



# **TASK FORCE REPORT**

**APRIL 2010**

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## Task Force – **Introduction**

**Task Force Members** – Andrew Wood (Thailand), Bob McGill (Australia), Nick Keglevich (Argentina), Hulya Aslantas (Turkey), Sylvia Liebisch (Austria), Mok Singh (United States of America) Chairperson Thom Vincent (Canada)

The Repositioning Task Force has spent a great deal of time reviewing the responses from our membership survey last year. We have analyzed the feedback and based on this information, have summarized many recommendations and changes for the EC to consider. Our expectations are that the ISC Executive and Councillors will review this document and the recommendations, and give their advice to the EC in Quebec City during the mid year meetings, May 3-5, 2010. The following were the Objectives of the Task Force as it recommended changes in regard to the Repositioning of Skal:

1. Create more membership value for our existing and future members of Skal.
2. How can we create and establish a substantial business network platform?
3. How do we improve the internal and external communications of Skal?
4. How can we become the major influence and voice in Travel and Tourism worldwide?
5. How do we educate our membership and the travel industry on our involvement with UNWTO and the promotion of Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism?
6. Continue to maintain the friendship and amicable of Skal.

Note: One of our objectives was to understand how we refine/eliminate/change pertinent statutes and bylaws to make our organization more effective, but this task will evolve out of the adopted changes from this document.

We started as a friendship organization 75 years ago. Towards the late 1990's we started to realize the strength we had in regard to 20,000 professionals in travel and looked at new approaches for Skal... 'Doing Business with Friends'; supporting Sustainable/Responsible Tourism, and setting up worldwide and recognized Eco-Tourism awards for properties preserving our environment. We are operating our organization without enough resources and financial strength, and our secretariat is not functioning up to modern day business requirements. The world has changed dramatically in the past ten years, along with communications and we need to decide if we are going to reposition Skal to catch up to the changing times. We need to recognize that 'Change is the only Constant' in life and proceed to create healthy changes for Skal.

Having said this about change, this does not mean any change in the fundamental values of Skal as an organization of friendship and amicale among travel professionals. In fact

it is this friendship that helps us want to do business with friends within our organization. We are a local, national, and international 'Club of Friends'

We believe that, in 2010, we are at a crossroads with our International Skal Organization, as many members commented during the Survey. We need to challenge ourselves to reinvent and invest in our organization or we will be destined to mediocrity or obscurity in the future. It is important that Skal be perceived as an international organization, but through various comments on our survey, our members find it difficult to understand the value they get from the internationality of Skal.

We cannot continue to operate our skal organization on past business models as this is a recipe for disaster. We need to address our weaknesses and work with our strengths to grow our organization and become the ideal professional travel organization that we all believe we can become.....'The Trusted Voice in Travel and Tourism'.

It is interesting to note the most recent Operational Plan for Skal International was approved by the General Assembly in Montreal in 1998, and updated in 2004. In review of the Strategic Objectives, we outline the following:

Point 1: 'Ensure the awareness and understanding of our mission and principles among all Skalleagues'. It seems from our survey that there is a great deal of confusion of our present mission and direction.

Point 4: 'To establish Fund Development Projects that help finance the new programmes and services that are needed, are marketable and related to the Skal mission.' At this time we don't have the monies necessary to fund any projects within Skal or related to the Skal mission.

Point 5: 'To ensure the permanent and continued extension of the Skal movement among the tourism professionals worldwide...' We don't believe that with the stagnant membership numbers over the past five years, that we can really state that we are extending Skal to tourism professionals worldwide.

Point 6: 'Establish and implement the adequate means, structure, organization, communication lines and formative environment conducive to the effective and efficient operation of our members and all Skal levels in providing the highest level of achievements in our objectives'. We don't believe we can answer anything in Point 6 with a positive or resounding 'yes'.

Point 7: 'To ensure an attractive Skal offer with programmes and services aimed at Travel and Tourism professionals, also by multiplying the opportunities of personal contacts among our members through Skal activities.' If this means bring more value to Skal, we have a great deal of more work to accomplish.

Point 9: 'To change the extended local and 'parochial' mentality of Clubs and National Committees to another inter-relation and internationalism.' A tremendous lift needed here on an ongoing basis through more effective communication.

Point 11: 'To be guided by operational planning, prepared by the General Secretariat and approved by the Executive Committee, to accomplish all these strategic objectives.' We believe that a 3-5 year operation plan for Skal should be the norm and provide us with the roadmap we need to accomplish our objectives.

'Development of Skal': In the Operations Plan....'To put a permanent, solid, rational and objective-led development policy into practice throughout the entire organization is a matter of great urgency.' There was a proposal to put such a development policy into practice within two years, using a number of countries to test the system. The Task Force is not sure where the Skal Executive stands on this program?

In conclusion, the Skal Operational Plan was, to our knowledge, last updated in January 2004. The Task Force has a challenge in understanding why this document and plan has not been updated annually. For the benefit of our membership and we hope, when our new recommendations have been accepted, the Executive Committee will have a working document to guide them year to year and of course make changes as we grow our organization.

In summary we have created a new, common, and clear Vision, Mission and Strategy for Skal with this document. By adopting our recommendations we will provide new meaning to Skal (instead of being a social club); improve the decision making of our organization; provide a standard reporting process and improve the transparency of our reporting; make people more accountable to the organization; and increase our membership and visibility in Travel and Tourism worldwide. Above all we will bring a new meaning and 'raison d'être' for Skalleagues around the world.

End.

## Task Force – **Vision and Mission Statements**

We need to redefine who we are and why Skal International exists. We need to give meaning to our organization and attract the energy, youth and intellect we require for the future. We want to define our direction and separate ourselves from our competitors.

By redefining our Vision and Mission, we can help transform Skal and become the internationally recognized organization we want to be, where membership is once again valued, respected and has meaning. Through our newly defined Vision and Mission we want Skal to be considered a more credible organization with a very important voice in the world of Tourism. In addition we want to keep and build on the friendship and amicable of Skal, and foster the opportunities of doing business as an important element of our future success. We have the strength to combine the knowledge and experience of our members to help shape world Tourism in a healthy, environmentally friendly and positive way.

The following were the initial proposed Draft Vision and Mission Statements produced by the Task Force and forwarded to Skalleagues for input. These redefined Vision and Mission statements can provide a new positive sense of direction for all members of Skal, at all levels, and allowing all of us to share in the direction on a local, national and international perspective. These statements represent an easy to understand voice of positive change and action, and are based on the following Strengths:

- Our Experience
- Our Professionalism
- Our Leadership
- Our Passion
- Our Members
- Our Diversity
- Our Global Awareness
- Our Cultural Diversity

**VISION STATEMENT:** ‘Based on our leadership, professionalism and friendship, use our expertise to work together towards becoming a trusted voice in the Travel and Tourism Industry worldwide.’

Following input from the Task Force and in consultation with Per Stendebakken, we have shortened the Vision Statement to the following:

**‘The Trusted Voice in Travel and Tourism.’**

**MISSION STATEMENT:** ‘Develop a strong brand that supports and communicates our vision to our members and the industry in order to work together to maximise networking opportunities and fully embrace Responsible Tourism.’

Following input from the Task Force and in consultation with Per Stendebakken, we have changed the Mission Statement to the following:

**‘Through our leadership, professionalism and friendship, work together to enhance our Vision, maximise networking opportunities and develop a Responsible Tourism Industry.’**

In regard to using a ‘Tag Line’ that would tie into our Vision Statement, we suggest the following:

**‘SKAL – Tourism’s Trusted Voice since 1934’.**

**Our Core Values:**

1. To continually develop and foster friendship in the travel and tourism industry worldwide.
2. We are socially and environmentally responsible.
3. We believe that integrity, trust, honesty and commitment are the cornerstones of our organization.
4. We will motivate our membership to always do business with their Skalleague friends.
5. We will inspire and assist young members with their professional development in the travel and tourism industry.
6. We will create a positive leadership culture that cares about our members, mentors our growth, and values open communication.
7. We will continue to build strong professional relationships with like minded travel and tourism organizations worldwide.
8. We will continue to build Skal from a good organization with good people to a great organization with great people.

Note: Now that we will adopt a new Vision and Mission statement, we will no longer need to have an annual President’s mantra. These annual ‘vision messages’ are confusing

to the Skal membership and have no real buy in from the members. It is important for all the EC to promote Skal through our new Vision and Mission statements and promote our commitment to Sustainable Tourism and our Eco Tourism awards.

End.

## Task Force – **Organizational Changes**

We can safely say that the Skal International movement is in a state of transition. Our organization has basically operated on the same statutes and by laws that have been in place over the past 75 years. Very few companies have survived without change over that time period. We respect the history and growth of Skal that has got us to 2010, but we need to understand how to change, to grow and survive.

We need to change to survive as an organization and attract the energy, youth and intellect we require for the future. We all love the friendships we have developed through our lunches, dinners, meetings, and congresses, but friendship on it's own is not enough to attract new members and grow our Skal organization. To grow we have to adapt to a rapidly changing world, environment, and concentrate on the important issues to improve our organization, make it more professional and create more of an opportunity to do business locally, nationally, and internationally.

The following quotes from our survey show we must change to survive.....'Different and often conflicting agendas; old age is a concern for the future; Skal needs to bring something different to the table; Skal is not well known, neither considered influential, lack of exposure in the past and the fact that our meetings were based on friendship and socializing, it did not give companies enough reason to pay dues...we need to change our image and show how important our organization is to the travel and tourism industry.'

There are many comments from the survey that want the Task Force to address the present organizational structure of Skal, how can we function better, and the need to make changes to address methodology of election, succession planning and our governance by somewhat archaic statutes and by laws.

The following recommendations outline effective changes to our EC/ISC/Secretariat structure and relationships to help grow Skal in the future and to help facilitate more effective decision making and communications:

The following organizational changes include new full time positions in our Secretariat Offices and a reorganization of the EC/ISC. Our objectives here are to position Skal for growth, create more value for our membership, create worldwide visibility for Skal and make our organization more responsible, more responsive, and to create accountable and esteemed leadership.

The three new proposed positions (we will discuss the financing of these positions under the Finance recommendations) are as follows:

**CEO:** We cannot continue to have our leadership change every year. We need to provide continuity to our organization, establish a leader and 'Face' of Skal; facilitate the positive image of Skal; have a spokesperson that consistently represents Skal. The CEO would align our future with our new vision and mission statements. The CEO would

report to the EC directly on all PR and Development issues. The office of the Secretariat would be managed by the Secretary General or an Administrative Manager and look after the administration of the organization, including all club correspondence etc. and financial matters. We believe that existing staff could support a CEO and the Secretary General for their responsibilities.

**Business Development and Membership Director:** (Reporting to the CEO) We cannot grow our organization by continuing to rely on volunteer efforts to increase membership. To develop meaningful business relationships requires commitment on a full time basis. The following are a few suggested responsibilities –

1. Develop sponsorship and advertising revenue streams.
2. Provide marketing and collateral support for networking opportunities at local, area and club levels.
3. Set up Trade Shows and B2B opportunities – and manage promotion and attendance.
4. Provide continual input to develop our website to make our website more attractive for new membership and business opportunities.
5. Where applicable, invest in database IT solutions, equipment and technology to improve the efficiency of the Secretariat.
6. Identify any and all new membership opportunities and create the programs for effective growth in membership.
7. Review and develop the Twinning and Young Skal programs.
8. Manage the membership DVD creation/upkeep/distribution and promotion.
9. Manage and promote networking.
10. Establish Co-operations/liason with other tourism organizations worldwide.

**Public Relations Director:** (Reporting to the CEO)

1. Prepare communications to travel and tourism industries when applicable.
2. Maintain a world wide and effective Press Release communications database.
3. Reviewing Web site for continual improvement re appeal to existing and potential new members.
4. Promote a new rebranded FVF.
5. Work with the ISC regarding reporting to the clubs.
6. Manage electronic voting on pre defined issues.
7. Regularly conduct research polls with our members on relevant issues and report to Travel and Tourism industries.
8. Promote EcoTourism and Sustainable Tourism as important platforms for Skal worldwide.
9. Manage and promote Skal News.
10. Collaborate with UNWTO.
11. Develop a PR Crisis Response Plan for SI to use in the event of any major Tourism Disaster/Crisis where we can offer human and financial support/resources.

In regard to the EC and the ISC, and in consideration of hiring three full time employees above, we recommend reducing the size of the individual EC and ISC Boards, creating a combined Board Structure with two members of the ISC Board sitting on the EC and becoming voting members.

This would reduce the overall two Boards from EC – 7 + ISC – 4 = 11 to the following:

### **Executive Committee Positions - 6**

President  
Vice President  
Director of Finance  
Director of Administration (Statutes)  
President of ISC  
VP of ISC  
Secretary General

1. We would recommend a new voting structure....that the total Board consisting of the EC and ISC be elected by the ISC. The ISC counsellors have a better understanding of the commitment and performance of the members of the EC, or lack of, as compared with the current system where the voting delegates at the General Assembly do not necessarily know the quality, or experience of the candidate and generally vote by region/area.
2. The EC carries out the policies, decisions and direction passed/voted by the ISC.
3. Clubs vote for their ISC representative who is responsible to their Area or National Committee

### **General Voting**

1. All Clubs will have the opportunity to vote on Skal matters through an electronic voting system, i.e. the matters that are voted on at the present AGM. This gives more power to the clubs, excepting the following point 2.
2. Clubs will not have a vote for the election of members to the EC as these will be elected by the ISC councillors, who represent the clubs worldwide.

### **Administrative Review:**

1. We need to review the job descriptions of the existing staff at the Skal offices of the Secretary General.

2. Appeal System: Introduce an appeal system in the ISC Council, that allows any Skalleague to lodge an appeal on Skal related matters. The ISC President will appoint a panel of 5 International Councillors to review all cases. Appeals are to be submitted in writing and a simple majority vote will decide the outcome of the appeal. This would remove some of the workload on the EC and decisions would be made in a timely manner.

End.

## Task Force – **Quality Management and Accountability**

We want to look at ways to improve on our administrative functions, our transparency, our capabilities, our reporting and performance. Perform a quality management review to examine the present policies and procedures of our Administrative Offices in Torremolinos. Do we have an existing quality management review process; scorecards and measurement tools for our personnel? How do we introduce Quality Practices and the necessary requisite training?

The following are our recommendations:

1. A legally binding ***Memorandum of Understanding*** be signed by all incoming office bearers' at all executive levels of Skål, which outlines their responsibilities and the expectations of those who elected /appointed them, and also outlines their expenditure limits and /or authority. This would be part of the quality process where all office bearers are aware of their roles and responsibilities.
2. Open, transparent and separate itemised and easy to understand financial report of EC expenditure; not have these executive expenses bundled under any other ticket expenditure items. For both auditing and reporting processes, the more transparent, the better.
3. An open, unbiased, and fair leadership succession plan be implemented to manage the elevation of elected officers at all executive levels of Skål. Without discrimination this plan must be both merit and qualification based so as to ensure that competent individuals with a good balance of qualities lead our respective levels of Skål. Qualities for consideration:
  - a. Distinguished Professional Acumen and Industry Profile.
  - b. Exceptionally Strong Leadership, Communication and Interpersonal skills.
  - c. Strong Understanding of Cultural Diversity and Sensitivity.
  - d. Recognised Professional Skills and Qualifications.
  - e. Respected Life and Skål Experience.
4. The Internal Auditor's(s) primary role is to audit & oversee the administrative procedures and management organisation of Skål, so as to ensure optimum cost efficiency. *The current auditing process within Skål International by elected Internal Auditors covers only the financial aspect and not the organisation management and administration. There should be a process that ensures accountability to members of the administration of affairs and demonstrates fundamental procedures that should be entrenched within the organisation's management system and against which an audit process can deliver results that provide evidence for management efficiency and effectiveness. We are a large international organisation with heavy responsibilities to be effective and open with our management systems. The financial audit should be recognised as separate to the quality audit.*

## Task Force – **Finances**

We all agree and the survey supports our premise, that in order to create more value for our organization, become more professional, and to successfully grow our organization, we will need to ‘invest’ in our future. This is going to cost our members more in annual dues and we will probably lose members because of a dues increase....however if we can show the ROI to our Skalleagues and that the increase in dues are an investment, we will keep the majority of our members and be able to bring in new members. If we are a group of professionals, we need to act professionally and plan our finances according to our needs. Remember we have not had a dues increase, except for cost of living, for some 10 years. In addition, we have financial challenges at present with our ongoing deficit cash flow financing, which is a contingent liability.

As this paper recommends, we need to hire executive full time staff to facilitate our plans for an expanded membership promotion; public relations program and an overall CEO to provide the constant and effective leadership we need for the future of Skal. We need to invest in a Rebranding of Skal to help revitalize our organization, create a new identity for Skal, and make our Brand stronger and more appealing to new and younger members, worldwide.

We need to fund the development of a strategic and marketing/promotional plan, guided by the CEO, to position Skal as the leader and champion of Sustainable/Responsible Tourism worldwide. We need to invest in the programs we are going to stand behind and be recognized for, and put a program in place to communicate our messages to our membership and the Travel and Tourism sectors worldwide...be ‘The Trusted Voice in Travel and Tourism’. All ISC Councillors understand the frustration of making recommendations and then being told there is no budget for their recommendation.

The following are our ‘rough’ estimates of investment monies required for staffing, programs and to eliminate the deficit. These approximate costs are based on a reduced membership of 15,000 after taking into consideration members who do not want to belong to the ‘New Skal’ and invest in the reorganization.

CEO	- 150,000 E
Business Development and Membership Director	- 125,000 E
Public Relations Director	- 100,000 E
Rebranding Skal	- 50,000 E
Sustainable Tourism Promo Package	- 30,000 E
Additional Travel re UNWTO etc.	- 25,000 E
Incentives for membership targets etc.	- 20,000 E
Total Investment Costs	500,000 E
Cost per member – 33.3E, round to 35E	
Skal Deficit	400,000 E
Recommend a 10E levy per member for 3 years	

Total increase in dues 45E per year per member.

Additional recommendations for Cost Savings and Efficiencies:

1. Year End: Align our Fiscal Year to the Calendar year along with our Fees Schedule.
2. Membership Dues: Prorate all membership dues. This will assist in membership development during the last six months of the year.
3. Per Diem: Eliminate the 43.20E per diem travel expense for all EC Travel.
4. Business Travel: Conform to government and corporate travel policies so that Business Class fares are only used for trips over 5 hours for all EC and Skal office staff.
5. Re examine the internal audit. Some of the internal audit can be performed electronically and we may be able to cut our travel expenses for skalleague audit travel by at least 50%, if we only have one auditor attend our offices in Torremolinos. A great deal of travel expenses can be saved by eliminating the on site need for two auditors.

Notes:

1. Minutes of the Taipei ISC Meeting, Oct.2008: We do not seem to have a follow up report on the following notes from Page 5. 'The EC discussed a financial plan which will aim to eliminate the deficit of Euros 350,000 over a ten-year period. The financial plan would include reducing the cost of the General Secretariat and Administration by 10,000 E. '
2. Travel Fund re ISC Councillors: This item has been tabled for the past few years, but no resolution or meaningful resolution.
3. Many Skalleagues are not aware of the costs involved to operate our offices in Torremolinos and we must educate our members on this expense which is supported by their membership dues.

End.

## Task Force – **Public Relations**

How can we more effectively communicate and become the most influential organization in the Travel and Tourism marketplace, worldwide?

How do we get involved in local, national or international tourism issues to make sure that Skal is recognized? Can we evolve and become a positive influence in the travel and tourism sector in a manner that gives real purpose to Skal and differentiates ourselves from other organizations? Can we become the ‘source’ of ideas and information in the travel industry on certain issues? Can we act as an aggregator of travel information for reference in the industry?

We need to understand how to create an effective International Public Relations directive. How can we promote what we stand for, our Brand, our objectives, our affiliations with UNWTO and UNEP etc., our Eco Tourism Awards, our stand on Sustainable Tourism issues, without an effective PR machine?

Our recommendations are as follows:

1. **Public Relations Director:** Hire a full time Public Relations Director to get our message(s) out to our members, and the Travel and Tourism industry. This Director would have, in place, a world wide media library for Press Releases and also schedule interviews with members of the EC and skalleagues who can promote and relate to Skal and relevant issues we are promoting. Promote our support for causes such as the ‘Prevention of sexual exploitation of Children in Tourism’, ‘Ethics in Tourism’, our involvement with Sustainable Tourism etc. See sample position responsibilities below.
2. **Go To Meetings:** Set up regular scheduled ‘Go To Meetings’ seminars for skalleagues to keep them informed on relevant Skal issues and to promote educational topics and Travel and Tourism advice of interest to our members. We could promote travel sectors and skalleague companies to other skal members and to the travel industry.
3. **Skal Emergency Task Force:** Create an Emergency Task Force of valued Skalleagues who would be available to use their background education, and tourism experience to assist countries when they suffer a natural disaster. Look at a fund that would help an established Skal Swat team...SSWAT. Members would apply to have their names on a standby list under industry criteria including expertise in ie. ground transportation, accommodation, marketing, communications, IT, air transport etc. This would be a huge PR recognition for Skal through international media and the UN.
4. **Advertising/Promotion:** Can Skal negotiate corporate discounted advertising rates for preferred international media and pass these rates through to skalleagues.

5. **Skal Tip Sheet:** Create a quick and simple Tip Sheet that is emailed to all Skalleagues on a monthly basis giving info on business opportunities, promotional offers, skalleague happenings.....with a disclaimer that any skalleague can opt out whenever they desire.

Public Relations Director sample responsibilities:

- i. Prepare communications to travel and tourism industries when applicable.
- ii. Maintain a world wide and effective Press Release communications database.
- iii. Reviewing Web site for continual improvement re appeal to existing and potential new members.
- iv. Promote a new rebranded FVF.
- v. Work with the ISC regarding reporting to the clubs.
- vi. Manage electronic voting on pre defined issues.
- vii. Regularly conduct research polls with our members on relevant issues and report to Travel and Tourism industries.
- viii. Promote EcoTourism and Sustainable Tourism as important platforms for Skal worldwide.
- ix. Manage and promote Skal News.
- x. Work with UNWTO

End.

## Task Force – **Communications**

How can we make our internal communications more effective, timely and efficient?

This is a challenge for most organizations. As Skäl has many layers, from club, to national organization, to the International Council, to the International Executive Council, it is more imperative that we continually examine better ways to communicate with our membership. How do we make committee and executive members more accountable in regard to their being more effective communicators to their constituents?

In addition we need more transparency and timely information regarding decisions that are made at the EC level. Skäl is a voluntary organization, supported by Dues from all members. All members working at any level of Skäl are responsible to the membership, therefore decisions and the rationale behind decisions should be available to all members on a timely basis.

Skäl needs to better capitalize on technology for more regular communication and to make meetings more accessible for members. How can we use technology to promote more B2B opportunities?

The following are recommendations to improve our Communication:

1. **Standard Reporting Document:** Set up a standard report document that is used by all committees, the ISC, the EC and the Secretariat. These reports would identify the issue; explain the issue discussed; outline the recommendation/action steps; add a timeline and the person(s) responsible to complete the Task. All reports would be filed on our website under the appropriate committee or organization, and each person responsible would be required to update the issue/task on a calendar quarterly basis. If any report is not updated by the end of the quarter, the Secretariat forwards an email with copies to the EC and ISC executive requesting information and reason for the delay.
2. **Minutes of Meetings:** Minutes of all Executive Council and ISC are published and posted within 14 days of meetings on our website and made accessible to all skalleagues. Obviously if there are any sensitive issues being discussed that relate to specific member issues, these should remain confidential, but there is no reason that the minutes of the EC/ISC meetings cannot be promptly completed and posted for our members. The delay in receiving this information represents another challenge in getting work accomplished on a timely basis. After each heading report in the summary of any minutes, the standard report document in item (1.) above will be completed so everyone understands the issue/task, who to complete and by when....and this is updated quarterly.

3. Electronic Voting: As many clubs cannot attend the International Congress due to the costs involved, Clubs must be able to vote on issues by electronic vote. We continually discuss how to influence our clubs to be involved in the national and international aspects of our organization, yet we shut out our local clubs from any decisions unless they attend the Congress. The club members pay their dues to participate in the organization and must be included in the decision making process. A Committee needs to be tasked to decide on what issues can be voted on electronically, but a suggestion may be that only Clubs that attend the Congress can vote for election of members of the EC, and all other agenda items, including membership fees and statute changes can be voted in advance by non attending clubs and at the Congress by attending clubs. Results of the votes, including any done electronically would be by 50% + 1 to be binding. Electronic voting in advance of the Congress would free up time for the Congress Agenda.
4. Research Polls: Regularly conduct research polls on important Skal issues. Share the results of any polls immediately with Skalleagues and post graphic results on the website.
5. Induction Toolkit: Examine a new member information outline on our website that reviews our goals, vision, mission, core values, the organization, the members commitment etc and have every new member who qualifies for Skal membership, go to our website, review this information and have to click 'I have read this information in full, understand and agree to abide by the code of ethics and membership rules of Skal' ...or something like this. We could have this info in the three official languages .... And in this way know that every skalleague going forward is being told the same things about Skal and understands our organization better.

Notes: Minutes of the ISC Meeting in London, May 2009 13.3, Page 12: Internal Communications Report: 'A presentation on how to use the website more effectively was to be given in Budapest. Also, there would be a step-by-step letter to all Skal members on how to use the website.' We are not aware of these items moving forward and are an example of the need for a standard reporting document with prudent follow up by responsible parties.

End.

## Task Force – **Membership**

How do we bring more value to our membership; make our Skäl membership more respected and meaningful...internally and externally? In addition we need to enhance our membership numbers to capitalize on income requirements for our organization.

Membership in Skäl has always been personal and not attached to a company. As we have encouraged ‘Doing Business with Friends, we have created a positive business environment that we need to continue to cultivate. Having businesses join Skäl as members will enhance our professional business culture, bring more value to the individual and business membership and grow our membership. Corporate membership would also allow more companies to subsidize the costs of individual memberships. In addition there are membership opportunities of service suppliers and sponsors that would bring value and business opportunities to existing and future members.

In addition we should expand our membership categories to include management in administration, reservations, service etc., not solely in the sales/promotion/marketing of travel. All company departments in travel companies/organizations are indirectly or directly promoting travel and tourism. Examine an inventory of all activities related to tourism such as the ecology, mountaineering, fishing, diving, hunting etc. Look at natural, historic and cultural travel areas of tourism as membership categories.

Our recommendations are as follows:

1. **Corporate Memberships:** Corporate memberships would be a great addition to our strong personal membership base and enhance our organizations relevance to the worldwide travel industry.

Corporate Membership Package:

The company pays an annual fee for x number of members:

1 – 5 members: EUR 175  
6 – 10 members: EUR 325  
11 – 15: members: EUR 475  
16 and above: EUR 600

The company would provide the names of the nominated individuals and they must each independently qualify under our current regulations. The more members from the same company, the more discounts they may enjoy. It must be a benefit for the company to secure “en block” membership.

**2. Supplier Memberships:** Skål needs to target global companies that can offer a benefit to Skål Members and Skål International and in-turn be assured of receiving a commercial benefit.

There are two tiers to this programme, Benefits Sponsorship and Benefits and ‘Cash’ Sponsorship:

For both tiers all ‘suppliers’ must be willing to sign and adhere to an agreement with Skål International whereby their local offices/representatives would work/do business with Skål members and the benefits programme is communicated succinctly. This should also include that there is a reciprocal agreement for sponsors to utilise the goods and services of Skål members with similar benefits.

Create a manual with guidelines on “how to find sponsors and get sponsored”.

### **1: Benefits Sponsorship**

- Provide the best available price or discount on their product/service
- Provide a prize for the congress each year, with funds raised to go towards FVF (or offset the deficit of Skål in the short term)
- A new category is established within Skål – Business Associate Partners
  - .. They have no voting rights
  - .. Cannot hold office
  - .. Ability to attend meetings/National assembly/congresses etc social functions
  - .. Logo appears in the Skål News/e-newsletter
  - .. Link from the Skål International website/listing with logo .. Booth at Congress

### **2: Benefits & “Cash” Sponsorship**

In addition to the above:

- Three levels of Sponsorship – Gold; Silver; Bronze

· Gold - €20,000

2 delegates to attend congress and all related functions (no attendance at the general assembly)

Collateral distributed in registration packs

Signage and acknowledgment at Congress and all related collateral

Booth at B2B Session

3 Adverts in Skål News

· Silver - €15,000

Collateral distributed in registration packs

Signage and acknowledgment at Congress and all related collateral

Booth at B2B Session

2 Adverts in Skål News

· Bronze - €10,000

Collateral distributed in registration packs

Booth at B2B Session

1 Advert in Skål News

In addition they have first option to sponsor functions, tea/coffee etc. We would suggest if they are attending Congress with a booth then the tea/coffee stations are located on or near their stands so that they have the opportunity to interact with members/delegates.

### **Companies to target:**

\*

Travel Insurance – AIG

\*

Visa /MasterCard /Amex /Diners

\*

Avis /Budget (already done)

\*

Star Alliance /One World

\*

Accor – (Advantage Plus Card)

\*

Electronics Supplier – Samsung, LG, Sony, Panasonic

\*

IT Supplier – Mac. HP. Dell

\*

Car Manufacturer – VW. Ford, GM

\*

Phone Company – Nokia, Motorola, Sony Ericsson

\*

Fast Food Chain

\*

Hotel Group – IHG, Hilton, Best Western, etc

\*

Courier Company – TNT, FedEx, UPS

\*

Luggage Company – Samsonite, Antler, etc

This is only a suggested list, but in essence any sales overture must be PROFESSIONAL. It should be instigated from an international level. It should outline benefits to all parties. It should be pitched as a partnership to increase the bottom line.

End.

## Task Force – **Networking**

How to position and perform better within Skal. Networking obviously improves our business value and we need to help members understand the value of networking in Skal. As we have a certified selection process for membership, it makes sense for skalleagues to do business with reliable potential partners who are fellow skalleagues. Sylvia Liebisch, our Task Force member from Austria, has created a networking manual for skalleagues to use while networking for business opportunities.

We also have a wonderful opportunity within Skal to attend other club meetings to exchange new ideas; see travel industry issues from a different perspective; for networking and to understand Skal better. We need to understand how to promote visits to other clubs as a positive experience.

The Following are Networking Opportunities for all Skallegues and some suggestions for consideration.

### **Congresses**

A great opportunity to meet skalleagues from around the world and enhance business opportunities. Always feedback from clubs about the expense of the Congresses and the need to be less expensive. Must improve the value of the Congresses to make them more attractive for international attendance and allowing companies to consider paying for their skalleague employees to attend.

Recommendations:

1. Consider more educational programming and industry speakers to attract attendees.
2. Can we have debates structured among our members on Skal and Tourism issues?
3. Can we examine Congresses in off-peak travel times at the destination to lower costs? Can we package 3,4 and 5 star hotels to give price selection opportunities?
4. Can we co ordinate our Congress with other worldwide trade shows to piggyback on the cost of the air travel...even return to the i.e. WTM every two years?
5. Examine using an independent professional Congress organizer to eliminate the financial pressure on Skal.

### **B2B**

Now that the B2B concept has been in place for the past few years and we have developed a number of interested companies that wish to display, we have to make the mini trade show look much more professional and attract the entire congress attendees.

## **Skal Booths at Trade Shows**

Many skalleagues are still not aware that we have Skal booths at trade shows such as ITB, WTM etc. We need to highlight this info on our website better and also make sure that we are sending out broadcast emails to all skalleagues on a monthly basis at least three months from the date of the show. We need to understand our ROI on Skal booths in regards to attracting new members.

Recommendations:

1. Set up a PR/Communications campaign at least three months in advance of every show where SI has a booth.
2. Complete a Report on each trade show, outlining all travel costs of SI attendees, admin costs; number of business cards collected from potential new members; and tracking new members and revenue after six months. This will help us understand the ROI and success of the booth program.
3. Review our Booth display and whether we can come up with a more attractive and professional booth.
4. We should also promote all our Skalleagues that attend and display at any travel trade show....to display skal membership brochures and information on Skal. Also use the 'Skal Member Here' signage.

## **Skal Website – [www.skal.org](http://www.skal.org)**

Our website represents probably the greatest opportunity to promote value and networking among Skalleagues. Our site needs to be more dynamic....and we have to create more desire/compelling reasons for our members to use our website for networking.

Recommendations:

1. Examine an easier search engine to find members, their business.
2. Can we set up an interactive B2B format on our website?
3. Can we send an automatic message to all our members when we have any significant news posted on our website to drive members to view info?
4. Can we promote a city, region, and a country every month for the information of our membership?
5. Examine relationships with other web marketing travel firms such as Travel Connect to provide more value to our membership.
6. Could we set up a lead system...when any member typed in their request (could set up a number of codes for product and country) then an email would be generated to all skalleagues whose criteria filled the requested need. This would generate leads electronically and on a simplified basis.

## Task Force – **Rebranding of Skal**

Our image of Skal....especially for younger people needs to be addressed. Our logo represents 'old', and it looks old, it is old..over 75 years old. We need to change our image to attract younger members...look active, dynamic, modern, more influential, more professional. It is difficult for young people to have a connection to the existing corporate identity of Skal. We do not have a position in the marketplace, i.e. in peoples' minds that attracts new members. A 'New Skal' look would provide a focus on change for Skal.

In addition, we have no consistency in the use of the logo on business cards, use of a concise promotional tag line, i.e. 'Doing business with friends' on email signatures. Presently you cannot use the Skal logo on commercial correspondence or brochures of Skalleagues...a great deterrent to promote the Skal organization.

As Per Stendebakken, our ISC from Norway, has rightly commented...'The Brand is the 'space' we occupy in peoples' minds, created by promises we make, how we behave or deliver according to these expectations, i.e. how we create a value that triggers interest in and acceptance for Skal. Communication, including PR helps to create expectations, but it is our actions and behaviour that are decisive. The challenging parts of rebranding are to define a new brand platform that members will identify with and remember by heart, then to get everyone in Skal, or at least all officers worldwide to live the new brand. Remember that the brand is created by our actions and behaviour'.

Our recommendations would be as follows:

1. Develop a process for a new strong Skal platform, to formulate this platform in such a way that we all can understand, remember and live by. While developing our Brand platform and finalizing our Vision, Mission and Core Values, we can then be in a position to review our corporate identity, establish a new identity and roll out a support plan for the 'New Skal'.
2. Existing Logo: Using the existing logo, decide on a tag line to be associated with our logo and promote usage of the logo/tag on all skalleague email signatures. Change the relevant by-law/statutes to allow skalleagues to print the existing Skal logo on any corporate literature relevant to the Skalleagues travel business

End.

## Task Force – **Young Skal**

How to reposition and effectively develop younger Skal members?

Very few skalleagues disagree that we need to develop new and younger membership in Skal. How do we attract younger members and maintain the ‘Professional and senior management’ environment in Skal Clubs? A number of years ago we discontinued the creation of Young Skal Clubs and have since tried to create a formula to attract younger skalleagues to our organization within the existing club culture. How do we encourage existing members of Skal to embrace the value of Younger Skal members?

We definitely encourage the role of existing Young Skal Educators, meeting and communicating regularly within Young Skal to influence Young Skal membership growth.

Recommendation is to create a Young Skal Manual including the following:

1. Conditions to qualify as a Young Skal member and recruitment procedures.
2. Establish a limit i.e. 5%-20% of any club would be the maximum number of Young Skal members .... Depending on the number of active and retired members of each club.
3. Identify committee/job tasks that Young Skal members could embrace and get involved with the Club. A Skal Internship.
4. Develop a Young Skal/Trainee worldwide exchange program via our web site to encourage and foster work placements with other skalleagues in other countries.
5. Create a ‘Young Skal Blog’ that would foster communication between Young Skalleagues in clubs around the world.
6. Create a promotion to educate and value the Young Skal membership within the existing Club membership.
7. Encourage active Skal members to post open business positions for Young Skal members on the International Skal WebSite.

End.

## Task Force – **Sustainable/Responsible Tourism**

How do we effectively package and sell our commitment to Sustainable/Responsible Tourism to our membership around the world?

We must create a strategic plan and marketing/promotion to facilitate communication of our adopted Sustainable commitments/programs from our EC to our Area/National Committees to our Clubs to our members. We can use our membership to celebrate our involvement in Sustainable projects. We need to invest in our promotion of Sustainable Tourism, stand behind this cause and gain recognition for our commitment to Sustainable Tourism throughout the Travel and Tourism industry.

The following are recommendations:

1. Tips for Sustainable Tourism: How do we ‘EFFECTIVELY’ promote a portion or all of the principals contained in this booklet which offers easy to follow tips to save energy and resources for companies and families. We must create a sense of Ownership and Responsibility about Sustainable Tourism.
2. Provide a Forum among Skalleagues for the exchange of environmental ideas around the world.
3. Create an educational and training presentation on Sustainable Tourism to be given at every Congress and passed down to Clubs. Can we create a ‘Sustainable’ challenge for all clubs with results and rewards posted?
4. Skal International to endorse and recommend Green Globe Index and Green Globe International as a preferred partner with Skal.
5. Appoint a permanent Skalleague as Board Member with the UNWTO to provide continuity and clarity of purpose and communication to/from Skal to UNWTO.
6. Find a strategic travel partner to work with and promote Sustainable Tourism together. Look at Baxter Publishing who would like to partner with Skal International.
7. In regard to the Skal Eco Tourism Awards, there has been very mixed feedback. We need to work better to properly communicate the objectives of the awards, the concept and importance of the awards to our members and the international media.
8. From the minutes of the ISC meetings in London, May 2009, Item 11, Page 6. ‘The Secretary General informed the EC about a programme called Hotel Energy Solutions, which was Tourism Responding to the Challenge of Climate Change. This programme will provide energy efficiency solutions and increase the use of energy efficiency for the accommodation sector, initially across the 27 countries

of the European Union.' We are not aware of the follow up steps with this item?  
Is this a project that Skal should be promoting to all its hotel members and other  
hoteliers in the hospitality industry?

End.

## Task Force – **Florimond Volckaert Fund**

The Survey indicated that there was a lack of awareness and understanding about the Florimond Volckaert Fund (FVF). There seem to be many challenges with the perception of openness and communication. The name of the Fund was difficult to remember, and definitely not easy to spell. We need to spend more time and effort on recognition, awareness and promotion of the Fund. The following are recommendations:

1. **Name:** Change to better name that is more recognizable and talks to the purpose of the Fund, ie. Skäl Benevolent Fund – Caring for Skalleagues around the World; Skäl Humanitarian Fund.
2. **Directors:** We have three Trustees. One is appointed the co-ordinating Trustee. We should only be paying travel for one Trustee to report at the Mid Term or Annual Congress.
3. **Funds in FVF:** Look at the present level of funding and the net funds per annum over the past 10 years. If we have not dipped below a level of say \$250,000, pass a by-law that permits the FVF to loan the EC monies on a demand note basis, but never below the agreed threshold. This could lower our borrowing or debt costs in the EC.
4. **Promotion:** We need to examine a professional promotion and PR of the FVF so skalleagues are aware of the Fund and how it helps Skalleagues. There is an acute lack of awareness of the concept of the FVF. Every month we should publish on our Skäl website (and in our Newsletter) how we helped an individual skalleague or family...we can obtain a waiver from the assisted skalleague. This will make the Fund objectives more real and more personal. Statistical information should be given on a minimum quarterly basis in regards to countries assisted; members assisted; total grants given.
5. **Tax Exempt Status:** Move the Fund (or split the Fund) to the USA or Canada, and set up a tax exempt status for contributions. This would help increase the revenues of the Fund. Examine the international use of any fund contributions if the monies are raised in the USA or Canada.
6. **Credit Card:** Make it simple and have members donate through their credit card with no extra card fees.
7. **Contributions/Awards:** We should examine whether assistance awards to skalleagues have been given to clubs or countries that have not donated to the FVF. The EC should exert influence for future donations by any club or country after having received skalleague support from the FVF.

8. **Donation Awards:** In London 2008, it was proposed that awards be given to donors of specific amounts to the FVF in recognition of their donations? Where does this stand?

End.

## Task Force – Statutes and By-Laws

To grow, we have to respond to a rapidly changing world and environment. We can't afford to spend countless hours of valuable time together at Congresses debating outdated statutes. We are micromanaged and operating a 21Century organization on 75 year old statutes and by laws, that existed far before the electronic world we live in. We need to understand how we can streamline our statutes and by laws to make our operations more responsive and effective.

Our recommendations are as follows:

1. Request Jan Sunde to work as an Advisor, to review and suggest new time lines and protocol for regular changes; extra ordinary changes to structure, modifications, and deletions of statutes/by-laws to make our organization less complex.

The EC seems to have powers to propose new Statutes anytime...as long as they are approved by the next Assembly...and this supersedes timing issues of statute changes. Presently members have to propose Statute changes 10 months in advance of any Assembly and the EC can propose changes to Statutes 7 months in advance of any Assembly. Statute changes do not come into effect until six months after approval at any General Assembly. These dates are problematic. Why can't the EC or ISC propose changes anytime, as long as they are ratified by a 2/3 vote at the upcoming Assembly?

- a. Areas of Statute Changes we need to address and/or propose:
  - i. Mission and Vision Statements.
  - ii. Membership – who can apply; titles; corporate memberships.
  - iii. Fees – Ability to change fees vs. waiting one year; pro rata dues important.
  - iv. Finance: Assessments can be made with ratification by a majority vote by the EC or ISC?
  - v. Structure of Organization: Voting body relationship between the EC and ISC. ISC should not be just advisory.
  - vi. Accounting: Change to the Calendar Year. When communication was only by mail etc., this was okay, now to simplify the accounting process and report to the members.. change our accounting to a calendar basis.
  - vii. Statute and By Law Changes – Make more flexible....see above.
  - viii. Sustainable/Responsible Tourism – This to become one of our central and ongoing business strategies....how to incorporate into Statute or bylaw changes.