



REQUEST FOR SUPPORT APPLICATION FORM

Date of Request	January 14, 2025
Organization/Group making the request	World Leisure Centre of Excellence at VIU
Contact Person	Aggie Weighill
Address	900 - Fifth Street, Nanaimo, BC, V9R 5S5
Telephone	250-756-8580
Email Address:	Aggie.Weighill@viu.ca
Type of Support Requested (Select one)	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Letter of Support in Principle <input type="radio"/> In-Kind Contribution <input type="radio"/> Partnership <i>Note: This policy is not applicable to requests for grant funding by the City, including Permissive Tax Exemption requests, or in-kind funding for facility rentals (see Grants Policy and Guidelines for further details)</i>

IF APPLICABLE:

Name of grant or program for which you are applying:

Bid to host the 2028 World Leisure Congress

Amount of Funding Requested: \$0 Grant Due Date: February 3, 2025

Grant Organization: World Leisure Organization

Address: Scientific and Technical Office Arenal 1, Segunda Planta | 48005 Bilbao, Spain

City: Bilbao, Spain Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Please provide an executive summary or short narrative that addresses each of the points outlined in the "Council Support policy". Include a draft letter, any supporting documents or materials and a detailed list of other funding partners (if applicable).

Please submit this form, with accompanying materials, to the attention of the Corporate Officer, Legislative Services, City of Nanaimo, 455 Wallace St. Nanaimo, BC V9R 5J6, or by email to: legislative.servicesoffice@nanaimo.ca.

Respecting Your Privacy

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BRIEFING NOTE

SUBMISSION TO:

Leonard Krog, Mayor City of Nanaimo

TITLE:

World Leisure Congress 2028 - *Leisure is Life: Pathways to Collective Well-Being*

SUBMITTED BY:

Dr. Aggie Weighill, Director of the World Leisure Centre of Excellence

ISSUE

- The [World Leisure Centre of Excellence at Vancouver Island University](#) (WLCE@VIU) has been approached by the [World Leisure Organization](#) (WLO) to consider hosting the 2028 [World Leisure Congress](#) (WLC).
- Pre-pandemic the WLC was a significant fundraising event for the WLO and while the organization recognizes that many destinations are no longer willing to pay in excess of \$125,000 (USD) to host conferences, they are still looking to financially benefit from the Congress.
- The WLCE@VIU is working Gina Bethell from Tourism Nanaimo to put together a strong bid which will include a commitment to offer \$50,000 USD as payment for hosting the Congress.
- We are currently seeking letters of endorsement from local and regional governments and community stakeholders in tourism and recreation (i.e., leisure related) to strengthen our bid package.

ACTION REQUESTED

- Letter of Support
- Discussion
- Information

KEY BACKGROUND FACTS

Proposal Development Considerations:

- Formed in 1952, the World Leisure Organization is a non-profit, non-governmental body of individuals and organizations from throughout the world who are committed to the belief that well selected leisure experiences improve quality of life for all – from childhood to later life. The WLO is a consultive organization with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.
- The World Leisure Congress is hosted every two years in different locations but due a realignment of the post-pandemic schedule, there will be three years between the next congress (Netherlands 2025) and the one we are bidding for.
- The Congress is typically attended by 500-700 delegates with the 2008 Congress in Quebec City being the largest at closer to 1000 participants.

- 2008 was the only time that the congress has been hosted in Canada. The most recent hosts have been: Rotterdam, Netherlands, Dunedin, Aotearoa-New Zealand, Sao Paulo, Brazil, and Durban, South Africa.
- The WLCE@VIU is recognized as a strong member of the global WLO Centres of Excellence network and convenor of academics, practitioners, and decision makers. There are currently submitted proposals to increase the network from seven to ten members representing Aotearoa-New Zealand, Brazil, Hungary, the Netherlands, China, United States, South Africa, Australia, and Canada (2).
- Joanne Schroeder, a professor at VIU, is the current chair of the WLO Board of Directors and is recognized as a global leader who is helping lead the transformation and growth of the WLO into a stronger more diverse organization with a greater global network that focusing on low and middle income countries as well as student mentorship and development.
- The proposed Congress theme, **Leisure is Life: Pathways to Collective Well-Being**, aligns well with the focus and mandate of the City of Nanaimo's Reimagine plan, the Canadian Parks & Recreation and BC Recreation and Parks Associations' strategic plans, as well as the overall focus of multiple federal and provincial ministries. It also fits extremely well with the destination image of Nanaimo and Vancouver Island, while being broad enough to create space for important regional issues such as Reconciliation, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and more broadly, sustainability.

ANALYSIS

Why this is a great opportunity for VIU, the WLCE, Nanaimo, and the Island region:

- The World Leisure Organization holds UN consultative status and is the only recognized leisure organization in the world. Hosting its signature biennial gathering of scholars, practitioners, and decision makers will bring significant global attention to Nanaimo, and the surrounding region. It will also provide an opportunity to showcase the innovative and award winning practices of the City of Nanaimo.
- The Congress is a four-day event that has historically included pre- and post-learning experiences that ensure the economic contributions of national and international delegates are spread widely.
- With the theme's strong alignment with national, provincial, and regional priorities, the congress provides an opportunity to strengthen Nanaimo's brand as a destination to host conferences while also highlighting Vancouver Island's strengths and assets in the Indigenous, sport, and leisure travel markets.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- We are currently only seeking letters of endorsement; however, if we are awarded the bid, we will approach the City of Nanaimo for event sponsorship and engagement.
- We are also inviting Darcie Osborne, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Culture to participate on the organizing committee of the WLC.

REQUEST

As Director of the WLCE@VIU, I am asking that the City of Nanaimo provide a letter of support for our bid to host the World Leisure Congress in May 2028.

The proposal requires full review and approval by VIU's Senior Management and we hope to submit the bid package for approval by January 24, 2025.

ATTACHMENT(S)

- Description of our proposed theme for the 2028 World Leisure Congress.

Congress Theme: Leisure is Life: Pathways to Collective Well-Being

The statement "**Leisure is life**" underscores the idea that leisure is not just an optional or inconsequential aspect of human existence but a fundamental part of living a fulfilling, resilient and meaningful life. It suggests that leisure is deeply interconnected with our well-being, identity, and social fabric. The statement further suggests that leisure should not be compartmentalized or treated as a luxury or indulgence but integrated into daily living to enhance life's pace and meaning.

Its potential meaning can be found in the intrinsic value of leisure. It is not merely a "break" from work or responsibilities but a space where people find purpose, passion, and personal growth. It encompasses the diverse and beloved places we design, build, and protect to facilitate leisure activities that bring joy, relaxation, and creativity, making them essential for a balanced and vibrant life. Leisure also fosters relationships through shared experiences through play, art, sports, outdoor recreation, and communal gatherings. These shared experiences have the potential to strengthen human connections and social bonds by creating opportunities for collaboration, understanding and cultural exchange.

We also see holistic well-being enhanced through leisure's contributions to mental, physical, and emotional health by reducing stress, improving resilience, and enhancing quality of life. Leisure is critical in personal and collective identity and expression, allowing people to share and explore their interests and talents.

Finally, "leisure is life" ultimately reflects the philosophy that life's richness comes not only from productivity and duty but also from moments of leisure that bring joy, renewal, and connection—a connection that can be experienced collectively. It champions the idea that leisure is vital to a thriving society, a healthy environment, and a fulfilling human existence.

Together, we look forward to defining leisure as an essential pillar of life and celebrating its capacity to rejuvenate, inspire, and unite individuals, cultures, and the global community. Join us at the 2028 World Leisure Congress in Nanaimo, BC, Canada, to shape a future where leisure is not an afterthought but a deliberate and transformative force for collective well-being!

Dr. Aggie Weighill
Director, World Leisure Centre of Excellence
Vancouver Island University
900 Fifth Street Nanaimo, BC V9R 5S5

RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE 2028 WORLD LEISURE CONGRESS BID

Dear Dr. Weighill,

The City of Nanaimo supports Vancouver Island University's (VIU) bid to host the 2028 World Leisure Congress. Nanaimo is well-equipped to host an event of this scale, offering exceptional facilities and experiences while showcasing our commitment to leisure and recreation.

Nanaimo is a thriving hub for events on Vancouver Island. Our natural beauty, accessibility, and robust infrastructure make us an ideal setting. We offer versatile venues, including the Vancouver Island Conference Centre (VICC), well-suited to host international delegations. Nanaimo is easily accessible via Hullo Ferries, Harbour Air Seaplanes, and the Nanaimo Airport (YCD), connecting to major hubs across Canada.

The congress theme, "Leisure is Life: Pathways to Collective Well-Being," aligns with Nanaimo's values. Our region prioritizes sustainability, inclusivity, and reconciliation, with Nanaimo recognized as a leader in in sustainability and promoting leisure's transformative impact.

Hosting the World Leisure Congress presents significant economic and social opportunities for Nanaimo. The event will boost local businesses and tourism while fostering growth in our meetings and conferences sector.

The City of Nanaimo is proud to support the World Leisure Centre of Excellence at VIU in this bid. We are committed to collaborating to ensure the success of this prestigious event and showcasing the best of our city to the world.