



***Representing, Supporting and Promoting
Scottish Mountaineering***

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland

Strategic Plan

2009-2013

February 2009

1. Introduction

- 1.1.** Mountaineering includes a diverse range of activities which offer people of all ages and abilities interest, exercise, challenge, reward and a sense of personal achievement in what for many becomes a passion for life.
- 1.2.** Mountaineering directly contributes to the achievement of each of Scotland's Strategic Objectives - a Wealthier and Fairer, Smarter, Healthier, Safer and Stronger, Greener Scotland.
- 1.3.** The Scottish Household Survey Culture and Sport Module 2007 (published December 2008) found that 62% of the population regularly walked for more than 30 minutes - by far the most popular form of 'sporting' activity. Hill walking emerged from this survey as the eighth most popular sport after walking, swimming, visits to the gym for weight and aerobic training, cycling, dancing, golf and football; 5% of the Scottish population regularly enjoy hill walking.
- 1.4.** The Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCofS) is the only recognised representative organisation for mountaineers who live in Scotland, and for everyone who enjoys walking or climbing in Scotland's mountains. MCofS is also the national governing body for the sport of competition climbing, known internationally as sport climbing.
- 1.5.** We represent participants in all mountaineering activities – from occasional novice hill walkers and inexperienced indoor climbers to elite athletes undertaking high altitude international expeditions. Unlike many sports, age is not a barrier to active and rewarding participation.
- 1.6.** MCofS was founded in 1970 by the Association of Scottish Climbing Clubs (ASSC) to represent their interests. Since its foundation, MCofS has steadily grown its membership to over 10,000 at the end of 2008.
- 1.7.** Our 130 mountaineering and climbing clubs range in size from 10 to 500 members and are run entirely by a network of about 900 volunteers. The majority of our clubs are open to all.
- 1.8.** This strategy sets out our commitment to increasing participation and performance in all aspects of mountaineering.

MCofS' aim is to represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering

This strategy summarises how we intend to achieve this aim between now and 2013. A more detailed action plan, together with targets, is set out in our 2009-13 Operational Plan.

Our guiding principles:

- We represent all Scottish mountaineers
- We inspire and encourage all to enjoy mountaineering activities
- We seek to remove barriers to participation in mountaineering
- We promote Scottish mountaineering at home and abroad
- We work in partnership with individuals and other organisations who share a common interest in mountaineering in Scotland
- We support a drug-free approach to mountaineering activities

2. Strategic Priorities

2.1. Representing Scottish Mountaineering

Our goals – MCofS will:

2.1.1. Demonstrate the role that mountaineering plays in contributing to the Scottish Government's Purpose, through its contribution to:

- **GDP Growth and Productivity** as a significant contributor to the economy of the Scottish Highlands and jobs in the outdoor activity sector.
- **A high quality of life** and physical activity, improving mental and physical well-being and life expectancy.
- **Solidarity and Participation** offering the opportunity to develop for people from all income groups and backgrounds.
- **Cohesion** as a vehicle for bringing people together and empowering individuals and groups.
- **Sustainability** by engendering awareness and respect for our environment.
- **Scotland's Strategic Objectives - by contributing to a Wealthier and Fairer, Smarter, Healthier, Safer and Stronger, Greener Scotland**

2.1.2. Champion Scottish mountaineering by raising awareness of its economic significance, the health benefits enjoyed by those who participate, and the potential that mountaineering activities have for a lifetime of physical activity, personal achievement and challenge.

2.1.3. Act as the 'Voice of Scottish Mountaineering' with the Scottish Government and its agencies, and with influential partner organisations such as those in Scottish Environment LINK and the Scottish Sports Association.

2.1.4. Continue to work with other mountaineering organisations in Scotland and elsewhere to identify synergies and develop joint approaches to the development of new programmes such as coaching in mountaineering.

2.1.5. Work with other representative organisations to ensure that the voice of Scotland's mountaineers is represented, for example with Scottish Natural Heritage and with land and deer management interest groups.

2.1.6. Raise our profile and improve public understanding of our aims, through effective marketing and communications, through the development of responsive and meaningful relationships with the media, and through appropriate PR activity.

2.1.7. Respond on behalf of Scotland's mountaineers to issues and developments which may affect the upland landscape or their freedom to undertake mountaineering activities.

2.2. Supporting Scottish Mountaineering

Our goals – MCofS will:

2.2.1. Develop individual competence, environmental awareness and self-reliance by providing guidance to everyone interested in mountaineering in Scotland. Our educational and information areas include mountain safety, mountain weather, avalanche information, access, conservation and biodiversity, coaching and skill development.

- We will implement a mountain biodiversity education project and by 2013 reach 1000 participants involved in outdoor education activities, through mountain leader award holders.

2.2.2. Support and enable the continuing development of our network of mountaineering clubs, which provide a superb social and recreational network, and which encourage personal development through experience. We will improve our support to the club network with the aim of enabling their continuing development.

- By 2013 we aim to increase the number of clubs to 150.

2.2.3. Support Mountain Leader Training Scotland (MLTS) by attracting registrants for the range of Mountain Leader Awards, and in doing so **help to build future capacity for mountaineering group leaders** in a range of educational and voluntary organisations.

- We will support MLTS to achieve 4000 new registrants over the plan period.

2.2.4. Continue to innovate and improve our communications with our members and the public and together with partners such as the Mountain Weather Information Service and Scottish Avalanche Information Service, provide, facilitate, and promote a range of relevant quality information services to our members and all mountaineers.

- By 2013 we aim to achieve a running rate of 1 million mountain weather forecast downloads per annum.

2.3. Promoting Scottish Mountaineering

Our goals – MCofS will:

2.3.1. Seek to inspire and encourage people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to enjoy a range of mountaineering activities, in Scotland's unique and varied landscape and further afield.

By 2013:

- We aim to increase regular participation in hill walking from 5% to 6% of the adult (16+) population.
- We will increase the number of female MCofS members from 25% to 35% of our total membership.

2.3.2. MCofS will work with partners in The Scottish Climbing Wall Network, the Active Schools Network, local authorities and other organisations, to inspire and encourage young and aspirant climbers to gain initial confidence and regular exercise through indoor climbing experiences linked to the Children's Player Pathway, provided at suitable facilities.

By 2013 we will:

- Establish 8 new children's climbing clubs based at climbing wall venues, with a total of 300 members.
- Enable 50,000 children in Scotland to have access to traversing and climbing walls at schools.

- Work with our partners to organise and promote a new national climbing event and an international climbing competition, linked to the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

2.3.3. Encourage all who participate in mountaineering in Scotland to do so responsibly, through our educational programmes and provision of relevant information concerning mountain safety, access and conservation.

- By 2013 we aim to increase the number of places available on our mountain safety courses and events by 65% to 800.

2.3.4. Attract and develop Scotland's aspirant climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers through the provision and coordination of targeted development programmes and activities which provide support, encouragement and inspiration.

By 2013 we aim to have:

- Established a volunteer scheme to support children's clubs.
- Organised school climbing competition leagues in at least 3 local education authority areas.

2.3.5. Facilitate specialist coaching and training support required by Scotland's developing and elite climbers to progress in climbing competitions at both UK and international level.

- Our competition goal is for a Scottish athlete to achieve medal success in the Olympic Games first ever sport climbing competition in 2020.

2.3.6. MCofS will demonstrate Scotland's mountaineering heritage and its active role in international climbing by working with partners to organise and promote international climbing competitions and events.

- **Over the period of the plan, we will work with our partner EICA: Ratho to organise and promote 6 new international climbing competitions.**

2.3.7. Reduce barriers to participation by working through our charitable trusts and in partnership with other organisations. Although potentially naturally inclusive to all, we recognise that there are barriers to participation for some due to location, cultural background or cost.

By 2013 we aim to have:

- Trebled the number of participants in visually impaired mountaineering courses.
- Achieved the Equity Standard Preliminary Level.
- Worked with partner organisations and community representatives to establish how we may encourage and inspire under-represented groups to participate in mountaineering activities.

2.4. Corporate Development

Our goals – MCofS will:

2.4.1. Achieve financial security which is fundamental to MCofS achieving its strategic aims.

By 2013 we will:

- Achieve an increase in membership to 12,500.
- Ensure that we retain reserves equating to 35% of turnover.
- Generate £10,000 p.a. income from sponsorship, advertising and donations.

2.4.2.We will aim to **demonstrate throughout all our activities why Scottish mountaineers should become members of the MCofS**, and how their interests and our work are aligned.

2.4.3.**Establish key performance indicators based on these priorities from 2009**, to measure and demonstrate progress towards the achievement of our strategic aims and key goals.

For further information or a copy of our Operational Plan 2009-2013 contact:

**David Gibson
Chief Officer
The Mountaineering Council of Scotland
The Old Granary
West Mill Street
Perth, PH1 5QP**

**01738-493947
07845-919150**

davidg@mcofs.org.uk

www.mcofs.org.uk

Appendices:

Getting to grips with Scottish Mountaineering

Appendix	Subject
A	Mountaineering Activities or Disciplines
B	Scottish Mountaineering: Organisational Context
C	Mountaineering Organisations: Scotland
D	Mountaineering Organisations: United Kingdom and Ireland
E	International Mountaineering Organisations

Appendix A – Mountaineering Activities or Disciplines

A.1. Setting the Scene

A.1.1. Mountaineering in Scotland offers a unique challenge due to its range of climbing and climatic conditions, and excellent venues. Conditions and terrain combine to offer opportunities for mountaineers to engage in different disciplines. Progression to the more technical disciplines – those requiring use of equipment – is a key consideration in the development of personal competence and self-reliance.

A.1.2. 'Hills' are distinguished from 'mountains' by being lower in height with a topography which allows them to be scaled on foot from almost any direction without the use of hands or technical equipment. Mountains tend to be higher, and are more shattered with rocky sections and mountainous terrain such as scree, gullies, ridges and rock faces. Although it may be possible to scale mountains without hands, they offer a more serious challenge.

Mountaineering disciplines are defined as:

A.2. Hill and Mountain Walking

The ascent or traversing of hills or mountains on foot.

A.3. Scrambling

The ascent of steep and rocky sections of mountains where hands have to be used as well as feet.

A.4. Climbing

The scaling of a rock face or climbing wall where the use of the hands is essential for passage. Rock climbing in Scotland includes the following range of disciplines:

A.4.1. Bouldering

Climbing short crags or large boulders with no reliance on ropes or climbing hardware.

A.4.2. Traditional Climbing

The predominant style of climbing which usually entails the use of ropes and hardware that is placed in rock fissures to provide protection.

A.4.3. Sport Climbing

The protection is already placed in the rock in the form of 'bolts' which the climber clips into for protection as s/he ascends.

A.4.4. Indoor Climbing

Indoor climbing walls range from large dedicated centres with full facilities to small walls in sports centres and schools. The Edinburgh International Climbing Centre, EICA: Ratho is the biggest indoor climbing wall in the world and the home of the Scottish National Indoor Climbing Centre.

A.5. Mountaineering

The ascent of hills and mountains where the use of technical equipment is essential for either hands or feet.

A.5.1. Winter Mountaineering / Walking in Scotland

The ascent of mountains in Scotland in winter conditions of snow and ice (also known as winter walking) is regarded as 'mountaineering', because safe ascent and descent is dependent on the use of technical equipment and associated mountaineering skills.

A.5.2. Alpine Mountaineering

Alpine climbing involves the full range of mountaineering skills with the added dimension of glacier passage and the need to 'move together' whilst roped.

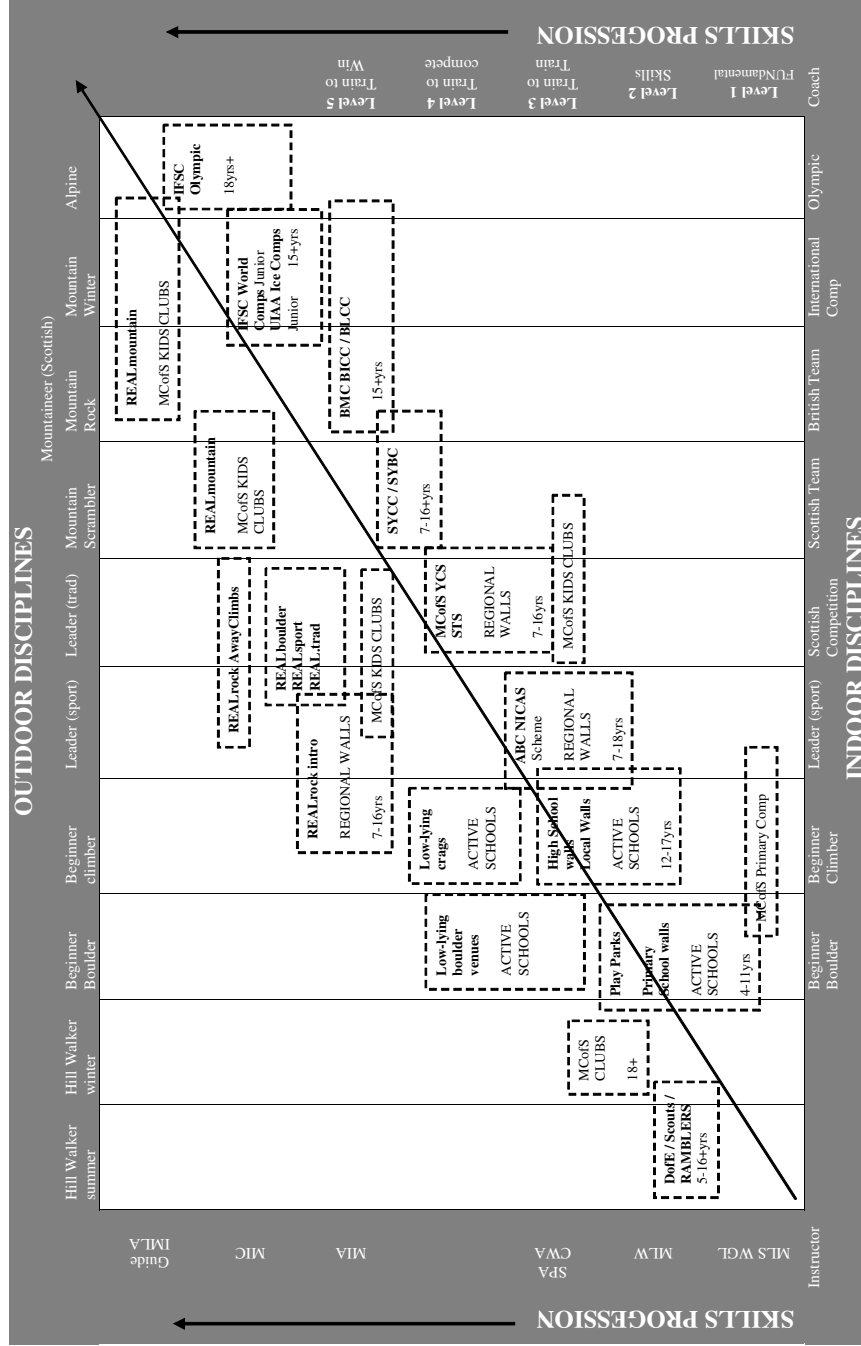
A.6. Ski-Mountaineering

Ski-Mountaineering is also known as ski-touring, cross-country skiing or back country skiing, and the use of skis is for transport, rather than competition.

A.7. Children's Player Pathway (see next page)

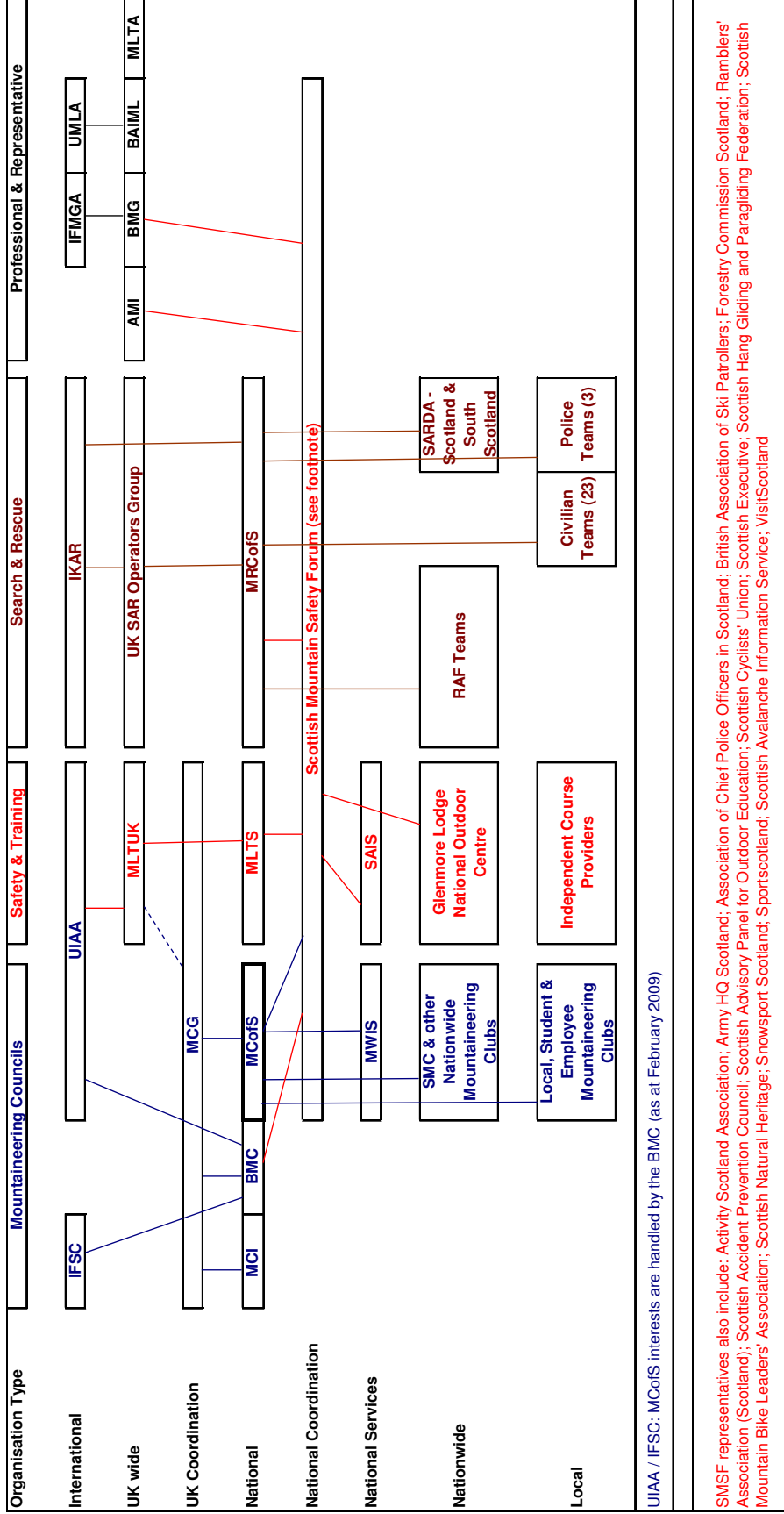
A.7. Children's Player Pathway

The following diagram outlines an indicative progression pathway for children or aspirant mountaineers in both indoor and outdoor mountaineering disciplines, from novice to elite level.



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Appendix B – Scottish Mountaineering: Organisational Context



Appendix C - Mountaineering Organisations: Scotland

In addition to MCofS, a range of organisations are involved in mountaineering in Scotland, including:

B.1. Mountain Leader Training Scotland (MLTS)

MLTS administers awards which are generally considered to be for volunteers, youth leaders and teachers. These include the Mountain Leader Award, the Single Pitch Award, the Climbing Wall Award, the Walking Group Leader Award, and the Winter Mountain Leader Award which is specific to Scotland. MLTS employs a full-time Executive Secretary and is a Company Limited by Guarantee and registered as a Scottish Charity. It works closely with MLTUK and the other home nation training boards to co-ordinate the development, promotion and delivery of awards. MCofS, MLTS and MLTUK work closely in a number of areas and MCofS has three volunteer directors on the MLTS Board.

B.2. The Scottish Mountain Safety Forum (SMSF)

SMSF is an umbrella organisation concerned with mountain safety in Scotland. The Forum was formed from outdoor bodies with a direct interest in the safety of walkers and mountaineers in the Scottish hills. A wide spectrum of organisations and bodies are represented on the Forum, which has the following remit:

- To act as a liaison group between the MCofS and other bodies with a key role in mountain safety
- To act as a forum to advise government on mountain safety issues
- To advise and assist the MCofS on mountain safety priorities
- To ensure the common purpose of safety initiatives regarding mountaineering ethos
- To liaise and consult with other bodies outside the SMSF on matters relating to mountain safety and the public

B.3. The Scottish Climbing Wall Network (SCWN)

SCWN was formed in 2008 between the MCofS and the 8 leading climbing walls in Scotland, to enable co-operation and partnership working which will support the development of the sport of climbing.

B.4. The Scottish Mountaineering Club (SMC)

The SMC is one of Scotland's oldest mountaineering clubs and was a founding member of the MCofS. Membership is invitation-only. The SMC is a Club Member of the MCofS. It engages in charitable activities through The Scottish Mountaineering Trust.

B.5. The Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland (MRCofS)

MRCofS is the representative and coordinating body for mountain rescue services in Scotland. It is administered by an Executive which reports to the General Committee comprising Mountain Rescue Teams and other organisations. MRCofS affiliates include the 28 mountain rescue teams in Scotland, comprising 23 civilian teams, 3 police teams, the Search and Rescue Dog Association (SARDA) – Scotland and Southern Scotland, and the RAF Teams.

B.6. Scotland's National Outdoor Training Centre (Glenmore Lodge)

Owned by sportscotland, Glenmore Lodge has a tradition of excellence in outdoor education and training spanning 60 years. Instructors based at the Lodge deliver training and assessment courses for leaders and instructors in a range of mountaineering disciplines, and a range of courses from beginner to advanced level. Glenmore Lodge is a key delivery partner for MCofS, with whom we have a strong and shared mutual interest in promoting Scottish mountaineering. We will continue to collaborate in the organisation and delivery of courses and events, which aim to improve mountaineers' personal competence through training and better understanding of mountain safety techniques.

Appendix D – Mountaineering Organisations: United Kingdom and Ireland

C.1. The BMC (The British Mountaineering Council)

The BMC is the equivalent representative organisation to the MCofS for England and Wales, and has no jurisdiction over mountaineering in Scotland. As the ASCC, mountaineering clubs in Scotland were members of the BMC prior to establishing their own Council in 1970.

MCofS and BMC work closely to coordinate climbing competitions, and the BMC currently acts for MCofS in international matters, representing MCofS interests with the UIAA and IFSC.

C.2. The Mountaineering Council of Ireland (MCI)

MCI is the equivalent representative organisation for the whole of Ireland. It covers the same range of activities as the MCofS but is also the mountaineering training board for Ireland.

C.3. Mountain Leader Training UK (MLTUK)

MLTUK is the governing body directly responsible for awards for professional mountaineers. These include the Mountaineering Instructor Award (summer), Mountaineering Instructor Certificate and International Mountain Leader Awards.

MLTUK also coordinates the other mountaineering awards with the four home nation training boards: (MLTE, MLTNI, MLTS and MLTW) and the Association of British Mountain Guides (BMG).

MLTUK also has direct links with the mountaineering councils (BMC, MCI and MCofS), enabling the training schemes to support the needs of the sport as a whole. MLTUK also represents the UK internationally with the UIAA in matters related to mountain training, and works to secure national and international recognition of the awards.

During 2009, MLTUK and the home mountaineering councils will collaborate to develop a coaching structure for mountaineering, through the mechanism of National Source Group. The mountaineering councils will be required to provide funding from their respective national sports agencies to support the development and implementation of the coaching structure.

C.4. Mountaineering Coordination Group (MCG)

The BMC, MCofS and MCI work together through the Mountaineering Coordination Group to consider joint approaches to issues which affect and influence mountaineering in the UK and Ireland, and works closely with MLTUK relating to training and coaching matters.

C.5. UK Search & Rescue Operators' Group (UK SAR)

Search and rescue is the activity of locating and recovering persons either in distress, potential distress or missing and delivering them to a place of safety. UK SAR is responsible for the structure and coordination of search and rescue in the UK. MCofS is a member of UK SAR.

C.6. The Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI)

AMI is the representative body for professionally qualified Mountaineering Instructors in the UK and Ireland. It was formed in 1990 to represent the interests of highly experienced mountaineers who have undergone training and assessment to qualify under the Mountain Leader Training UK (MLTUK) Mountaineering Instructor Scheme

C.7. The Mountain Leader Training Association (MLTA)

MLTA is part of MLTUK, the governing body for climbing and mountaineering award schemes in the UK. Membership of MLTA is for climbing, walking and mountain leaders who hold or are working towards a national award. The main focus of MLTA is to provide training and development opportunities and support through networking for its members.

C.8. British Mountain Guides (BMG)

BMG is a member of the International Federation of Mountain Guide Associations (IFMGA), the body that coordinates the standards and mutual recognition of the twenty-six national mountain guide associations. A British Mountain Guide is an IFMGA Guide - an internationally qualified guide with the knowledge and skills to lead parties in the world's most challenging mountain environments.

C.9. The British Association of International Mountain Leaders (BAIML)

BAIML is a part of the Union of International Mountain Leader Associations (UIMLA) and looks after the professional interests of International Mountain Leaders in the UK.

Appendix E - International Mountaineering Organisations

D.1. International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA)

The UIAA was founded in 1932 and is the worldwide representative organisation for national mountaineering associations. Its key aim is to promote, develop and regulate international mountaineering activities, and to participate actively in the Olympic Movement.

D.2. International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC)

The IFSC was founded in 2007 and represents the interest of competition climbing worldwide. It is a continuation of the International Council for Competition Climbing which was formerly part of the UIAA until the UIAA decided to cease responsibility for competitions in 2006. On December 10th, 2007, the IOC granted provisional recognition to the IFSC, welcoming sport climbing into the Olympic Movement.

D.3. International Federation of Mountain Guide Associations (IFMGA, IVBV, UIAGM)

The stated aims of the association is to maintain close ties between all mountain guides; to harmonise the work regulations which govern the profession; to ensure better safety conditions for clients; and to facilitate the ability of mountain guides to work abroad.

D.4. Union of International Mountain Leaders Associations (UMLA)

The stated mission of UMLA is to encourage the forming of member country national associations; work towards cultural, social and legal recognition of the profession of international mountain leader (IML); harmonise member country training and assessment in terms of minimum requirements and quality; encourage and bring value to the sustainable development of mountainous regions; encourage and agree the right of an IML to practice in all mountainous countries; develop the visibility and professional reputation of the profession; and to develop and adopt a Code of Conduct.

D.5. International Commission for Alpine Rescue (IKAR)

Located in Switzerland, IKAR is a working group of national mountain rescue organizations. MRCofS is a full member of the group.