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IRSA Policy: IRSA Classes

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ABBREVIATIONS

COA	Class Owners Association
DNM	Designated National Member of IRSA
EC	Executive Committee of IRSA
ERS	Equipment Rules of Sailing
ICA	International Class Association
IRSA	International Radio Sailing Association
WS	World Sailing (formerly International Sailing Federation, ISAF)

DEFINITIONS

The following words and phrases have these definitions in this document.

Associate Membership	Membership granted to an ICA that has received IRSA Designation for its class.
Chair	Chairperson, chairwoman, or chairman.
Continent	Europe, North America, South America, Asia, Africa, Oceania.
Designation	"International", "Recognised", or "Classic".
Independent ICA	An ICA granted Associate or Provisional Membership.
IRSA Class	A class of boat which has received Designation.
Member	A DNM, an Associate Member, or a Provisional Member.
Membership	The Members of IRSA.
Provisional Membership	Membership granted to an ICA that has yet to receive IRSA Designation for its class.
will/should	In this document, the word "will" indicates an intent, while the word "should" expresses a value.

1 Intent

While IRSA supports all forms and classes of radio sailing, its support of an IRSA Class is intended to ensure that class meets the standards required for international competition of the highest quality. As sanctioned by World Sailing Regulations, an IRSA Class, and only an IRSA Class, is permitted to organise “World Championship” events, and under the IRSA Class Championship Regulations, an IRSA Class, and only an IRSA Class, is permitted to organise “Continental Championship” events.

2 Policy

IRSA ensures that IRSA Classes meet the standards required for international competition of the highest quality by requiring that such classes fulfil specified criteria and carry out specified procedures as laid down in the IRSA Constitution, IRSA Regulations, and IRSA Guidelines.

This document explains IRSA policies for IRSA Classes in general. Specific documents may apply to specific classes.

3 IRSA Objectives

Figure 1 shows the IRSA Objects as expressed in its 2017 Constitution (which is the same as the 2014 Constitution). As required by its Constitution, IRSA will lead and support classes and the development of classes intended for international radio sailing.

1 OBJECTS

- 1.1 The objects of IRSA shall be to develop the sport of radio sailing throughout the world. IRSA is recognized by WS as an affiliate member.
- 1.2 Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, IRSA shall be the authority for:
 - (i) The promotion and encouragement of designing, building, and racing radio sailing boats;
 - (ii) The granting and withdrawal of IRSA Class Designation and the supervision of IRSA Classes, including the Class Rules and measurement procedures;
 - (iii) The organisation, licensing, and sanctioning of World Championships authorized under WS Regulation 25.3, and Continental and Regional Championships, for all IRSA Classes;
 - (iv) The provision of input to WS on the Appendix for Radio Sailing of the WS Racing Rules of Sailing.

Figure 1. IRSA objects

4 Overview of an IRSA Class

This overview is summarised in *Table 1* and *Figure 2*. Note that the exact details relating to an IRSA Class are contained in the IRSA Regulations.

4.1 IRSA Class Designation

An IRSA Class is designated “International”, “Recognised”, or “Classic”. IRSA Designation entitles a class to hold world and continental championships under delegated authority from WS. “International” is the ‘full’ designation, while “Recognised” is a ‘lesser’ designation when the number of boats actively sailing is more limited. “Classic” is a designation only available to an “International” or “Recognised” class when a reduction in boat numbers means that either of these designations is no longer appropriate, provided that the class continues a “tradition of international competition extending back many decades”. Criteria leading to IRSA Designation for a class are detailed in the IRSA Regulations, and are summarised as follows.

In order to receive Designation, a class will have a recommendation from at least one DNM, a majority vote of the EC in favour, and an active ICA. The ICA will have a Constitution which is approved by the EC and which provides for a directing board, an elected executive committee, and effective owner representation.

The class will have a Class Rule which is based on the ERS, conforms to the WS Standard Class Rules format and the WS Advertising Code, and approved by the EC Technical Committee.

The class will be able to demonstrate that it is “actively racing”:

- (i) In the case of an **International class**, in at least 6 DNMs which are from at least 3 Continents with at least 50 boats per country.
- (ii) In the case of a **Recognised class**, in at least 4 DNMs or at least 3 DNMs which are from 2 Continents with at least 30 boats per country and a total of 100 boats worldwide.

4.2 IRSA Class administration

IRSA Classes will be administered either by an IRSA Class Committee, or by an independent ICA. A class of boat which obtains an international following may seek Designation as an IRSA Class, entitling it to hold World Championships. An IRSA Class which is administered by an IRSA Class Committee should seek to become independent and devolve as a separate ICA. In these processes, a class may receive interim IRSA Designation, and an ICA may be granted Provisional Membership of IRSA. Criteria for the granting of Associate Membership to an ICA of the class are detailed in the IRSA Regulations. In summary, a Provisional ICA will hold a World Championship for its class before the class receives confirmed International or Recognised Designation, and Class Officers will be elected during the World Championship (if not already elected).

ICA Status:	Class Designation:	
	<i>Interim</i>	<i>Confirmed</i>
<i>IRSA acts as ICA</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Provisional</i>	Yes	Inappropriate – if the ICA is provisional, the Class is likely to be interim
<i>Associate Member</i>	Inappropriate – if the ICA is fully independent, the Class is likely to be confirmed	Yes

Table 1. Summary of IRSA Designation and ICA Status

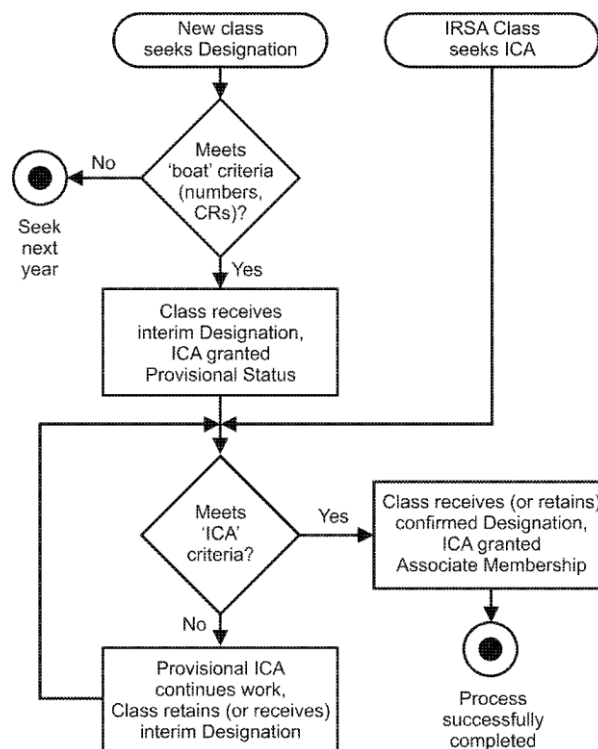


Figure 2. Summary of processes to receive IRSA Designation and be granted Associate IRSA Membership

5 Overview of class administration

The administration of any radio sailing class may conveniently be divided into the following areas, each of which could be an area of responsibility for a Class Officer and/or a sub-committee (of the Class Committee, COA, or ICA).

Technical: Questions inevitably arise about the particular meaning and intent of class rules, and interpretations of the rules need to be decided and distributed. As experience with the rules accumulates, and as interpretations are issued, the Class Rule needs to be revised.

Measurement: The Class Rule provides for the control of a boat. Some of the matters controlled require measurement, recording, and the issue of a certificate to an owner. Associated with records of issued, re-issued, and cancelled certificates would be records of issued hull numbers and current owners. Associated with measurement would be the appointment and training of class measurers.

Events: A major role of a class organisation would be the arrangement of class events. Whether very informal or highly structured, a class event involves all of the matters required by the Notice of Race and the Sailing Instructions, including the scoring system, the observers system, the heat management system, advertising, and any regulations dealing with entrant eligibility.

Information and communications: In the modern world, a class typically promotes and publicises itself on social media, maintains class-related information on a Web site, and uses a discussion forum for Class Officers and other stakeholders and interested parties.

Governance: Typically, a class organisation needs governance, perhaps through a Chairperson and/or a Governing / Directing Board, supported by secretarial and record keeping services, perhaps through a Secretary, and financial services, perhaps through a Treasurer.

6 Overview of a new class

6.1 New class initiation

While a new class of radio sailing boat could be initiated in a wide variety of ways, there are three routes which are the most common – by a manufacturer or designer of a "one design" kit, by one or more specialist builders or designers, and by IRSA.

Where a new class is initiated by a manufacturer or by one or more specialist designers or builders, IRSA will provide advice and guidance upon request, and will have no other involvement with such a new class.

Where a new Class Rule is initiated by IRSA, the new class concerned will be called a "Supported Class". A "Supported Class" is not an "IRSA Class" as defined, and does not have "IRSA Designation".

6.2 New class administration by a COA

A new class develops by securing a following of enthusiastic owners. A new class supported by a manufacturer or one or more specialist designers or builders should form a Class Owners Association or similar which undertakes the class administration roles and responsibilities identified earlier.

When a new class is "actively sailed" in sufficient numbers the COA could seek IRSA Designation for its class and recognition as an independent ICA.

6.3 Supported Class administration by IRSA

A Supported Class will at first be administered by IRSA rather than independently (but administration by a COA is certainly possible). The first version of the Class Rule will be initiated by the Technical Committee itself and submitted to the EC for approval. Following EC approval, administration of the new class rules will be undertaken by a sub-committee of the Technical Committee for an appropriate period. A successful review of the Supported Class at the end of this period will lead to the transfer of class administration to an IRSA Class Committee which will act as a COA. After a further period of administration by an IRSA Class Committee and periodic review by the EC, the Supported Class will seek IRSA Designation, followed by the IRSA Class Committee transforming into an independent ICA which will be granted Associate Membership of IRSA.

6.4 Owner enfranchisement

For a new class to develop internationally, the initial COA or ICA (or IRSA Class Committee acting as an ICA) should give early consideration to the mechanisms for owner enfranchisement in class governance.

In a common approach, class owners would be members of their NCA or national COA, and representatives of NCAs or national COAs would vote on matters of class governance through an ICA or an international association of national COAs.

In an alternative approach, now effectively supported by electronic communications, owners would be direct members of the ICA or international COA, such that they would vote directly on class matters such as Class Rule changes and the election of Class Officers.

Note that NCAs or national COAs would naturally form and always be required (in order to attend to class administration on matters at a national level related to class measurement, events, and information) regardless of whether owners were directly enfranchised in the ICA or represented by national delegates to the ICA.

IRSA policy is that IRSA Classes should give particular regard to direct owner membership, because IRSA considers it supports more effective owner representation.

7 Open and Closed Class Rule

A Class Rule as a whole may be said to be 'open' or 'closed':

Open: Anything not specifically prohibited by the Class Rule is permitted.

Closed: Anything not specifically permitted by the Class Rule is prohibited.

Within a Class Rule, the particular rules for the major boat components of sails, spars, rigging, hull, appendages, and ballast will individually control the degree of development allowed, ranging from totally unrestricted through partially restricted to fully restricted to a specific product. Individual rules in a Class Rule will prohibit, require, limit, or leave free as necessary.

Describing a Class Rule as open or closed provides a meta-rule that identifies what happens when no rule in the Class Rule seems to apply directly. An open Class Rule is intended to encourage diversity, creativity, and differentiation, while a closed Class Rule is intended to ensure conformity, equality, and convergence.

Compared to an open Class Rule, it is likely that a closed Class Rule would tend to require more expertise on the part of the rule makers to make explicit what is usually tacit, require more maintenance given inevitable technical advances, and hence show more 'rules creep'. Compared to an open Class Rule, it is likely that the interpretation of a closed Class Rule would tend to involve more discussion about the intentions of the rule makers.

In the current IRSA Classes, three have an open Class Rule, and one has a closed Class Rule. IRSA has no policy regarding an open versus closed Class Rule. Where a class wishes, in general, to encourage diversity, creativity, and differentiation in class boat design and construction, an open Class Rule would be appropriate, while a closed Class Rule would be appropriate for a class which wishes to ensure conformity, equality, and convergence.