

2020-2025 Strategic Plan

Organization

Inventorying roles and responsibilities of Board members, staff, and contractors is necessary for defining and improving efficiency in the operational structure of the organization. Specifically, during 2020-2025, the WAS should prepare for potential transitions or retirements of the organizations Executive Director, Home Office staff, Secretariats, and IT support staff. A procedure needs to be developed to guide and educate the WAS Board to increase productivity and efficiency in conducting the business of the Society. The Society has fallen behind in effectively maintaining and utilizing membership data and is therefore unable to capitalize on opportunities to improve understanding of membership trends and needs. A better understanding of the roles of various staff and contractors in managing the membership management systems needs to be established.

High Level Strategic Goal

Optimize Society operation and management

Mid-Level Strategy 1

Improve efficiency of efforts of WAS staff and contractors

Actions

- Create an inventory of Executive Director duties and responsibilities^{1,16}
- Create an inventory of Home Office staff Director and, Asst. Director duties and responsibilities^{1,16}
- Create an inventory of Secretariat duties and responsibilities^{1,16}
- Create an inventory of IT duties and responsibilities^{1,16}
- Develop process to address staff turnover^{1,16}

Mid-Level Strategy 2

Improve data collection, management, analysis and application

Actions

- Collect and analyze membership data using automated tools^{12,16}
- Implement methods to capture attendance trends at conferences and activities during the conferences and workshops^{12,14,16}
- Create database for registered conference and workshop attendees and exhibitors^{12,16}

Mid-Level Strategy 3

Improve transparency and efficiency of WAS Board Committees and processes

Actions

- Develop a comprehensive orientation process for new Board Members (e.g., information packet, orientation meeting with President)^{1,5}
- Review existing committee structure and responsibilities and make changes as appropriate^{1,5}
- Complete modernization of Policy Rules and Regulations⁵

Finances

Strategic planning is ultimately defined according to resource allocation. Thus, in order to undertake new initiatives and secure long-term viability, a clear and concise business model that is transparent and has Board accountability is necessary. Although the WAS continues to maintain a stable financial position with continued long-term positive profit derived from meetings, there are concerns with the current business model, specifically regarding the need to diversify revenue streams remains. Actions proposed address these concerns by evaluating cost-saving measures, exploring novel funding streams, and examining historical profit-sharing agreements to improve global presence while concurrently encouraging the financial independence of Chapters. Additionally, the existing documentation of financial decision-making policies and procedures is inadequate and financial implications of Board decisions are not always effectively shared with the membership.

High Level Strategic Goal

Establish a transparent financial model that secures long-term viability of the Society

Mid-Level Strategy 1

Improve financial management

Actions

- Revise current finances, regular costs, and outsourcing/insourcing possibilities to guarantee a sustainable business model³
- Document policies and procedures that clearly define financial operations^{3,5}
- Evaluate tools designed to improve financial management³

Mid-Level Strategy 2

Enhance global expansion by supporting financial sustainability of Chapters

Actions

- Provide support of Chapters until they become financially solvent^{1,3}
- Provide investment in high production and underrepresented countries by planning appropriate conferences and workshops^{3,6,16}
- To create new revenue, assess the feasibility of sending sponsored newsletters^{9,14}
- Evaluate the potential benefits of cost-sharing of conferences such that Chapters begin to invest in their own meetings^{1,3,16}

Membership

Affiliation should provide multiple benefits, as most people have chosen to belong to a limited number of societies. Membership has remained flat for a decade, and the WAS brand must become a tool to recruit in a tiered membership structure, giving access to a global community, and offer timely information, whereby aquaculture becomes a sustainable enterprise that supplies high-quality products. Presently, members are moderately satisfied with the value they receive and may not renew membership because information is of limited relevance, meetings do not reflect their particular needs, networking opportunities are limited, or are simply not reminded to do so. The Board must define a measurable goal for the WAS in terms of the number of members that needs to be targeted over time, and the expected demographics. The committee proposes a series of actions to achieve the strategic goals that will result in increased membership numbers and improved retention, strengthening the organization as a representative of stakeholders involved in aquaculture.

High Level Strategic Goal

Maximize membership benefits and engagement

Actions

- Review membership categories and benefits to allow for increased flexibility of membership options benefits¹²
- Develop and conduct member preferences survey¹²
- Increase membership awareness of the value of membership^{12,14}
- Develop methods to keep members aware of, and engaged in, WAS activities¹²
- Develop and maintain member database (based on metrics established by BOD)^{12,14,16}
- Explore new ways to engage and increase value/benefits for industry members^{11, 12}
- Conduct an evaluation of student attrition/retention in the Society^{10, 12}
- Develop methods to improve student engagement in WAS^{10,12}
- Target meetings and workshops in underrepresented aquaculture-producing countries to increase membership¹²

Conferences and Workshops

WAS conferences are well attended, extremely well managed, and provide a reliable income for the Society; however, some argue that our conferences are losing relevance due to a perceived decrease in the quality of science presented, lack of meeting focus, and not being relevant to all sectors of aquaculture. The WAS is at conceivable risk both from being stretched too thin operationally due to the number of conferences, and from competing with other aquaculture conferences. Opportunities include using new paradigms in conference structure and technology, supporting more region-specific or theme-based meetings, evaluating the scientific rigor of presentations, and having the WAS Board and membership more involved in setting standards for meetings.

High Level Strategic Goal

Strive to make WAS conferences the first choice for aquaculture worldwide

Mid-Level Strategy

Improve the experience attendees have at conferences and workshops

Actions

- Assign new responsibilities and new structure to the existing Conference Steering Committee^{5,6}
- Conduct a survey at each conference to assess what conference attendees expect from the conferences^{5,6}
- Evaluate alternative conference structures used by other industries and apply what works to aquaculture⁶
- Conduct an evaluation of the science presented at conferences¹³
- Engage with industry partners as a sponsor, of highly-focused events^{6, 11}

Communication

Communication is a notable weakness of the Society. An ineffective WAS messaging mechanism limits the ability to connect with the global community, to educate about policy development, and to effectively engage and retain Society members. The lack of neither a standing committee dedicated to communication nor a permanent or specialized staff, contributes to the absence of an assertive communication plan. The antiquated website, poor social media presence, and the lack of adoption of modern digital communication technologies are examples of these inadequacies. The Strategic Planning Committee proposes a series of actions to achieve the strategic goals that will result in improved communication to the Society members and to the general public. This effort will ultimately strengthen the role of the organization in becoming a representative and respected voice for academic, industrial, and political organizations involved in aquaculture.

High Level Strategic Goal

Effectively communicate to the membership and the general public

Mid-Level Strategy 1

Improve management of membership, website updates, and contact with members

Actions

- Create a permanent committee to establish and promote Society communication strategy^{5,14}
- Partition IT, conference, and website management and maintenance¹⁴
- Hire or subcontract experts to assist in communication efforts (newsletters, social media, and website upgrade supervised by a communications committee)^{1,14,16}
- Implement new automated tools to manage membership communications, website content, newsletters, and membership data^{1,14,16}
- Create an environment to improve engagement with students through more constant and accepted communication using automated CRM platforms (jobs, projects and scholarships, useful manuals and opinion papers, etc)^{10,14}

Mid-Level Strategy 2

Improve public perception and knowledge about aquaculture

Actions

- Identify topics to highlight and promote aquaculture^{1,14,16}
- Develop helpful content (economic, social, environmental, infographics and others) that can be distributed via email, websites, and social media^{1,9,14}

Publications

The Society has focused on three types of publications: The *World Aquaculture Society Magazine*, the *Journal of the World Aquaculture Society (JWAS)*, and books. The JWAS has gone through a reinvigoration process and is gaining acceptance and respectability within the scientific and private enterprise communities. Nevertheless, this process must be updated to continue to improve the quality of the JWAS, increase impact factor and other metrics associated with online research output (e.g. altmetrics). This reinvigoration alone is not sufficient, and integration of WAS publications with modern communication tools (social media, newsletters, and others) is critical to guarantee that the WAS continues to be the global leader in the distribution and promotion of highly regarded aquaculture science. Publishing high-quality science is critical; however, communicating it effectively to stakeholders is equally important. The Magazine is an important vehicle for information transfer to stakeholders but requires significant expenditures for printing and distribution. A revised business model must, therefore, be considered to take advantage of modern digital tools and dissemination platforms. In addition, the WAS book selection process should be revised during the transition to a new Book Editor. Printed books continue to be a primary source of scientific information, but their role should be targeted towards the appropriate audience. The WAS publications are an important source of timely scientific information but can also be used as a communication tool to improve aquaculture's link with the global aquaculture community.

High Level Strategic Goal

Make WAS publications the source for highly-regarded aquaculture information

Mid-Level Strategy

Improve value of publications

Actions

- Further improve the quality, member satisfaction, and dissemination of the JWAS⁹
- Develop new geographically specific and demographically appropriate online publication types (white papers, manuals, best-practices, activity books for children, and other) with WAS brand⁹
- Develop materials (infographics and webinars) that can be used by local authorities as an education tool to increase knowledge about aquaculture and its value⁹
- Develop better electronic outreach to members^{9,12,14}
- Broaden the digital presence for special publications and the Magazine to all sectors of the industry⁹
- Revisit the re-invigoration plan for JWAS⁹

- Improve the dissemination of *JWAS* articles so that authors know that WAS is committed to processes that are directed to achieving high visibility and citations of publications)⁹
- Better connect *JWAS* articles with other WAS communication platforms (social media, website, newsletters, and others)^{9,14}

Outreach

The Society has been hesitant in establishing a role in policy development. Currently there are little to no relationships established with the international community of policy makers. The Committee proposes engaging international aquaculture organizations to provide a scientific basis for policy development and increasing and improving contact with membership. This increased outreach to membership can be either direct communications or through information supplied to the Secretariats.

High Level Strategic Goal

Position WAS as a highly regarded information source

Mid-Level Strategy

Improve relationships or develop new relationships with other aquaculture organizations and NGOs

Actions

- Develop a partnership with FAO, international NGO, and other associations for cooperative support of aquaculture through related publications^{4,8,11,13}
- Provide material to WAS Chapters for distribution⁹
- Improve WAS engagement and education of policy makers about aquaculture and WAS participation in providing a science foundation for policy development^{4,8,14}

WAS Committees, Ad Hoc Committees and Staff Responsible for Implementing Actions

¹Executive Committee

²Election

³Finance and Long-Range Planning

⁴Affiliations

⁵Rules and Regulations

⁶Conference Steering

⁷Honors and Awards

⁸Past Presidents

⁹Publications

¹⁰Student Activities

¹¹Industry Relations

¹²Promotions and Membership

¹³WAS Fellows

WAS Ad Hoc Committees

¹⁴Communications

¹⁵Strategic Planning

Staff

¹⁶Executive Director