Status Report to the 2024 ISU Congress on the Four Year Plan 2022/23-2025/26

Committee/Commission: **Council / Development Commission Coordinator / Development Program Director**

Project/Function/Area of activity: **ISU Development Program**

The strategy and activities of the ISU Development Program are described in ISU Communication No. 2310, which was updated in February 2020. The activities were also carried out in line with the priorities of the Council and, from mid-2023, with the ISU Vision 2030.

1. Financial Reporting

The annual C Contributions, were paid and the reporting assessed in accordance with Communication No. 2310.

The Projects budget was reduced from CHF 1.7 million in 2022 to CHF 1.4 million in 2023 but will be increased again in 2024. This amount covered the Skater and Coach Scholarships and Development Commission expenses as well as initiatives and ISU Member projects. The number of project applications has risen again after the drop during the pandemic.

2. Projects

The Development Commission maintained a consistent approach to reviewing and deciding on projects and there has been an increasingly thorough review of project finances, with invoices required for all expenditure. A quarterly summary of approved projects is published on the Development page of ISU website.

The Development Commission works on the basis that the projects budget shall be split equally between the two Branches though there is always some small variation from year to year, depending on the applications received. 2022 saw the continuation of the trend that started in 2020, for more applications for the Speed Skating Branch, (42) than for the Figure Skating Branch (32), but in 2023, the numbers came back into balance (40 applications for each). On average, around 85% of applications are approved each year. The remainder are either withdrawn, or are not accepted due to being submitted late or for operational reasons.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECT APPLICATIONS (all applications)					
	Europe	Asia	Americas	Oceania, Africa & India	Total No of Appls
2022	65%	18%	9%	7%	75
2023	72%	10%	10%	8%	80

Across the whole reporting period, most project applications were for
- training camps or seminars, most of which involved both Skaters and Coaches
- support for competitions
- long-term training opportunities to push forward skating sports in specific countries or regions
- transition from inline to ice
- projects to establish new disciplines in a particular ISU Member.

3. Numbers of ISU Members, Skaters and Coaches involved in Projects taking place in 2022-2023

Over the period 2018-2023 the table below shows the numbers of Skaters, Coaches and Officials participated in ISU Member projects supported by the Development Commission. The table does not include Skaters, Coaches and Officials who participated in International Competitions supported by the Development Program. The table reflects projects that took place during the calendar years 2022 and 2023, regardless of the year of the project application. Some project reports for 2023 have not yet been received so the actual total number of participants will be higher.

		Participation Approx. No. ISU Members	Participation approx. No. Skaters	Participation approx. No. Coaches	Participation Approx. No. Officials
2022	Speed Skating Branch	21	377	57	13
	Figure Skating Branch	28	209	59	25
2023	Speed Skating Branch	26	373	51	0
	Figure Skating Branch	45	325	133	34

4. Scholarships

a) Junior Skater Scholarships

The Junior Skater Scholarships program continues with the system of applications that was introduced in 2020. We have seen that the Scholarships are now more targeted at specific needs and outcomes and the total number of Scholarships granted has increased and now remains quite stable, though there is a variation from year to year depending on the number and quality of the applications received.

JUNIOR SKATER SCHOLARSHIPS 2020-2023						
		Europe	Asia	Americas	Oceania, Africa & India	Total
2022	Figure Skating Branch	34	3	0	5	42
	Speed Skating Branch	17	6	8	3	34
2023	Figure Skating Branch	45	4	2	5	56
	Speed Skating Branch	25	12	6	2	45

b) Coach Scholarships

Coach Scholarships are used in different ways for the various disciplines.

Speed Skating and Short Track: Nominations are requested from ISU Members. After a review by the Development Commission and Vice President, Scholarships of USD 10'000 or USD 5'000 are awarded. These are paid over 2 years and a report on activity and progress is required 12 months after each payment. Coaches use this support to fund various activities, such as Masters level qualifications, coaching internships, training camps, sports psychology education and many more. In 2022, only 3 Scholarships were awarded (due to lack of applications)to Coaches from HUN, ITA and USA and in 2023, 9 were awarded to Coaches from CAN, FRA, GER, HUN, MAS, MGL, POR, SLO and SWE.

Ice Dance:
In 2022 and 2023 ten Coaches were selected for a mentoring scheme, involving 6 months of mentoring by top Coaches from September to February. This was done online, with exchanges on tools such Zoom, WhatsApp and Teams, exchange of videos and educational materials plus group and one-to-one discussions. In 2022 and 2023, Coaches from Asia (CHN, INA, JPN, UZB, VIE), Europe (ESP, FRA, GBR, SUI, SVK), Oceania (AUS, NZL) and Africa (RSA) participated.

Comments from the Coaches included the following:

Switzerland -2023:
'Thank you so much for your explanations and detailed work with me. I understood in which direction I should develop myself and what will really help me to bring the athletes on the top level.'

South Africa – 2022:
'Your advice and suggestions especially for my Junior Dance couple most definitely helped them to improve not only their elements, but improved their performance together as a dance couple so they qualified and skated at our National championships last week.'

Synchronized Skating: For Synchronized Skating, each year five Coaches were supported with 6 months of mentoring from a top Synchronized Skating Coach plus travel support to attend an ISU Synchronized Skating Officials Seminar. In 2022 and 2023, Coaches from AUT, CZE, ESP, FRA, GER, HUN, NED and NZL participated.

Netherlands 2022
'This scholarship has not only given me a lot of useful information and insights but it also gave me new energy and new motivation. In countries where there are few synchro teams it is not always easy to keep your mind fresh and sharp.... it is important for me to be able to look elsewhere for information and inspiration to improve... The concept of a mentor has been a very big help.'

Hungary - 2023
'This collaboration strengthened and developed my coaching skills and I am extremely grateful for that! ... During the season, we were able to raise the technical levels of the elements from competition to competition, based on the given advice.'

Singles and Pairs: In Figure Skating, as a joint decision of the Single and Pair Skating Technical Committee, Sport Directors, Development Commission and Vice President, the budgeted Coach support was allocated as extra funds for Junior Skater Scholarships.

5. Development Commission Initiatives

a) Skater to Coach initiative

The Skater to Coach initiative was launched in 2018 to give financial support for educational and other development activities for Skaters who have retired and wish to become Coaches, Administrators or Officials or move into other roles in the Skating disciplines. Coaches have used the funding for many different activities: to pay for national coach qualification programs; to attend Coach camps or mentoring in other countries; to buy technological aids (software and hardware) for coaching; to help towards funding of their education (e.g. specialized degrees related to coaching); to improve their English language skills, and many other activities. Several young Coaches who were given Skater to Coach support in 2018 and 2019, have also since been granted a Coach Scholarship (see section 4b) above) as they move to the next stage of their career. In 2022 12 Scholarships were granted and in 2023, 15.

b) Visiting ISU Coach initiative

An initiative to establish a Visiting ISU Coach program was launched in 2018. Expert Coaches have spent time in the ISU Member country, giving advice based on actual conditions and providing ongoing support to establish effective skating programs. There is a balance between pre-meetings online, in person visits, and virtual follow-up.

VISITING ISU COACH INITIATIVE 2018-2023						
		Europe	Asia	Americas	Oceania, Africa & India	Total
2022	Figure Skating	4	3	2	1	10
	Speed Skating	2	3	0	0	5
2023	Figure Skating	6	2	3	3	14
	Speed Skating	2	1	1	0	4

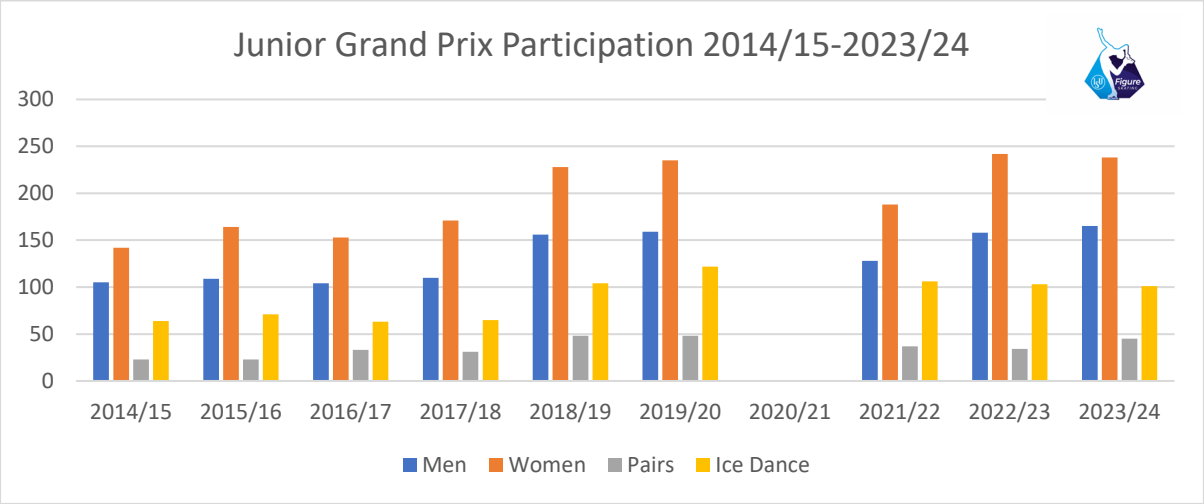
6. Council Projects

a) Worldwide Seminars

In 2022, four Worldwide Seminars were held for Ice Dance (Junior and Novice, both in Oberstdorf, GER), Pair Skating (Berlin, GER) and Synchronized Skating (Vierumäki, FIN). A total of 212 Skaters and 103 Coaches benefited from these Seminars. In 2023, due to a reduced budget, 3 Seminars were held. A Junior Ice Dance Seminar and a Synchronized Skating Seminar in Oberstdorf, GER, and a Pair Skating Seminar in Berlin, GER, with a total participation of 144 Skaters and 78 Coaches. An Ice Dance Seminar in Asia will be held in alternate years from a Synchronized Skating Seminar and is planned for 2024.

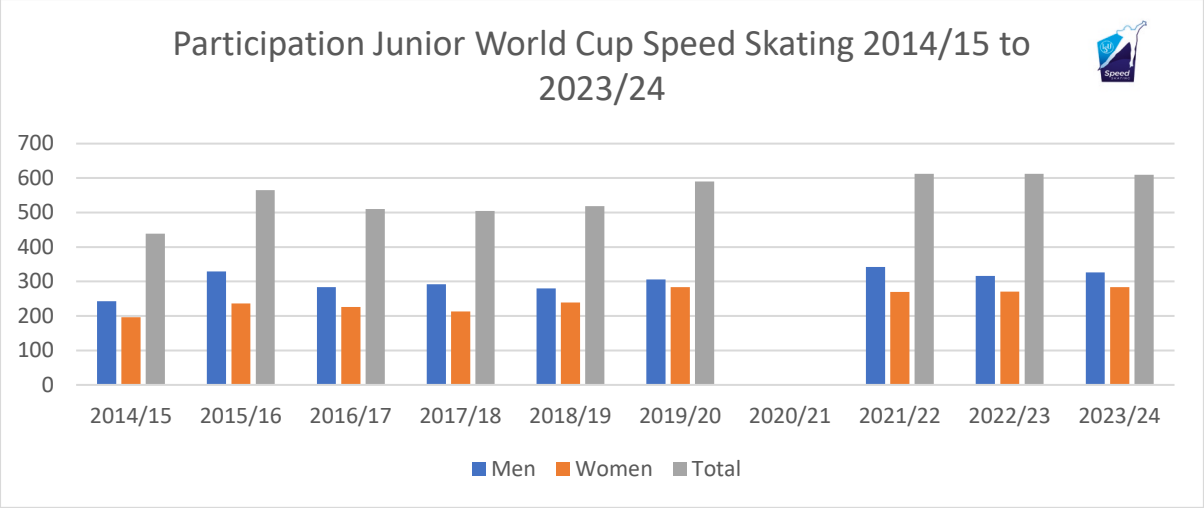
b) Junior Grand Prix of Figure Skating

Following the cancellation of the Junior Grand Prix of Figure Skating due to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020/21, the 2021/22 series went ahead, though with the cancellation of the Grand Prix Final, Junior and Senior. In the season 2022/23 one event in Yerevan, ARM was cancelled, but the remaining competitions were held as planned. The overall positive evolution in the number of Skaters participating in the Junior Grand Prix since 2014/15 has continued with numbers rising again post-pandemic for Men and Women Singles Skating and stabilizing for Pair Skating and Ice Dance.



c) Junior Speed Skating World Cup

Since the season 2021/22 the first two Junior World Cups Speed Skating have taken place back to back in the same venue or country. A travel contribution of USD 750 per Skater has been available to support up to 5 Skaters per ISU Member from outside Europe to travel to Events 1 and 2. The number of participating ISU Members has increased from 23 in 2014/15 to 28 in 2023/24, slightly down on the pre-pandemic peak of 31 in 2019/20.

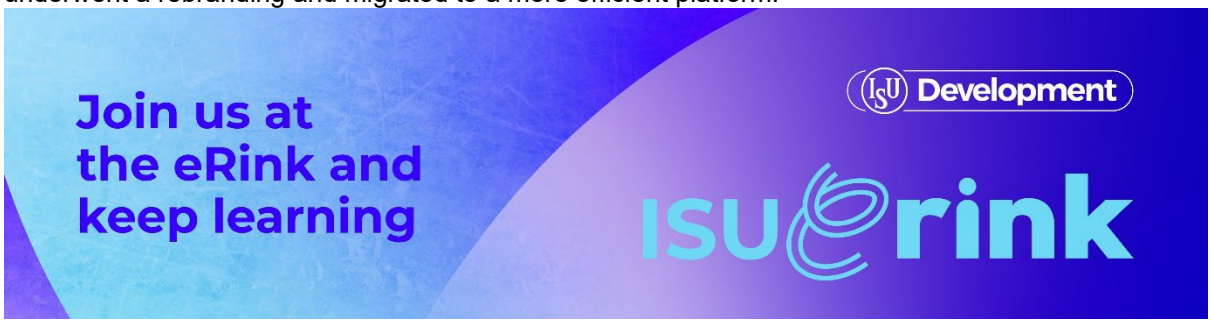


d) Junior World Cup Short Track & Junior Short Track Challenge Series

In order to provide competitive opportunities for Junior Skaters who are age eligible to compete in the World Junior Championships for the respective season, support was given for five Junior Short Track Challenge competitions in Europe in the 2021/22 season and three in the 2022/23 season. In the 2023/24 season, however, these competitions were replaced by the first Junior World Cup Short Track, consisting of three competitions, all held in the Netherlands. The inaugural competitions were a great success both in terms of numbers of Skater entries (279 Men and 192 Women) and also in the range of participating ISU Members (37). A travel contribution of USD 500 per Skater for up to 4 Skaters was available to non-European ISU Members to travel to the Events 1 and 2. 16 ISU Members took advantage of this.

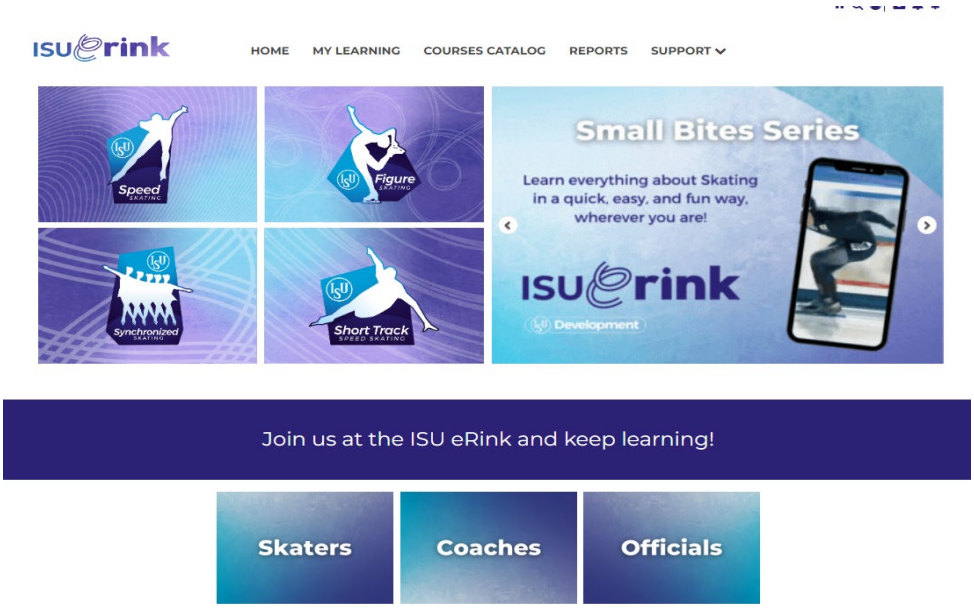
e) ISU eRink

The ISU eLearning platform, now known as eRink, is dedicated to providing high-quality online educational content for the skating community, including Skaters, Coaches, Officials, and administrators at various levels. The platform supports training needs for ISU bodies and complements in-person seminars to enable continuous learning. In a significant revamp at the end of 2022, the eRink underwent a rebranding and migrated to a more efficient platform.



Key additions to the eRink in 2022-2023 included a range of courses relevant to both Figure Skating and Speed Skating disciplines, such as Code of Ethics updates, Pure as Ice certificate course review, and Athlete Safeguarding courses. Notable courses for Figure Skating encompassed Coaches Education interactive courses, New Program Components for Officials, and Healthy Skaters seminar updates. In Speed Skating, focus was placed on Level 1 Coaches Education and Speed Skating Basics Officials' courses. In 2022 and 2023, in total, 66 courses were added to the eRink.

In addition to developing eLearning content, the ISU eRink strengthened its support to ISU bodies by providing dedicated online education space for various seminars, such as the Figure Skating Frankfurt Seminars (all Figure Skating Disciplines), Speed Skating Starters and Experts Training, Short Track Speed Skating Officials Seminars and the Visiting Coaches program. Furthermore, the platform started to build an online library of skating-relevant materials to provide resources for ISU Members.



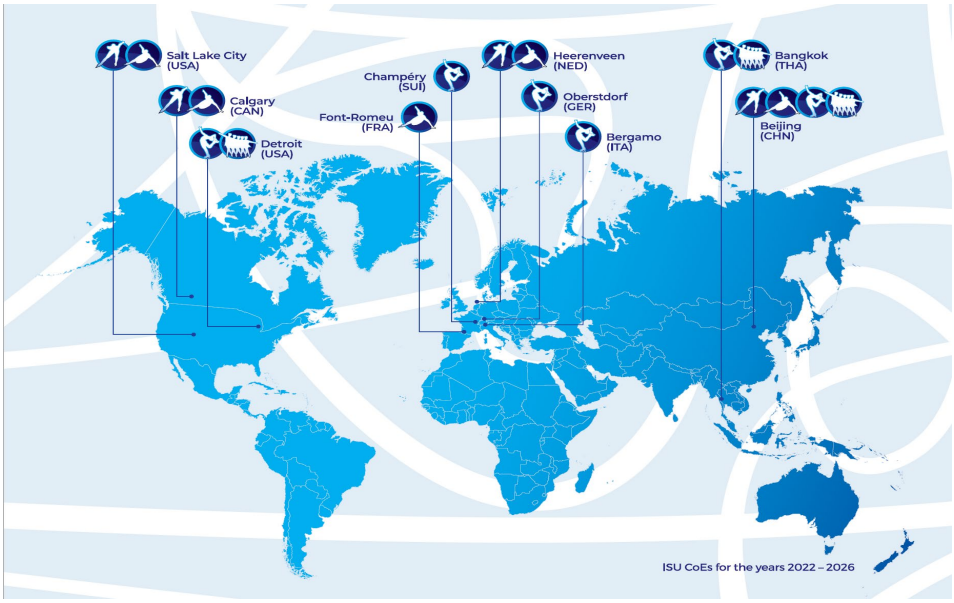
As of the end of 2023, the eRink had around 7'000 users from 95 ISU Members, showing a significant growth from 3'900 users representing 88 ISU Members in 2021. The platform saw equal representation of Skaters, Coaches, and Officials (see chart).

Notable achievements included the participation of Coaches in interactive courses and ISU Member implementation pilots, as well as engagement of Officials in online re-appointment learning exercises and seminars across both Branches.

f) ISU Centers of Excellence

The ISU Centers of Excellence (CoEs), comprising 11 recognized skating entities across Asia, Europe, and North America officially launched in April 2022. The CoEs are dedicated to fostering the training and development of Skaters, particularly from developing ISU Members, and also support Coaches and Officials while strengthening the capabilities of ISU Members. The CoEs, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and training programs, form an integral part of the ISU's global training, coaching, and development network. The 11 ISU CoEs are listed below (in alphabetical order by Branch)

Figure Skating Branch	Speed Skating Branch
• ***Detroit Skating Club, USA -*** *Single & Pair Skating, Ice Dance and Synchronized Skating* • ***Eissportzentrum Oberstdorf, Germany -*** *Single & Pair Skating, Ice Dance* • ***Ice Jar Comprehensive Training Center, Beijing, P.R China -*** *Single & Pair Skating, Ice Dance* • ***Ice Lab, Bergamo, Italy*** *- Single & Pair Skating, Ice Dance* • ***IWIS International Training Center, Bangkok, Thailand -*** *Single & Pair Skating, Ice Dance and Synchronized Skating* • ***Skating School of Switzerland –*** *Single Skating*	• ***CREPS CNEA Font-Romeu, Altitude Training Center, Font-Romeu, France*** *– Short Track* • ***Heerenveen, the Netherlands –*** *Speed Skating and Short Track* • ***National Speed Skating Oval – Ice Ribbon, Beijing, China*** *– Speed Skating and Short Track* • ***Olympic Oval at the University of Calgary, Canada –*** *Speed Skating and Short Track* • ***Utah Olympic Oval, Salt Lake City, USA –*** *Speed Skating and Short Track*



Activities of the ISU CoEs in 2022-2023 included talent training, coaching programs, specific camps, and educational projects. They welcomed both international Skaters and Coaches to their training programs, offered internship opportunities, and organized camps catering to different disciplines and needs within Figure Skating and Speed Skating. The CoEs also contributed to content development for the ISU eRink platform and actively supported grassroots skating activities, including participation in World Ice Skating Day events.

As ISU development centers, the CoEs engaged in various development projects in collaboration with related ISU Members, serving as organizers, co-organizers, or hosts. They also supported the Visiting Coach Initiative of the ISU Development Commission and hosted international competitions to promote skating development.

The statistics for 2022 and 2023 reveal the participation in international activities, including training programs, seminars, camps, and competitions organized by the CoEs. The data provides insights into the involvement of Skaters, Coaches, Officials (excluding those from hosting CoE countries), and ISU Members across these activities.

2022 & 2023 activities and participation

Items	Total Number
Total Number of International Activities	98
Number of Skaters Participated	975
Number of Coaches Participated	174
Number of Official Participated	134
Number of ISU Members Represented by the Participants	39

7. Conclusion

During 2022 and 2023, the number of project applications and the variety of ISU Members making applications have risen again after the drop during the pandemic period. The Visiting ISU Coach program has proven consistently popular and there have been an increasing number of projects to introduce skating on ice to athletes from other sports. More projects are taking place at ISU Centers of Excellence, and involving the eRink for sharing materials, in addition to the online modules available.

An annual report of Development Program activities has been published on the ISU website since 2019. Over the reporting period 2022/23-2023/24, if the annual C Contribution is also taken into account, then 97% of ISU Members have been assisted in some way by the ISU Development Program, either by means of project support or participation, Scholarships, or a C Contribution. Only 3 ISU Members have not received any support. In addition, many ISU Member Skaters participated in competitions supported by the Development Program - the ISU Junior Grand Prix, ISU Junior Speed Skating World Cup, Short Track Junior Challenge and Junior World Cup Short Track competitions, and other International Competitions supported by the Development Program.

April 2024