

(World Skills Logo)

PROPOSAL TO HOST THE WORLD SKILLS SECRETARIAT IN LONDON
A proposal from UK SKILLS

This proposal sets out the case for a new General Secretariat for World Skills - a Secretariat that is modern, responsive and in touch with the skills needs of the global labour market, both now and in the future. The proposal is for a Secretariat that is equipped to fulfil the mission and objectives of World Skills as set out in the Strategic Plan. The proposed Secretariat will be resourced to meet the demands of an organisation that aspires to be financially sound, that is technically competent, that has a strong marketing and sponsorship capability and that can underpin the skills agenda it promotes with sound labour market research and intelligence. Siting the Secretariat in London will give the organisation direct access to all the major world capital cities, access to the headquarters of some of the leading international companies and to some of the leading organisations in the world in the field of training and skills development. This will allow the World Skills organisation to develop as the premier international organisation in support of the skills agenda.

Introduction

This paper sets out the United Kingdom case for establishing the WorldSkills General Secretariat in London. The proposal is prepared by UK SKILLS and is supported by the UK Government through the Department for Education and Skills [the Scottish Executive, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly]

[The proposal is also supported by The City and Guilds of London Institute, the Confederation of British Industry, the Trades Union Congress, the Learning and Skills Council, the National Training Organisations National Council, the Further Education Skills Competitions Committee, etc.....]

About UK SKILLS

UK SKILLS came into being in its present form in August 1990. It is a charitable organisation, with the majority of its financial support provided by the UK Government. It has a Board of 15 Directors, chaired by Chris Humphries CBE, Director General of the City and Guilds of London Institute. The Directors represent a wide range of interests – employers, further education and other learning providers, trades unions, broadcasting and Government. World Skills and UK SKILLS share the common aim of promoting skills and raising standards.

The purpose of UK SKILLS is to help the UK raise its skills standards to world class levels and to celebrate the pursuit of excellence in skills, learning and development. Its strategic objectives are:

- to benchmark performance against the best in the world and raise standards across all sectors of employment
- to promote equity and diversity so that those engaged in the activities supported by UK SKILLS reflect the diverse population of the UK
- to demonstrate the benefits and added value of UK SKILLS activities through monitoring, research and evaluation

UK SKILLS does this by:

- establishing a UK wide network of high quality skills competitions covering all significant sectors of employment
- active membership of World Skills and developing UK participation in the World Skills Competitions
- promoting and celebrating excellence in training and development through the National Training Awards
- providing, in partnership with The Prince's Trust, a showcase for skills through the National Skills Festival Company and The Skills Show
- working in partnership with others who share our aims, and actively seeking opportunities to involve others

The UK SKILLS Corporate Plan for 2001 to 2004 commits to active membership of World Skills. For the 36th competition in Seoul we sent a team of 29 competitors and 9 of our technical experts are Chief Experts in their trade. UK SKILLS also tries to be an active member of the committees of World Skills and supports the Executive Board in its commitment to modernising the competition and raising standards.

About our partners

The Department for Education and Skills is a Department of State of the United Kingdom Government and the Secretary of State for Education and Skills sits in the Cabinet. It has responsibility for education, training and skills in England. These issues are the responsibility of the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The City and Guilds of London Institute.....

Other partners.....

The Way Forward for World Skills

World Skills stands on the threshold of a new era. For fifty years it has successfully run world skills competitions funded by subscriptions from its members. If it is to be a major player on the world stage it can no longer operate on the basis of only coming into the limelight once every two years. It needs all year round visibility. It needs to build its reputation as an organisation that is committed on a continuous basis to skills development, with a deep and thorough knowledge of the skills needs of the global economy. World Skills has already taken a major step along the way by the drawing up of a Strategic Plan (see Annex x), which was agreed at the General Assembly of World Skills held in Montreal in November 1999. To reach the goals of the Strategic Plan a seven point action plan has been compiled. This proposal sets out a plan for a Secretariat that will ensure that the action plan and the Strategic Plan are achieved.

The Secretariat

(i) Strategic role

This proposal is for a General Secretariat which is able to support World Skills in its mission of promoting a worldwide awareness of the essential contribution that skills and high standards of competence make to the achievement of economic success and individual achievement. It is a proposal for a Secretariat that will enable World Skills to achieve the goals set out in the Strategic Plan, and the accompanying seven point action plan.

The strategic objectives for the Secretariat should be:

- to enable WorldSkills to achieve the goals set out in the Strategic Plan

- in particular, to enable WorldSkills to achieve its proclaimed aim of promoting skills across the world
- as a means towards this, to modernise and raise the skills competitions to the highest standards of quality and fairness, positioning them as the premier world event for skills recognition
- to operate a full-time but flexible organisation that will promote the new identity of World Skills, support the development of the competition structure and open up to all member countries a means of contributing ideas and effort
- to secure, through increased membership, sponsorship and other fundraising, the financial contributions necessary for World Skills to operate as an effective and powerful international organisation capable of meeting the needs and aspirations of member countries

The organisation will need to be in tune with the modern global economy and the new technologies, able to cope with rapid change and willing and able to respond to the needs of the Executive Board and the members of World Skills.

This requires an organisation that employs the highest quality personnel, has good support systems, runs a proactive and innovative website and has capacity for research and evaluation. It will also need access to a first class interpretation service.

(ii) Marketing and Sponsorship

World Skills can no longer operate as an organisation that is solely funded from contributions from its members. The Secretariat will need to develop a fundraising strategy that will put the organisation on a firmer footing and allow it to develop and grow in line with the Strategic Plan. It cannot do this unless it can show the benefits of competitions to the skills agenda and show that it is in tune with the needs of the global economy.

This objective requires a sophisticated marketing strategy which segments the market into different strands and develops marketing approaches which are tailored to the needs of those the World Skills organisation is trying to influence. The proposal by the World Skills Executive Board to recruit the services of a marketing expert from a marketing company with global expertise will give this process a good start but the process needs to be ongoing. It is, therefore, recommended that the permanent staff cadre of World Skills includes a Director of Marketing. Because of the synergy with the sponsorship activities that will be required it is recommended that the postholder is responsible for marketing and sponsorship.

(iii) Technical Support and Research Capacity

The increasingly complex requirements of the World Skills competitions means that the World Skills organisation needs to be able to provide more support to the

countries who are hosting the competitions. At the moment technical support is provided by members of the Technical Committee but they are all volunteers and the time that they can devote to World Skills is limited. In the run up to the competitions the technical requirements of the trades need to be given a high priority. This proposal, therefore, recommends the appointment of a permanent Technical Director to fulfil this important role. The proposal also recommends that the Technical Director has the support of an assistant, part of whose role is to keep abreast of skills development so that World Skills is kept fully up to date with the skills needs of the global economy.

(iv) Organisation and Recruitment of Personnel

This proposal recommends staffing for the Secretariat of 6 people.

- **The Secretary General**, who will be in charge of the HQ operation. He or she will be accountable to the President, beyond that to the Executive Board and ultimately to the General Assembly, for carrying out the decisions and policies approved by the membership. They will also be responsible for taking a forward look for the organisation so that it keeps ahead of the needs of the global economy;
- a **Director of Marketing and Sponsorship**, responsible to the Secretary General and whose central task will be to raise the funds needed for the new style Secretariat and World Skills operation, and to lead the marketing function;
- a **Technical Director**, also responsible to the Secretary General and whose primary responsibility will be to raise the competitions to the highest standards and to ensure their relevance to the 21st century economy. The Technical Director will also take the lead on Health and Safety, a vital aspect of the responsibilities of the World Skills organisation;
- a **Research Assistant**, to support the Technical Director and an **Administrative Assistant** to support the Secretary General and the Marketing Director. This person will look after the day to day running of the office and act as a finance clerk.

Job descriptions and person specifications are set out for all six posts in Annex xx. It is recommended that the search for a new Secretary General is conducted on a global basis. There are a number of companies in London who could do this.

(v) Location – why London?

London is acknowledged as one of the three truly international centres of the world. It is possible to get a direct flight from London to all the major cities of the world which makes it an ideal hub for travelling and keeps down the costs of travelling by reducing the need for connecting flights, additional train journeys etc. London is benefiting from a major growth in the routes covered by budget airlines, which will be a major advantage to those travelling within Europe. And in this proposal prestige office

accommodation is available at no cost in the City of London, with easy travelling to London's four major airports and the Eurostar terminal.

London is also the headquarters for many of the main international companies, which will be an important consideration in developing the sponsorship programme.

London is major centre of employment with a large, vibrant and highly qualified labour market on which to draw. In particular it is a major centre of expertise for marketing and public relations, and web site design.

(vi) Timetable for implementation

(vii) Facilities for the new Secretariat.

It is proposed that the Secretariat should be co-located with The City and Guilds of London Institute, in modern and well-equipped premises in the City of London. City and Guilds have offered accommodation at not cost, with the provision of excellent support facilities on a contractual basis. This is an effective and efficient way to do things and would give best value for money as the Secretariat would be too small to have any purchasing power. Co-location with City and Guilds, an international organisation with an excellent reputation in the field of vocational training and skills development, will provide the Secretariat with access to some of the leaders in the field.

(viii) Management Style and Values

The management of the Secretariat should be commensurate with the principles, mission statement and core values of World Skills as outlined in the Strategic Plan. Adherence to the core values would set the culture of the organisation.

The core values of World Skills are:

- striving to be the best you can be
- focused on people and teamwork
- treating integrity as non-negotiable
- encouraging honesty, openness and fairness
- respecting the needs and aspirations of others in all relationships
- respecting the different cultures of all peoples
- orientation towards the future

The Secretariat must be an organisation that creates solutions that are cost effective and relevant to the modern workplace

(ix) Costs

The detailed costs are set out in Annex zz. The headlines are

Salaries and associated costs

Support services

Executive Board expenses

Staff travel

Costs of World Skills meetings

Marketing

Website development

etc

New Ways of Working

A major change for the Secretariat would be in the exploitation of new technology. There is enormous potential for a website that is creative and innovative. It has the potential to be the essence of the World Skills organisation, with different areas serving different purposes/groups of people eg students, employers, potential sponsors, etc and allows for confidential areas eg for technical experts to have debates

The other new aspect of the work would be the development of some research capacity. World Skills will only operate effectively if it is well informed. This means developing its knowledge base on the skills agenda, labour market policies and the global economy. This would be the responsibility of the Assistant to the Technical Director.

Funding – how much will it cost

Expenditure - Figures to be added later for salaries, premises, services and website)

Income – membership fees, pump priming for first two years, sponsorship.

Membership fees to be gradually increased between now and 2005 so that they are in line with the increased level of service that the new Secretariat can provide to members

Guiding principles need to be – high quality service to Exec Board and members, value for money, capacity to build up reserves for the future

Transitional arrangements

It will be vitally important to ensure a smooth transition from the existing Secretariat to the new arrangements. The Executive Board is putting in place plans to recruit a Marketing Director immediately to take forward the sponsorship plans proposed by the consultants. This person should be able to look after marketing and sponsorship until a permanent Director can be appointed. The temporary appointee will work alongside the present Secretary General until such time as the new Secretariat can set up its office.

Daniel Sommer's contract has been extended to July 2003 to ensure continuity for Switzerland as they prepare for the 37th World Skills Competition in St Gallen in July 2003. He has given his commitment to work alongside the new Secretariat and ensure a smooth transition.

If as a result of the vote at the General Assembly in New Zealand in March 2002 the Secretariat is to be located in London the premises could be acquired quickly but the recruitment process would take between 5 and 8 months. This means a realistic start date of late 2002.

Conclusion