

International Organisation of Aquatic Physiotherapists (IOAPT)

Strategic Plan 2023-2027

The International Organisation of Aquatic Physiotherapists (IOAPT) is a global physiotherapy organisation that represents physiotherapists with a special interest in aquatic physiotherapy.

The efforts of the IOAPT are directed towards enabling national organisations, their aquatic physiotherapy specialty groups, and their individual members to work in the aquatic environment through evidence-based practice, research, clinical specialisation and collaborative practice with other disciplines. The intention of this World Physiotherapy Specialty Group is to be the international resource for aquatic physiotherapists.

The IOAPT Executive Committee organize the Strategic Plan for this next term (2023-2027) in these structure:

- Vision
- Mission
- Values
- Purpose
- Objectives
- Goals by Areas
- Strategic Pillars
- Work Program/Future Steps

VISION: To support, develop and promote worldwide excellence and unity in clinical and academic standards for aquatic physiotherapy, in order to maximise the impact in improving health and wellbeing.

MISSION: In order to promote effective practice in aquatic physiotherapy globally, the mission of the IOAPT is to:

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- Promote and maintain high standards of specialist education, training, guidance and clinical practice in aquatic physiotherapists;
- Promote and support professional development in aquatic physiotherapy;
- Promote and facilitate evidence based practice and research amongst its members;
- Develop and disseminate new and current resources in aquatic physiotherapy;
- Work towards international unity/conformity of educational standards of practice amongst aquatic physiotherapists;
- Provide opportunities to bring together, nurture and grow the international community of Aquatic Physiotherapists by providing a platform for communication, collaboration, networking and information exchange;
- Collaborate with international stakeholders to participate in the development of policy and legislation within the global field of aquatics;
- Communicate and collaborate effectively with its members and with other organisations;
- Convey to physiotherapists, other healthcare disciplines and the general public the purpose and level of specialisation of aquatic physiotherapists.

IOAPT VALUES: In order to achieve our overall vision and mission, the IOAPT is guided by the following set of values that steer our operation:

- **Connecting** - we bring the aquatic physiotherapy community together through our member organisations, aquatic physiotherapy interest/specialty groups and the wider aquatic physiotherapy profession.
- **Diversity and Inclusion** – we are committed to improve diversity and inclusion in order to provide equitable healthcare for all people.
- **Belonging** - we recognise and embrace the diversity in our aquatic physiotherapy community and our actions create a sense of belonging.
- **Empowering** – we support our member organisations and aquatic physiotherapy specialty groups in the service of others to create lasting change and impact;
- **Collaborating** - we work with our member organisations, aquatic physiotherapy interest/specialty groups and others who share our values and objectives.

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- **Leadership** – we value leadership in all its facets and at all levels in the aquatic physiotherapy community.

IOAPT PURPOSE:

IOAPT's purpose is ***“To be the worldwide organisation for the promotion of excellence in aquatic physiotherapy that meets the health needs of our population”***.

By ensuring and supporting strong and adaptable national professional organisations and their aquatic physiotherapy interest/specialty groups, we will ensure the delivery of and access to services that promote high-quality care worldwide. Strong and forward-thinking national physiotherapy professional organisations and their aquatic physiotherapy interest/specialty groups will be supported by IOAPT's activities and initiatives.

We need to ensure that we will be facilitators that connect multiple aspects of aquatic physiotherapy into a comprehensive body, promoting research and innovation, sharing knowledge, upholding excellence, and together leading the international aquatic physiotherapy community.

We will mentor, challenge, and create pathways to expand the practice of aquatic physiotherapy, carefully balancing the strength of standards with the needs of the society we serve.

We need to make sure that we are recognised as THE global experts. We advocate on behalf of the global aquatic physiotherapy community, for policy and initiatives that lead to better health outcomes for our patients around the world.

IOAPT OBJECTIVES:

- Develop and promote the expansion of Aquatic Physiotherapy;
- Represent Aquatic Physiotherapy internationally;
- Act as a knowledge hub, facilitating connections and networking between members throughout the world, creating opportunities for members to meet, collaborate and share research;
- Develop and promote high standards of Aquatic Physiotherapy education, research and practice;

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- Encourage communication, exchange of information and organisation of educational events for aquatic physiotherapists;
- Encourage scientific research and promote evidence based physiotherapy practice in areas relevant to aquatic physiotherapy;
- Encourage the development of national organisations of physiotherapists that share the objectives of the IOAPT.
- Facilitate international and interprofessional collaboration;
- Support the development of aquatic physiotherapy in emerging countries.

IOAPT GOALS BY AREAS:

- **Education:** Provide a platform to promote the sharing of knowledge between aquatic physiotherapists working throughout the world.
- **Practice:** To build clinical expertise and encourage high standards of aquatic physiotherapy.
- **Communication:** To advance practice by the exchange of information.
- **Research:** To encourage scientific research and promote opportunities for the spread of knowledge of new developments in the field.
- **Collaboration:** To assist World Physiotherapy member organisations in the formation and development of aquatic physiotherapy interest/specialty groups.
- **Organisation:** Maintain the IOAPT's high quality standards; maintaining up to date policies and procedures, a timetable for tasks and reports due and day-to-day organisation management.

IOAPT STRATEGIC PILLARS**1. Here to Serve:**

We are here to serve our members and the wider global physiotherapy community and those individuals who seek excellence from aquatic physiotherapists. We need to expand the quality, exposure, and influence of aquatic physiotherapists to meet the growing needs of our diverse society through:

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- 1.1. Identifying the needs and the topics of high priority within aquatic physiotherapy member organisations;
- 1.2. Supporting and mentoring the member organisations and their aquatic physiotherapy interest/specialty groups;
- 1.3. Identifying resources available through member organisations and their aquatic physiotherapy interest/specialty groups and share that information through the aquatic physiotherapy community;
- 1.4. Identifying available education resources that currently exist and share that information through the aquatic physiotherapy community;
- 1.5. Engaging in open discussions with wider aquatic physiotherapy community to identify specific needs;
- 1.6. Responding to the membership and wider community alike and making available expertise and resources for evidence-based care;
- 1.7. Promoting specialised skills and expertise generated through the efforts of the IOAPT to enhance comprehensive, trusted quality and evidence-based care.

2. Dynamic Community:

The IOAPT aims to be a responsive and engaged global aquatic physiotherapy community that together responds dynamically and creatively, leading the way through:

- 2.1. Building and fostering connections and collaborations across the community;
- 2.2. Sharing effective practice that enables and influences the wider community;
- 2.3. Engaging members and non-members in collective dialogue to identify and explore broader trends and opportunities to grow the IOAPT and its reach;
- 2.4. Growing the membership community through mentoring, links, and creating pathways that accelerate admission and connection by using technology or digital technologies to enhance communication and learning;
- 2.5. Exploring different ways of collaboration and partnering to enrich the experience of members.

3. Quality, Excellence, and Accessibility:

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For the IOAPT, quality is about standards. It is also about being available and inspiring to be better. IOAPT will drive excellence and expand quality through:

3.1. Promoting:

- 3.1.1. Evidence informed practice;
- 3.1.2. Dissemination of knowledge;
- 3.1.3. Technical advice and expertise;
- 3.1.4. Established standards and upholding these through reasonable international monitoring;
- 3.1.5. Opportunities to partner with other organisations for continuing education;
- 3.1.6. Support and enable member organisations and their aquatic physiotherapy interest/specialty groups to achieve membership of IOAPT.

3.2. Inspiring quality and expanding scope by:

- 3.2.1. Defining pathways for quality practice;
- 3.2.2. Leading the response to challenging situations, i.e., COVID-19 and other world pandemics and eventualities.

4. **Strong and Courageous Voice:**

As experts in the field of Aquatic Physiotherapy, the IOAPT will represent the community at all levels and actively advocate for greater access to quality treatment globally, and influence policy by:

4.1. Representing the aquatic physiotherapy profession through:

- 4.1.1. Providing expert advice on behalf of World Physiotherapy as an agent for change in health;
- 4.1.2. Influencing the global debate relating to health for greater impact and health outcomes;
- 4.1.3. Seeking to influence and setting the political agenda.

4.2. Advocating for the profession by:

- 4.2.1. Promoting evidence-based and clinically informed practice;
- 4.2.2. Highlighting global gaps and opportunities;
- 4.2.3. Addressing global accessibility and quality issues;

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4.2.4. Advocating for the role of aquatic physiotherapy in the management of diverse health conditions;

4.2.5. Promote practice rights worldwide for physiotherapists to use the full range of evidence-informed aquatic physiotherapy procedures.

5. Preparing for the Future:

It is the aim of the IOAPT to be viewed as a respected, trusted, and well-known organisation that answers the needs of the aquatic physiotherapy community with responsibility and rigor, ensuring long term financial stability and sustainability through:

5.1. Actively pursuing membership growth by:

5.1.1. Giving support to official global organisations and increase the participation of professionals with the creation of interest/specialty groups in aquatic physiotherapy;

5.1.2. Developing strategies to assist aquatic physiotherapy interest/specialty groups in promoting their development and outreach for IOAPT membership.

5.2. Strengthening governance through:

5.2.1. Ensuring we are a diverse and inclusive community that is truly representative of the aquatic physiotherapy community;

5.2.2. Continuing to be rigorous about protecting our standards of practice and their application;

5.2.3. Developing an organisational structure that is responsive to the needs of the membership to implement the strategic direction and plan;

5.2.4. Implementing and continuously reviewing constitution/rules, policies and procedures.

5.3. Ensuring that the IOAPT remains the recognised and respected name that represents aquatic physiotherapy globally through:

5.3.1. Developing a clear brand for the IOAPT and what it stands for which is actively promoted;

5.3.2. Maintaining the IOAPT focus on values and goals by being a role model.

5.4. Advocating for the IOAPT and its place in the physiotherapy arena within the media and the general health community, as a priority;

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5.5. Ensuring the IOAPT is an organisation that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusivity in all its activities and structures.

IOAPT WORK PROGRAM/FUTURE STEPS:

- Prepare, resume and publish the results of the information obtained through the IOAPT surveys (First Survey: “Identify the needs of the Aquatic Physiotherapists in IOAPT member organisations” / Second Survey: “Aquatic Physiotherapy Education in IOAPT member organisations”);
- Create and publish the document “Aquatic Physiotherapist’s Skills Profile”;
- Create and publish the document “Global Guidelines and Standards for Aquatic Physiotherapy Intervention”;
- Create and publish a guidance document on the basic contents/knowledge at an educational level (in the basic and postgraduate course) that the Aquatic Physiotherapist must possess;
- Create and publish the “IOAPT Corporate Relations Document”;
- Create and publish the document “Guidelines for hosting the IOAPT Conference”;
- Create an Education and Research Committees within the IOAPT;
- Promote webinars, meetings, workshops, congresses on various topics in the area of Aquatic Physiotherapy;
- Create the IOAPT Google drive, database and newsletter;
- Create a proposal list of categories and its criteria for annual IOAPT Awards;
- Assist the “IOAPT Latin American Aquatic Physiotherapy working group” and its training and updating program in Aquatic Physiotherapy, and expand this working group by regions (Africa, Asia, ...)
- Promote the dissemination of initiatives by the IOAPT members in terms of education, training, practice and research;
- Continue to help countries that want to be members but are having difficulties.
- Work closely with the World Physiotherapy Congress Programme Committee to identify priority topics and speakers, as well as collaborating with other World Physiotherapy

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specialty groups to submit programming ideas, encourage proposals for posters and presentations, and work with World Physiotherapy in appropriate roles;

- Explore opportunities to partner with other organisations for continuing education offerings (communication with member organisations, its aquatic physiotherapy specialty groups and other associations to identify roles and opportunities for partnering, sharing information, identifying state of the art topics and speakers);
- Identify currently available education resources and post on the IOAPT website and social media;
- Encourage our members to refer to a list of Aquatic physiotherapy speakers/faculty who are willing to be a resource for member organisations;
- Provide regular updates on published research, opportunities for collaboration on research and profiles and topics connected to research.