



SKIMO CANADA



Ski Mountaineering Competition Canada

2024/2025 Strategic Plan

PREPARED BY:

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DIALOGUE

Land acknowledgement

Ski Mountaineering Competition Canada (SMCC) acknowledges the past, present, and future generations of the Indigenous Nations that have stewarded the lands we ski and compete on. We honour and celebrate the natural environment, and that these are the lands of First Nations and Métis Homelands, and for this, we are grateful.

About Skimo

Ski mountaineering racing (or skimo) is a competitive form of ski touring. Competitors travel through mountainous terrain using a combination of skis with climbing skins, walking with skis strapped to their backpacks, and skiing downhill. Four recognized disciplines vary in duration from 3 minutes to 5 hours. The two shortest disciplines, sprint and relay racing, will debut in the next Olympic Games.

Skimo's roots go back to its introduction at the 1924 Olympics in Chamonix when it was still connected with its sister sport, biathlon. Today, skimo is immensely popular in Europe and is an on-trend winter sport for amateur athletes in North America. It will be re-introduced in its modern form at the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics.

Skimo in Canada

Skimo's history in Canada, however, is much shorter. In 2002, the international organizing body, the ISMF approached the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) to field a team for World Cup races in Europe. The ACC quickly established an ad hoc organizing committee and fielded two Canadian ski mountaineers.

A community of fitness-oriented skiers and mountaineers started racing at events organized across Canada. The sport has grown in fits and starts. Still, with the help of ACC and enthusiasts across Canada, organizers have planned a racing calendar each winter in support of the Canada Cup Series and fielded a national team for international competition.

When it was announced that skimo would be included as a sport in Milano Cortina Winter Olympics, long-time volunteers agreed that it was time to form SMCC and pursue recognition as a national sports organization (NSO). With the support of ACC and Sport Canada, SMCC was recognized by the International Ski

Mountaineering Federation and the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) in 2022, and incorporated as a federal not-for-profit in April 2023.

Our strategic planning process

SMCC invited our new board and a group of supportive volunteers and athletes to a series of workshops to create a new strategic plan for SMCC. Conducted by facilitators with a background in strategic planning, the purpose of these workshops was to

- Create a practical vision for SMCC to achieve in the next five years
- Identify challenges that stand between SMCC and its vision
- Develop strategic directions and high-level strategies to accomplish our vision

This plan represents our collective effort to set out a plan for our fledgling organization.

Our mission and mandate

Our Mandate: Ski Mountaineering Competition Canada (SMCC) sanctions and governs ski mountaineering racing in Canada.

Our Mission: SMCC promotes and fosters the development of ski mountaineering racing across Canada through access to races, resources, education, and community.



Our vision for the future

The following are the elements of our practical vision for the future.

In five years time, Ski Mountaineering Competition Canada envisions a future in which:

The skimo community is vibrant and engaged. Programs and events help new skiers explore and engage in our sport regardless of age and stage. A clear development pathway guides certified development coaches in developing young athletes.

Ski resorts support new skimo clubs and communities through generous uphill policies and a renewed eagerness to host races and events. Broad support from the ski industry and our growing community enable a robust race and event calendar.

Skimo is a widely recognized Canadian sport. The Canadian public follows our athletes in competition, and skimo receives media attention. The historical accomplishments of Canadian skimo athletes and organizers are more widely recognized.

There is a well-supported path for our high-performance athletes. Canada produces high-performing skimo athletes who consistently succeed at international competitions and the Olympics. These athletes benefit from a strong athlete development program and better overseas support. The ISMF sanctions at least one World Cup race hosted in Canada.

We organize a racing calendar with multiple tiers. All across Canada, athletes of all levels have opportunities to race in events appropriate for their skills and abilities. Our events align with how international skimo races are organized and conducted.

Provincial Sporting Organizations (PSOs) & clubs are well-developed. Retired athletes are involved in sports development and administration, and we have active Provincial and Territorial Sporting Organizations (PSO/TSO) in seven provinces and territories. Regional organizations foster the creation and growth of local ski clubs.

We have stable governance and finances. Our NSOs, PSOs, and TSOs receive consistent, sustainable funding through membership fees, grants, sponsorship, and donations. They operate under balanced budgets by pursuing a coordinated budgeting process and following normalized administrative procedures.

Our bylaws and policies are sustainable. Our bylaws and policies foster good governance across our organizations while addressing issues of importance to our members.

How we plan to achieve our vision

We plan to undertake three broad strategic directions.

Build the spirit of our sport

Challenges

We are eager to create a diverse, athlete-centred culture. Yet, our immediate energy and resources are dedicated to creating a new organization that meets our funders' governance, financial, and safe sport requirements.

Strategies

Make our sport accessible to grow participation. Growing participation among recreational and junior athletes is crucial to expanding our athlete and volunteer base. We will grow participation through introductory and recreational events.

Inspire a love for ski mountaineering through a safe and welcoming culture. Our sport is small but friendly. Once we formally adopt the principles of safe sport, we can use our reputation as a safe and welcoming community to help grow skimo in Canada. We need to identify our culture's best attributes and emphasize fun.

Create excitement and engagement through strategic communications. Skimo is as exciting as new Olympic sports like climbing, surfing, and coastal rowing. By taking a strategic approach, we can create awareness and outreach programs for skimo while dispelling myths about safety and effort.

Create a sustainable national sports organization

Challenges

Skimo is a relatively new sport in Canada, and its relative obscurity prevents us from building a base of support among potential participants, spectators and sponsors. Our sport isn't well understood in Canada's ski industry either, and ski resorts are reluctant to give uphill skiers access to viable terrain for introductory programs, training and competition.

Strategies

Rebuild genuine connections at the local level. Our most successful competitions and events are the product of carefully fostered connections among sponsors, supporters, members of the ski industry, and other sports. We need to cultivate these connections at the local and personal level.

Create a national high-performance plan with performance thresholds. When Canadian athletes ascend the podium at international events, they attract attention, support, and funding. Given current levels of international competition, we have years of development ahead to build an internationally competitive cadre of athletes. We need a high-performance plan that helps our sport's most significant assets, our athletes, excel on the world stage.

Develop operational excellence by utilizing limited resources effectively

Challenges

Our financial and volunteer resources will continue to be stretched as we transition from an ad hoc committee to a national sporting organization. We need more volunteers with professional skills to help grow our sport and organization.

Strategies

We must be disciplined in how we act on priorities. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization. We must prioritize our most critical tasks to use their energy and skills most effectively. We need a volunteer coordinator to build a volunteer database. We will also need to establish effective subcommittees.

Develop a four-year plan with an annual review cycle. We will create a long-term, four-year plan of strategic tasks in harmony with the Olympic and World Championship cycles. We will also organize our activities in the off-season months for the sake of our volunteers.

To maintain momentum, we will professionalize our organization. We will define clearer roles and responsibilities among our board members, volunteers, and our staff. In the future, we will hire an executive director to create a more permanent point of contact and support.

Build financial capacity. To accomplish our goals, we must identify and secure additional funding. These may include athlete sponsorships, setting up a registered charity and fundraising, and securing other forms of support.