

BACKGROUND

Feedback in the ORG review highlighted the important role that the BMC has in bringing together the various stakeholders within the hill walking, climbing and mountaineering sector and identified a higher profile for the BMC in carrying out that role. There are a number of references to differing partners throughout the document and this work stream therefore offered a number of routes to engage with different types. We also recognised that some organisations we would like to think as partners are in fact our key stakeholders with whom we need to become better at influencing or supporting their activities but where it is unlikely that we would work as closely as those we see as our partners.

ORG identified the partner assembly as a coalition of organisations from the sector who agree to work together in a cooperative and mutually supportive manner. With this in mind and through discussions with a range of organisations, staff and specialised committees we have now produced a summary of our expectations of the Partner Assembly.

Partner Assembly – Terms of Reference

PURPOSE OF THE PARTNER ASSEMBLY

The Partner Assembly aims to enable membership and representative bodies to achieve more by acting together than they could achieve on their own. It will do this by identifying strategic alliances, offering a high level sounding board to partners' and being a communication channel for strategic plans of the represented bodies.

THE BENEFITS OF THIS ARE THAT IT WILL:

- Enable the BMC to become a lead in the sector
- Provide a stronger coalition for acting as an advocate in the best interest of the membership
- Give us the ability to respond to potential issues and opportunities swiftly and in a joined up manner
- Develop revenue stream or sponsorship opportunities that can increase our and our partners membership bases and/or revenue
- Provide a leading voice for setting standards and provision of advice and guidance

IT WILL DO THIS THROUGH THE FOLLOWING:

1. **Strategic alliance**

1. Share strategic objectives of the Partner organisations and establishing key areas for collaborative working and potential sources of funding
2. Identify potentially strategic alliances that support specific mutually beneficial projects
3. Work together to help develop effective communications between Partner organisations to enhance awareness and engagement
4. Develop strategies to identify and influence government policy, guidance, practice and funding opportunities

2. **Operational support**

1. Establish operational activities which can provide common or complementary goals
2. Provide a channel for sharing information regarding Trustee and Director vacancies and their requirements within Partner organisations and exploring representation across the network.

3. **Engagement with respective Boards/Councils**

1. Provide a collective means of engagement between the Partner organisations and the BMC Board and National Council to ensure effective communication on strategic plans.

2. Offer guidance and advice as appropriate to the Boards/Councils of Partner organisations and/or making recommendations, in relation to activities relevant to the Partners Assembly.
3. To represent the interest of the assembled Partners to a question raised by the Board of Directors of one of the Partners or an external body.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PARTNER ASSEMBLY

The partners who would be initially invited to join would be those organisations already involved with the BMC in key alliances and sector partnerships. It would be anticipated that attendees would be senior executives or directors/trustees of their body.

The initial composition of the Partner Assembly will be:

1. Bodies with which the BMC has existing strong links (each would have a full vote):
 - 1.1. Association of British Climbing Walls
 - 1.2. Association of British Climbing walls Training Trust
 - 1.3. Mountain Rescue England and Wales
 - 1.4. Mountain Training Cymru
 - 1.5. Mountain Training England
 - 1.6. Mountain Training Trust
 - 1.7. Mountain Training UK
2. Other membership or representative bodies associated with hillwalking, climbing or associated activity (each would have a full vote) who may be invited:
 - 2.1. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award
 - 2.2. Girl Guiding
 - 2.3. Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP)
 - 2.4. Outdoor Industries Association
 - 2.5. The Ramblers Representative organisations that work in the outdoor to support under represented groups
 - 2.6. The Scout Association
 - 2.7. Representation from Wales (to be agreed in the context of BMC Cymru developments, noting that partners in Wales come together under the auspices of Mountain Training Cymru)
 - 2.8. Any other organisations that the Partner Assembly wishes to include within its voting membership, subject to the approval of the BMC's Board.
3. The following are suggested as observers, subject to the agreement of the Partner Assembly:
 - 3.1 any councilor elected at the BMC General meeting to represent particular partner member constituency on the BMC NC
 - 3.2 up to three BMC representatives for competition/youth/training committees or similar groups (dependent on the outcomes of the current review of Competitions and Specialist Committees)
 - 3.3 BMC volunteers or staff who sit on Partner Boards
 - 3.4 representatives from other organisations not included above that have a strong interest in the outcomes of the Partner Assembly or who may be able to contribute to particular debates as observers and for agreed fixed period.

OPERATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE ASSEMBLY

Operational aspects of the Assembly will be managed by a working agreement with the BMC Board and will typically include the following:

1. The Chair of Partner Assembly during the first year will be the BMC Director responsible for Partners, after the first year the Chair will be elected by the Partner organisations and is likely to be on a 3 year basis.
2. The Partner Assembly would aim to work on the basis of consensus, but voting rights are identified as these will be needed on formal matters such as approving new members for the Assembly.
3. All minutes of meetings of the Partner Assembly be made available to the Boards of all partners and to all partners members on request, with appropriate recognition of the potentially sensitive nature of a discussion and due discretion exercised by all recipients. The approach of the Partner Assembly will be open and transparent at all times and redaction should be the exception, rather than the norm. Minutes will be published on the BMC's website and Partners may wish to provide a link from their own website.
4. Within the current reconstitution of the BMC's National Council, the Partner Assembly elects one of its voting members to sit as a specialist councillor on the National Council in order to provide input on potential strategic or sector wide issues that the NC may want to take into account as part of its remit.
5. The Partner Assembly will meet on a quarterly basis during its **first** year and the frequency thereafter agreed at the end of its first year. The use of electronic communication and platform, such as Team Works, can be utilised to engage in meetings or discussions.
6. The Partners will select their representative to the Assembly typically a senior executive, director or trustee (whether paid or volunteer) who is able to act as a conduit between the Assembly and the Board and make recommendations that fit with the strategic direction of their organisations.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Partner Assembly will not be entitled to direct the affairs of the BMC Board, or the Company, and the Board will always remain the ultimate decision making body for the Company and will be responsible legally and otherwise for managing, administering and operating the Company, and setting and implementing the strategy.

Administration

1. The BMC will provide the Secretariat for the Partner Assembly, will facilitate arrangements for meetings and will cover the associated costs. Organisations attending Partner Assembly meetings will arrange travel and accommodation and cover the costs of their members' attendance.
2. The BMC will provide a 'team working' platform for the management of documents, whilst it will require Partners to upload papers and reports as required in agreed timescales.
3. The BMC secretariat will help produce the Agenda with the Chair and attend meetings, produce minutes and upload these to team working.
4. Actions from the meeting will remain the ownership of the Partners and responsibility of their delivery remains in their hands.

Memorandum of Understanding

The Partner Assembly and the BMC National Council will agree a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to ensure communications between both bodies are timely and appropriate to allow both bodies to understand the proposed actions and intent of each party.

The MoU can be reviewed at the request of either body or the BMC Board, and must be reviewed when the chair of either body is changed