



## THE MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL OF SCOTLAND

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# Mountaineering Development Framework

(020608)

# Climbing

This framework identifies the aims and objectives of the MCoFS regarding the development of climbing in Scotland and the structure and arrangements required to achieve them. It covers all activities termed 'climbing' in summer and winter.

## The Vision:

MCoFS wishes to see a climbing framework in Scotland which encourages greater participation in climbing at grass-roots level, then provides a pathway for personal development focusing on delivering advice and support at critical 'gateway' points in that pathway, based on the ethical and safety imperatives of risk, self reliance and independence and environmental awareness so important to the sport; and where personal achievement in climbing at whatever standard is supported and promoted at local, national and international level for all those who participate.

## Status of Climbing in Scotland and Worldwide

Scotland provides a unique environment in which to climb: the mountainous nature of the land close to the sea gives stunning scenery whilst the maritime weather creates unique winter climbing conditions on the west coast particularly that on Ben Nevis, which is very different to the rest of Europe and for which Scotland is rightly famous across the world.

Scottish winter climbing has a unique ethos embodied in ground-up unrehearsed ascents of even the hardest routes without the use of fixed protection (bolts) and requiring unique weather and snow conditions termed as 'full Scottish conditions'. This style of climbing is world renowned.

This is recognised and celebrated bi-annually with an International Winter Meet based at Glenmore Lodge, organised by the BMC and MCoFS. Between 40 – 70 guest climbers and mountaineers from Federations across the world (including some of the world's best) are hosted by up to 40 Scottish and British climbers to introduce guests to Scotland's climbing style.

Scottish Summer rock climbing however has probably been seen as the poor neighbour of England (or Europe?). This is unjustified as the rock climbing scene here is vibrant and dynamic, with a variety of rock types unmatched elsewhere in the UK, a huge variety of climbing situations and scale of cliffs that can lay claim to be the best in the UK! The predominant style is 'adventure' and Scotland can lay claim to the hardest 'adventure' climb in the world (Rhapsody, E11, D MacLeod 2006). Scotland lags behind the rest of the world in achievement in sport style, but it is growing in popularity and new venues are being opened up at all grades catering for novice to elite.

There is no international recognition of rock climbing achievement in Scotland presently, with the bi-annual BMC International Rock Climbing Meet being hosted in North Wales. Foreign climbing visitors to the UK tend to concentrate on the English Peak district due to its high profile in worldwide climbing press. In relation to this Scottish rock does not gain a high international profile.

Whilst the development of new climbing venues in England and Wales is slowing and reaching saturation, Scotland still provides huge potential for new cliffs, crags or routes for those activists engaged both at the cutting edge of grades and at lower grades. Sea Cliffs in particular offer huge future potential.

The historical specialisation of many Scottish climbers in winter has led to an early exploration of Sport Mixed climbing in Scotland with the opening up of a dedicated venue for 'Dry-tooling' and a growing specialist scene linked to competitions. This has seen Scottish based climbers be the first from the UK to actively attend the Ice World Cup Competitions on the continent in numbers [5 competed in 2007 – 1 young climber aged 13].

A recent survey identified that MCoS member's participation in climbing disciplines was 96% mountaineering, 35% traditional rock climbing, 32% indoor climbing, 24% winter climbing, 14% sport climbing, 13% bouldering and 37% of respondents agreed with MCoS organising climbing competitions (only 2% disagreeing).

## Description of the Activity

The following are brief definitions of the various disciplines to be found within climbing in Scotland:

Indoor sport climbing:	In-situ bolt-protected climbs
Competition Climbing	Competitive sport climbing indoors only (UK)
Outdoor Sport climbing	In-situ bolt-protected climbs
Outdoor Adventure Climbing:	Leader-placed gear-protected climbs
Bouldering	Low level soloing (<5m) on boulders or crag bases
Outdoor single pitch	Climbs <50m, usually with easy access and egress
Outdoor multi-pitch	Extended expeditions over multiple rope lengths in mountain or sea cliff locations where access and egress is complicated
Outdoor winter climbing:	
Ice Climbing	Leader-placed gear-protected climbs on ice / snow
Winter Mixed Climbing	Leader-placed gear-protected climbs in winter conditions
Outdoor Sport Mixed Climbing	In-situ bolt / peg protected climbs in winter conditions
Dry-Tooling	In-situ bolt / peg protected climbs (specific year-round venues)

# Background: Where are we now?

Below is an audit of the current status of climbing in Scotland: previous successes and initiatives, identified trends and gaps in provision and the potential for the future:

## Diversity of Disciplines:

- Traditional climbing is still the main focus of Scottish climbing development with the publication of new climbs and venues increasing every year [e.g. SMC Journal 'New Climbs' 40pp (1991), 100pp (2005)].
- Sport climbing venue development outdoors at lower level grades has increased the number of people being able to access outdoor climbing similar to indoors and is sure to continue expansion. A dedicated guidebook is due for publication in 2008 [SMC].
- Bouldering has expanded greatly in popularity, with 3 recent new guidebooks devoted to this discipline in the last 2 years and on-line information and guides increasing [3 dedicated websites]. Bouldering is also an accessible activity for children, indeed children as young as 6yrs have participated in its development.
- Competitive climbing is now being regarded as a legitimate discipline by the climbing community and the MCofS.
- The development of the 'mixed masters' competitions (dry-tooling) have increased the number of people gaining an early experience of winter climbing techniques in a non-mountain environment. This offers an opportunity to develop a performance pathway from first introduction (indoor) to active outdoor participant in what is otherwise a difficult environment for young people.
- The expertise developed through Scottish climbing, summer and winter, have transferred to the Alpine regions and greater ranges with Scottish climbers performing well at international level exploration, and in exemplar style, following the ethos of Scottish climbing (see expedition grants). Both the MCofI and now the BMC hold Alpine Summer meets every year for 18-24yr old members.

Reference:

SMT Journals

MCofS Scottish Mountaineer

## Increase in Facility Provision:

- The fulfilment of previous MCofS strategic plans to establish Regional Centres suitable for larger participation, competitions and events [Transition Extreme Aberdeen, The Ice Factor Kinlochleven, Inverness Climbing Wall - all established; Borders venue being sought (2008)].
- The fulfilment of previous MCofS strategic plans to establish a National Centre facility that would become 'A Centre for Scottish Climbing and Mountaineering' (EICA, Ratho) and would attract international events (World Cup, World Championships, European Championships and Masters) on a regular basis.
- The fulfilment of previous MCofS strategic plans to establish a National Centre facility for Indoor Ice Climbing at The Ice Factor, Kinlochleven.
- The development of small traversing walls in primary schools across Scotland by local authorities [Argyll & Bute, The Western Isles, and Highland Region - with an estimated 5,150 primary age pupils now having daily access to climbing at school].
- Increasing inclusion of climbing walls at High Schools/Community Schools (e.g. Portree - confirmed, Elgin - in planning, Aberfeldy - confirmed, Perth - confirmed. Morrison's Academy, Crieff - complete). [access for 3,000 pupils in P&KR].
- Continuing development of new walls linked to community centres (e.g. Perth YMCA, Clydebank).
- There is a lack of a National Facility Strategy that coordinates facility design with standards required by the local population or where appropriate fitting within a regional and national framework.

Source: School Climbing Walls in Scotland: Data Research 2008 MCofS

Reference:

Climbing Walls Policy (incorporating MCofS National Facilities Strategy) 2001

Towards a Facilities Strategy Draft 03.03.08KH

## **An Increasing Level of Participation at Indoor Walls:**

- Inverness leisure has seen wall use numbers increase through the introduction of their 'Highlife Card' [2006-07: ~11,000; 2007-08: ~15,000] and this seems set to continue, with a Development Plan at the wall that includes future expansion.
- EICA Ratho has seen a huge number of people access the wall [Apr07-Mar08: 56,609 arena users; ~2,920 kids sessions; ~2,230 starter sessions;].
- Local Authorities (often through Active Schools) are increasingly offering sessions at local walls (e.g. P&K sessions at local walls).

Source: MCofS Climbing Walls Gazetteer 2007 Update

## **Competitive Climbing:**

- The MCofS Youth Climbing Series has seen a significant increase in the number of participants in recent years [62 (2005); 100 (2007); 103 (2008)]. The British Final 2007 at Ratho attracted 216 competitors and >100 Parents. The Welsh 'Rounds' now lead to a single Welsh 'Team' and MCofS have started a Youth Series. Potential for greater participation through marketing (and increase in youth membership).
- A Scottish Youth Championship was established in 2007 and was attended by 40+ elite children aged between 7yr and 15yr taken from the YCS Rounds. SYC to be held again in June 2008.
- The BMC organised British Lead Climbing Championships (BLCC) and the British Bouldering Championships (BBC) have developed into single yearly events, held in England. As a result there is anecdotal evidence from competitors living in Scotland of a desire to see Scottish National Competitions established, to include junior and youth categories in bouldering and leading.
- The newly expanding 'Mixed Masters' events include a youth category. From its inception in 2003 at Glasgow with 30+ competitors, the 2007 event at Kinlochleven attracted 40+ competitors. In 2008/09 there will be a Mixed Masters Series across Scotland.
- The establishment of a 'Leading Ladder' by the BMC in England included one round at EICA, Ratho. There is anecdotal evidence of a growing increase in interest in securing more Scottish venues in the future.
- European Ice Climbing Championships are attracting Scottish climbers including young people [5 Scottish competitors (2007); 5; including Steven Addison aged 13 (2008)].
- Local climbing competitions continue at most larger walls, concentrating on bouldering as it is commercially more cost effective. Leading competitions are costly to set up.

## **Scottish Climbers' National & International Competitive Achievements:**

- There are few Scottish adult climbers competing in the British Championships or in international competitions. There is anecdotal evidence this may be due to the lack of a Scottish National adult championship or series and a requirement to travel to southern England to compete. The last successful Scottish placing at international level was Malcolm Smith in the late 1990's.
- However, Scottish young climbers from the MCofS Youth Climbing Series are progressing to British and International competitions and gaining significant rankings including: Natalie Berry: Age: 16; Robert Mackenzie: Age: 16; Jonathan Stocking: Age: 15; Ross Kirland: Age: 16; Dylan Mackenzie: Aged: 11; Stephen Addison: Aged: 13; Peter Johnson Deb Banerji: Age 16.

Source: MCofS Youth Strategy 2008 – 2010 Draft1

## Next Steps Progression:

- The current focus from Local authorities, youth groups and climbing walls has been on novice introductory access. There is anecdotal evidence that the numbers being offered such introductions is increasing [see climbing walls usage]. The MCofS has concentrated on the next step from indoor to outdoor climbing for young people (REALrock) as professional costs for instruction in this 'gateway' are a barrier to most parents, and the requirements of child protection and AALS registration limiting for individual operators.
- The REALrock MCS initiative started in 1998 has now been taken on board by some larger operators [e.g. EICA, Ratho Youth REALrock sessions Mar07-Apr08: 47] and proposed sessions at Inverness Wall. High staff costs, client fee ceiling, and necessary low ratios mean most commercial operators will view these as a 'loss-leader' or a part of a bigger pathway sequence only.
- A MCofS REALrock Pilot in 2007 assessed the feasibility of full administration and delivery of Scotland-wide REALrock (previously administered by MCofS) by an independent wall. It identified a growing market for such initiatives but a necessity to be delivered as 'events' with volunteers, due to the significant time required for co-ordination and promotion. The risk of cancellation due to adverse weather conditions was also a significant factor with 2 from 3 weekend events ultimately cancelled. Each event attracted 30-40 participants. [See REALrock Report (appendix 1)].
- 'Next Steps' sessions designed for adults have only been available in recent years through outdoor centres' design of 'Climber Improvement' courses. [Plas-y-Brenin, N Wales, 15 separate courses as a structured pathway including technical skills (10yrs) and 'coaching' (3yrs), encouraging progression; 2007: ~600 participants. Numbers indicate the biggest expansion in coaching field; Glenmore Lodge, Scotland, offer workshops, technical skills courses and rock improver courses (10yrs) 1 day or 5 day: 2008: 4 dates/4 places. Take-up is approximately 50%. Also previous Performance Seminars (winter) initially popular, but interest diminished].
- Informal Club 'mentoring' and individual participation remains the main avenue for addressing 'Gateway' issues for most activists in climbing: tuition from friends, other club members, self-teach methods using regular performance articles in monthly climbing press [Neil Greshams's Masterclass, Climber mag.; Steve McLure's coaching articles, Climb mag. Dave Binney techniques, Climb mag.] and an increasing number of 'how-to-do-it' books (e.g. Rockfax Sport & Trad climbing, Essential Skills / The Complete Guide by Pete Hill etc.).
- The low number of serious or fatal accidents in rock climbing is testament to the success of the informal method of gaining experience, risk management skills and knowledge. [Rock climbing and snow/ice climbing incidents has gone down from 7% to 3% and from 14% to 7% respectively in the period 1996 – 2005] and points to the importance of future initiatives in this field particularly.

### Reference:

REALrock 2007 Report by S Muir

Mountain Incidents Study 1996 – 2005 by Bob Sharp

## Performance Coaching

- The growing awareness of a need for performance coaching in the sport indicated by the increasing number of coaching websites, climbers as coaches, coaching courses at The National Mountain Centre (PYB) and indoor climbing walls offering coaching [EICA, Sep07-Mar08: 106].
- A growing body of research into injury issues in climbing (increasingly in young people) indicates a need for performance coaching in our sport; and there has been a growing number of research initiatives in climbing from university departments.
- The UK Mountaineering GB's current discussions regarding 'professional' standards in performance coaching in relation to the UKCC: The National Source Group.
- The growth of private coaching being delivered at indoor walls including: The Coaching Consortium (incl. Neil Gresham and 9 other top-class athletes); Dave MacLeod (The On-line Coach); Scott Muir (Extreme Dream Coaching); Rock & Sun Performance Coaching (UK).
- Youth Climbing Series Training sessions established at EICA, Ratho [~400 (2007/08)].
- 5 youth coaching sessions piloted by MCS in 2007 at Extreme Dream and EICA, Ratho, [up to 40 children participating each session].

- The development of FUNdamentals coaching courses in climbing by Dave Binney in line with UKCC criteria and their requirements for the new CWA.

Reference:

Coaching in Rock Climbing: A preliminary Study by Ben Hirst 1998, commissioned by the MCofS, through the Professional Development Programme Department of Entrepreneurship Stirling University

Mountaineering National Source Group Report on Coaching in Mountaineering – A Possible Future for Coaching Awards (draft2 being compiled).

Coaching in Climbing in the UK: An investigation of current practice and recommendations for future content, delivery and integration with UK coaching structures by Dave MacLeod March 2007, commissioned by the MCofS.

Towards a Coaching in Climbing Award by Scott Muir November 2007, commissioned by the MCofS.

National Source Group Questionnaire 2007.

EICA, Ratho: Usage figures.

## University Level Participation:

- The annual inter-university indoor climbing championships, organised by The British Universities Sports Association (BUSA) attracts 200+ competitors from across the UK. Held in 2004 at NRCC, Ratho with 201 entrants from 63 Universities saw Scottish students gaining 1<sup>st</sup> Men's (D Macleod) and 2<sup>nd</sup> Women's (Lyne Malcolm).
- A Scottish University Sport (SUS) climbing competition started in 2006 has shown continuing opportunities for developing climbing within Universities but has recently faltered.
- SUS identified gaps where students often take up sports at University, but do not continue after. Initial approaches were made in 2006 to MCofS to form partnerships to continue participation and provide pathways.
- Virtually every University in Scotland has active climbing and/or walking clubs which MCofS have access to in terms of safety education, but not performance or pathway support.
- Within the MCofS membership there is a general lack of support to the 16-24yr age group as the current 'Youth' initiatives (YCS and REALrock) focus on 7-16yr and only 2% of club members are in the 16-24yr age range.
- Universities offer one of the main arenas for both the introduction and development of self reliant and independent climbers in Scotland (embracing the risk ethos of the sport), with nearly 1,000 active participants and a continuous turnover of members bringing new novices into the sport yearly.

Source: MCofS Membership Attitude Survey 2007

Reference: SUS Seminar 2006

## Clubs:

- MCofS Clubs contain ~6,800 members in 135 separate clubs (2007). The demographic is weighted to the older age categories: 35-54, 55-64, 65-74 (more so than the age distribution of the Scottish population), and very few <16yr. More individual members participate in climbing than club members [31% club; 41% Individual].
- Some clubs have been very successful in attracting new members. These tend to be climbing clubs in central belt locations. Such clubs offer an opportunity for novices to develop into self reliant and independent climbers (embracing the risk ethos of the sport) and as such should be encouraged as a template for other clubs.
- Some clubs operate on a family basis and include member's children when fully supervised by their parents (e.g. Perth Mountaineering Club, Red Rope (Scotland)).
- MCofS encouraged a club to pilot youth involvement in 2006, utilising REALrock principles, by establishing a 'Kids' section within the club. Concerns over child protection and liability by volunteers and lack of continued support halted further progress.
- Most clubs are currently reluctant to engage with non member's children as a regular part of their activities.

Source: MCofS Membership Attitude Survey 2007

## **International:**

### **Competitions -**

- The establishment of a separate international federation specifically dealing with competition climbing (The International Federation of Sport Climbing – IFSC) in 2007. The IFSC was created when 48 member federations of the Union Internationale des Associations D’Alpinism (UIAA) voted unanimously to create the new International Federation, from the UIAA International Council for Competition Climbing which had been in existence since 1997. Interest in sport climbing competitions is growing; the IFSC now having 72 member federations.
- In December 2007, Sport Climbing was welcomed into the Olympic Movement when the IOC Executive Board granted provisional recognition status to the IFSC. Notably the IFSC focus on youth was cited as a factor in the decision.
- IOC recognition gave membership of the IFSC in The Association of the IOC Recognised International Sports Federations (ARISF). The IFSC was also granted membership of The General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF).
- IFSC is a member of the International World Games Association and Sport Climbing premiered in The World Games in 2005 and will again feature in The World Games 2009.
- The World Youth Championship event is the biggest climbing competition in the world. The Adventure Centre Ratho hosted the competition in September 2004 [350 competitors from 30 countries competed; 1,000 people attended the event, generating an estimated £1m spend in the Edinburgh area over the 4 days of the event].

### **Participation -**

- MCofS established an Expedition Grant (with funding from sportscotland) in 1981 and has supported over 50 expeditions since.
- 5 supported expeditions comprised university student clubs.
- MCofS first supported an expedition comprising young people in 2006 with a grant to Glasgow Academy [12 students: 16yr-17yr].
- In 2008 the MCofS re-defined its ‘Expedition’ grants scheme into a ‘Bursary’ and expanded the range of disciplines eligible for support to include young people (14yr+) in both outdoor disciplines and indoor competition climbing. This offers an opportunity to help support ‘next-steps’ progression into mountaineering for young climbers and international competition support for elite athletes.

## **Equity:**

- MCofS membership gender split is 74% male, 26% female; 25% of female members participate in outdoor trad climbing; only 11% outdoor sport climbing and 29% participate in indoor climbing.
- A self organising group ‘The Scottish Women’s Climbing Meet’ initiated by MCofS in 1980’s is no longer active. Women specific coaching and courses have been set up (e.g. Chicks Unleashed). There is scope for coordination of activities to encourage women into outdoor climbing and mountain climbing.
- The MCofS initiated a series of courses hosted by Glenmore Lodge for Visually Impaired people in 1999 covering a range of activities including climbing. Organised by a volunteer (ex-member of staff). Later organised by one of the partially sighted participants [average 8-10 participants and 8-10 visual helpers; 13 in 2007].
- 2009 is the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the MCofS VI Course.

Source: MCofS Membership Attitude Survey 2007

## **Skills Training and Courses:**

- A National Indoor Climbing Achievement Scheme (NICAS) was launched in May 2008 by the Association of British Climbing Walls (ABC) to offer a pathway for young climber's activity at indoor walls. This was developed as a means of maintaining interest and usage/membership of young people at walls and has been endorsed and supported by MCofS. (Opportunities for links and information).
- Non-certificated skills training by MCofS occurs through the MSA work programme including targeting University Clubs safety at seminars and winter courses as well as the general public. [2007: Student winter skills w/e: 70; Winter Skills: 54; Navigation: 48; Avalanche: 24; First Aid: 10].
- The safe delivery of courses by qualified personnel through schools, LA's, climbing walls, outdoor centres and youth organisations is ensured by the MLT awards. Registrants for these awards in Scotland (SPA and ML) must take out MCofS membership and these have fluctuated but in previous years average at approximately 250 per year. This has increased in recent years [year ending Oct 2006: 438; Oct 2007: 347] perhaps reflecting the increase in grass-roots introductory climbing. However, registrants maintaining membership after assessment is very low [e.g. year ending Oct 2007: 90% lapse rate].
- The MLT launched the Climbing Wall Award (CWA) in January 2008.

Source: MCofS database

## **Environmental, Access and Ethical Considerations:**

- Access legislation and the access code has made significant changes to the way we access the countryside. The increase in rights has also increased the need for MCofS to be pro-active in education of SOAC, Hill Phones service and HFTSH contacts etc.
- Responsible access means raising awareness of MCofS codes of good practice in climbing, bird / plant access information (and good practice and restrictions if any). Many of these codes relate directly to ethical considerations and must be integrated in publications and educational approach.
- Environmental awareness should include general environmental education and increase the knowledge and understanding of biodiversity, 'Tread Lightly'.
- Climbing Ethics – the MCofS has been at the forefront in Scotland in allowing discussion of ethical issues (e.g. Cairns, memorials, winter ethics, sport ethics) and no other organisation is able to take this authoritative, mediary role. [see pitch-in on the website and Talking Point in the magazine, climbing ethical debates]. Most such discussions have a direct environmental aspect and so discussion through the magazine, other publications and events is vital in order to raise environmental awareness of the sports impact.

## **Climbing Equipment:**

- There are numerous books and successive magazine articles offering advice regarding what equipment is required in climbing, but some clarification for beginners would help them get started.
- Guidance is also available on use and maintenance from manufacturers.
- The BMC Technical Committee gives advice about gear usage and limitations. MCofS could make use of this expert knowledge and pass on to members.
- Clubs often hold 'gear pools' for use by members. They hold a duty of care in operating such a facility, but there is little information available for them relating to these stores and the use of them.
- There is an opportunity for linking the care and maintenance of suitable gear with in gear pools that help deliver a sport development pathway, identification of 'gateways' and help promote risk management. The MCofS can help its member clubs with advice.

# MCofS Role in Scottish Climbing

Our vision for climbing will entail the MCofS taking a central (national) role as described in the MCofS Strategic Aims 2008-2012:

*“MCofS Strategic aim is to become the umbrella organisation and lead body for mountaineering in Scotland, providing members, stakeholders and the public with a central point of contact offering reliable, expert advice.”*

Delivering this aim in relation to climbing, the MCofS will therefore consider the following:

1. There are several key organisations currently involved in the delivery of climbing in some form or other across Scotland, but offering isolated individual activity without reference to other opportunities nor taking a holistic view. The MCofS will develop partnerships with these organisations to coordinate the distribution of advice and information regarding climbing, allowing better opportunity for the development of a coherent, accessible pathway.
2. The MCofS will set up a Climbing Development Group (CDG) led by the Specialist Development Officer of the MCofS and consisting of the MSA and A&C specialist Officers and the SO. This group will take responsibility for the deployment of the framework and in order to do so, will recruit advice when required for specific areas from: experienced climbers (recognised, knowledgeable and experienced experts and climbing peers in the different climbing disciplines from the ‘lead’ body – MCofS members – and including performance coaches), recognised experts in the environmental field in ‘lead’ organisations such as RSPB, SNH, NTS, WLG etc), and qualified instructors and guides.
3. The CDG will develop:
  - Create a player pathway that enables targeting of important ‘Gateway’ stages in the development pathway and encourage a progressive approach to climbing disciplines.
  - A national approach to the development of further climbing facilities.
  - A national approach to the development of competition climbing from ‘Fun’ level to ‘Elite’ level.
  - Support climbers to gain expert training in technical skills if required.
  - Develop a performance coaching system to help climbers excel in their performance at whatever level they aspire to.
  - Offer performance coaching opportunities.
  - Support elite level athletes at National and International level.
  - Create a framework for supporting children through the pathway including REAlrock opportunities and progression to mountain venues.
  - Encourage and support climbing and mountaineering clubs to embrace a role in the pathway.
  - Use a range of publications (website, magazine, brochures) to disseminate information.
  - Underpin the player pathway with the Scottish ethos of climbing.

# **ACTION Plan**

Taking account of the above audit of the current position, the vision and aim of the MCofS, the following items should be included in a 2008-2012 Strategy (4yr) as an action plan.

## **1. Develop Player Pathway Development Strategy:**

- Finalise Audit of current situation as outlined under 'Background' above (consultation with walls, clubs, outdoor centres, local authorities).
- Identify gaps in provision and reasons, and where MCofS can add value.
- Combine with partnership feedback to produce a 'Player Pathway' model for climbing.
- Produce Strategy for the implementation of the pathway, to include facility provision, identification of 'gateways', identify partnerships for each 'gateway', and resources required.
- Develop the resources for the implementation of the various elements making up the Player Pathway strategy.

## **2. Take an integrated approach to development through partnerships:**

- Identify possible partnership organisations / develop 'Partnership Packages' detailing mutually beneficial opportunities (promotions, advertising, recognition, information sharing, added value, sponsorship opportunities, and referrals). These could include:
  - Set up a Scottish Climbing Wall Network (SCWN) for joint initiatives such as REAlrock, educational awareness (environmental and ethical)
  - Utilise the current Liaison Group with EICA, Ratho (the National Centre) in particular, to take forward the concept of 'the home of Scottish climbing' and development pathways in climbing including ethical and environmental items.
  - Establish a Liaison group with the National Outdoor Centre to advise on development of climbing courses related specifically to mountain terrain to marry into a progressive approach to climbing.
  - Open dialogue with Local Authorities concerning advice (facility development, design; progression and next steps; education of climbing ethics and incl. environmental awareness).
  - Open dialogue with Active Schools Coordinators system (facility development; competitions; coaching; instruction; advice.
  - Develop close link with ABC regarding National youth initiatives (NICAS)
  - Continue discussions with GB/s through MCG, and UKCC in regard to performance coaching development (agree way ahead, investigate syllabus).
  - Develop formal link with Scottish University Sport to advise and support pathway development of students regarding competition, coaching and adventure.
  - Continued liaison with sport lottery regarding on-going facility development: Perth, Clydebank, Gairloch, Elgin etc.

### **3. Expand on production of information and guidance:**

- MCS Website – ‘one-stop-shop’ for climbing information in Scotland – advice and information as pdf’s and a forum for discussion of issues relating to climbing. The website should also target foreign climbers to visit Scotland.
- Ensure the Scottish Mountaineer offers ‘something different’ to the commercial climbing media: articles on climbing environment, ethics, Scottish climbing, Scottish climbers, climbing debate forum, advice (technical, ethical, environmental etc), news and events.
- Produce a series of publications of climbing ‘FactFiles’ (discipline-based information for beginners covering all aspects of the sport: ethics, environment, next steps, safety, coaching, equipment use and maintenance).
- Produce MCofS information for NICAS log book (including ‘FactFiles’ info etc.).
- Produce MCofS information for MLT CWA and SPA log books, and through MCofS membership provide CPD opportunities for award holders (to encourage greater environmental awareness, participation in the sport recreationally and within their GB and as potential volunteers for MCofS initiatives).
- MCofS Information Boards – develop system for utilisation and maintenance of established boards (leaflet dispensers); produce further boards for new Wall Partners.
- Increase profile of Scottish climbing in international press through production of articles about Scotland’s climbing.
- Produce Facility FactFile for the development and siting of climbing facilities, advertising the new Climbing Wall Manual advice. Aim to distribute to LA’s, etc.
- Ensure that above publications include environmental and access information particularly: website, Scottish Mountaineer, FactFiles, NICAS & MLT Log Books: to cover Hill Phones service, SOAC, HFTSH contacts, codes of good practice, bird / plant access information, general environmental education
- Ensure that publications relate ethical issues directly to the activity - integrate ethical ideals into activity information and environmental advice.

### **4. Delivery of Events:**

- MCofS REALrock (Children) Sessions – deliver through walls network partnership, coordinated by MCofS, targeting larger groups (kids Clubs) at various ability levels.
- MCofS Youth Competition Series – increase participation through greater marketing; investigate the need for expansion of ‘Regions’; support and formal recognition of the Scottish Championship event; consultation regarding ‘Scottish Team’ at the British Final.
- MCofS VI Course – support the course for 2008 and investigate 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary options (2009).
- Support the delivery of performance coaching sessions to young members at partnership walls at affordable prices at different ability levels.
- Investigate MCofS Alpine Meet for summer 2010.
- International Meets – In partnership with the BMC, host the 2009 winter meet in Scotland.
- International Meets – investigate the possibility of a summer rock meet in Scotland.
- International Competitions – in association with EICA, Ratho and BMC:
  - International Masters Event, Difficulty and Speed, May 2009
  - European Youth Series, Difficulty and Speed, September 2009
  - World Youth Championships, Difficulty and Speed, September 2010

Longer Term Aims:

- Set up MCofS Club Gatherings with sessions in risk management skills, and ‘coaching’.
- Set up MCofS Regional Events to attract new members – slide presentations, debates.
- Support a Member Club to hold a youth meet as a pilot.
- Encourage greater female participation – investigate the status of the Scottish Women’s Climbing Meet and develop women’s meets (e.g. bouldering meet, sport climbing meet). Establish links with MCI women’s initiatives for exchanges.

## **5. Support to climbers and members:**

- Operate the MCofS Climbing Bursary to support members climbing and mountaineering activity
- Club Support: Develop a series of advice notes for clubs regarding player pathway development and how they can be part of a national system to increase their membership, increase their skills, and particularly risk management.

## **Appendices:**

(See separate document)

### **Player Pathway**

A schematic representation of climbing (non-vocational, recreational):

- disciplines,
- access points,
- ‘next steps’ skills progression,
- facility requirements,
- training and coaching requirements

**END**