

Country Development Working Group - Annual report

The Country Development Working Group was established in August 2008, with the following members:

- Alexander Georgas (chairman)
- Terry Cubley
- Visa-Matti Leinikki
- René Vidal

According to the vote of the IGC 2008 Plenary, the mandate of the working group is to:

- Create a framework for development of emerging soaring movements
- Promote the enhancement of gliding infrastructure around the world
- Encourage mobility of glider pilots across countries and promote gliding tourism

The first objectives set by the group were to assess the current situation and issues in gliding countries around the world and to develop a strategy for the deployment of the group's work.

In terms of assessing the current situation in the gliding movement, a number of avenues are being explored, including the following:

- Compiling of flight data from online gliding competitions (OLC, etc.)
- A country-by-country internet search for information on gliding in emerging countries
- A worldwide online glider pilot survey

The focus of this research is to promptly compile a body of knowledge on the state of soaring, so as to inform our thinking on what development programs to pursue next. We also believe that this data can be put to good use in the gliding community, while also promoting the work of the group.

Specifically, the following deliverables are being planned for the first quarter of 2009:

- The online glider pilot survey
- A comparative study of cross-country gliding in emerging and advanced countries of the world
- A country by country report on the state of gliding

In terms of strategic planning, it is our priority to establishing a proper dialogue with members of the gliding community around the world. We are therefore planning to create a web presence that will act as the centerpiece of our communication strategy and as a tool in the implementation of our development work.

The first step in this strategy is to host the online pilot survey, which we will publicize on the existing online gliding forums. We are hoping that participants in the survey will then want to return to the site to view the results, at which time we will also make available the country report on the state of gliding. Our plan is to keep developing the site as a key component of our development programs. By creating a compelling web presence we are trying to both establish an efficient communication channel, but also to inform and energize pilots to participate in our efforts.

The current cycle of planned work is expected to end in Spring 2009. While we will continue to collect and present data, our focus will turn to the implementation of development strategies. The objectives we will be looking at next are the following:

- Establish a network of contacts with people directly involved in country gliding movements

- Implement a pilot project as a case study that can then be rolled out into further countries.

We believe that the key to a successful outcome will be to convince interested parties in the gliding community of the viability of our development efforts. We hope that our work in the next year will contribute to this goal. We invite you to contribute to the group's work with your ideas, feedback, expert knowledge and networking. If you are interested, please contact us directly, or through the group email at igc-countrydev@fai.org.

Alexander Georgas
January 2009