The usefulness of a corporate strategy usually depends on whether the people are engaged to making the strategy work. What happens is not as important as how people perceive events. Emotion, integrity and empathy play significant roles. If a strategy is to work, people need to be involved, heard and encouraged to achieve their potential. (McKeown 2012, 8 & 20; Kourdi 2015, 51.)

It should be acknowledged that, in sport organizations, board members are often volunteers and that impacts their ability to contribute to the strategy process. Boards should be more involved in the strategy development processes but that consequently means that they need to dedicate more time, intellectual commitment and expertise. Despite having the required education and experience, they still might struggle with the sophistication that strategy capability building process demands. (Ferkins, McDonald & Shilbury 2009, 270.)

The strategic process of change might be challenging in many ways. Many change strategies fail to deliver the promised outcomes if the direction is unclear or badly understood. Even though there is action, it does not contribute to the success of the strategy. It is crucial that there is a clear logic and principles for action which provide guidance on the required actions and styles of action to the people involved. The strategy requires engaged creativity of employees, partners and customers and therefore a strategy is not complete just through documentation on paper. If the people involved do not believe in the strategy or are not inspired by it, the consequent lack of their commitment will result in failure. On the other hand, some people might actually agree with the strategy but resist the change due to its possible effect on their current jobs. Some might love the strategy but do not have the necessary skills or discipline to implement it. (McKeown 2012, 150.)

Even if it is only for the sake of accelerating or deepening the strategy process, one should consider investing in expert facilitation and looking for help from outside the organization as well. Using an external consultant is a good decision as the members of the board are so deeply involved in the matter that they cannot always see the bigger picture. Vision and ideas are needed also from other industries. An experienced consultant sees

and is able to evaluate the group, its actions and to direct the actions towards the right direction. However, he is not a miracle maker and the responsibility is not with him, it is with the board. (McKeown 2012, 131-134; Kaija 2013, 63.)

## 4.3   Strategic analysis

To avoid solely on focusing on the activities which relate to current programs, sport organizations must conduct a comprehensive internal analysis to define where strengths, weaknesses and capacities within the organization are. Gathering facts, even if they are brutal, and being honest about the truth, will often make correct decision-making self-evident. It is extremely difficult to make a series of right decisions if one does not confront the facts. A concept called the Stockdale Paradox refers to the acceptance of brutal facts but at the same time having tremendous faith and commitment to prevailing as a company despite the brutal facts. (Minikin & Robinson 2011; Collins 2001, 69-70 & 83.)

There are different methods to keep track of the facts. From the leadership point of view and merely relating to personnel, processes such as informal discussions, dialogues and debates as well as analyzing the issues without any blame, play an important role. However, so does building mechanisms. Information is available for many companies but information alone is not sufficient. The information needs to be changed into something which cannot be ignored. (Collins 2001, 74-79.)

Thinking about the past assists one in creating a bigger picture for the purposes of strategy development. Determining the success factors, identifying the areas that have worked and the ones that have failed, listing the projects that have been done already and seeing how the past has influenced the current state of the organization all contribute to the task. One should define what lessons can be learned and which should be unlearned. Looking to the past also helps one understand why the organization is the way it is and doing what it is doing. The past determines what are the matters which need to be known about the future but there also are dangerous habits of overemphasizing the broad trends without a clear understanding of the details they contain. Establishing a good balance between the future and the past is required to avoid redundant and disproportionate emphasis on either one of them. (McKeown 2012, 52; Kourdi 2015, 50.)

When conducting an analysis for the purposes of strategy creation, one should seek answers to the following questions:

- What stage has your organization reached?
- What stage has your industry reached?
- What stage have your products and services reached?
- What crisis has your organization faced? What will be next?

If the focus is on growth, one should also evaluate the past growth and the potential growth with the continuation of the current trends and competition. Continued growth consists of growth curves with new curves starting before the ultimate decline of the organization. An organization should have the ways and means for identifying and addressing internal challenges. This is to find new products that are suitable for current and new customers. (McKeown 2012, 110-111.)

Instead of focusing on states, Kourdi (2015, 38) discusses questions which are designed to understand the relevant situations and using that approach to contribute to the strategic analysis. As per Kourdi, asking the right questions will provide the right information:

- What is the current situation?
- What has caused similar situations in the past?
- What, specifically, has caused this situation to arise (it may result from a combination of factors)?
- If X is the cause, how does it explain all the facts?
(Kourdi 2015, 38).

Gathering data, as a single activity, will not be sufficient. It is important to understand what is meaningful to the task in hand. There will be a lot of information revealed through the analysis and such should be followed by an extraction of the elements that have the greatest effect on the strategy. Those then need to be gathered and shared. For example, the SWOT analysis is a good way to present such information, regardless of the area that it is being used for. (Kourdi 2015, 124.)

The SWOT analysis refers to an analysis process which has the objective of identifying an organization's strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and the threats in the environment of the organization. This information provides guidance to the strategy development process so that it would aim at enhancing the strengths, eliminating weaknesses, exploiting opportunities and work against the threats. However, SWOT can be seen as an outdated tool and suggestions have been made to approach the task with resource or competence-based planning. (Dyson 2002, 632.)

It is crucial to understand that strategies are not only about actions and opportunities but also about understanding how opportunities relate to one's strengths and weaknesses. If

filling gaps in these areas is necessary, learning, training and recruitment of people might work as beneficial solutions. One is to determine the essence of one's strengths while exploring the strengths in detail. This should be kept in mind when strategic analysis is conducted and when the importance of different features is being determined. (McKeown 2012, 122-125.)

Creating a time path to illustrate past and future performance assists in having the managers' focus on the current performance and its sustainability and improvement. There are important matters to consider when creating such an illustration. One needs to ask the relevant questions on why is the performance in its current path, where will it go if the company remains on that path and how a robust strategy would be designed to significantly improve future performance. The resource that best signals success and failure should be charted. There should be numerical and time scales. The illustration needs to have a sufficient amount of history and exact numbers. In addition to creating the numerical and time scales on each resource, there should be a time path which illustrates how the position potentially changes in the future in good and bad scenarios. The main performance chart should be accompanied with another which measures the contributions which had led to that outcome. These can include, for example, customers and unit sales. This may assist in identifying where the main challenges are. Lastly, it is important to understand the effect that resources have on performance. Whether it is tangible resources, such as customers and staff, or the intangible resources, such as reputation, managers will better understand the importance of building and conserving resources. (Kourdi 2015, 99-100.)

The amount of resources will change as time goes by. It is crucial to apprehend how the resources develop over time and how those processes can be controlled. However, it is not sufficient just to know whether the resources are growing or getting smaller; one needs to understand how many customers, staff and other resources currently are available, at what rate are those numbers changing and how affectively can those factors be affected by other controllable forces and factors. (Kourdi 2015, 100.)

Understanding when to switch focus to new markets is a very important part of a competitive strategy and it is equally important to understand how to make such switch. This relates to reacting to changes through an analysis on whether the existing market is growing, stagnating or shrinking. If the current market continues to grow, opportunities for further expansion might exist and a strategic thinker would want to define when and where

such opportunities exist and what would those mean to the organization. (McKeown 2012, 43-47.)

## 4.4 Vision, mission, values and objectives

Before proceeding to planning, it is important to vision and think first. With insufficient time and effort invested to thinking, the planning might lead to solutions to wrong problems or vice versa. Determining what the strategy needs to work will set the basis of going back to where you currently are and what the strategic needs are. This all needs to be seen in a big picture and considering such is an essential part of the strategy development. Exploring the future is one part of that. Looking forward enables one to judge when it is suitable to make a change. By forming a future context, it is easier to understand the implications of events taking place currently. (McKeown 2012, 10 & 21 & 51-52.)

It is very easy to confuse the meanings of these terms. Mission, values, vision and objectives all serve a different purpose. Mission statements generally reveal the reasons for one's existence and what the organization is motivated to contribute. Values give employees direction on what the company ethically believes in. This transforms into principles to be applied when doing business. Vision serves as an inconclusive and broad goal or an objective. (Collis & Rukstad 2008, 85.)

However, none of the above serves as objectives which are to be very specific. Missions are not strategic goals, values emphasize doing things right instead of the right things to do and visions are too broad to provide enough guidance to the everyday actions of the employees. Objectives, on the other hand, are to be very detailed, measurable and specific on the time limits. The objectives may lead to a number of additional goals which are built based on the bigger objective. The additional goals give a good basis for measuring progress with a balanced scorecard for example. (Collis & Rukstad 2008, 86.)

When the objectives are determined, it might be beneficial to utilize principles of S.M.A.R.T. objectives. The abbreviation S.M.A.R.T. refers to the words specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-phased. The objectives are specific when they clarify who does what, the usage of verbs is limited to one and the verb is not too general or vague. Specific objectives make it easier to measure them. When objectives are made measurable, they indicate the amount of expected change and through such provide the required reference points. The objectives are achievable when they can meet the time and resource demands and realistic when the scope of the problems and necessary steps can

be implemented. They are time-phased when the measurement or completion of the objectives is indicated with a time-frame. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2009.)

The following figure 2 illustrates the hierarchy of these statements. The higher they are in this hierarchy, the broader they are. More and more detail is added to the statements as an organization goes down the list. This process leads all the way to the implementation phase and measurement of progress:
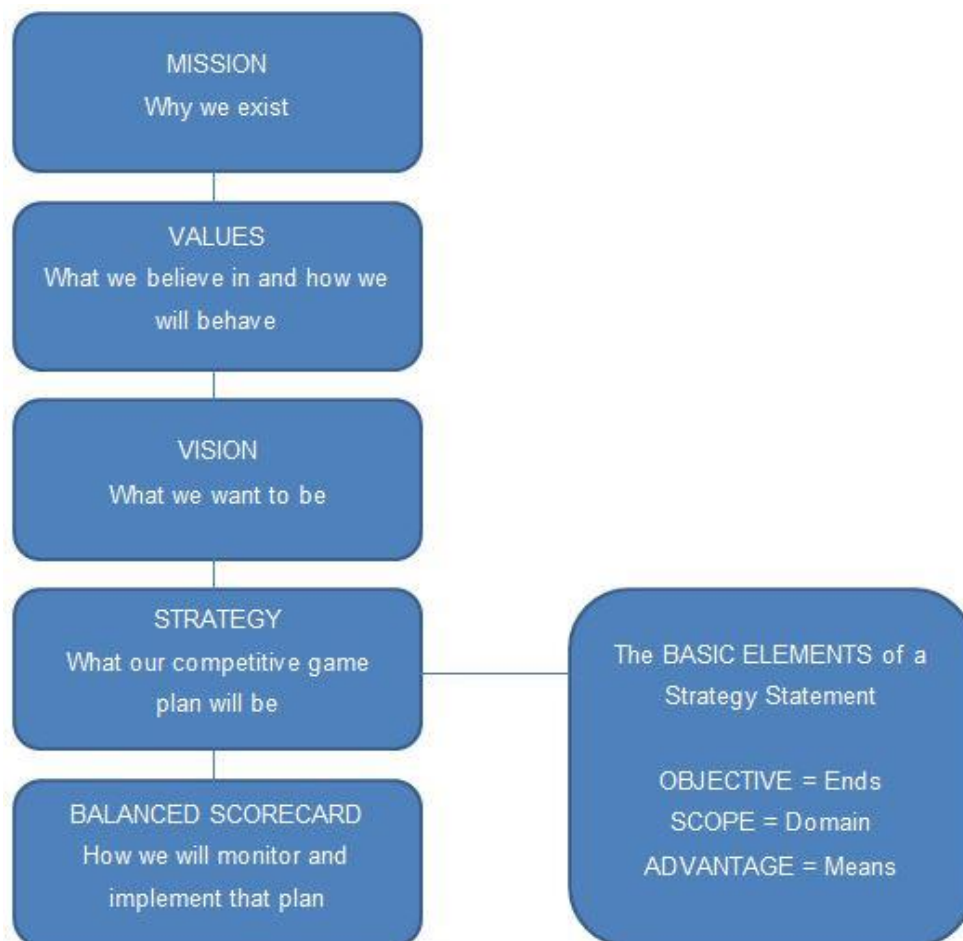


Figure 2. A hierarchy of company statements (Collis & Rukstad 2008, 85).

In business, the people who work for the company, or have a stake in it, need to be inspired by the leaders. Leaders need to create a vision which directs the strategy of the business. A vision of the future, that is clear and meaningful, will assist in engaging people, unlocking commitment and energy. It will provide guidance to all actions and decisions at all levels and promote purpose's consistency, enabling everyone to work in the direction of same goal. The focus of the managers might be more on the immediate, daily priorities of meeting the needs of customers, problem-solving, management and leadership but they might not be able to prepare for future. Thus, the fundamental part of a lead-

er's role is to decide the correct direction for a successful future and to take people to-wards it. In some cases, this might lead to an organizational change or even transfor-mation. (Kourdi 2015, 138.)

A vision works if it is comprehended well and it brings meaning to every day actions of the people involved. A compelling and effective vision is convincing, realistic and sufficiently powerful to create excitement and inspiration. It is received best by people if they are able to understand what they are to do and why they are to do it. It summarizes the values which direct decisions and actions. It is easily explained, has sufficient amount of specifics to guide decision-making and it is flexible enough to allow initiatives from individuals and is ready to react to conditions that will change. A guiding vision will be created through a process of actions on deciding what is important in the future, trusting intuition, testing assumptions, getting people to understand and support it, and to keeping in mind that the progressive visions are to be powerful, easy to communicate, desirable, realistic, focused and flexible as indicated earlier. The most important thing is that the action in accordance with the vision will actually produce results which causes everyone to commit to it. (Kourdi 2015, 140-141.)

Mission statements have the objective of creating and protecting value. It serves as the core of the organization's purpose. Organization's purpose leads to consideration on how value will be created. This is needed for building a profitable organization which secures sustainable growth. The answers to why the organization is here and what it is trying to achieve will help one to identify what is needed for achieving the aims. If the purpose of an organization is not known, business plans and the consequent actions will miss the mark. The leadership should ignore day-to-day distractions, agree what the purpose is and then view all of the business activities with that lens. It ensures that everything from strategic development to operations management is focused on building a successful business and delivering real value. (Kourdi 2015, 16.)

Knowing what one wants to achieve and stating it in an understandable way is one part of finding position. In this orientation part of strategy, one allows people to understand where they stand in relation to where one wants the company to go. Mission and purpose state-ments have gained bad reputation because of the times that they were created without a meaningful link to what the company wants to do. They end up being meaningless and causing disappointment among the people working for the organization. However, the mission statement can be a powerful tool. It allows subsequent decisions and actions to be compared to the overall strategic intention. The best mission statements of intention

are changed as time passes. Despite the changes, they define the positioning, intention and direction of the organization and through that provide clarity to all people involved. Wording and intention should be considered carefully and creatively as each strategy and statement has an influence to employees, partners and customers. The challenge might also be that statements can be interpreted or understood in different ways which might results in wasted or counterproductive effort. (McKeown 2012, 57-60.)

When the big picture has been decided upon, it is highly beneficial to present it visually. Illustrating the business and its place in the world, with a deeper look to events and possibilities, works better if it is done graphically. When successfully executed, one is able to draw a simple picture or a functional diagram representing the business and indicating how it works, what are the pressures, threats and opportunities. These do not need to be beautiful but they need to serve the purpose of communicating the bigger picture to others in order to get their support. (McKeown 2012, 54.)

Creating value is fundamental to what the strategy can achieve. It can be complex as it is prone to subjective judgment, easily eliminated and subject to unexpected events whether they are good or bad. It can be managed as managers have the skills and ability to lead and direct the organization's fortunes. These common attributes can help delivering value and securing long-term success:

- connecting vision, strategy and business processes with what is needed for the business to succeed – above all, putting mechanisms in place to make sure that people work towards the same goal;
- positioning the organization to deal with a range of possible scenarios, and then being able to hone in on what is needed when a particular scenario occurs;
- aligning the range of initiatives with the organisation's overall objectives and strategies ;
- inspiring the actions required by leading others appropriately;
- focusing on the connections between stakeholders that will create value;
- using the strategies, and their value drivers, to present a credible picture of where the organization is headed;
- making value creation central to evaluating and managing people and determining how performance is rewarded;
- appointing one person to align strategies, actions and performance management.

(Kourdi 2015, 21.)

Key questions to creating value question how clear and compelling is the purpose of the organization and what does it do, what more could the organization reach, what are the expectations of the employees and customers, how does the company help people and

what value does such bring. Lastly, one needs to evaluate how valuable are the services and products. (Kourdi 2015, 21-22.)

It is quite crucial to know what one is trying to do. This includes determination of specific goals and individual tasks. Strategy includes connected and cumulative tasks that are more valuable than the just the combination of their parts. Strategy summarizes the new vision that is novel enough to re-energize desire but also credible enough to be believed in. Ruthless prioritizing is essential in removing distractions to increase value and profit of the business. The leaders should determine what the current priorities are, what should the short and long-term priorities, goals, and objectives for the business be and what changes are needed. It should then be determined whether these are end goals or performance goals. (McKeown 2012, 56 & 111; Kourdi 2015, 160.)

However, goals, along with measurement systems and financial controls, are necessary but they should not be made to be more hard work that they are actually worth. Effort should be invested in encouraging strategic thinking and action as it is those that create and deliver competitive advantage. (McKeown 2012, 132.)

## 4.5 Strategy development

It is time to develop the strategy once all of the previous steps, including strategic analysis and the definition of the statements and objectives, have been concluded. Strategic thinkers usually undergo a process of asking different kinds of strategic questions. To ask why and why not are the most important feature in the creation of the strategic questions. At least some of the choices are based on the decision on where to focus the strategic thinking. (McKeown 2012, 16 & 22.)

The strategy should meet the needs of growing and if one is not in a growing industry, then one should either figure out how to change that situation or to make the decision to approach a new market. It is better to first work through the logic of the strategy and then proceed to the practical reality of it, looking at contradictions between the accomplishments wished for and the way things are organized. (McKeown 2012, 111.)

McKeown states that every part and everyone should be part of shaping an organization's future. There are four key questions to be thought about with imagination, ambition and understanding of customers, products and resources:

1. What do we want to do?
2. What do we think is possible?
3. What do we need to do to achieve our goals?
4. When should we react to new opportunities and adapt plans?

All of these questions serve a purpose. The first one seeks the organization to determine what is desirable. The second question brings practicality. The third directs the organization to strategic moves and leads to the decision-making on leadership style, structures, processes, projects, tasks, roles, products and services which eventually help the organization to reach its overall goals. The fourth one brings a sense of reality as it is impossible to predict what will exactly happen next and therefore an organization will need to be ready to adapt when the existing strategy is challenged. (McKeown 2012, 4-6.)

Very similarly to McKeown's (2012, 4-6) strategic questions above, Kourdi (2015, 8) also proposes a process in which strategic questions are asked. Kourdi's approach focuses on asking the relevant questions on who, what and how:

1. Who to target as customers (and who to avoid targeting)?
2. What products and services to offer?
3. How to undertake related activities efficiently?
(Kourdi 2015, 8.)

The answers to the who, what and how questions should be questioned continually. The strategy should not be changed too often but altered circumstances will require adjustments. Using these questions periodically and staying on top of these matters will provide the opportunity to make necessary changes. On the contrary, if these are completely ignored after the strategy has been developed, no necessary changes will take place and the company will end up doing what it has always done. (Kourdi 2015, 11.)

Collins (2001, 95-100) introduces the Hedgehog Concept, pointing out that it is the simplicity of the strategy that makes it efficient. The three questions, which are used to create the concept, push the organization to determine what they can be the best in the world at, how the organization can generate sustainable cash flow and profit and what the deep passion of the organization is. Forming three circles with this matters and joining them together drives the organization to the core. Collins emphasizes that the Hedgehog Concept is not designed to serve as a plan to be the best at something nor is it a core competence; it is a method of creating an understanding on what one can be best at. It is equally important to distinguish in what the organization cannot be the best at. The Hedgehog Concept is illustrated below in figure 3. (Collins 2001, 95-100.)
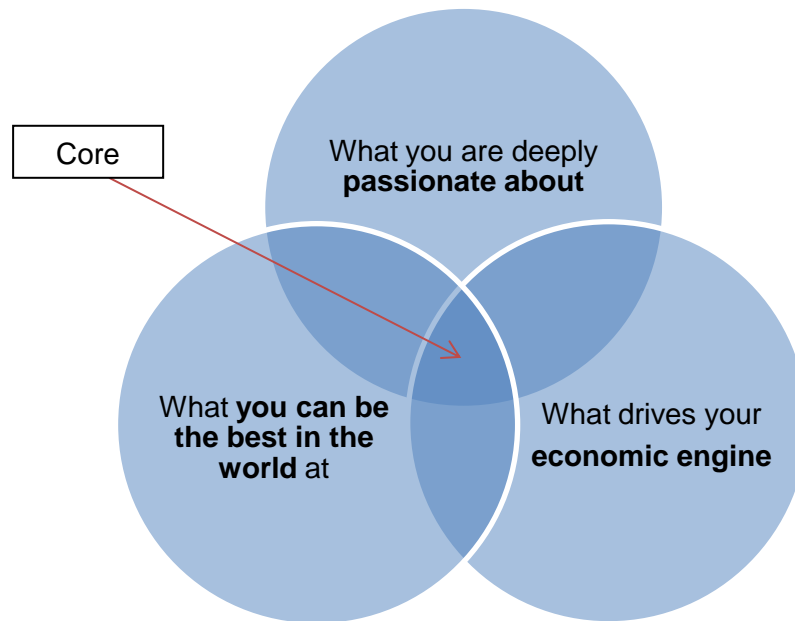
Figure 3. Three circles of the Hedgehog Concept (Collins 2001, 96).

Collins recommends that, instead of only focusing on what to do, it is beneficial to also design "stop doing" lists. Such can be done for example as a part of the budgeting process. Instead of only focusing on how to allocate funds to certain activities or to solely manage costs, the process can be utilized to determine which matters truly fit the core of the business and which do not. If an activity does not fit the core, using Collins' example of Hedgehog Concept, it is to be completely removed and funding is to be targeted to something else. Collis and Rukstad echo the views of Collins. One should be defining the scope of the firm. Boundaries, which are clearly decided on, should make it very easy for managers to understand which activities are the ones that they should focus on and, almost more obviously, which ones they should not focus on. (Collins 2001, 139-140; Collis & Rukstad 2008, 86.)

### 4.5.1 Strategy management process

Many variations of strategy management processes exist and, especially smaller businesses might not have any formal process. Instead, they determine what they are doing as the process moves forward. Larger corporations may use a cycle which starts three to six months before the next fiscal year begins. Often individual departments communicate their individual plans to the top of the hierarchy. The top management level then uses the individual plans in the design of the corporate strategy and communicates such back down the hierarchy. Quite often negotiations about resources and finances come to pic-

ture, creating a situation where the newly established strategy is more or less followed or ignored depending on the organization. (McKeown 2012, 129-130.)

Depending on the company, the strategy might either be communicated from top down or, on the contrary, all of the personnel are included in the process. There are challenges with strategy management processes. Some strategies are so superficial that only a few people know what the strategy actually agrees on. Some are creativity-killing, detailed and bureaucratic strategies which serve the main purpose of covering political gaps. With strategy being the company and company being the strategy, it is ideal to establish a strategy which continually engages all personnel throughout the year. (McKeown 2012, 130.)

Traditionally, the process begins with a performance review at the highest level of the company, comparing results to the initial plan. Whereas such process is strategic from the views of the leadership, it often does not consider the bigger picture. Considerations related to the state of the company, position in the market, performance and trend-related prognosis, mission, goals, purpose and competitive advantages are often bypassed. This easily causes the issue of strategy being a repetitive annual process. (McKeown 2012, 130-131.)

There often are challenges with the traditional strategy planning processes but there are methods to address such. There needs to be sufficient time for the executive team and the whole organization to engage and to think about the bigger, strategic picture and such sessions need to take place often enough. The strategy process should be deepened and accelerated by using the help of people, inside and outside the organization, in a focused number of strategy events. The strategy should be co-created into a simplified model which is then put forward to the company for a debate. If the staff has been part of the creation of the model, it has a meaning to them and they are emotionally engaged. (McKeown 2012, 131-132.)

### 4.5.2   Meetings and engagement of people in the strategic process

The meaning of people in the strategy process is huge. Therefore it is important to understand how to get the people to engage the most. In many cases, the engagement happens during meetings and therefore knowing how to organize and structure these meetings is equally as important. As the strategy is to adapt to competitors, technology and customers, it involves change. If the strategy is changed but the company is not, the strat-

egy is wasted. The strategy itself might create challenges. The strategy may be correct but boring, making it undesirable to read. There might be new ideas which are not credible or the strategy might be so vague that the expectations end up being unclear to the ones who wish to help. To address these potential issues, it is better to think about making the strategy engaging before it is in place. One should consider how many people can be involved in the creation of the strategy, what do the people involved think, what is simplest communication of the strategy, what will inspire the people to engage and how to avoid the strategy being too superficial. (McKeown 2012, 144-145.)

A meeting of minds, instead of mindless meeting, with sufficient time should be set up to progress with the strategy questions. If done correctly, it can have huge value in terms of creating a turning point in the history of the company. Timing, for both the strategy and the strategy meetings is important. Overall objectives should serve as the structure of the meeting as a detailed agenda might restrict the engagement of the people. As the objectives are established, the discussion should immediately move to additional objectives, leading the discussion to practical steps with names, dates and criteria for achievement. If one is moving from traditional strategy thinking to dynamic management, it is beneficial to establish a schedule for the year. In many cases, limiting time makes the meeting more fruitful as people are used to clock watching and feel the sense of competitiveness through the time pressure. (McKeown 2012, 136-137.)

The participants should be prepared and engaged before the meeting. Conversations about the strategy should take place long before any meeting takes place. This goes in line with a continuous, dynamic strategy. The participants should think about the company's basic and strategic questions. The session organizers should gather facts, survey results, financial results and projections. (McKeown 2012, 137-138.)

It is beneficial to have a warm-up session in the beginning of the meeting. This enables the participants to get into a thinking mode. A creative activity, from juggling to professional entertainers, works as long as the participants enjoy it. New experiences are the only way to get people to think about new things. It is even more beneficial if the activity relates to the fundamental strategy questions. (McKeown 2012, 138.)

To ensure clarity, the objectives and the aims of the meeting should be discussed in the beginning. Projecting the basic questions, for example, on the wall makes the framework of the discussion clear for all participants. Such illustrations include the review of the

strategy progress and possibilities as part of improving performance and plans. (McKeown 2012, 138.)

The participants need basic information about the current situation and thus it is worthwhile to present an update and an overview of the main facts around the company's position. Once the facts have been clarified, the group should be provided with ideas on where the company could go. Once the discussion about the potential future of the company has been held, it is time for the group to define where the company wants to go. This is a more practical step in which individuals and groups engage to thinking about directions, destinations and missions that make sense and inspire. The participants will enjoy action as they want to know what happens next. Through movement between desirable strategic objectives and believable strategic plans, the participants will be keener to respond. (McKeown 2012, 139.)

The next step is to define the changes that need to be made. This process distinguishes the current status of the company versus the desirable outcomes. Finding the differences between the two will outline the necessary changes. When the changes are clear, the group should create a plan on how to make those changes. Whereas some changes can be more immediate, especially the behavior-related changes take time. The group should consider when and how these changes are made or asked for, automatically directing them to thinking the fundamentals of what, who, how and when. (McKeown 2012, 140.)

Then the group is then to define how success is measured. Completing the changes is one part of success but one should know a short set of measures that shows whether one is getting closer to the overall strategic objectives. These need to be balanced enough for the soft and hard aspects of the desirable achievements but also precise enough to allow the progress to be clear. (McKeown 2012, 141.)

Lastly, to ensure momentum, the next steps of the project, which are relevant to the overall strategy, should be made clear to the group. These kinds of meetings can be challenging. Some of the subjects may be emotionally sensitive to some participants and therefore they can degenerate into a fight over power. Sometimes the presence of the most senior participant might cause intimidation among the group, resulting in discussions that have very little meaning even though the participants might have the willingness to contribute. It is also possible that some participants would have attended similar meetings in the past which would have not gone as they wished. If they were contributing enthusiastically in the previous one, they might not feel comfortable to do so again. (McKeown 2012, 141-142.)

### 4.5.3 Scenarios and canvases

Scenario planning is a powerful tool for the establishment of a strategic direction and the priorities which are to guide strategists and decision-makers. They serve as perspectives on potential events and their consequences and thus provide context in which managers can make relevant decisions. Decisions will be better informed through the contemplation of a range of possible outcomes and such a deeper insight will make the strategy more likely to succeed. (Kourdi 2015, 72.)

Scenarios bring many benefits. Scenario planning provides a wider understanding of the changing world. It brings an insight to how different factors, which generally affect the business, actually affect each other. It also brings information about the forces shaping the future by revealing linkages between factors which might seem unrelated to one another. Scenarios are to test the current strategies and the new ides created. By taking a different view, problems which occur through group thinking can be avoided. Scenario planning enables wider context discussions on ideas, plans and perspectives, as it breaks the constraints of more traditional strategic processes. They also stimulate creativity and innovation through the considerations on different potential future outcomes. They help the people involved to better understand their environment, share knowledge, consider the future and assess strategic options. It enables those involved to recognize and react to new circumstances, making them more prepared to better evaluate and integrate information. (Kourdi 2015, 73-74.)

Successful usage of scenarios has many features. Those relate to stimulating decisions in a continuous process of planning, environment analysis, scenario generation and testing, option development, selection, refining and implementation. It truly engages and almost forces the people involved to think deeper into what the process could lead into and how one should react to such. (Kourdi 2015, 75-76.)

Many points need to be considered about scenario planning. The scenarios work the best when people from all levels are involved. The scenarios must be relevant and the process needs to be kept relevant and focused through critical assessment of each scenario. The process involves understanding forces which may shape the future without effort of trying to predict the future, understanding why certain matters would occur in a certain way and relating all of those insights and observations to the future of the organization. Existing biases must not have any influence on the guidance of the process and, instead, creative

thinking plays a crucial role. Scenario planning needs to be supported by a genuine commitment of the organization; in the case of daily operational pressures overshadowing the process, individual creativity and energy will be very limited. (Kourdi 2015, 78.)

Canvases are another option for strategy illustration. Drawing a strategy canvas illustrates the current strategic position of the organization and therefore assists in charting the strategy. Managers will be more able to concentrate on the bigger picture instead of figures, lingo and catching up with operational details. The canvases summarize the strategic profiles of an industry, competitors and the organization itself. (Kim & Mauborgne 2005, 82-83.)

## 4.6 Strategy implementation

Strategy is nothing unless it will also be implemented and thus the implementation phase is as important as the strategy development. It is somewhat comparable to a training session which alone becomes a waste of time unless nutrition and rest after the training is taken care of. Although the strategy alone might be perfect, it is crucial to remember the value of getting it done. Designing and completing the strategy does not contribute to the task unless it leads to action and this action may emerge from a series of meetings in all levels of the organization. Strict orderliness to a detailed plan of action is fundamental to the implementation of the strategy. (McKeown 2012, 151.)

The execution should be built into the strategy. This will build trust and commitment and inspire the voluntary co-operation of the people involved and consequently minimize distrust, unwillingness to co-operate and even the possibility of sabotage. In the development and execution of the strategy, the organization needs to aim to fair process. Fair process consists of three principles; engagement, explanation and expectation clarity. (Kim & Mauborgne 2005, 172 & 175.)

A business strategy is a dynamic process of change. There are several valuable matters to remember when people are being led through the change period. The vision needs to be clear and understood by the people involved. The change process needs to be communicated as a process over time instead of a single and fixed event. With poor communication often being the problem, one needs to consider how to best communicate the information throughout organization. Planning and preparation needs to take place to identify the required steps for the achievement of the change. People are not to have a

tunnel vision; they should see the intermediate events that take place during the process of achieving the objectives. (Kourdi 2015, 172-173.)

The goals are to be set so that they provide recognition for the short-term wins; goals that are too far in the future will not sustain enthusiasm. One needs to be realistic and practical about the change process as old processes might have created pessimism. Long-serving managers and supervisors might resist the change and such resistance needs to be taken care of. People need to be allowed to participate in the creation of the change process to avoid the feeling that they are being forced to do something and they constantly need to be kept motivated as there is no room for fear of failure. Systems and processes need to be reviewed and enhanced as people might actually just be frustrated with those instead of the actual change. Lastly, if necessary, the people need to be provided with training and support before any change process takes place. (Kourdi 2015, 173.)

Companies that transferred from good to great developed and used consistent systems with clear constraints but, within the frameworks of those systems, they also gave freedom and responsibility to the people involved. They also illustrated cultures of discipline. This, however, does not refer to a company disciplining their employees. It refers to a three-part process in which all parts are based on having discipline. These are disciplined people, disciplined thought and disciplined action. Jumping directly to disciplined action would not lead to sustainability. It would be crucial to first find people who are self-disciplined and then move on to disciplined thinking process such as the acceptance of brutal facts. (Collins 2001, 125-126.)

The two challenges of strategy implementation are in reducing wasted effort on arguing about the change and making sure that right actions for successful change are made. With a clear strategy, one ensures that it is easy to understand, allowing people to know how to contribute, and therefore it also increases the willingness for contribution. With the people involved being part of creating the strategy, they understand its logic and the available choices. (McKeown 2012, 146.)

Execution of a strategic shift can also be challenging because the change requires resources. Trying to increase the resources can end up being a long and a political battle. Therefore the leaders should focus on multiplying the value of the current resources. Identifying hot spots and investing more on those, identifying cold spots and lessening on those as well as engaging in horse trading are practical steps to address this issue. In hot spots, one is able to have high potential performance gains in return for low resource in-

put. The cold spots are the opposites of hot spots. Horse trading refers to trading resources that are not needed to other units in order to gain resources from them. (Kim & Mauborgne 2005, 156.)

### 4.6.1 Communication

Larger organizations may have a strategic planning team which has the task of creating strategies based on financial analysis but by when these strategies reach the middle management level of the organization, they most likely disappear and consequently are not implemented. Colleagues need to know what one is trying to achieve before they can contribute effectively. They also need to know how one fits into their view of market. Customers need to know how the product compares to the ones offered by the competitors. Needless to say, the strategy is to be communicated so that any employee would understand it. (McKeown 2012, 6 & 56; Kim & Mauborgne 2005, 93.)

Very few executives are able confirm that they can summarize their strategies briefly or, in the case that they would be able to do it, other people would summarize the strategies the same way. If strategy statements are not clear and simple, the execution of those will most likely fail. Employees are filled with frustration if they are performing unnecessary work simply because they have not known or understood the strategy. Before making initiatives for improvement, the employees should be aware whether such an individual action fits the overall picture. It is necessary to have a simple strategy statement which can be internalized and used as a guide when difficult decisions are to be taken. This need for simplicity is often under-estimated by leaders, leaving them confused on the reasons why their beautifully built strategy is not implemented by the employees. (Collis & Rukstad 2008, 82-84.)

The strategy must consider the realities of the company. It needs to be consistent with other departments' work, employee and supplier capabilities and customer expectations. Confusion and conflict should be avoided at all cost and therefore clear communication is to be truly emphasized as a requirement to be applied all across the company. If the departments are managed individually, and as isolated from one another, it results in the inflexibility of the whole system. (Kourdi 2015, 128; Verschoor 2015, 14.)

A well-designed strategy statement results in behavior alignment within an organization. Individual decisions made by the employees actually end up being a part of a bigger picture and therefore reinforcing individual actions and decisions of other employees. A good

strategy statement contains the objective, the scope and the advantage. The objective, or objectives, should give a clear understanding about the aim of the task and also clarify the by when the target needs to be achieved. The scope provides clarity on the area that the strategy covers and consequently also makes it clear where the venture ends. Setting boundaries and limiting the area might seem de-motivational but it actually simplifies the general task and thus makes it easier to make business decisions as the implantation of the strategy goes forward. However, in business, it is not sufficient to just know the objective and the scope. Competitive advantage, which provides clarity to how one will achieve the objectives, is the most essential piece of the strategy. This can be provided, for example, through value proposition as it clarifies the reasons why customers would or should buy the products and how all of the decisions and activities within the organization need to be aligned to be able to deliver the value proposition. (Collis & Rukstad 2008, 85.)

### 4.6.2 Technology

Nowadays technology plays an important role in the implementation of the strategy. They provide tools to be utilized with the task. Strategy tools are to stay close to the reality. The most powerful tools assist people in the navigation through the process of shaping the future. The strategy is nothing without these being included to the implementation. (McKeown 2012, 8-9.)

The technology developments in globalization have created a need for companies to react swiftly and flexibly. The true difference is in the speed as businesses are able to operate at all hours without any constraints on geography. Human beings value community and ability to share information across borders. Businesses need to be local, regional and global, centralized and decentralized. Companies need to rely on people to be innovative and to apply their own experience but also to collaborate, plan long-term and be responsive and flexible. Businesses rely on hard management factors such as finance but also on softer factors such as communication and creativity. With a high rate of change, the leaders must decide and communicate a consistent set of values and principles which make the change process sustainable. They need information to understand the environment and its complexities. To avoid too much information, a consistent set of principles enable the capturing and filtering of relevant knowledge. Lastly, they need to manage planned and unexpected issues successfully. This also requires balance as focusing solely on long-term might devalue important and immediate issues and short-term thinking might lead to reaction on circumstances which have very little relevance to sustainable growth. (Kourdi 2015, 54-57.)

Technology certainly plays a key role in the operations of an organization but a company should not only focus on the role of the technology but more so to think about technology differently. Technology serves as an accelerator of momentum when used correctly. Transition processes are not about pioneering technology; technology is not important in these processes until one defines which technologies are relevant to the task in hand and how one can pioneer the application of such. (Collins 2001, 147 & 152-153.)

It is false that the effect of technology would always be immediate, dramatic and far-reaching as usually they are evolutionary. The significance of technology is overestimated in short-term and underestimated long-term. The development of major technologies comes with significant costs and risks. A developer may provide overstated claims, leading to problems occurring after the development costs have been covered, to avoid presenting technology that is just a little bit better than the previous one. Such, realistic projects, are often denied. (Kourdi 2015, 52.)

## 4.7   Measurement of progress and success

The implementation of the strategy is important and therefore one needs to measure how the execution of the strategy is progressing. In addition, measuring success and illustrating value truly assist in many areas of operations as one can show how meaningful the operations are. Also, measurements ease the management processes. Kaplan and Norton wrote 20 years ago: "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it." (Kaplan & Norton 1996, 21)

The key characteristics of an organization are to allow one to measure success and to compare to others in similar markets. It is important to consider the key industry characteristics and also to define the additional and unique characteristics one wishes to have as his own. An understanding of what success looks like in relation to the strategy is needed. One must measure progress towards the accomplishment of the mission is being made, whether the strategy actually works and how the individuals and groups are contributing. (McKeown 2012, 59 & 132.)

Flexible and clear understanding of the strengths of one's organization and how those relate to the strategic opportunities is the key to success. This might seem difficult to comprehend as the area of core competencies and resource based view has been tricky to understand for many people for decades. It is the challenge that makes it worthwhile.

It is important to understand what brought success in the past, what is the organization best at doing, what are the limits of one's strengths, what are the opportunity spaces and what are the gaps between strengths and weaknesses within the strategic plans. However, understanding what one does the best should not limit learning. (McKeown 2012, 124.)

The governance of a sport organization can also be used as barometer against which the progress measurement can be done. Governance functions, including performance and operations, can be used to indicate the level of professionalism. Emphasizing strategic capability assists in the demonstration of how important the enhancement of strategic focus and rational management processes is. (Ferkins & Shilbury 2011, 122-123).

Measuring matters that are important to customers and to the organization helps the reinforcement of their importance within the employees. Thus, it is important to understand what to measure and the way it is measured. On the other hand, analytical tools, process steps or descriptions or models will never have the ability to illustrate the full scope of the quickly changing reality. These more so work as instruments which assist in understanding the bigger picture. (Kourdi 2015, 6; Verschoor 2015, 13.)

It is also very valuable to think about and acknowledge the matters that can go wrong, how to respond to those and how to prepare for those. There should be processes which help noticing these potential problems as early as possible. This is to make sure that rapid changes to some aspects of the strategy can be put to place. (McKeown 2012, 153.)

# 5   Action Research

In action research, as the name describes, both research and action are simultaneously put into place. Action research is not work solely for researchers as there are always people involved from practical work life. Action research can be conducted by anyone from the operational to the executive level. It is seen as process of professional learning and development. It closely relates to practical work life as well as to acknowledgement and removal of practical problems. The strength of action research is that the identified problem concerns the person involved, creating commitment to a change through finding solutions without having any external instructions or orders. (Kananen 2009, 9.)

Action research aims to create permanent change through democratic actions and co-operation within companies, organizations, hospitals etc. This makes action research a career-long learning and growth process for the work community. Co-operation requires a common goal and therefore is not always free from problems. On the other hand, it is also possible to conduct action research as an individual, solely focusing on development without co-operation. (Kananen 2009, 9.)

## 5.1   Definition

Providing an exact or a simple definition on action research is difficult as, instead of being just a single research method, it is a combination of research methods, featuring qualitative and quantitative research. In fact, using the term research strategy, which aims at approaching a phenomenon and collecting information about it, might be more suitable. Typical elements of action research are the development of operations (change), co-operation and research. Without research, changes and enhancements in a workplace are merely to make the everyday work better. (Kananen 2009, 11.)

As per BusinessDictionary.com, it is a process of revealing solutions through a set of activities which focus on progressive problem solving. The outcome of the process is aimed at improving practices and addressing problems. Action research is often conducted by a group and the process involves investigation through activities instead of theoretical response. (BusinessDictionary.com 2016.)

Action research is process-like by its nature as operations of a company are being constantly developed through cycles that follow one another. The phases featured within a

cycle, expressed in the simplest way, are planning, action and monitoring. (Kananen 2009, 11.)

Schools describe action research as an extensive collection of evaluative, analytical and investigative research methods built to pinpoint areas of improvement regardless of them falling under organizational, academic or instructional areas. The aim is to find practical solutions to fix the areas of improvement efficiently. However, action research is not only about solving existing problems. It may be conducted simply because the researcher wishes to learn more about the area or the program in question. (Glossary of Education Reform 2015.)

## 5.2    Action research and other research methods

The research questions best reveal the difference between action research and the traditional research methods. The research questions typically are to usual questions related to leadership and to working in a supervisor role in an organization. Examples include:

1.  How can I increase the enjoyment of the employees in their work tasks?
2.  How can I decrease the amount of personnel changes in my department?
3.  Through which actions can I have the employees enhance the productivity of their work?

Traditional researches focus on collecting information using either questionnaires or interviews. The results of such almost always lead to statements suggesting that certain factors affect a certain matter but they rarely lead to action or experiments which follow the outcome. In other words, the researcher and the community gain information but such might not be ever utilized in actuality. Also, in the traditional research methods, the researcher is not to affect the phenomenon in the research in any way. (Kananen 2009, 13.)

Qualitative research answers to questions what and how. Quantitative research answers the questions how much and why. Action research aims at answering all of those questions. (Kananen 2009, 26.)

## 5.3    Validity and reliability

Validity, in brief, refers to conducting research on the correct matters. Validity is ensured by using the correct research method, correct measurement and measurement of correct matters. Problems might occur in defining what is "correct" in different situations and thus

how is the "correct" measured, evaluated and defined might be challenging as well. Reliability means durability of the research and whether the same results would occur if the research was conducted again. In other words, the measurement produces the same results on different measurement occasions and thus the results are not a caused by a coincidence. (Kananen 2009, 87.)

Measuring reliability is difficult as the same measurements cannot be applied to all types of research. What might work for quantitative research does not work for qualitative research as starting points and goals are different. In action research, the task is even more challenging because, despite action research falling under the category of qualitative research, the measurements of qualitative research do not apply to action research. Thus, it is better to approach this evaluation with the acknowledgement that action research is a combination of research methods and therefore a research strategy. (Kananen 2009, 87-88.)

When evaluating a development project or a removal of a problem, one cannot conduct the evaluation based on traditional researches and therefore it is better to compare the results with the goals of the project. If a problem can be removed or its effects can be reduced, the cycle of action research has been successful. It is also in the principles of action research that evaluation is conducted by the people who were involved in the process and concerned by it. From the results point of view, it is important that the measurements are self-explanatory and they specifically measure the change. In addition to the results, learning and changes in attitudes may be measured. (Kananen 2009, 99.)

## 5.4   Execution of action research

Action research consists of cycles and the each cycle consists of a number of phases. There are many variations of the phase cycles. The differences occur between different writers but the fundamental thought of all is the same. The phases are determining the problem, presenting a solution, experimenting the solution and evaluation. (Kananen 2009, 28.)

The first part of action research is to define and to study the research problem. This should not be difficult if it comes to practical working life as normally there are areas that can use enhancement. Whereas it might be easy to name and identify the problem, it might be challenging to get to the core of it. As an example, the problem might be dissatisfied customers or decreased sales in comparison to the previous evaluation phase. It is

important to define the problem and then change it to real research questions. To be precise about the problem and to find the core of it, it would be worthwhile to ask who, where, what and when. (Kananen 2009, 29-32.)

Action research, and especially the practical execution of it, has many phases. These include calculation of project resources, analyzing the current situation, choosing the targeted area of development, creating the research and development questions, action plan containing the who, what, when and when questions, objectives and results, metrics, evaluation, dissemination and evaluation of the results and the next phase of the cycle. (Kananen 2009, 45.)

Synonyms for action research include cycle of action and cycle of inquiry. The process, which is predefined, is to be repeated a number of times. Glossary of Education Reform includes a number of phases to one cycle as illustrated in figure 4:
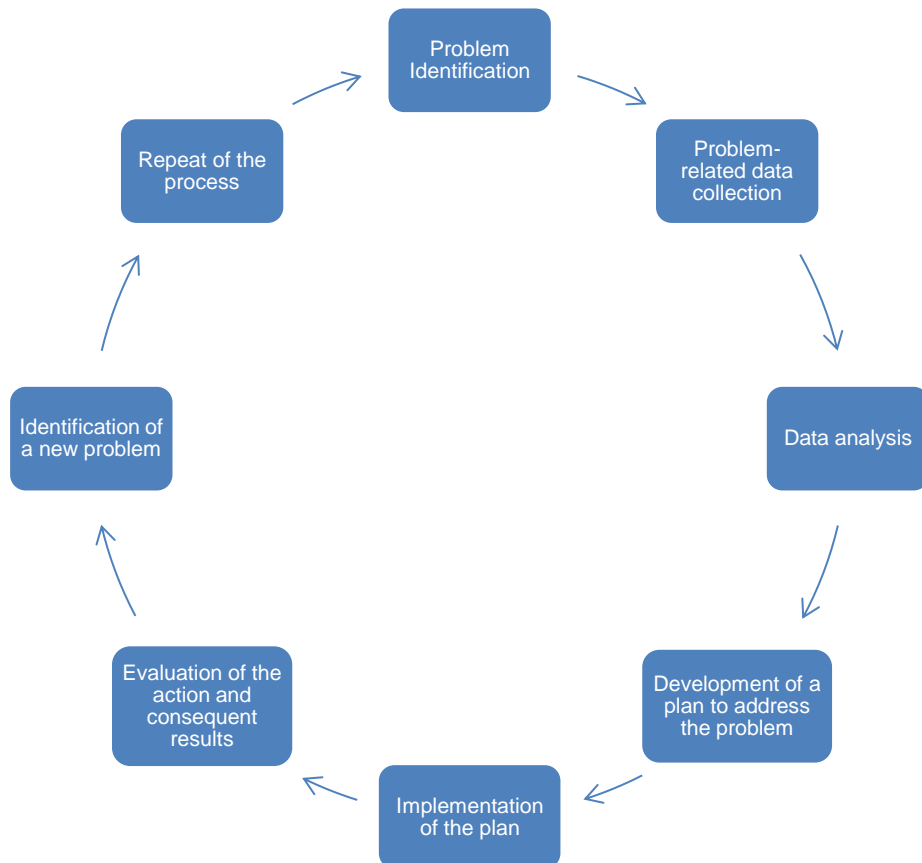


Figure 4. Phases of Action Research. (Glossary of Education Reform 2015).

University of Warwick provides a simpler version for an action research cycle which consists of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. The way of conducting the steps is up

to the researcher. It is however important that the steps are small, practicable, inclusive and re-iterated. The steps need to be small enough to keep the research responsive to any possible findings that occur. They need to be practicable so that one can simply implement an innovative plan so that its effects can be observed. They need to be inclusive so that they are accountable and can be shared with the people being part of it. They need to be re-iterated so that the cycles can be repeated as many times as practically possible. (University of Warwick 2016.)

To summarize the paragraph above, one cycle of an action research, as per the University of Warwick, can be summarized as indicated in figure 5:
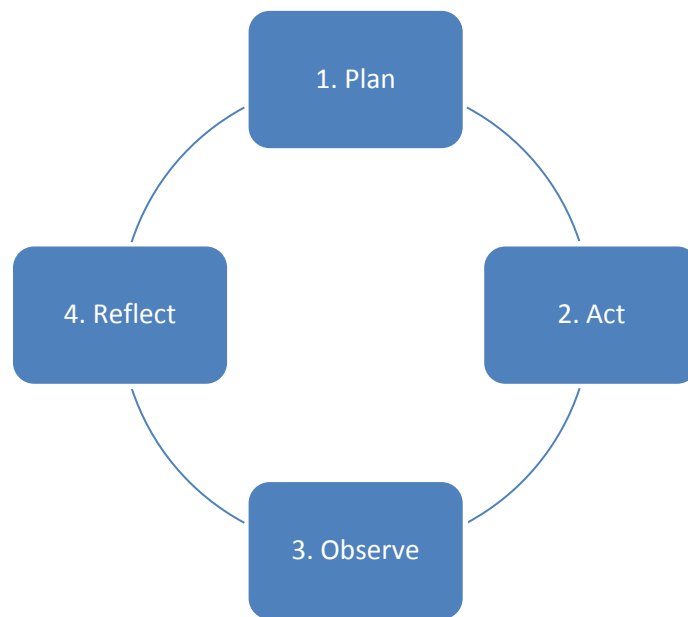


Figure 5. The Action Research Cycle. (University of Warwick 2016).

Action research also requires a number of people taking part. These include the researcher and the people who are part of the researched phenomenon. Action research demands more from the people than the traditional research methods as none of these people can be passive. The researcher cannot be passive as the success of the whole process depends on the researcher. On top of the matters related to research, the researcher needs to understand group behavior. This emphasizes the meaning of social skills. (Kananen 2009, 50.)

The phases of information collection consist of planning, data collection, analysis and action. Planning features focus, literature review, sources of information, ethics and validity.

Data collection features interviews, observation, written sources and questionnaires. Following the analysis of these, problem solving, evaluation and the development of the community take place as action. Observation includes a number of techniques including notes and research diary. (Kananen 2009, 60 & 71.)

## 5.5 Relevance to strategy development process and to the researcher

It might be challenging for research to show something which constantly changes. Research has the risk of being too rigid. Therefore the empirical part plays an important role. It requires observation and reflection of different situations, pattern-identification which leads to a generalization of those patterns. This then leads to scenario-planning and to usage of that process to create tools. Research is important as facts can only be gathered based on the past while business decisions always relate to the future. Research enables one to potentially decrease the size of the gap between the past and the future. Research can, in addition to its role of being informative, inspire strategy-creation through becoming a process. (Verschoor 2015, 41 & 52.)

Reima Kaija, a Board Member of the Finnish Professional Golfers' Association (PGA), made an action research with the aim of creating a strategy for the Finnish PGA as well as a balanced scorecard which would serve as the tool to measure the success of the implementation of the strategy. Petri Harsunen used action research for the development of an action model for strategic planning and service development to be utilized by Kepli, which is the sport organization of Keski-Pohjanmaa region in Finland.

As an active Board Member, taking part in the process and influencing the change was an educational experience. As per the aims of action research, strategy work and action research were a good learning experience for the researcher. At the end of the research, the researcher had the chance of influencing and had a large role in delivering the work to the stage of having a balance scorecard. Following and registering the development of the process emphasized how important it is to document everything. The main challenges of the project related to time or to the lack of it. Not all of the goals were reached and the research ended up being the first cycle and other cycles would follow at a later stage. (Kaija 2013, 60-62.)

Harsunen, through his action research, was able to answer four strategic questions which related to strategic planning, working environment, structure of the actions of the organi-

zation and finance. Action research was the most beneficial research method for such process as it provided more clarity to the research questions. (Harsunen 2014, 93).

Action research gave the researcher a lot. As per its nature, it was a good tool in relation to working as an instrument for information and comprehension. It demands the researcher to deepen himself in the theory which gave a better picture of what the strategic process could have been. Action research is excellent for describing and analyzing the process. When it would be time to move on to the next cycle, the researcher would be much more mature and ready in the strategic thinking and evaluation. When it would be time to go through the next cycle, more emphasis should be put on the analysis phase, more time should be dedicated for it and all of the people involved should work harder to achieve the goals as strategy work is a valuable opportunity worth investing in. (Kaija 2013, 61-63.)

## 6   Research – IIHF strategic framework development process

Following the characteristics of action research, the research has consisted of different research methods. These included a literature review in the theoretical part and meetings, formal and informal discussions, feedback collection and questionnaires used in the empirical part. The main feature of the research has been researcher's active involvement in the process. This process is reported in a form of a research diary which supported by an action research model with its cycles.

Whereas, in action research, it is important to keep official records of all of the discussions and meetings, the value of informal discussions has also been acknowledged in this research. The informal meetings do not have official minutes; only notes of the researcher. The formal meetings have all been documented by minutes which for the use of the IIHF. It should also be noted that there were numerous discussions, for example between the researcher and his supervisor, colleagues and Vierumaki Project Coordinator, which are not indicated in this chapter. These took place over coffee or lunch breaks, brief sit-downs or phone calls and therefore it was a challenge to keep records of all of those. However, the below includes all meetings and discussions which significantly contributed to the process and the reporting is done with the objective of being fully transparent. The people involved in the process are described through their positions instead of actual names. This is to, in case the research is to be repeated by another researcher in the future, assist the future researcher in the design of the process and with the decisions on whom to include in the process.

Based on the review of the literature on action research and evaluation of the development process of the IIHF Development and Coaching Committee, the researcher decided to utilize the simple model of University of Warwick with one cycle consisting of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. The cycles have been repeated until there is no more time. The researcher's role was to conduct the planning, take action based on that, observe those actions and the respective outcomes and finally to reflect on those outcomes for further planning. The focus of this action research has mainly been on designing solutions to research problems and therefore the phases of each cycle have all related to a planning process which includes action. In other words, as the aim has not been to finalize a strategy and to implement it, the action phases have not meant usage of a finalized outcome but more so to putting planning into effect.

## 6.1    Cycle one: identifying the research problem and potential solutions

The objective of the first cycle was to identify the problem and to gather relevant infor-
mation and potential solutions. These would then be taken into account when the process
was to move forward to the next cycle. The first cycle naturally started with the phase of
planning. This included the initial discussions and background knowledge, the identifica-
tion of the research problem and the definition of research objectives. The action phase
consisted of a number operational meetings and discussions. Those focused on discuss-
ing the problem and the potential solutions for solving it. Observations were made by the
researcher throughout the process and the reflection phase took place once all of the
meetings and discussions had concluded.

### 6.1.1    Identifying the research problem

The first step of the research was identifying the problem. As it originated from the practi-
cal and daily work in the global development of the game, it was rather easy to select the
problem. Along with the researcher, the operational people and the IIHF Development and
Coaching Committee acknowledged that there should be more results seen from the Na-
tional Association Assistance Program and that some elements of the seasonal National
Association Domestic Development Plans were not working at the level which would be
satisfactory. There was also a need to find better ways to indicate success, show a return
on the investment and to ensure that all parties involved are accountable for their actions.
Enhancements had been made throughout the progression and execution of the program
but it was clear that more results were needed to truly show value.

The researcher was involved in numerous discussions and phone call which took place
during the spring and summer of 2015 and in actuality, some of the problems were al-
ready acknowledged in the summer of 2014 when the program was rather new and being
executed during the IIHF Hockey Development Camp.

Whereas the research problem was becoming clearer, defining the core and the source of
the problem was not easy. There were a number of suggestions from the researcher and
other employees, colleagues and Committee Members involved, which were based on
practical execution and critical thinking. Some of the potential reasons for the problem
included the relatively young age of the program, insufficient guidance and instruction
from the office to the National Associations and the camp participants, unwillingness of
the National Associations to invest money or resources and thus complete Domestic De-
velopment Plans, skill or power limitations of the camp participants, motivational problems

of some of the students supporting the camp participants, lack of National Association long-term development plans, language problems and limited time for designing, planning, executing and reporting of the projects. Also, the program was to be targeting specific needs of the National Associations but the IIHF National Association Audit data and analysis was seen as too old to be relevant.

Based on all of this information and discussions, the researcher was able to define the research problem. The research problem and questions should focus on the enhancement of current programming in order to deliver more results, increase accountability and to show value of the National Association Assistance Program.

### 6.1.2   Initial discussions and the objective of the research

On May 27, 2015, an informal meeting between the researcher and the Sport Director took place in the IIHF Office in Zurich, Switzerland. The objective of the meeting was to discuss and agree upon the next steps of the National Association Audit and enhancements to be made in relation to the National Association Assistance Program.

Through the discussion, it was clear that the IIHF should plan and conduct the National Association Audit once more to gather and analyze relevant data about all of the IIHF Member National Associations. It was agreed that auditing should be done more cost-efficiently than the previous one and therefore it might be more beneficial to have an online tool play a bigger role than in the previous audit. In the previous audit, a person had also travelled to the countries to verify and discuss the matters included in the auditing process. The auditing should result in finding areas of improvement and therefore it would be extremely important to define the relevant questions which provide the necessary information for all parties involved to enhance the development operations of the National Association.

It was also agreed that, as the audit would lead to a lot of raw data which would need to be analyzed, this matter should be discussed with the colleagues from the Degree Programme for Sports and Leisure Management in Vierumaki, Finland to see whether it would be a beneficial experience for the students to assist in the data analysis and to have a role in designing the consequent steps forward. This seemed logical as the students were already supporting National Associations with their Domestic Development Plans.

Lastly, it was agreed that the IIHF should explore adding a requirement of long-term planning to the National Association Assistance Program. Such a requirement already existed in the operations of the IIHF Yearly Training Program for women's high performance ice hockey as well as for the development of ice hockey in Asia which followed the Asia 2022 Strategy designed by the IIHF Asian Strategic Planning Group. The IIHF would need to provide support in the creation of the long-term plans and such concept should be tested before put into place. A solution could be that there are, for example, three to five countries selected to take part in a pilot project which would include auditing and long-term development planning.

Based on these discussions, the objectives of the research was to create a global ice hockey development concept or a program which consists of data collection and analysis and concrete tools to utilize such intelligence to establish National Association long-term development plans. The researcher was to do the necessary planning to determine how the process could begin and then move to action which was to gather the relevant people together and to discuss the project with them.

### 6.1.3   Meetings in July 2015

On July 9, 2015 and consequently during the 2015 IIHF Hockey Development Camp in Vierumaki, Finland, a meeting was held to discuss the auditing and long-term planning tools. The IIHF Asian Development Manager presented how auditing and other tools related to development were used in the Asian region. In addition to the presenter, in attendance were the researcher, Co-Chairman of the Development and Coaching Committee, Sport Director and the Vierumaki Project Coordinator of the IIHF.

The Asian Development Manager had continued to audit the Asian IIHF Member National Associations using almost the same concept as used in the previous National Association Audit. The only difference was that some of the areas had been deleted as they were no longer seen as relevant information.  He gathered information concerning the organization, development, education, support and communication, medical and facilities. In the online part of the audit, many of the matters were entered in as numbers, ticked boxes or text, such as a SWOT analysis. He would then visit each country to verify the data and to discuss the steps forward.

In the Asian region, a wide variety of data and other measurable features had been entered into tools called development tracker and activity tracker. The purpose of the tools

were to illustrate how the key resources, such as the number of registered players, had grown or decreased and what had the activities and projects been over a longer period of time. The activity tracker did not only display activities and projects but also the correspondence and agreements that had taken place in conjunction to those. These tools were built using Microsoft Excel and the maintenance of those for the 19 countries included in Asia was extremely time-consuming due to the manual work.

The meeting attendees then discussed how these tools could be used for the whole IIHF Membership. Everyone agreed that there could be enhancements made to the content of the audit and those areas should be re-evaluated completely. Also, with a total of 74 IIHF Member National Associations, it would be impossible for the IIHF Office to use the same tools to keep track of every National Associations progress and needs if the capacity of human and other resources remained the same. The idea of receiving assistance from the students was again brought up and it was agreed that the researcher would meet with the Vierumaki Head of Campus during the same week.

In summary, the meeting attendees agreed that the work should begin on designing a full program which would cover National Association auditing and long-term planning. Auditing would illustrate general information but it would also serve the purpose of providing the fundamental matters for the long-term planning. As these would be linked together, the planning processes of those should also be combined and not separated.

As the IIHF Hockey Development Camp was in Vierumaki, Finland, it provided an opportunity to meet with the Vierumaki Head of Campus and discuss the potential concept going forward and the possible involvement of the students. It was also known that the Vierumaki Head of Campus has a lot of expertise in the usage of audits and long-term planning and therefore the discussion should not only focus on the role of the students but also to the feedback and input that the Vierumaki Head of Campus might have.

On July 10, 2015, the researcher met the Vierumaki Head of Campus in an informal meeting. The complete and previously designed concept as well as the role of the students was discussed. The idea was warmly welcomed and both agreed that it would provide more meaning and purpose to the work of the students, providing more motivation through ownership. The students could already be involved in the decision-making concerning the audit content and the design of the long-term planning feature to be included in the National Association Assistance Program. It was also mentioned that the pool of students

could potentially increase as the students of the Finnish programme might be available to be part of the program.

Both, the researcher and the Vierumaki Head of Campus, agreed that the total concept would include auditing, National Association long-term development plans or strategies, IIHF Hockey Development Camp participation and the Domestic Development Plans. The Domestic Development Plans would serve as seasonal implementation of the development strategy and therefore the camp participation would be decided based on the needs of the National Associations.

The students would potentially conduct the audit data analysis and then correspond with the IIHF and the National Association to provide suggestions on what the long-term plans would address. By doing this, the students would have the opportunity to experience the total strategy development and implementation process in a practical and real-life environment. The communication principles would be the same as already for the Domestic Development Plans. It was agreed that this concept would be talked further when the researcher visits Vierumaki again in September.

### 6.1.4 Meetings in September 2015

Very little progress was made during August 2015 due to the summer holiday period. However, a number of informal meetings and phone calls concerning the project took place prior and during September. Many of these were very brief, focusing on small and specific areas or tasks.

On September 2, 2015 in Vierumaki, Finland, as part of the action phase of the first cycle, the researcher once more met with Vierumaki Head of Campus to discuss the overall concept and the involvement of the students. The agreed plan was that the ice hockey season 2015-16 should be dedicated on creating the necessary tools for auditing and that the students would be part of the design process, providing suggestions on the audit content based on their experience working with the National Associations. The aim would be to have the tool ready in the beginning of 2016 so that there would be sufficient time to gather and especially analyze the data. The data could already be used in the 2016 IIHF High Performance Camp and perhaps a program, which would have the objective of educating and supporting the National Associations in the long-term planning, could take place. Understanding that the development of such tool would be subject to many schedules, including other departments such as the IT, the meeting attendees acknowledged

that proposed goal might be too ambitions in terms of time and availability of everyone involved. On the other hand, should these matters progress smoothly and quickly, the ice hockey season of 2016-2017 would be dedicated to the development of the National Association long-term development plans and therefore should either serve as the pilot project or launch season.

As part of the process, it would also be important to clarify the learning objectives for the students to provide them a clear understanding of what the involvement in this program would provide to their personal development. With the finalization heavily depending on the progress and decisions of the IIHF, it was agreed that the researcher would keep the Vierumaki Head of Campus up to date on the progress before further steps would be taken.

On September 3, 2015 and during the same trip, the researcher met with the Vierumaki Project Coordinator to discuss the progress of the process and concept change. The proposed plan and the respective timeline were discussed and it was agreed that concept, at least on the macro level, was a good and feasible idea. There would need to be much more work to be done concerning details and that it would be beneficial to create a project plan at a later stage to indicate the roles, responsibilities and the exact timeline.

The researcher spent the remainder of September 2015 for reviewing the observations made and reflecting those. The objective of the reflection was to prepare the researcher for the planning of next cycle, which would aim at taking the cycle one outcomes into even further action.

## 6.2 Cycle two: taking outcomes of cycle one into action

Following the first cycle and its phases, it was time for the second cycle. The observations and reflections of the first cycle provided a good starting point and understanding for the continuation of the process. A lot of the information gained was discussed again with the aim of designing a tool or a program to address the research problem so that it can be approved and taken forward in December 2015.

### 6.2.1 Meetings in October 2015

Following the re-organization of the IIHF Office, the researcher and the newly appointed Sport Development Manager responsible for the Asian region met on October 8, 2015 in

the IIHF Office in Zurich, Switzerland to discuss the development operations of the Asian region. Programming and future plans were generally discussed.

However, it was also agreed that the IIHF should aim at establishing an overall program which would be applied to all of the IIHF Member National Associations. On a macro level, the concept, auditing and the tools would be the same for everyone but there would need to be a tailor-made approach for each country. The Sport Development Manager would take care of the Asian National Associations and the researcher would cover the remaining 53 National Associations.

On October 29, 2015, the researcher had a phone meeting with the Co-Chairman of the Development and Coaching Committee to provide an update on the progress and to discuss the proposals on going forward. The aim of the phone call was to decide on how to continue with the audit content planning and with the National Association long-term planning program.

During the call, auditing and the technology for it were discussed. It was agreed that an online platform should be used to address the need for cost-efficiency. Whereas it would be the task for the IIHF IT Department to provide their expertise on the available tools or creation of new ones, the IIHF Development and Coaching Committee would first need to create a work group to discuss the audit questions and content. Both agreed that it would be better to start with a smaller group first to create the initial proposal. It would also be good to explore the opportunity of having an external expert or consultant to assist with the project. Once the initial proposal would be made, it would be presented to all relevant parties for their feedback.

As the discussions took longer than expected, there was not enough time to discuss all of the matters planned in advance. Therefore, the researcher and the Co-Chairman agreed that the phone meeting would continue on November 3, 2015 to ensure that all aims of the phone meeting would be reached.

### 6.2.2   Meetings in November 2015

On November 3, 2015, the researcher and the Co-Chairman of the IIHF Development and Coaching Committee continued the discussion about auditing and long-term planning program. The audit content project would be started in January following the planning meeting which would take place in December. Both agreed that the plans needed to be dis-

cussed collectively with the Sport Director and Chairman of the Committee before any official steps could be taken forward. However, both should meanwhile think about the people to be involved in the group and potentially have preliminary discussions with such candidates.

On the long-term planning program, it also was decided that a work-group would be the best way to proceed with the planning. Such work group would be part of finalizing the auditing plan because the audit results would feed the practical work around the long-term plans. The work group would consist, not only of some Development and Coaching Committee Members, but also of some ad-hoc members that, on daily basis, work more closely with the field work, given that some of the Committee Members hold very high positions at their National Associations. A list with proposed names was created. However, it was also agreed that this would need to be ratified during the planning meeting in December. The planning meetings would work so that the researcher and the Sport Director would first travel to Calgary, AB, Canada to meet with other operational people before having the second planning meeting with the Committee Chairman. The people to attend the first meeting would be the Co-Chairman, the Sport Director, one key Committee Member, Director of Membership Services from Hockey Canada, the external advisor and the researcher. The first planning meeting would more focus on the programming and the details within them with the aim of being able to present a concept going forward to the Committee Chairman in the second planning meeting.

On November 5, 2015, the researcher, the previous Asian Development Manager and Sport Development Manager held a meeting in the IIHF Office in Zurich, Switzerland to discuss the Asian operations, auditing and tools once more. The agenda of the meeting was very much the same as in the meeting held July, consisting of the usage of audit, long-term strategies, Domestic Development Plans as well as the development and activity trackers. In Asia, a four-year cycle had been used. This consisted of a self-evaluation year, status report year, project planning year and project reporting year and the cycle was continuous.

In addition to the existing tools, there was a fruitful discussion on how technology could help address some of the issues around manual work. It was agreed that the next audit tool should be created so that it can automatically produce the required outputs. All of the data entered by the National Associations should be exported to files which illustrate all of the necessary pieces of information based on the selection of the user. The objective would be that the outputs are as simple as possible to enable the National Associations,

the IIHF and the students to comprehend them. It would also be important to add some self-evaluation tools for the National Associations and through those teach them how to manage the process independently.

On November 16, 2015 in Zurich, Switzerland, the researcher and the Sport Director had an informal and quick meeting with the Committee Chairman. The main objective of the meeting was to provide the Chairman with a relevant analysis to be used in the IIHF Council Meeting. However, it was also an opportunity to discuss the plans quickly. Whereas the plans were appreciated, it was once more agreed that it would be more beneficial to go through the whole concept with sufficient time during the meeting in December. As the Council was just about to meet, it would be better to provide general clarification on the plans to them first and only then continue to discuss the details.

On November 26, 2015, the researcher and the Committee Co-Chairman had another telephone meeting. The objective was to form the agendas of the first and the second planning meetings and to discuss the involvement of the external advisor. It was agreed that the first planning meeting agenda would include the audit process, National Association development plans, accountability framework, IIHF Hockey Development Camp, a model club program, long-term player development and player safety. The second planning meeting agenda would include the review of the past and the current situation in relation to development programming, international coaching symposiums, proposals from the first planning meeting, the future concept and programming and player safety.

### 6.2.3   First planning meeting in December 2015

The first planning meeting took place on December 19 and 20, 2015 in Calgary, AB, Canada. In attendance were all of the people that had been proposed earlier. These were the Co-Chairman, the Sport Director, one key Committee Member, Director of Membership Services from Hockey Canada, the external advisor and the researcher. Also the agenda proposed earlier was used.

The Co-Chairman first discussed the proposed overall concept including auditing, MNA development plans, accountability framework and the role of the IIHF Hockey Development Camp. As concluding background information, the group also discussed the financial resources availability and the need to show accountability and value.

The discussion began with a focus to auditing, long-term plans and the relationship between those two areas. Auditing should lead to National Association profiles which would be used for identifying the gaps. The development plans, whether long or short-term, would be designed and executed to address those gaps. However, it would be extremely important to define the way for measuring progress. Through such metrics, growth could be evaluated and demonstrated and the financial accountability would potentially be illustrated through similar methods, understanding that the financial investment is valuable as long as the goals are met.

Other ideas to address challenges included National Association Senior Management meetings in conjunction to the IIHF Hockey Development Camp, recognition and endorsement of successful programming and National Association infrastructure support. Having, for example, the National Association General Secretaries attend the IIHF Hockey Development Camp would enable them to see what is done in the practical level and through such understanding they would most likely be more willing to support the initiatives. Endorsement and recognition for the National Associations that had conducted and executed projects and programs successfully should be done at events such as the IIHF Annual Congress or Semi-Annual Congress to ensure that other National Associations see the endorsements. The infrastructure support would be an extension to the traditional view of the development of the game. The group acknowledged that programs, such a Learn to Play or coach education, would not be successful if the National Association infrastructures were not able to support those.

After listening to all of the discussions, the external advisor took the floor and made comments which were probably the most valuable for the entire process. He suggested that the IIHF should take a few steps back and evaluate what the tangible IIHF objectives are. As an example, he pointed out that Sport Canada measures the performance of all National Sport Organizations based on six key principles: leadership, advocacy, collaboration, performance outcomes, development outcomes and citizenship. He also suggested that it would also good to look at categorizing the countries based on the availability of people, places and programs and based on their willingness, ability and readiness. With these, the approach would be more tier-based, ensuring that the National Associations receive the most relevant information and also are able to interact with other National Associations that have similar challenges. People, places and programs could serve as the key metrics.

The group discussed these matters and concluded the meeting in a full consensus on continuing the progress by defining the IIHF objectives, exploring the possibility of operating tier-based programs, model checklists based on people, places and programs, profiling best practices for each tier, launching a recognition program and piloting the whole concept.

### 6.2.4 Second planning meeting in December 2015

On December 20, 2015, the second planning meeting took place in Edmonton, AB, Canada. Thus, this immediately followed the first planning meeting and was attended the Chairman of the Competition, Development and Coaching Committees, the Co-Chairman of the Development and Coaching Committee, the Co-Chairman of the Competition Committee, the Sport Director and the researcher. The agenda for the meeting consisted of Competition Committee related matters first, followed by the Development and Coaching Committee Agenda which had been drafted based on the telephone meeting late November.

The group began by generally discussing whether the IIHF activities are still valid and worthwhile. Measuring and illustrating the value of IIHF operations, student involvement, Hockey Development Camp participants and National Association commitment was a challenge and the group brainstormed methods on how to measure these. The group also discussed the priorities of the Development and Coaching Committee and certain areas were recognized as the strategic priorities. Such included the National Association Assistance Program, Hockey Development Camps, coach education and player safety. However, also taking some steps back, the main priority within the group was recruitment and retention of players. If the IIHF did not take leadership in these areas, potentially nobody else would do either.

It was acknowledged that the fundamentals would need to be fixed before any concrete tools were to be put into place. Referring to the advice of the external advisor, it would be more important to first strategize the activities of the Development and Coaching Committee for the next four years and then proceed to practical tools for implementation, execution and measurement. In other words, one should know what one wants before proceeding to defining measurement of success. It would be necessary to define the challenges, why those existed and how those could be fixed. This process would lead the group to the core of the problem. A strategic analysis should be conducted, including activities such as

review of past programming, National Association questionnaire and Committee Member questionnaire.

The Committee Chairman would communicate the plan to the IIHF President so that the Committee proposal could be presented to IIHF Council in March. Such enquiry would also seek for the President's feedback on the process in general to ensure that no time or efforts are wasted when going forward with the design of the process and the framework.

## 6.3  Cycle three: new research objective and consequent action

The third cycle began when the two planning meetings were over. As a surprise, but also as a crucial change, the objective of the process had changed. Whereas the research problem remained the same, the approach to address it had changed. It was truly acknowledged that the process needs to take a few steps back before further steps should be taken.

### 6.3.1  Identifying the new objective

The two planning meetings had an enormous effect on the research. The objective of the development process had now changed from the practical auditing and development tools to strategizing the global development of the game. Acknowledging the lack of time, as the current Council and Committee terms were to end in just over five months, the objective would be to create a strategic framework which also serves as the Committee succession plan. The succession plan would then be given to the Committee of the next term for their evaluation and potential implementation.

It was agreed that, while keeping the Chairman and the Sport Director aware of the progress, the Co-Chairman and the researcher and the external advisor would do the necessary preparation work so that the Development and Coaching would create, at least the fundamentals, of the strategic framework and the succession plan in the upcoming committee meeting in early March, 2016. Immediately after the committee meeting, the Chairman would present the outcome to IIHF Council.

### 6.3.2  Committee meeting preparation in January 2016

On January 19, 2016, the researcher and the Committee Co-Chairman had a telephone meeting. The objective of the call was to discuss the roles and the responsibilities in the preparation of the strategic framework and the agenda which would be used in the up-

coming committee meeting and also in the committee conference call which would take place prior to the actual meeting to prepare the participants.

Firstly, the Co-Chairman clarified that the external advisor would not be available to join the March committee meeting on-site. Therefore, the development of the strategic framework should be led by someone else. Both agreed that the Co-Chairman would take this responsibility while being supported by the external advisor and the researcher. He would schedule separate meetings with the external advisor to discuss the progress, new ideas and the process and its contents as a whole. Also, the external advisor could partly join the meeting via a video conference call.

The role of the researcher was also discussed. Through the action research, the researcher would gather relevant data, analyze it, provide suggestions based on theory and to eventually prepare a proposed strategic framework based on the outcomes of the development process. It was also agreed that both, the researcher and the Co-Chairman, would ensure that the Chairman and the Sport Director are aware of the progress.

On the agenda for the upcoming conference call and the committee meeting, it was agreed that the meeting should itself should consist of a number of workshops, each focusing on the strategic priority areas. Each of those would serve as an agenda item and therefore the agenda would contain items on development strategy, coach education, IIHF Hockey Development Camp, auditing, player safety and research. These would be discussed by the group with the aim of creating the Committee succession plan.

Later the same day, the researcher joined the Committee Chairman and the Competition Committee Co-Chairman to discuss the agendas of the upcoming conference calls and committee meetings. The Sport Director and the Development and Coaching Committee Co-Chairman were not able to attend the call due to other commitments in their schedules.

In the call, the researcher presented the idea of running workshops for each of the strategic priorities. This idea was fully supported by the Chairman. It was agreed that the group should be engaged prior to the meeting through pre-assigned tasks. This would ensure that each Committee Member would be more prepared to contribute to the task in hand. The strategic priorities would be communicated to them for their feedback and they would need to provide relevant information prior to the meeting.

On January 27, 2016, the researcher and the Co-Chairman once more held a telephone meeting to go through the final preparations for the upcoming conference call. With the agenda already out, the discussion mainly related to the practical planning. It was agreed that each of the strategic priorities would be assigned to a certain Committee Member based on their experience and expertise. A list of names, each assigned with a topic, was created and such would be communicated in the conference call. These Committee Members would then be responsible for the preparatory work leading to the committee meeting and running the respective workshops during the meeting. They would have access to support from the IIHF Office and they would have the authority to assign other people, also outside the Committee, to assist them with their tasks.

Also, the goals of the meeting were discussed. It was once more emphasized that, with the limited time, the main goal of the meeting would be to design an executive summary of the IIHF strategic framework for the development of the game which would then be presented to IIHF Council and would later serve as the Committee succession plan.

Lastly, the gathering and the analysis of relevant strategic data was discussed. It was agreed that the researcher, with the support of the Vierumaki Project Coordinator, would gather student feedback, design and distribute a questionnaire to the National Associations and a separate questionnaire to the IIHF Hockey Development Camp participants. Also, as part of the strategic analysis, the past execution of Domestic Development Plans should be put into the presentation. The researcher could also compare such to the actions done the previous Committee. The Co-Chairman would design a questionnaire which would be distributed to the Committee Members. Such would ensure their preparation and engagement to the project.

### 6.3.3   Conference call in February 2016

On February 4, 2016, the Development and Coaching Committee had a conference call to discuss the upcoming meeting, the proposed agenda and roles and responsibilities. The Committee would begin on March 6, 2016 with the arrival of the participants and some possible activities and March 7, 2016 would fully be dedicated for the meeting and the workshops before the Members were to travel in the evening.

As planned, certain Committee Members were assigned to prepare and lead the workshops on the strategic priorities whereas the Co-Chairman would lead the process of creating the strategic framework as a whole. The Committee Members that were to lead the sub-groups and topics accepted these responsibilities and were supported by the rest of

the Committee. It was added that there would be a session which would solely focus on the analysis of the past and that such should be held by the researcher with the assistance of the Vierumaki Project Coordinator. The Member National Associations and camp participants would be provided with feedback questionnaires as soon as practically possible and other relevant data would be analyzed to provide further insight to the Committee.

### 6.3.4   Final preparations, data gathering and analysis in February 2016

Following the conference call, there were a number of phone calls and e-mails which took place in relation to the preparatory work. Some of the Committee Members assigned to facilitate the workshops needed further data for their preparations and the researcher and the Vierumaki Project Coordinator, were providing those as requested. There were also a number of e-mails and phone calls taking place to prepare the respective questionnaires. The researcher and the Vierumaki Project Coordinator drafted the questionnaires which were verified by the Co-Chairman, Sport Director and General Secretary. In addition, the Vierumaki Project Coordinator collected feedback from the students in an informal gathering on how to enhance the operations of the program execution.

On February 12, 2016, the Co-Chairman, the external advisor and the researcher held a quick phone call to discuss the preparation and the content of the upcoming committee meeting. As the external advisor would not be able to be present at the meeting, it was agreed that he would join for a one-hour session through a video conference call.

Also, based on the amount of work to be done, it was clear that there would not be sufficient time to cover everything in one day. Therefore it was decided that the strategic data analysis session and the talk held by the external advisor should already take place in the evening of March 6, 2016, enabling the workshops to begin immediately in the morning of the following day. The start time of the meeting for March 7th was also moved to be earlier. The workshops on each topic should take a maximum of one hour per topic. Thus, the facilitator of the session would first have a presentation on the topic, which also contained suggestions, and the Committee would then further discuss and brainstorm the topics.

On February 15, 2016, the Co-Chairman distributed an online survey to the Committee, Sport Director and the researcher and asked everyone to answer the questionnaire by February 25, 2016. The Committee Member Questionnaire is illustrated in Appendix 1. To provide clarity on the vocabulary, he also provided a document which clarified the meanings and the differences of the terms such as vision statement, mission statement, strate-

gic priorities, value statement, goals, objectives, strategy, tactic and metrics. The document is provided at the end as Appendix 2.

On February 17, 2016, the researcher sent a questionnaire to every IIHF Member National Association via e-mail. The National Association Questionnaire is featured as Appendix 3. They were asked to distribute the questionnaire to all of their people who had been involved with the activities covered in the questionnaire. Thus, they were allowed to have more than one person from the National Association responding the questions with the objective of having a range of responses from the political level to the operations. The deadline was responding was set to be on February 26, 2016. Thus, they were provided with a limited time to respond in order to maximize the rate of response.

The respondents, on top of their current position in the National Association, were categorized based on where their country currently is in the IIHF men's World Ranking. The questionnaire contained questions related to IIHF Hockey Development Camps, National Association Assistance Program, Vierumaki Degree Programme student support, auditing and long-term planning, player safety and International Coaching Symposiums. They were also allowed to have an open word at the end, discussing anything they wished in relation to the IIHF development programs. It was emphasized that there are no right or wrong answers and that the data collection and analysis process will only be meaningful if all of the respondents are completely honest. It was also clarified that the data would be only used for IIHF purposes and not shared with a third party.

On February 24, 2016, the researcher e-mailed another questionnaire, which is included as Appendix 4, to everyone who had participated in the leadership programs of the IIHF Hockey Development Camp either in 2014 or 2015. The deadline for responding was set to be on March 2, 2016. The questionnaire was slightly modified from the National Association questionnaire, only covering the areas of IIHF Hockey Development Camps, National Association Assistance Program and Vierumaki Degree Programme student support. The wording of the National Association questionnaire was modified so that it better suited the points of view of the participants. Again, honesty was emphasized and it was clarified that the research data would not be made public or shared with a third party.

### 6.3.5 Committee meeting in March 2016

On March 6, 2016, the Committee Members arrived to Frankfurt, Germany and the meeting started in the evening. The Chairman welcomed everyone, discussed the agenda and the objectives of the meeting.

The strategic data analysis session followed immediately. The researcher held a presentation to the Committee which contained a summary of the National Association Assistance Program operations since 2011 to date, Vierumaki Degree Programme student feedback, National Association development and IIHF Hockey Development Camp participant questionnaires and a summary, conclusion and suggestion section which took all of those parts into consideration. The session revealed both value and areas of improvement in relation to the operations of the programs. The results of the strategic analysis are discussed further in the section 7.1 of this research.

The strategic analysis session was then followed by a presentation by the external advisor who joined the meeting from Toronto, ON, Canada via video conference call. His presentation was about characteristics of a change agent and how little things can make a big difference. The session was not only informative but very inspiring for the whole group. The emphasis was on people and the meaning of people serving on agents of change. The Committee, with its expertise and reach, could truly touch all the levels of the game. He encouraged the Committee to define performance culture, invest in branding and IIHF recognition through it, values, ownership and action, passion and team work. He further continued to emphasize the meaning of clear objectives and simplicity, expectations that are clearly defined and established timelines.

Lastly, he brought up the importance of knowing what you know, knowing why you do not know and finding someone who does know what you do not. On National Association actions, people, places and programs should be the most evaluated resources and he asked for the group to be brave enough to aim for a change. Doing what one has always done will get one what has always been gotten.

The first day sessions were wrapped up with some preparatory words concerning the agenda of the next day and how the Committee Members could prepare. Everyone received the strategic analysis data presentation via e-mail and they were urged to think about the findings in relation to the agenda, discuss and interact during the Committee dinner and thus to be prepared to contribute in the workshops the following day.

On March 7, 2016, the Committee continued the work. The whole day was dedicated to workshops on the strategic framework, coach education strategy, auditing, IIHF Hockey Development Camp and player safety. Research was also included as it would potentially contribute to the task in hand. The Committee succession plan, which would serve as the summary of these discussions, was the second last agenda item followed by other business.

The first workshop, named development strategy workshop and facilitated by the Co-Chairman, was an interactive session from the beginning to the end. Based on the responses that the Committee had provided in relation to matters such as vision and mission statements, the Committee was put into different groups. The groups would review all of the responses received and then continue to establishing the vision and mission statements. Larger pieces of flip chart paper had been placed on the wall and each group would write down their proposals for the vision statement and the mission statement. Another task was to review all of the proposed values and propose three which would also be indicated in a separate flip chart paper on the wall, dedicated just for the values. Once these had been completed by each group, all participants were distributed with little stickers. These were to be used as votes. The Committee Members reviewed all group proposals and placed their stickers based on which one they liked the most. The flip charts and stickers were left on the wall for a later review once all of the workshops had been concluded.

Most of the other workshops had a similar format. As requested from the workshop leaders in advance, they began by having a short presentation about their topics, providing the necessary background information as well as proposals and ideas on how to go forward. The main purpose of the presentations was to initiate discussions which would lead to enhancements on each area.

On coach education, the main focus was on the annual IIHF International Coaching Symposiums and their role in the development of the game. The Committee was presented on how and where the symposiums had been operated in the past and encouraged to discuss whether the general theme and the target groups should be changed in the future. The main outcomes of this session were that the themes should be included in the strategy for a four-year period and that the Symposiums should not only be about coaching but development of the game in general.

The auditing workshop included a background presentation which was then followed by discussion suggestions from the workshop facilitator. The Committee agreed that auditing should aim at categorizing the countries to ensure that the relevant matters are being asked. The Committee also agreed, in order to keep the program cost-efficient, that majority of the auditing should be done online with rewards and random checks to ensure honesty. Based on the established strategy, the audit should consist of basic areas such as competition, education and promotion while the higher level countries would also have questions related to for example high-performance and ice hockey for the disabled. The IIHF would use the information to, together with the National Association, define where the gaps are and to design long-term plans for them which would then be seasonally implemented.

In the IIHF Hockey Development Camp workshop, the facilitator first discussed the current objectives of the camps, the feedback received from the MNAs and its relation to IIHF's National Association Assistance Program and the Minimum Participation Standards. The group discussed possible enhancements to the programs and how to ensure that the right people from the National Associations attend the camp. The Committee agreed that the main focus of the camp should be on assisting the National Associations in creating long-term plans and strategies to address domestic development while the seasonal Domestic Development Plans would serve as implementation projects of such plan. Based on the development strategy of the IIHF, all of the programs and numbers of attendees should be re-evaluated. It was also agreed that quality of the programs should be measured through the outcomes. Such should be done using an online tool.

The player safety workshop was formatted slightly differently than the others. The group reviewed and discussed existing material which addresses player safety. It was also discussed whether there is a need for a separate youth rule book. The Committee agreed that player safety should be addressed in the strategy. The more specific matters to be considered were age definition of youth, age-appropriate body contact and body checking and elimination of intimidation. In relation to all of the sessions, the Committee agreed that research opportunities should be more used to support the strategic decisions. Relative age-effect was used as a specific example.

Based on the workshops and the initial voting on vision, mission and values, the Co-Chairman drafted a strategic framework which was then circulated to the Committee for their review, consideration and feedback. The draft strategic framework was illustrated on a one-page document, clarifying the vision, mission, values, strategic focus areas and the

strategic priorities. No defined action steps were included at that stage and such would be decided upon based on the feedback received from the Committee.

## 6.4 Cycle four: taking outcomes of cycle three into action

As March 2016 provided a number of outcomes, and especially the main one which was the draft strategic framework, a lot of additional planning, acting, observing and reflecting needed to be done. Most of the researcher's time, in relation to the research, was spent on thinking how to practically proceed with the draft strategy framework.

However, there were some meetings which provide the necessary action to move towards finalizing the strategic framework process and to contribute to the planning of suggested action steps. Whereas the work on the strategic framework was to conclude, work already began on exploring way how to whole concept could go forward.

### 6.4.1 Meetings in April 2016

On April 8, 2016 in Zurich, Switzerland, the IIHF Event Department, its Transfer of Knowledge Director and an external consultant held a presentation about an online tool which is used mainly for transferring knowledge between IIHF World Championship and Olympic Winter Games Organizing Committees. This tool was also utilized by two IIHF Committees as a project management and overview tool. Some of the features of the online tool included sharing information, documents, project plans, roles and responsibilities and deadlines through calendars. It was also able to produce outputs and reports based on the user's selection, show an at-a-glance view of how each project is progressing and it also featured a communication tracker to indicate what was agreed at what time by whom. The main benefit would be that all of the information would be there once entered which would save a lot of manual work in the projects which are repeated annually. The person in charge of the projects could decide to whom to provide access. During the presentation, it was clarified that this tool could be made available for other IIHF Committees as well.

Following the presentation, the researcher had two separate informal discussions with the external consultant as well as the Transfer of Knowledge. On top of other possible projects, the discussion focused on the utilization of this tool in the IIHF National Association Assistance Program. The tool, with its features on collecting and sharing information, could be used for auditing the national associations and sharing long and short-term plans as projects. As the plans would be featured as projects, progress estimation and features

such as key performance indicators could be used there as well. It seemed that there were no limits to the tools that could be made available to this platform. However, it would naturally mean a lot of work in the beginning to set everything up.

It was agreed that the researcher would further discuss the potential utilization of the online tool with the Sport Director, Co-Chairman and other relevant colleagues and Committee Members. It was acknowledged that, if the formal steps led to a decision to use this tool, there should be more planning meetings scheduled with the external consultant to explore the possibilities and the scope of the application of this online platform.

On April 15, 2016, the researcher and the Co-Chairman held a telephone meeting to discuss the progress of the project and the draft strategic framework. The objective was to once more go through the contents of the strategic framework and the meanings of different parts in it as well as to agree on the scope of the framework and the formalization procedure until the Committee of the next term would continue.
During the call, the researcher and the Co-Chairman agreed to certain wording changes to bring more clarity to its readers. Also, the contents of the strategic priorities were discussed and agreed upon to allow the researcher to make suggestions on the action steps based on these areas and the recommendations made during the Committee Meeting.

It was also decided the framework should just contain the fundamental parts up to the strategic priorities. The Development and Coaching Committee of the next term should review those plus the Committee Meeting minutes and the suggestions of the researcher. Once a consensus on the strategic framework and required action steps would be found, then the work could continue to defining objectives and to creating a full strategy. The researcher would modify the document as discussed and the Co-Chairman would discuss it with the external advisor with the aim of finalizing it.

On April 18, 2015, the Co-Chairman met the external advisor in Calgary, AB, Canada. They discussed the contents of the framework and the recommended next steps. It was agreed that the contents of the document reflect the discussions of the Committee and that it should be presented as such to the Committee of the next term. It was also noted that taking further steps in the process would be pre-mature as the recommendations on the main areas of the strategic framework should be put forward by the Committee of the next term and that those should be brought forward to Council by the Chairman of that Committee. However, the researcher should continue work on defining what the proposed

action steps would contain, how the strategy should be implemented in general and how measurement of progress and success should be conducted.

# 7   Results and the IIHF strategic framework

The research has resulted in a number of findings through the strategic analysis process, important statements and priorities of the strategic framework as well as a set of suggestions on how the project could be going forward as the future cycles take place. The main contributor to these outcomes has been the process itself. The numerous meetings and discussions have taken the project forward at the pace that it required, given that time was rather limited.

The strategic data analysis discusses its main findings and the matters which had the biggest impact to the process. Vision, mission, value statements, strategic focus areas and strategic priorities are clarified in their own sections. The sections which discuss the action steps, strategy implementation and measurement of success are based on researcher's observations and reflections and merely serve as suggestions for future execution. All of those would be subject to the decisions of the next IIHF Council and Development and Coaching Committee.

## 7.1   Strategic data analysis

Gathering relevant data was truly a beneficial process for both, recognizing the value of current and potential future programs as well as for identifying gaps and areas of improvement. The strategic data analysis served as the basis for all of the discussions and workshops, providing relevant information to the Committee for making recommendations going forward. It became apparent that such process should be done more often to ensure that the IIHF is aware of the opinions of the parties involved. By conducting the process, ideas on how to improve the data collection were immediately identified. Some of the data analyzed pointed out areas which could be immediately addressed, leading into rapid enhancements. Also, as all of the areas related to the work of the researcher, it provided an opportunity for self-assessment, critical thinking and consequent self-development.

The analysis of past National Association Assistance Program contained information about the operations and numbers of Domestic Development Plans conducted in the previous years plus a projection on the numbers for the current season. It became apparent that the number of projects reported to the IIHF was significantly lower than the number of projects initially created. The potential reasons to this issue related to insufficient support from the IIHF office, poor selection and nomination of the people to design and execute

the Domestic Development Plans, insufficient support from the National Associations and inconsistency of student support.

The student feedback was summoned by the Vierumaki Project Coordinator as agreed initially. A document, which summarized the feedback of the students, was sent to the researcher prior to the meeting. The researcher and Vierumaki Project Coordinator discussed the contents of the feedback document to distinguish the most relevant points and to consider how those areas could be enhanced.

The National Association questionnaire was answered by 97 respondents. There was an even distribution between the rankings of the countries and the positions of the respondents. Later in the questionnaire, some respondents had decided to skip questions, most likely because they did not feel comfortable answering these questions, whether it was due to insufficient knowledge in the respective area or language difficulties. The IIHF Hockey Development Camp participant questionnaire was answered by 37 people and some of them also decided to skip questions depending on the area that the questions concerned.

There were a number of findings from the researches from above and all of those were included in the summary, conclusions and considerations section of the strategic data analysis presentation held in the Committee Meeting. The IIHF Hockey Development Camp is important for the National Associations. It brings value and concrete results, the programs are suitable to them and the National Associations would actually be willing to send even more people to attend the camps. The respondents suggested that the IIHF provides continuation to Learn to Play Program to address long-term athlete development. A number of other programs to be featured at the IIHF Hockey Development Camp were proposed.

On the execution of Domestic Development Plans, there was a clear discrepancy between the information the IIHF had and the information that the National Associations provided. The Committee learned that some of the National Associations had decided not to report the projects fully despite it resulting in eligibility for financial subsidies. It was clear that the IIHF did not have sufficient information about the execution rate of these projects and such should be addressed in the future. Slightly contradicting the above, the National Associations saw the financial subsidies to be important.

People involved are the key to successful programming. The IIHF needs to ensure that the National Associations send correct participants to the camps. The student support is valuable to the National Associations but there is room for improvement. The IIHF Office needs to support both, the National Associations and the students more in the operations of these programs. Such assistance should include further guidelines and supportive material as well as communication with them. The inclusion of students should be made mandatory to the National Associations but before such step, there should be ways to ensure that the students remain consistently motivated to take part in the program. Communication between all parties should be enhanced as access to relevant information seems to be a challenge.

The auditing helped National Associations in the past but not at the rate that one would have hoped for. When designing the audit, the National Associations should be included in the process of creating the audit to ensure that their needs are met as well. There is a lack of continuity and purpose. The National Associations do not know what the long-term plan of the IIHF is and the IIHF does not know what the long-term plans of the National Associations are. The respondents indicated that their National Associations do have long-term plans but majority would appreciate the assistance of the IIHF in creating those. Also, while IIHF communicates the general objectives of the IIHF Hockey Development Camp and the National Association Assistance Program, perhaps it would be beneficial to also clarify what are not the objectives of these programs.

Player Safety is very important to National Association and they would appreciate IIHF providing guidance, material and tools to address it. If the IIHF provided a player safety program for the use of the National Associations, almost 90% of the respondents would use it while 9% were unsure. Also, Coaching Symposium was seen to be valuable. 97% thought that it is important that the IIHF organizes such. However, the two most popular themes were development of youth players and long-term player development. Thus, the IIHF should consider changing the name, instead of only coaching, to refer to development of ice hockey and the themes should follow that general guidance.

The strategy analysis was concluded with a brief, macro-level SWOT analysis. Strength is that the IIHF Programs are valuable to the National Associations. Weakness is that there is a lack of accountability and difficulty to show return to investment. Opportunities are in the long-term planning of the National Associations and the IIHF plus in technology. Available funding, or the potential lack of it, is a threat especially if results are not shown.

## 7.2 Vision, mission and values

The Committee was able to define its vision, mission and values in the Committee Meeting. The strategic data analysis and the outcomes of the Committee Member questionnaire provided the basis for deciding these fundamental statements. The strategy development workshop then provided an opportunity to discuss the options proposed by all Members. Through the discussion and the process, the Committee Members reached a consensus.

As communicated to the Committee in advance, the vision statement aimed at being a description of a desired outcome which inspires, energizes and helps to create a mental picture of the targets for the Development and Coaching Committee. The Committee agreed that its vision is to "be a source of knowledge, inspiration, and support for the development of ice hockey for all Member National Associations".

The mission statements objective was to briefly describe the fundamental purpose of the Development and Coaching Committee and to provide answers to why the Committee exists for both, the IIHF and for the National Associations. The Committee agreed that its mission is "to design and support initiatives that will further the development of ice hockey on all levels in the Member National Associations of the IIHF, and to act as an advisory entity to the IIHF Council on matters of development in its deliberations on funding and resource distribution".

The Committee Members had also provided suggestions on the values of the Committee through the Committee Member questionnaire. There was a long list of suggestions which were written down, voted on and cut to six. These were passion, knowledge, credibility, commitment, integrity and experience.

## 7.3 Strategic focus areas and priorities

Based on the vision, mission, values and taking all of the workshops and their outcomes into consideration, the Committee also define strategic focus areas and strategic priorities. The strategic focus areas, referred to as pillars in the definitions document, consistent of five areas which were designed to impact on the achievement of the vision and mission statements. These were summarized into five verbs, each accompanied with a short description to provide clarity to what is the relation of those to the work of the Committee. The five strategic focus area verbs were investing, growing, leading, ensuring and strengthening.

Investing makes reference to infrastructure development for National Associations. It was agreed through the auditing workshop that the Committee should consider development of National Associations on a larger scale, including their organizations. Growing refers to development of strategies to ensure growth of the National Associations. Growth of ice hockey has repeatedly been indicated as the task of the IIHF and the Development and Coaching Committee. Leading means training of the sport's leadership. Providing specific programs to develop the people working in leaderships positions remains a priority to the Committee. Ensuring refers to sustaining and increasing resources and supports. Many of the National Associations value and need the support of the IIHF in order to develop ice hockey in their countries. Strengthening equals building National Association capacity. When growth is one of the strategic focus areas, the Committee needs to aim at building the capacities of the National Associations.

The strategic priorities were divided into four categories: leadership development, resource development, player safety as well as research and development. Each of these priorities would serve as the foundation for planning the goals, objectives and action steps of the actual strategy. The planning of initiatives should consider the strategic priorities and work towards accomplishing those through usage of processes and tools.

The leadership development consists of leadership education programs that the IIHF offers to its Member National Associations. These will include all of the coach, instructor and administrator programs which the IIHF will facilitate to address the strategic focus areas of infrastructure development and sport leadership training. This category also includes the IIHF Hockey Development Camp which solely focuses on the development of leadership.

Resource development will focus on the role of the IIHF in the creation and granting of tools, materials and publications such as coach education materials and platforms, long-term player development models, Learn to Play Program manuals, further online resources and other guidelines. As this strategic priority solely focuses on the matters mentioned above, it does not relate to financial resources or consist of developing human resources, which was addressed under leadership development.

Player safety as a strategic priority is almost self-explanatory. The Development and Coaching Committee will invest in providing guidance to National Associations on increasing and ensuring player safety. This may include instructional videos on coaching and

practicing body checking, a specific rule book for youth ice hockey and material to address player behavior.

Research and development refers to research-based decision making. It is a priority for the Committee to provide development-related information which has been validated by recent research. This is mainly relates to knowledge which is one of the values listed. It is also important to utilize research opportunities in the creation and enhancement of the programs and the tools discussed in the other strategic priorities.

## 7.4   Strategic framework

The objective of the process was to create a strategic framework for the global development of ice hockey. Therefore, the vision statement, mission statement, values, strategic focus areas and strategic priorities were written into and illustrated through a one-page document which serves as the strategic framework. The strategic framework is included in this research document as an Appendix 5. It first includes a short descriptive paragraph about its purpose and then continues to show the areas discussed above, almost in a hierarchical manner.

The bottom part of the document also has a title for action steps (tactics). However, the suggestions on what those would be are not indicated in the document yet. The framework is to be provided to the Chairman and Members of the Development and Coaching Committee in the beginning of the term 2016-2020 for their review and recommendations before concrete action steps should be included. Based on the action steps, more specific objectives and measurable targets will be defined.

As it was agreed that the action steps are a matter to be decided by the next Committee, one can conclude that the Committee successfully delivered what was expected. With rather limited time, the Development and Coaching Committee was able to create a document which outlines the fundamental areas. Through such, the document will serve as a succession plan for the next Committee.

## 7.5   Suggestions on how to continue with the process

This section is dedicated to the suggestions of the researcher on how to proceed with the path leading into the finalized strategy. These recommendations are a result of a number of observations and reflections which the researcher made during the development process of the strategic framework. It is clear that the Development and Coaching Committee

of the next term will be responsible for formalizing the strategic framework, defining the respective action steps, finalizing the strategy, planning its implementation and determining the ways for the measurement of progress and success. However, the development process of the strategic framework has revealed a number of matters are to be taken into consideration in the future cycles. For example, all of the suggestions made during the workshops provide opportunities for improvement. Those are to be evaluated and prioritized accordingly in order to have a realistic plan which focuses on the integration of these enhancements.

Business strategy literature discusses terms such as employees, customers, products, value and profit. It would be beneficial to determine how such terms translate into the picture in which an international non-profit sport federation seeks to develop its game. The employees are not just the people that work at the IIHF office. There is IIHF staff, Council Members, Committee Members, Vierumaki staff, students and, most importantly, National Association personnel involved in delivering results, growth and sustainability. Tools such as stakeholder maps will provide clarity on the roles, responsibilities and how everyone involved relates to the bigger picture. Customers are the people that consume the products offered. In the case of developing the sport, this view leads all the way to a 5-year old player who is about to start a new hobby. Depending on the strategic priority, the customers can vary and those should be clearly determined. Products are the programs, resources and tools that the IIHF will offer for the use of its National Associations. Value is to be achieved through the quality of those products; they are to be meaningful to the users. Profit does not refer to financial revenue; the IIHF profits when National Associations successfully develop ice hockey in their countries. Determining the profits will be based on the determination of objectives and ways to measure success.

Most likely the finalized strategy will not be perfect. It should be remembered that the strategy is to be re-visited at least annually. Through the implementation of the strategy, measurement of progress and success and critical thinking, one can expect that the strategy needs to be edited at least on annual basis. New circumstances, threats and opportunities will occur and the strategy, as a whole, needs to react to those.

### 7.5.1 Action steps

The action steps, or tactics, will consist of concrete projects and actions which are there to deliver the strategy. Basing the planning of these on the strategic priorities will simplify the process; if a program, activity or project is to deliver value under the guidance of the stra-

tegic priorities, it should be taken forward. Same principle would work the other way and thus no proposed initiative should be taken any further if it does not fall under the scope indicated by the strategic priorities.

The action steps will include programs and resources such as camps, leadership education programs, recruitment programs, materials and guidelines. Many of these are already in place and should be enhanced based on the feedback received and based on the actual strategy. New features should be included to fill in possible gaps. Acknowledging the possible limitations concerning human and financial resources, the four-year strategy should be accompanied by a four-year project plan which prioritizes the tasks to be done.

An enormous gap in the operations of the National Association Assistance Program was discovered during the process. Whereas the IIHF needs to have a strategy for global development of ice hockey, the National Associations need to have their own strategies or long-term plans as well. It is not sufficient to audit the structure and operations of a National Association and then immediately proceed to seasonal plans and project aiming at providing growth and sustainability. If the Domestic Development Plans are not part of a bigger picture and a longer plan, they end up being random activities which have short lives. Also, one strategy to address the development of 74 National Associations would most likely not work as all of them have their individual and specific needs.

Auditing is to be a process which provides the relevant information to discover potential gaps and areas for improvement. Those will then enable the National Associations, with the support of the IIHF and the students, to establish a long-term strategy for domestic development of ice hockey in that country. These plans should address each National Association as a whole. This includes organizational matters from structure and governance to daily operations and resources. Thus, the plans are not be limited just to activities targeted at players, coaches and game officials. Similarly to IIHF's strategic framework, the National Association long-term strategies are to include the fundamental parts of strategies in general, from the vision statement to concrete action steps. The Domestic Development Plans shall then serve as the action steps which aim at delivering the National Association's development strategies. This concept is illustrated in the figure 5 below.
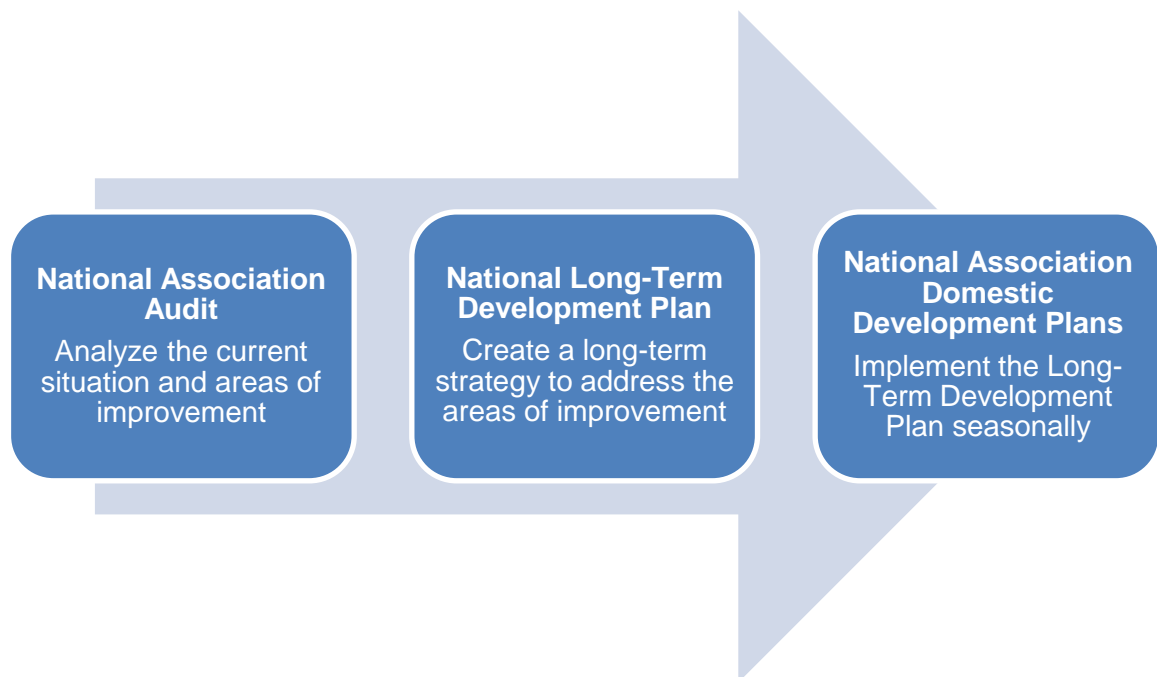
Figure 5. National Association Development Process

As a summary, the IIHF needs finalize the strategy and to decide what the action steps in assisting National Associations are. Through those, the IIHF will have a clear approach to the global development of ice hockey. When those are decided, the IIHF can support the National Associations in their long-term planning of domestic development, goal-setting and the execution of those strategies. Through such features, issues related to accountability, growth, sustainability and measurement of success will be addressed. It would also be good to consider whether the requirement of long-term development plans is inserted into the Minimum Participation Standards.

Based on the gaps and the needs of the National Associations, the IIHF will be more equipped to enhance the current programs and resources as well as to launch new programs should those be needed. For example, the IIHF Hockey Development Camp programs and National Association allocations to those should be completely based on needs identified through the intelligence gathered in the process of creating domestic development strategies.

### 7.5.2 Implementation

As per the literature and also through the findings of the research, it is apparent that the people are the most valuable asset in the implementation of a strategy. Once the strategy has been finalized, the IIHF needs to re-evaluate the human resource requirements to ensure that development strategy can be implemented with quality from the IIHF's point of

view. The students involved could contribute greatly to the task as long as the long-term plans of the National Associations were in place and the IIHF office was giving them sufficient instruction and direction. Providing a program which contains long-term planning and strategizing would add value and increase the motivation of the students as such skills are beneficial regardless of the future job they are aiming to get. Auditing and long-term planning will also help identifying which people should attend the IIHF Hockey Development Camp and thus design Domestic Development Plans in co-operation with their National Associations. If the IIHF investments are not directed at the right people, the long-term plans or short term projects will become meaningless as they most likely will not be executed.

The IIHF strategy needs to be clear enough so that it can be communicated to and understood by all of the people involved. Again, referring to who can be seen as employees in the execution of the strategy, the strategy needs to be communicated to IIHF Council, IIHF Development and Coaching Committee, the relevant IIHF staff, Vierumaki staff and students and to National Associations. All of them need to understand what the IIHF aims to do and achieve and all of that needs to be illustrated, preferably in a simple document which can be easily distributed. Such illustrations should also enable the recipients to understand their roles in the execution of the strategy.

It might be worthwhile to also determine where to limit the communication as well. The IIHF strategy is relevant to all of the parties, including the National Associations, mentioned above as it gives direction to where the efforts should be focused and invested to. However, if the National Associations design their own ice hockey development strategies, the IIHF strategy becomes less relevant to the people doing the work in the domestic development. The National Associations should follow the same principles and to ensure that all of their people understand what the National Association is trying to achieve.

Technology will play a key role in enabling all of the required to be efficiently conducted. There should be a tool which gathers all of the relevant elements into one place. To avoid the tremendous amount of manual work using excel sheets to create trackers and outputs, there needs to be an online tool which features all of the necessary components including auditing, long-term plans, domestic development project plans, key-performance indicators, communication trackers, IIHF resources and relevant outputs. Having all of the information in one place will enhance the communication, create transparency and decrease the number of misunderstandings. The platform should act as a project manage-

ment tool, indicating roles and responsibilities, timelines and objectives. Access should be provided to operational people based on their relevance in the execution of the projects.

### 7.5.3 Measurement of progress and success

In the process of finalizing the strategy and based on the strategic priorities, clear objectives should be defined. These are to be measurable and to include time frames and limits. The clarified goals ultimately define what successful execution of the strategy means and therefore guide the people involved in their daily operations. These also help in defining what value and profitability mean and enable one to monitor whether growth and sustainability are actually taking place.

Certain distinctions should be set when measuring progress and success. There should be measurable targets which solely relate to the IIHF's execution of the strategy. These could include numbers relating to general growth. Examples of such are total number of registered players globally, a number of IIHF resources and their usage as well as injury rates in IIHF Championships. However, if the National Associations have their own long-term and seasonal plans in place, those will need their own measurable targets. With the IIHF supporting the National Associations, there should also be metrics in place to evaluate how well the IIHF assists the National Associations.

Determining success can be a tremendous challenge and also potentially misleading. Using player numbers as an example, there can be other factors which affect those instead of the performances of the National Associations and the IIHF. A National Association may be operating at an excellent level but the player numbers are decreasing due to for example bad economic situation in the country. Alternatively, the National Association is not performing well but the number of players is increasing as the sport is becoming more popular among youth through other channels. In addition, focusing on solely numbers but not on impact could be very misleading. As another example of that, meeting target attendance numbers in a coaching symposium is meaningless if none of the participants understands the content or uses the information in their daily work.  Due to this challenge, it is extremely crucial that the both, the IIHF and the National Associations, carefully think what the proper measurements of progress and success are and what sort of impact do those have to task in hand.

Again, technology would be extremely important in facilitating the monitoring and measurement part of the strategy. With limited resources and a large number of National Asso-

ciations, the online platform discussed earlier needs to have a platform or fields for these metrics as well. As long as all of this information is on one platform, it can be easily accessed and viewed by all of the people involved. If all of metrics are in one place, one should be able to instantly generate outputs which illustrate the broad and detailed views on how well the execution is progressing in all of the levels.

In summary, the separated sets of the measurable targets would relate to IIHF strategy implementation, National Association strategy implementation, quality of IIHF support in National Association strategy implementation, National Association Domestic Development Plan execution and quality of IIHF support in the implementation National Association Domestic Development Plan execution. There will be a considerable amount of work to be done to determine all of the metrics to be used in this framework but those are necessary for illustrating how well things are progressing. Figure 6 shows the areas and distribution of metrics in this suggested concept:

**IIHF Global Development Strategy:**

IIHF's own metrics and key-performance indicators to measure implementation and success

**National Association Development Strategy**:

National Association' s metrics and key-performance indicators to measure the implementation and success

IIHF's metrics to evaluate the support given

**National Association Domestic Development Plans**:

National Association' s metrics and key-performance indicators to measure the implementation and success
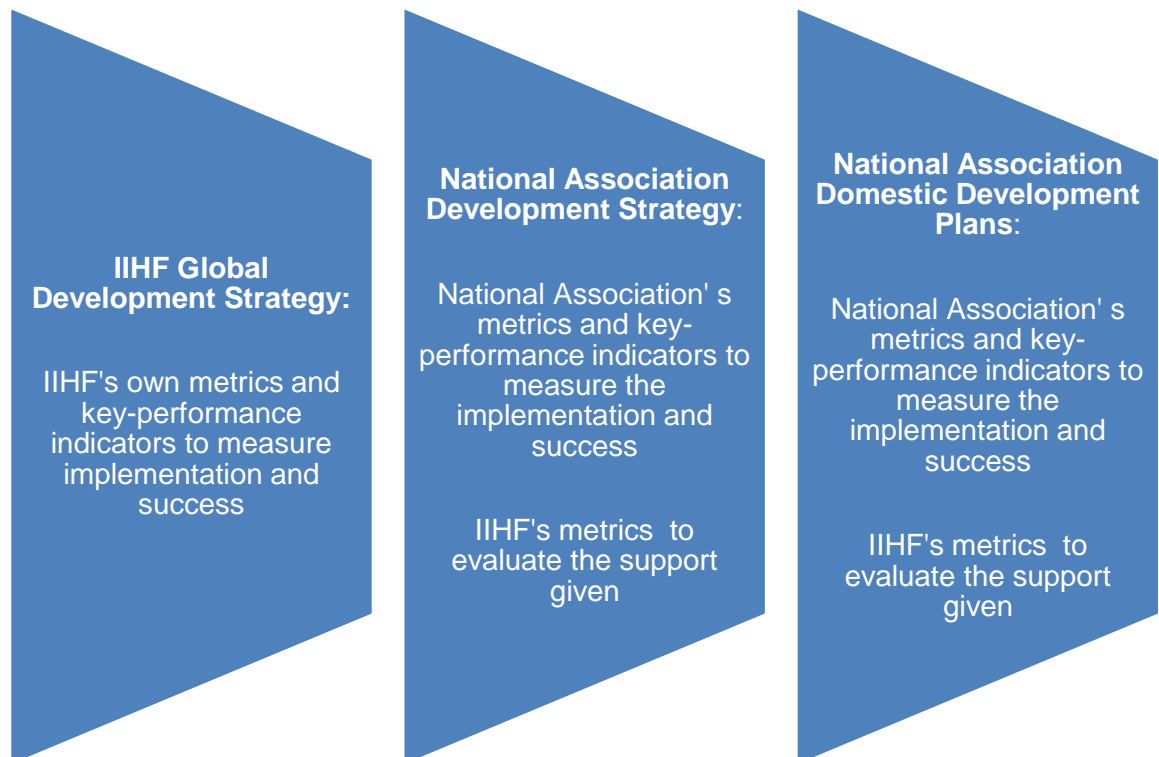
IIHF's metrics to evaluate the support given

Figure 6: Three-level metrics model for measurement of progress and success

# 8    Conclusions

This action research has proven to be a very good process in relation to its objective and the research questions. Despite the change of the objective and the consequent limitation of time, the research has been able to provide the required strategic framework for global development of ice hockey and it has provided the answers to the research questions. The general objectives were listed in section 2.1 of this article and were indicated to be the following:

- To plan a global ice hockey development strategy framework for the use of the IIHF Development and Coaching Committee.
- Evaluate the complete development and planning process to determine whether it is beneficial for other IIHF Committees to use as such.
- Enhance the professional skills of the researcher.

As indicated in the results and mentioned earlier, a global ice hockey development strategy framework was planned, designed and illustrate in a simple one-page document which captures the fundamental statements of the current Committee. This information will be passed forward for further the considerations and approvals so that the actual execution of the plan may begin.

The part 8.2 focuses on evaluating the development and planning process and to suggesting how to make improvements to the process in the future. Through this evaluation process, the benefits of similar actions for other IIHF Committees is evaluated and commented on. The enhancement of the professional skills of the researcher is discussed in section 8.3.

## 8.1    Answers to research questions

Typically for action research, the aim was to find answers to the research questions through a process instead of solely referring to data collection and analysis. The pre-determined research questions were made so that they also match the features of action research. The research has resulted in answers to the research questions, some that have already been put into place and others that remain to be subject to the approval of new people taking part. The research questions were:

1. What are the vision, mission, values and strategic priorities of the IIHF Development and Coaching Committee?
2. Are the current IIHF development programs suitable and valuable for the use of IIHF Member National Associations and if needed, how can those be enhanced?

3. What are the suggested methods, metrics and tools for the IIHF to utilize to measure success and show value of the development programs?
4. What kind of process has the development of the strategic framework been for the IIHF Development and Coaching Committee in practice and how could such be enhanced in the future?

The IIHF Development and Coaching Committee were able to determine the vision, mission, values and strategic priorities. All of those were included in the strategic framework, along with strategic focus areas. These statements serve as the foundation for the development of the actual strategy and therefore serve as a succession plan to be delivered from the current Committee to the next.

The strategic analysis process provided valuable information on the suitability and value of the current IIHF development programs and the workshop held during the Committee meeting provided numerous suggestions on how to further enhance them. It is clear that the National Associations value the IIHF development programs or they need them. The IIHF needs to continue to provide the support to its Members as long as the global development of ice hockey is in the mandate of the IIHF. The enhancement suggestions for the current programs have been provided but the usage of those is subject to the new Council and Committee first accepting the strategy and defining the objectives.

The research also provides suggestions on the methods, metrics and tools for the IIHF to utilize to measure success and show value of the development programs. A three-level approach which also separates the roles and the responsibilities of the IIHF and the National Associations is suggested. It is impossible to provide concrete suggestions at the time when the IIHF strategy is not fully done and as the National Association long and short-term plans are yet to be designed. However, the suggested model, combined with the necessary technology and the required human resources, will provide the IIHF the ways and means to monitor and illustrate the progress made and the success gained.

The answers to the fourth research question will be discussed separately in the following section. It is important to view and reflect on the process and make suggestions on how to enhance the process in the future. Such comes, as usual, with a number of proposals.

## 8.2 Process execution, enhancement suggestions and future use

As mentioned earlier, the process has been beneficial for the IIHF Development and Coaching Committee as the objectives of the research have been met. It has also been a refreshing change, engaging the people involved to critically think about the current activities and to take steps back to re-evaluate what the fundamental purpose and objective of

the Committee is. Clarity on such and a consensus which has been reached in a group provide efficiency to the actual work through clear definitions on the roles and responsibilities and it also increases excitement within the group and team cohesion. Creating the basis for the work to be done for the next four years also makes it easier for the operational people, such as the researcher, to continue forward in the planning and execution of daily operations.

The researcher had not used action research in any projects before and naturally there were many matters and actions that could have been done better. One of the fundamental issues was the lack of determining the process in the beginning. It is very natural that the process will take a turn and change during the execution but it would be more beneficial to plan better in the beginning and decide which action research process is applied. Also, the National Association data collection should have been done in a slightly different manner. Despite the novel aim of including numerous respondents from the same National Association to learn about the thinking in different levels of the organization, it would be more beneficial to request that only one person per National Association responds. With two or more people answering from the same organization, it is possible that the results are nullified.

Lack of time was another problem. This research was forced to solely focus on planning as there was no sufficient time to wait for the finalization and implementation of the strategy which would have been followed by another analysis and reflection process. As the implementation of the strategy and the measurement of success need enough time, it would most likely take about three years in an international sporting federation. On the other hand, should one have the required time to conduct such a research, it would certainly be extremely beneficial.

The timing of the process was both good and bad. It is beneficial that the process is saving the next Committee's time as they will not need to go through the process of creating the strategic framework, given that they actually like the end-result. On the other hand, many questions, such as specific objectives, were left unanswered as it was not seen wise to spend time on those until the next Committee has reviewed the fundamental parts of the framework. Thus, perhaps it would be more beneficial to go through this process in the beginning of the Committee term, but the time pressure will most likely be even higher as there is a general demand for action. When the process is done in the beginning of the Committee term, there will not be limitations on the decision-making and thus the process is able progress more quickly.

The size of the group and the busy schedules of the Committee Members made the process challenging as well. It is unreasonable to expect a Committee to provide enormous amounts of input when their own work schedules are already extremely busy. Also, when the group is large, not everyone necessarily contributes. Most likely such is a result of respect for some other Members of the group, lack of preparation due to the busy schedules or simply shyness which restricts innovation and discussion. Therefore it was better to do the majority of the work in smaller groups. Should a similar process be done again, the size of the group and the schedules of the group members should be considered.

It was a very good idea to use an external advisor. As the process shows, the initial aims were premature and the external advisor helped to choose the right direction. Perhaps the researcher and other people involved were so deeply focused on creating solutions that the fundamentals were forgotten. The external advisor challenged the people involved to think about the objectives of the IIHF which launched a new process within the process, far more valuable that a single tool or a program.

In general and despite the areas of improvement, it has been a very beneficial process for the Committee. Strategizing activities is very important for any organization or a unit and the IIHF Committees as units are not any different from them. It is very recommendable that other IIHF Committees undergo a similar process as well, at least to form a strategic framework or a long-term action plan. The clarity it brings to the Committee, Council and operation staff is extremely valuable. The creation of fundamental statements and long-term plans decreases the number of misunderstandings concerning deliverables and actions tremendously.

Also the use of data collection and analysis is recommendable for every Committee for every activity or program. Through information and measurements, one is more prepared to answer questions, illustrate value and to measure success. As one can see the National Associations as customer, learning more about the customer and their needs should be the core of the activities. On top of questionnaires, one should also try gather more information through informal channels such as phone calls and coffee break discussions.

## 8.3 Self-development of the researcher

The development process has been extremely beneficial for the researcher for many reasons. The learning has not only been about the review of relevant literature. With a rele-

vant and work life-related practical process, and with the active participation in it, the researcher has been able to enhance his professional skills. Also, the opportunity to work with other people who already have expertise in the area of strategies has been a huge contributor to self-development.

Learning about strategies has been fascinating for the researcher. Understanding strategies and strategic processes is not only beneficial in the development of ice hockey but in all areas of the work, even if the industry changed. Understanding how to analyze, plan, act, observe and reflect is important in any work. Also, capabilities in conducting strategic processes, with the relevant data collection and analysis, strategy development, implementation and measurement of success, will be useful in work-related activities in the future.

One of the most important realizations has been that strategic processes are not something that one goes through just once and then the activities stop. The dynamic approach, flexibility of the process and the necessity to periodically go back to the strategy are extremely important. This has been forgotten many times in the past. This is just an example of a concrete development area; many other findings about strategies were made during the literature review which will be very useful in the future. There were also some mistakes made during the process and mistakes have the tendency of being best possible education. This was the first time that the researcher was a part of a development process of this nature. When a similar process is conducted again, the researcher will be more prepared to contribute more.

The learning from the process started to show in other areas of work as well. The aim of learning strategic thinking has therefore been achieved. Aiming to think three steps ahead and building different scenarios is helpful in every area of the researcher's work. Illustrating and modeling thoughts and processes has also assisted in the communication of ideas, even if they are of simpler kind. Also, the importance of collecting data has become obvious. Not only in relation to strategizing, strategic data should be collected and thus the approach should be very business-intelligence like thinking should be used in everyday operations, at least for the sake of measuring progress and success.

Action research provides a win-win situation for researchers who are working full-time. The researcher recommends this type of research to anyone who is in a position to be part of a strategy or development process. Action research pushes the researcher to think

about the daily operations through structures and models which challenges one to be more capable to justify actions as well.

## 8.4   Validity and reliability

The research has been valid as the correct and relevant matters were researched. Also, action research as a research method was the correct method to use in a work-related development process. This is more emphasized through the active involvement of the researcher. Despite the challenges which can occur when selecting the "correct" matters to research or the consequent and potential problems in deciding how to measure, evaluate and define these subjects, the researcher is convinced that the method of the research was suitable and correct matters were evaluated as the process led to concrete results. If another research method was used, the results would have only been left on suggestive level.

As Kananen (2009, 87-88.) mentioned, measuring reliability through traditional research methods is challenging. Simply looking at the durability of the research or whether the results would be exactly the same in the future, the reliability would most likely be very low as the process is based on involving a number of individuals, taking their views into account as well as setting up the process based on everyone's schedule. Also, as time change, the content of the strategic framework should change. However, as Kananen (2009, 99.) suggested, the reliability should be measured through a comparison between the goals of the project and the end-results. Based on those, the reliability of the research is very high. The results of the research and the development process met the research objectives and provided answers to the research questions.

# References

Bester, P. 2012. The business environment of sport organizations: A review. African Journal of Business Management, 6, 46, pp. 11530-11535.

BusinessDictionary.com. 2016. Action Research Definition. URL: http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/action-research.html. Accessed: 18 April 2016

BusinessDictionary.com. 2016. Strategy Definition. URL: http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/strategy.html. Accessed: 20.04.2016

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2009. Evaluation Briefs. URL: http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/pdf/brief3b.pdf. Accessed: 25 April 2016.

Collis, D.J. & Rukstad, M.G. 2008. Can You Say What Your Strategy Is?. Harvard Business Review, 52,4, pp. 82-90.

Collins, J. 2001. Good to Great. HarperCollins. New York.

Dyson, R. 2002. Strategic development and SWOT analysis at the University of Warwick. European Journal of Operational Research, 152, 3, pp. 631-640.

Ferkins, L., McDonald, G. & Shilbury, D. 2009. Board Involvement in Strategy: Advancing the Governance of Sport Organizations. Journal of Sport Management, 23, 3, pp. 245-277.

Ferkins, L. & Shilbury, D. 2011. Professionalisation, sport governance and strategic capability. Managing Leisure, 16, 2, pp. 108-127.

Glossary of Education Reform. 2015. Action Research. URL: http://edglossary.org/action-research/. Accessed: 08 April 2016.

Harsunen, P. 2014. Strategisen suunnittelun ja palveluiden kehittämisen toimintamalli – case Keplin strategia 2020. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. Helsinki.

International Ice Hockey Federation 2016. IIHF. URL: http://www.iihf.com/iihf-home/the-iihf/. Accessed: 27 February 2016.

International Ice Hockey Federation 2016. Statutes and Bylaws. URL: http://www.iihf.com/iihf-home/the-iihf/statutes-bylaws/. Accessed: 27 February 2016.

International Ice Hockey Federation 2016. Council. URL: http://www.iihf.com/iihf-home/the-iihf/council/. Accessed: 27 February 2016.

International Ice Hockey Federation 2016. Committees 2013-2016. URL: http://www.iihf.com/iihf-home/the-iihf/committees/committees-2013-2016. Accessed: 29 February 2016

International Ice Hockey Federation 2016. Staff. URL: http://www.iihf.com/iihf-home/the-iihf/staff/. Accessed: 29 February 2016.

International Ice Hockey Federation 2016. Mission Statement. URL: http://www.iihf.com/iihf-home/the-iihf/our-mission/. Accessed: 29 February 2016.

International Ice Hockey Federation 2016. Sport. URL: http://www.iihf.com/iihf-home/sport/. Accessed: 1 March 2016.

International Ice Hockey Federation 2016. Youth. URL: http://www.iihf.com/sk/iihf-home/sport/youth/. Accessed: 1 March 2016.

International Ice Hockey Federation 2016. Camps. URL: http://www.iihf.com/iihf-home/sport/camps/. Accessed: 1 March 2016.

International Ice Hockey Federation 2014. IIHF Statutes and Bylaws. URL: http://www.iihf.com/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/The_IIHF/2014-2018_IIHF_Statutes_and_Bylaws_web.pdf. Accessed: 29 February 2016.

Kaija, R. 2013. Suomen PGA:n asema ja tulevaisuus. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. Helsinki.

Kananen, J. 2009. Toimintatutkimus yritysten kehittämisessä. JAMK University of Applied Sciences. Jyväskylä

Kaplan, R. S. & Norton, D. P. 1996. The Balanced Scorecard. Harvard Business School Publishing. Boston.

Kim, W. & Mauborgne, R. 2005. Blue Ocean Strategy. Harvard Business School Publishing. Boston.

Kourdi, J. 2015. Business Strategy. Profile Books. London.

McKeown, M. 2012. The Strategy Book. Pearson Education. Harlow.

Minikin B. & Robinson L. 2011. Developing strategic capacity in Olympic sport organizations. Sport, Business and Management: An International Journal, 1, 3, pp. 219-233.

University of Warwick 2016. Action Research. URL: https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/ldc/resource/evaluation/tools/action/. Accessed: 18 April 2016.

Verschoor, C. 2015. Change Ahead. BIS Publishers. Amsterdam.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Committee Member Questionnaire



# *IIHF Coach/Development Committee*
# *Strategic Framework Exercise*
### *16.02.15*

*In an effort to outline the Strategic Framework for future IIHF Coach/Development Committee activities, the current committee members will engage in a process to develop a "road map" for the committee charged with leading Coaching and Development programs for the IIHF and the Member National Associations over the next 4 years.*

1. *What do you feel the Vision for the IIHF Coach/Development Committee should be?*

2. *A Mission statement must be brief and to the point. Please write a brief statement describing what you feel is the purpose of the committee for the IIHF and for the Member National Associations.*

3. *State three (3) reasons why you feel the Coach/Development committee exists?*

4. *State three (3) values you feel describe the IIHF Coach/Development Committee:*

5. *What do you feel are the strategic focus areas (strategic priorities) of the Coach/Development Committee? (You may list up to 5 strategic priorities).*

6. *List up to three (3) goals of the IIHF Coach/Development Committee:*

7. *List three (3) outcomes the Coach Committee should achieve through the International Coach Symposium held each year at the World Championships:*

8. *What do you feel is the number one outcome the Coach/Development Committee should achieve through the Annual IIHF Hockey Development Camp?*

9. *List additional outcomes the Coach/Development Committee should achieve through the IIHF Hockey Development Camp: (Feel free to list up to five (5) outcomes)*

**Appendix 2. Clarification Document to the Committee**

### INTERNATIONAL ICE HOCKEY FEDERATION

## Coaching and Development Committee

*"Developing a Strategic Framework for the Coach and Development Programs"*

March 6 & 7, 2016

---

### *Overview of a Strategic Framework:*

The framework is intended to guide the strategic direction of the IIHF Coaching and Developing Programs. Recognizing the importance of this committee within the overall committee structure of the IIHF, the framework will reflect the input from current committee members with the goal of outlining the opportunities of the next committee in fulfilling it's role in supporting the growth and development of the IIHF member national associations.

The IIHF Coach/Development Committee strategic framework will include:

- *Vision*
- *Mission*
- *Pillars: key areas of activity designed to impact on the achievement of the vision and mission*
- *Strategic Priorities*
- *Tactics or activities addressing the strategic priorities*
- *Key deliverables*
- *Metrics: a method of measurement demonstrating that key outcomes are met*

### *Definitions:*

A **vision statement** is a description of a desired outcome that inspires, energizes and helps to create a mental picture of the target(s) for the Coaching and Development Committee. It could be the outcome of a project, goal, series of projects or a group of goals.

A **mission statement** is a brief description of the Coaching & Development committee's fundamental purpose. It answers the question, "Why does the committee exist? In addition, the mission statement articulates the committee's purpose both for those in the IIHF and for the Member National Associations.

- *The difference between a mission statement and a vision statement is that the mission statement focuses on the committee's present state while the vision statement focuses on the future work of the committee.*

**Strategic priorities** are ranked organizational or committee objectives and goals. These can include generalized mission statements like ethical guidelines as well as more specific targets, such as interactions with the hockey community. Planning initiatives consider these strategic priorities and work toward accomplishing them with a use of various tools and/or processes.

**Value statement** explains what we believe in and it is really a set of values that clearly articulates what the committee members believe in.

- - - - - - - - - - - -

### *Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Metrics*

A **goal** is a broad aim toward which the committees' efforts are directed – the What!

An **objective** is a specific and measurable milestone that must be achieved in order to reach the goal

A **strategy** is a plan of action designed to achieve an objective – the How!

A **tactic** is a specific action step required to deliver on a strategy – what we do! Each strategy may have a number of tactics

**Metrics** measure an organization's activities and performance. Developing performance metrics usually follows a process of:

- Establishing critical processes/MNA requirements
- Identifying specific, quantifiable outputs of work
- Establishing targets against which results can be scored

**Appendix 3. Member National Association Questionnaire**

# MNA Development Questionnaire

The International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) has prepared this questionnaire with the objective of collecting data which can be utilized in designing a global ice hockey development strategy for the years to come. We are in a process of looking at ways to enhance our current Programming, thus aiming at providing your National Association the best possible support with the development of our game.

Areas addressed in this questionnaire are the IIHF Hockey Development Camps, National Association Assistance Program, Vierumaki Degree Programme student support, auditing and long-term planning, player safety and International Coaching Symposiums.

Our goal is to receive multiple responses from different positions within each Member National Association and therefore ask that this questionnaire is distributed to all staff and personnel who are or have been involved in these areas. There are no right or wrong answers. This data collection and analysis process will only be meaningful if all of the respondents are completely honest. The collected data will be used to develop the IIHF Programming and will not be made public or shared with a third party. The questionnaire is anonymous.

We sincerely thank you for taking your time to answer this questionnaire. Your feedback is extremely important to us!

Section 1: Background Information

1. In which position is your country currently within the IIHF World Ranking?
    1. 1 – 6
    2. 7 – 13
    3. 14 – 20
    4. 21 – 30
    5. 31 – 40
    6. 41 – 50
    7. Not ranked

2. What is your current position in your National Association?
    1. President or Council Member
    2. General Secretary
    3. Sport/Technical Director
    4. Administrator
    5. Volunteer
    6. Other, what **(text box)**

Section 2: IIHF Hockey Development Camp (Camp)

1. How valuable is the Camp to the development of ice hockey in your country?
    1. No value at all

    2. A little value

    3. Some value

    4. Valuable

    5. Very valuable

    6. I do not know

2. How you been able to see concrete results in the development of ice hockey in your country over the last years, directly relating to the Camp (this refers to development of players, setting up and developing your programming, increased knowledge of your Camp Participants etc.)?

    1. No concrete results at all

    2. A few concrete results

    3. Some concrete results

    4. Concrete results

    5. Many concrete results

    6. I do not know

3. In general, are the Camp Programs meeting your MNA's current needs and thus are they suitable for enhancing the development of ice hockey in your country?

    1. Not at all suitable

    2. A little suitable

    3. Somewhat suitable

    4. Suitable

    5. Extremely suitable

    6. I do not know

4. How valuable are the following Camp Programs to your Association **(1-5 grading: Not valuable at all, a little value, some value , valuable, very valuable)**?

    a. Player Development

    b. Coach Development

    c. GK Coach Development

    d. Team Manager Development

    e. Equipment Manager Development

    f. Administrator Education Program

    g. Learn-to-Play Program

5. Are there other Programs you would like to be added to the Camp? Any other feedback concerning camp?

    **TEXT BOX**

6. What do you think about the number of Leadership Program participant allocations that you received so far?

1. You would like to send less

2. Current number is sufficient and preferred

3. You would like to send more

4. I do not know

7. Except for the LTP and the Equipment Manager Program, the IIHF has required that the Camp participants create a Domestic Development Plan to address the development of specific areas of the game in your country. Is it a challenge to find suitable Camp participants who possess the know-how of successfully designing and executing this task?

   1. Extremely challenging

   2. Challenging

   3. Somewhat challenging

   4. A little challenging

   5. Not challenging at all

   6. I do not know

Section 3: National Association Assistance Program and Domestic Development Plans

1. Are you aware of and do you know about the National Association Assistance Program (NAAP) and/or the Domestic Development Plans (DDP)?

   1. No

   2. Yes

2. Has your Association taken part in this program in the last three years and successfully executed a DDP in your country?

   1. No

   2. Yes

   3. I do not know

3. If you answered "No" to the previous, please explain why you have not taken part?
   **TEXT BOX**

4. How important is the financial development subsidy (50% of your Association's costs) from the IIHF to the development of ice hockey in your country?

   1. Not important at all

   2. Slightly important

   3. Somewhat important

   4. Important

   5. Very important

   6. I do not know

5. Is this Program suitable/does it work well for your Association?

1. Does not work at all
2. Slightly works
3. Works somewhat
4. Works well
5. Works extremely well
6. I do not know

6. Have you been able to see concrete results in the development of ice hockey in your country over the last years, directly related to the DDP's?

1. No concrete results at all
2. Very few concrete results
3. Some concrete results
4. Concrete results
5. Many concrete results
6. I do not know

7. Do you discuss about budgeting, needs (content/topic), possibilities and challenges with your Camp participant when the Camp participant is creating the DDP?

1. No
2. Yes
3. I do not know

8. What are the biggest challenges in the development, execution and reporting of the DDPs?
   **TEXT BOX**

Section 4; Vierumäki Degree Programme Student Support

1. Are you aware of the possibility to use Vierumäki Degree Programme students as support personnel in the development of ice hockey in your country, specifically for the development of the Domestic Development Plan?

1. No
2. Yes
3. I do not know

2. If you were not aware of the available student support, would you consider using the student support in the future?

a. No
b. Yes
c. I do not know

3. Is the student support valuable to your Association?

1. No value at all

2. Very little value

3. Some value

4. Valuable

5. Very valuable

6. I do not know

4. What kind of support do you expect from the students?
   **TEXT BOX**

5. Are there challenges in relation to the student support? If yes, what are those?
   **TEXT BOX**

Section 5: Audit and Long-Term Planning

1. Were you part of the IIHF Audit process last time?
   1. No
   2. Yes

2. Did the Audit help you develop your Association and ice hockey in your country?
   1. Not at all
   2. Slightly helped
   3. Helped somewhat
   4. Yes, it helped
   5. Yes, it helped a lot
   6. I do not know

3. Has your Association continued to periodically audit and/or evaluate itself?
   1. No
   2. Yes
   7. I do not know

4. Does your Association have a long-term plan or a strategy for the development of the Association and/or ice hockey in your country?
   1. No
   2. Yes
   3. I do not know

5. If you do have a long-term plan for development, are the following used in it? **(I don't know, Yes or No)**
   a. Analysed data to provide background information to develop a plan?

      b. A plan on how to implement the strategy in the everyday work of the Association personnel and clubs?

      c. Key performance indicators or measurable targets to keep track of the progress?

      d. Ways to measure how the Association personnel or clubs implement the strategy in their daily work?

      e. Periodic meetings to re-evaluate the plan?

6. Do you see value in long-term planning?
    1. No value at all
    2. Very little value
    3. Some value
    4. Valuable
    5. Very valuable
    6. I do not know

7. If you do not have a long-term plan for development, why not? **(more than one option can be chosen)**
    a. It is not seen important for our Association
    b. We do not have the time to design a plan
    c. We do not have the personnel to design a plan
    d. We do not have money to design a plan
    e. We do not have the know-how to design a plan
    f. I do not know

8. If the IIHF provided support in the creation of a long-term development plan, would that be valuable to your Association?
    1. No value at all
    2. Very little value
    3. Some value
    4. Valuable
    5. Very valuable
    6. I do not know

Section 6: Player Safety

1. How important is the safety of players to your Association?
    1. Not important at all
    2. Of very little importance
    3. Somewhat important
    4. Important
    5. Very important

      6.   I do not know

9. Does your Association have a Program or Programs to address any of the following areas of player safety? **(more than one option can be chosen)**

    a. Material to address player-behaviour and respect (e.g. posters, leaflets)

    b. An online resource to provide information about player safety

    c. Material to show how to practice the technical and tactical elements of body-checking, receiving body checks and angling (women's hockey)?

    d. Material specifically designed for different target groups (e.g. players, parents, coaches)

    e. Other material such as disciplinary guidelines, facility safety guidelines

2. How important for your Association would it be that the IIHF provides a program which contains these elements?

    1. Not important at all

    2. Of very little importance

    3. Slightly important

    4. Important

    5. Very important

    6. I do not know

3. If the IIHF provides a layer Safety Program for your use, will your Association use it in your country to address player safety?

    1. No

    2. Yes

    3. I do not know

Section 7: IIHF International Coaching Symposium

1. Are you aware of the IIHF International Coaching Symposium which takes place during the IIHF Men's World Championship?

    1. No

    2. Yes

2. Do you think that it is important that the IIHF organizes such a Symposium?

    1. No

    2. Yes

    3. I do not know

3. How often should the IIHF organize these Symposia?

    1. More than once a year

    2. Every year

3. Every second year

4. Less frequently than every second year

5. I do not know

4. Out of the following themes, which ones would be the most beneficial to your Association and country? **(more than one option can be chosen)**

    a. Professional coaching

    b. Elite-level youth coaching

    c. Development of youth players

    d. Recruitment and retention of players

    e. Long-term player development

    f. Club management

Section 8: Closing and Open Word:

Please feel free to provide any other feedback concerning development that you would like the IIHF to consider when planning the future development Programs.

**TEXT BOX**

**Appendix 4. Camp Participant Questionnaire**

# IIHF Hockey Development Camp Participant Questionnaire

The International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) has prepared this questionnaire with the objective of collecting data which can be utilized in designing a global ice hockey development strategy for the years to come. We are in a process of looking at ways to enhance our current Programming, thus aiming at providing your National Association the best possible support with the development of our game.

Areas addressed in this questionnaire are the IIHF Hockey Development Camps, National Association Assistance Program and Vierumaki Degree Programme student support.

You are receiving this questionnaire as you have recently participated in the IIHF Hockey Development Camp and thus been a part of the National Association Assistance Program. If you have not taken part in these, you may ignore this questionnaire.

There are no right or wrong answers. This data collection and analysis process will only be meaningful if all of the respondents are completely honest. The collected data will be used to develop the IIHF Programming and will not be made public or shared with a third party. The questionnaire is anonymous.

We sincerely thank you for taking your time to answer this questionnaire. Your feedback is extremely important to us!


Section 1: Background Information


1. In which position is your country currently within the IIHF World Ranking?

    1. 1 – 6
    2. 7 – 13
    3. 14 – 20
    4. 21 – 30
    5. 31 – 40
    6. 41 – 50
    7. Not ranked


2. Which Program did you attend at the IIHF Hockey Development Camp?

    1. Coach Development
    2. GK Coach Development
    3. Team Manager Development
    4. Equipment Manager Development
    5. Administrator Education Program
    6. Learn-to-Play Program


Section 2: IIHF Hockey Development Camp (Camp)


3. How valuable is the Camp to the development of ice hockey in your country?

    1. No value at all
    2. A little value

3. Some value

        4. Valuable

        5. Very valuable

        6. I do not know

4. How you been able to see concrete results in the development of ice hockey in your country over the last years, directly relating to the Camp (this refers to development of players, setting up and developing your programming, increased knowledge of your Camp Participants etc.)?

        1. No concrete results at all

        2. A few concrete results

        3. Some concrete results

        4. Concrete results

        5. Many concrete results

        6. I do not know

5. In general, are the Camp Programs meeting your MNA's current needs and thus are they suitable for enhancing the development of ice hockey in your country?

        1. Not at all suitable

        2. A little suitable

        3. Somewhat suitable

        4. Suitable

        5. Extremely suitable

        6. I do not know

        7.

6. How valuable are the following Camp Programs to your Association **(1-5 grading: Not valuable at all, a little value, some value , valuable, very valuable)**?

        a. Player Development

        b. Coach Development

        c. GK Coach Development

        d. Team Manager Development

        e. Equipment Manager Development

        f. Administrator Education Program

        g. Learn-to-Play Program

7. Are there other Programs you would like to be added to the Camp? Any other feedback concerning camp?

        **TEXT BOX**

8. Except for the LTP and the Equipment Manager Program, the IIHF has required that the Camp participants create a Domestic Development Plan to address the development of specific areas of the game in your country. Has it been challenging for you to design and execute this task?

        1. Extremely challenging

2. Challenging

3. Somewhat challenging

4. A little challenging

5. Not challenging at all

6. I do not know


Section 3: National Association Assistance Program and Domestic Development Plans

9. Are you aware of and do you know about the National Association Assistance Program (NAAP) and/or the Domestic Development Plans (DDP)?

   1. No

   2. Yes


10. Has your Association taken part in this program in the last three years and successfully executed a DDP in your country?

    1. No

    2. Yes

    3. I do not know


11. If you answered "No" to the previous, please explain why you have not taken part?
    **TEXT BOX**


12. How important is the financial development subsidy (50% of your Association's costs) from the IIHF to the development of ice hockey in your country?

    1. Not important at all

    2. Slightly important

    3. Somewhat important

    4. Important

    5. Very important

    6. I do not know


13. Is this Program suitable/does it work well for your Association?

    1. Does not work at all

    2. Slightly works

    3. Works somewhat

    4. Works well

    5. Works extremely well

    6. I do not know


14. Have you been able to see concrete results in the development of ice hockey in your country over the last years, directly related to the DDP's?

1. No concrete results at all
2. Very few concrete results
3. Some concrete results
4. Concrete results
5. Many concrete results
6. I do not know

15. Did you and your Association discuss about budgeting, needs (content/topic), possibilities and challenges in relation to your Camp participation and DDP creation?
    1. No
    2. Yes
    3. I do not know

16. What are the biggest challenges in the development, execution and reporting of the DDPs?
    **TEXT BOX**

Section 4; Vierumäki Degree Programme Student Support

17. Are you aware of the possibility to use Vierumäki Degree Programme students as support personnel in the development of ice hockey in your country, specifically for the development of the Domestic Development Plan?
    1. No
    2. Yes
    3. I do not know

18. Have you been contacted by a Vierumäki Degree Programme Student?
    1. No
    2. Yes
    3. I do not know

19. Is the student support valuable to your Association?
    1. No value at all
    2. Very little value
    3. Some value
    4. Valuable
    5. Very valuable
    6. I do not know

20. What kind of support do you expect from the students?
    **TEXT BOX**

21. Are there challenges in relation to the student support? If yes, what are those?

**TEXT BOX**


Section 5: Closing and Open Word:


Please feel free to provide any other feedback concerning development that you would like the IIHF to consider when planning the future development Programs.

**TEXT BOX**

## Appendix 5. Strategic Framework

**IIHF Development and Coaching Committee**
**Strategic Framework**
18.04.2016

In an effort to outline the Strategic Framework for the activities of the next IIHF
Development and Coaching Committee, the current Committee Members engaged
in a process to develop a "road map" for the Committee charged with leading
Coaching and Development programs for the IIHF and the Member National
Associations over the next 4 years.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Vision** | Be a source of knowledge, inspiration, and support for the development of ice hockey for all member nations |
| **Mission** | To design and support initiatives that will further the development of ice hockey on all levels in the member associations of the IIHF, and to act as an advisory entity to the IIHF council on matters of development in its deliberations on funding and resource distribution. |
| **Values** | ❑ Passionate   ❑ Knowledgeable   ❑ Credibility<br>❑ Commitment   ❑ Integrity   ❑ Experience |
| **Focus Areas** | ✓ Investing – Infrastructure development for MNAs<br>✓ Growing – Strategies to grow membership<br>✓ Leading – Sport leadership training<br>✓ Ensuring – Sustaining and increasing resources and supports<br>✓ Strengthening – By building MNA capacity |

### Strategic Priorities

| #1. Leadership Development | #2. Resource Development | #3. Player Safety | #4. Research & Development |
|---|---|---|---|

### Action Steps (Tactics)

107