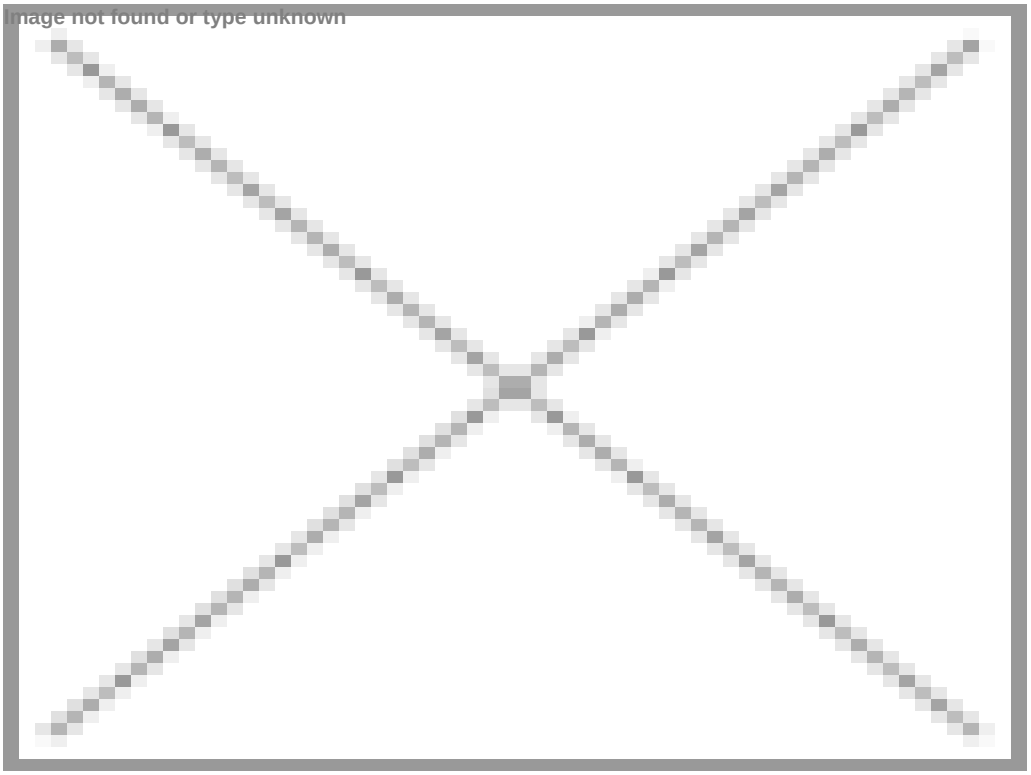
05 JAN 2024

UIPM SECRETARY GENERAL'S MESSAGE: 2024 WILL BE THE YEAR WE DIP OUR TOES INTO A BLUE OCEAN



What do you want to see when you consider the future of our sport and our organisation?

I see a blue ocean that we are about to put our toes in, and that is a very exciting place to be. However, I often ask myself the question: ‘Are you convinced about all the changes taking place?’

My answer is always positive (*yes)* but, in some aspects, it is tempered with caution (*not yet)*.

Yes because I strongly believe we are moving in the right direction to make the big picture materialise. *Not yet* because we need to see substantial results and numbers in a lot of key areas, and we cannot rush this part of the process, it will inevitably take time.

During the most recent online meeting of the UIPM Executive Board on December 18, our 2024 goal and the key indicators of accomplishment were confirmed:

2024 goal:

- To **strengthen** UIPM to be a **more complete and stronger** International Federation **with more resources and possibilities** after the full integration of Obstacle Sport.

2024 key indicators of accomplishment:

- Smooth preparations and **excellent demonstration of Modern Pentathlon competition in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games**
- Fix **Fencing innovation** and rules adjustment to fit the needs of the International Olympic Committee and Los Angeles 2028 **before July/August 2024**
- **Agree a suitable venue for LA28** before Paris 2024 or soon after
- Define our **competition format for LA 2028** according to IOC and LA28 requirements by July/Aug
- Conduct a **successful electoral UIPM Congress** in Saudi Arabia **with the adoption of necessary motions**, with all **preparations advanced from Q1 2024**.

However, facing the imminent reality of 2024, I can't stop thinking about our long-term future, which could include a real blue ocean for our sport and the organisation.

In the commercial world, the blue ocean strategy is described as "the simultaneous pursuit of differentiation and low cost to open up a new market space and create new demand. It is about creating and capturing uncontested market space, thereby making the competition irrelevant. It is based on the view that market boundaries and industry structure are not a given and can be reconstructed by the actions and beliefs of industry players".

So there are questions we need to continuously answer and update.

What would be the guiding principles of the strategy if we decided to create our own blue ocean? For the strategy itself:

- Can we create a new boundary?
- Can we focus more on wider impacts than numerical / financial outcomes?
- Can we surpass current demands?
- Can we set up a reasonable order of steps?

Then for the implementation:

- Can we achieve continuous internal buy-in?
- Can we align our implementation as part of our strategy?
- Can we smoothly coordinate new value, benefits and personnel?
- Can we keep updating our new blue ocean when needed later?

It is clear that we will need to draw our own map, deciding where and when to create and increase, deduct and delete.

Meanwhile, how can we attract more partners besides the ones who already stand beside us?

- Can we attract partners who are wandering at the edge of our sports market?
- Can we attract partners who have traditionally avoided our sports?
- Can we attract partners we never met and never considered joining the sports world?

And more to the point:

- Is there common ground between us where we can identify a values match?
- Is it possible we can create some new demand for all these potential partners?
- Is there any chance we could merge some markets and demands in order to acquire their investment?

To achieve what we will aim for, can we be fair all the time in terms of:

- Engagement with our community?
- Clear explanations for all stakeholders?
- Clarify of expectations for the goal and tasks?

Last but not least, where does our governance model suit our mission and overall purpose, and where could there be clever adjustments?

None of the above is easy to answer on paper, let alone in practice, but it’s vital that we start to answer our own questions about future direction.

In a nutshell, can we find a value innovation? And can we be reconstructionist?

Indeed, my real feeling is that while 2023 was tough, 2024 will be no less challenging. But we are accustomed to this. The harder the storm, the stronger we will be when we sail through it and arrive in our blue ocean.

Given the choice, I choose to take the chance every time.

And you?