



<http://www.trail-running-association.org>

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Constitution of five working groups with the aim of the creating the International Trail-Running Association

The world of trail running has evolved very fast. New demands are constantly being made in this rapidly expanding sport. The stakes are more and more important for all the players: organisers, athletes, equipment manufacturers, teams... The organisation of an international association for the discipline, gathering the largest number of participants as possible and recognised by all, seems to be necessary, so as to federate them all with a common policy and shared values, so as to collaborate with and influence the decisions of the IAAF (International Athletics Federation).

Act 1 – The International Trail-Running Conference

On September 3rd, last year, in Courmayeur (Italy) the first International trail-running conference was held, the objective of which was a discussion with all the actors of the discipline, which is in full evolution, and to try to determine in the shorter or longer term the convergent policies.

It brought together people from different aspects of the discipline: federations, brands, runners, media, race organisers, a total of 150 people from 18 different countries. It was the first time that so many players in the field of the trail had met to express their points of view.

It gave all the participants the chance to discover all the diverse points of view, and the necessity for trail-running to be organised as a full discipline. It also highlighted the need to take in to account the approach taken by the American, Asian and Oceanic continents even if the initiative was introduced on a European scale. The organisation of 5 working groups was proposed so as to pursue the discussions.

Act 2 – Constitution of five working groups

Today fifty players in the world of trail running coming from 13 countries* and 4 continents realised the implementation of five working groups which had been defined and then set to work for 2 months. They are equipment manufacturers (Hoka, Salomon, The North Face®, Garmin...) race organisers (Western States 100 mile, TNF Lavaredo Ultra-Trail, Olympus Marathon, Tor des Géants®, Eco-Trail® de Paris, Ultra-Trail du Mont-

Blanc®), specialised media (ultrarun.es, Irunfar.com, Spiritotrail...), association for anti-doping, high calibre athletes, coaches, statisticians... The French Athletics Federation (FFA), the International Association of Ultrarunners (IAU), the National Committee for Trail-Running in South Africa, the Portuguese Trail-Running Association, and the Belgian Royal League of Athletic's Trail-running commission all participated in these working groups.

* Belgium, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Portugal,, South Africa, Spain Switzerland, Turkey, United States of America.

The five working groups themes:

- **Definition of trail** - objective: to draft a definition of trail-running for runners and the public in general so that everybody understands the characteristics of this sporting discipline. This definition will respect the practice of trail-running all over the world and in all diverse natural environments (plains, sea, mountains, desert...). They will organise the categories taking in to account the distances without judging the value.
- **Ethical charter** - objective: to draft an ethical charter which expresses the values of trail-running shared by all the players in the field.
- **Management of high calibre athletes** – objective: to develop recommendations for the relationship between organisers, top athletes and equipment manufacturers regarding the parity of premiums, whether for engagement, commitment or performance, offered by the organisers to the runners etc.
- **Health policy and anti-doping** - objective: to propose a « Health Policy » to protect, to the maximum, the good physical health of the participants in trail-running events, applicable and financed by the organisers of these sporting events.
- **International Ranking** - objective: to put an international ranking in place based on the system devised by Didier Curdy*. This group is examining the reliability of the system, sporting regulations, categories, legal aspects and funding, and all other aspects involved.

(*) Didier Curdy is a trail runner who is passionate about statistics; he has been working on this project for several years.

Act 3 – Working methods

These working groups have a web-site <http://www.trail-running-association.org> on which five private forums were created. These pages are exclusively reserved for the working groups so that the members of the groups may work peacefully together and express their points of view freely from the four corners of the globe. One person from each group is responsible for regularly posting a synopsis of their group's work on the forum so as to inform internet users so that they also may express their points of view.

Act 4 – The next step: the creation of the International Trail-Running Association

The 5 working groups will continue to work throughout March.

The work of these groups will serve as the basis on which to create, this spring, the **International Trail-Running Association** which will be open to all players in the field of trail-running and will aim:

- to develop and promote trail-running as a complete sport, accessible to all;
- to promote its sporting ethic;
- to represent its members at an international level;
- to maintain constructive relationships and collaborate with the national associations of trail-running and the national and international federations;
- to promote the organisation of continental or world trail-running championships
- to contribute to the safety and health of the participants.

A forum on the web-site: <http://www.trail-running-association.org> has already been created to allow everybody to express their points of view.

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