



## **Ski orienteering bids for inclusion in the 2018 Olympic Winter Games**

**August 31, 2010 HELSINKI, Finland**

The International Orienteering Federation (IOF) has applied for ski orienteering to be included in the programme of the 2018 Olympic Winter Games.

In the past few years, ski orienteering has grown considerably in terms of global spread. The growth has been boosted by the inclusion of ski orienteering into the Asian Winter Games and the CISM World Military Winter Games. Some 35 nations are expected to participate in the World Ski Orienteering Championships to be held in Sweden in March 2011.

Ski orienteering is an exciting winter sport that combines extreme physical fitness and cross-country skiing skills with the ability to navigate and make difficult route choices at high speed. The events can be organised in cross-country skiing and biathlon arenas and do not require the creation of any permanent infrastructure.

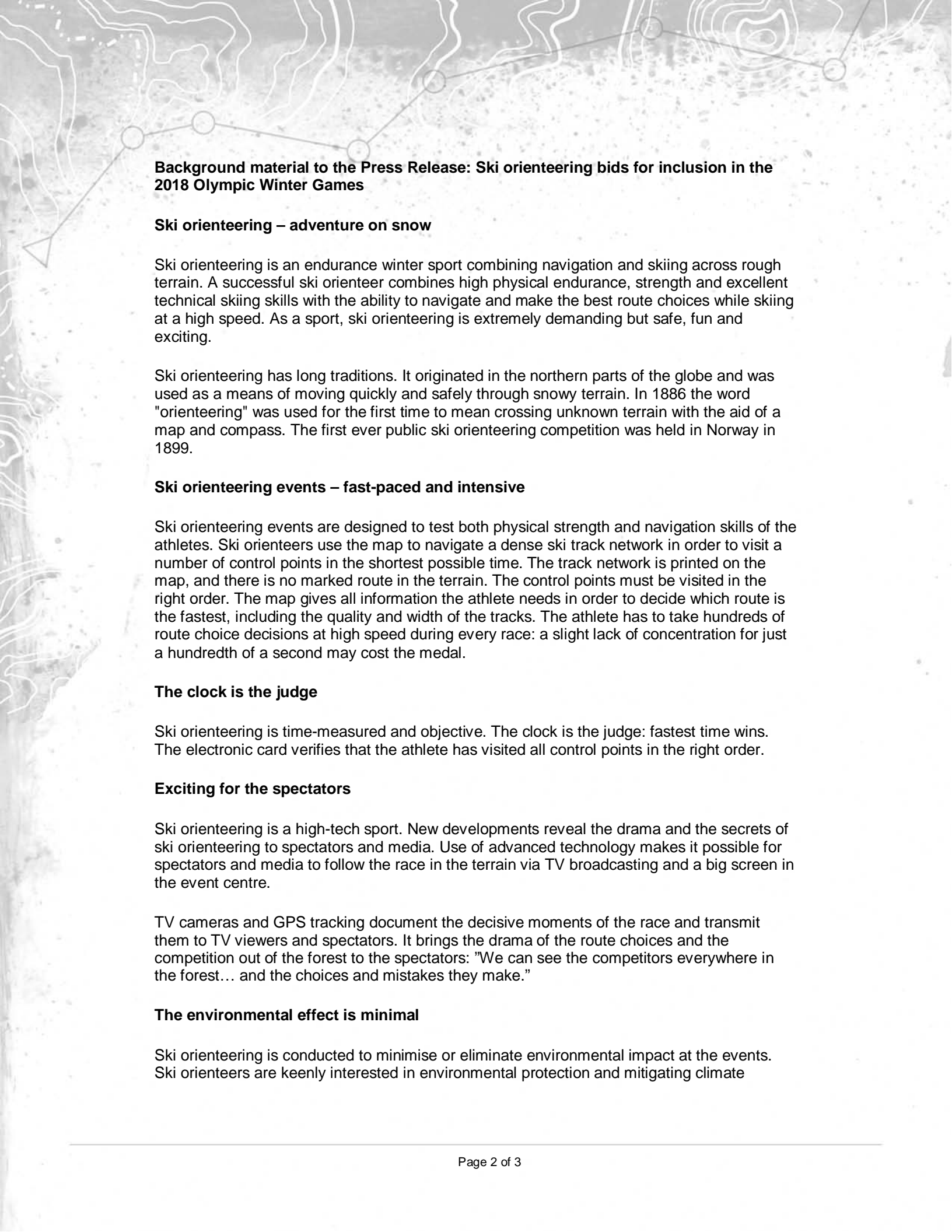
"We have developed and tested new spectator and media friendly formats. Sprint and sprint relay are intensive competition formats and very well suited for TV broadcast. We have also addressed other development aspects such as the universality of the sport. Today the geographical footprint of ski orienteering is comparable to most other sports on the programme of the Olympic Winter Games", says IOF President Åke Jacobson.

The IOF Athletes' Commission for ski orienteering has been closely involved in the development of the new formats.

"Sprint and mixed sprint relay have proven to be extremely attractive competition formats that appeal to the athletes as well as to spectators and media. Our events fit nicely into a 45-minute TV broadcast and they utilise the latest technology such as GPS tracking and biometric data to bring the drama of the competition to the spectators", says Eivind Tonna, Chairman of the Athlete's Commission and continues:

"Ski orienteering requires the combination of ultimate physical and mental performance – endurance, speed and skiing technique, navigation and route choice – which is quite exceptional. I believe that, given the opportunity, we will show that ski orienteering provides added value to the Olympic Winter Games."

*Should you require more information, please contact the IOF Secretary General Barbro Rönnerberg: [iof@orienteering.org](mailto:iof@orienteering.org), +358 9 3481 3112.*



## **Background material to the Press Release: Ski orienteering bids for inclusion in the 2018 Olympic Winter Games**

### **Ski orienteering – adventure on snow**

Ski orienteering is an endurance winter sport combining navigation and skiing across rough terrain. A successful ski orienteer combines high physical endurance, strength and excellent technical skiing skills with the ability to navigate and make the best route choices while skiing at a high speed. As a sport, ski orienteering is extremely demanding but safe, fun and exciting.

Ski orienteering has long traditions. It originated in the northern parts of the globe and was used as a means of moving quickly and safely through snowy terrain. In 1886 the word "orienteering" was used for the first time to mean crossing unknown terrain with the aid of a map and compass. The first ever public ski orienteering competition was held in Norway in 1899.

### **Ski orienteering events – fast-paced and intensive**

Ski orienteering events are designed to test both physical strength and navigation skills of the athletes. Ski orienteers use the map to navigate a dense ski track network in order to visit a number of control points in the shortest possible time. The track network is printed on the map, and there is no marked route in the terrain. The control points must be visited in the right order. The map gives all information the athlete needs in order to decide which route is the fastest, including the quality and width of the tracks. The athlete has to take hundreds of route choice decisions at high speed during every race: a slight lack of concentration for just a hundredth of a second may cost the medal.

### **The clock is the judge**

Ski orienteering is time-measured and objective. The clock is the judge: fastest time wins. The electronic card verifies that the athlete has visited all control points in the right order.

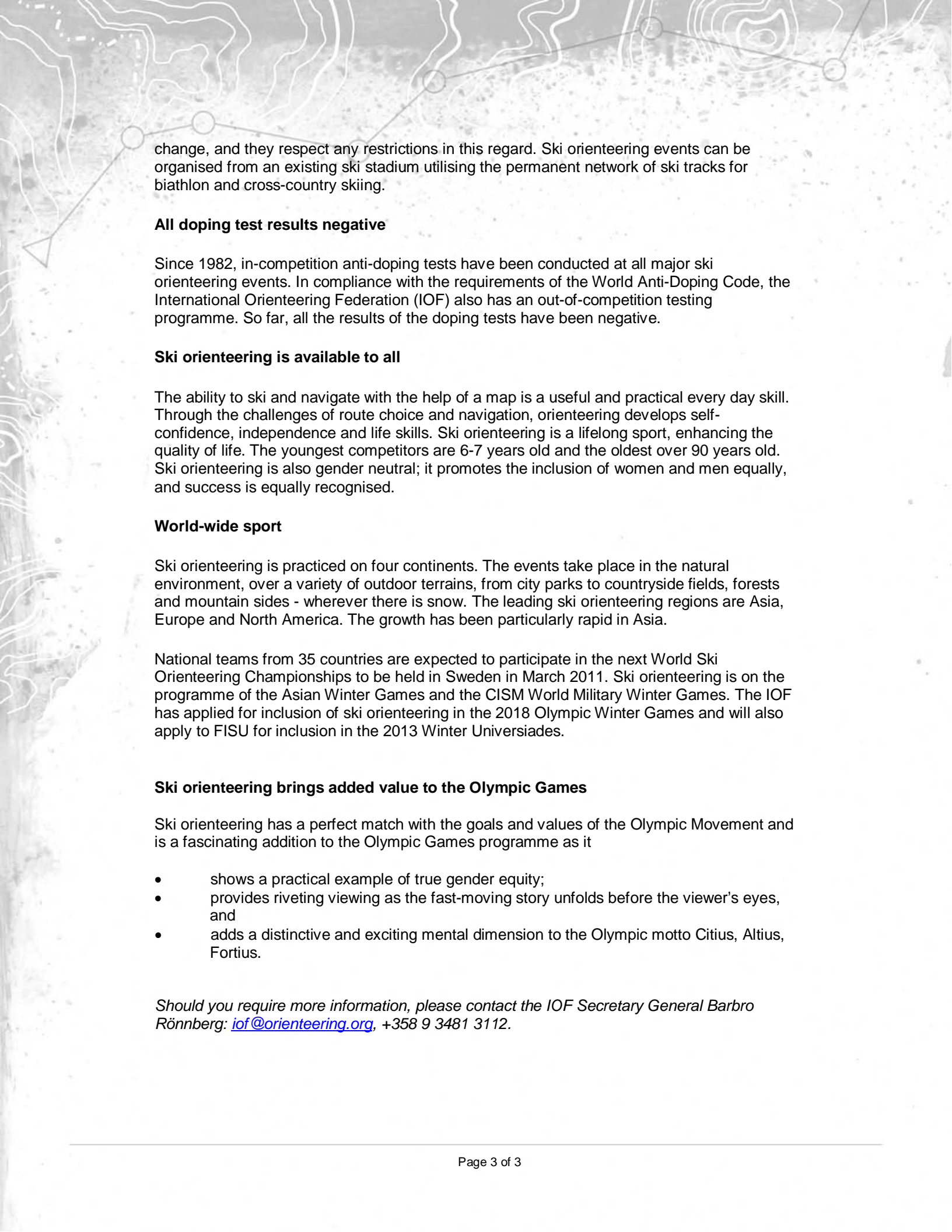
### **Exciting for the spectators**

Ski orienteering is a high-tech sport. New developments reveal the drama and the secrets of ski orienteering to spectators and media. Use of advanced technology makes it possible for spectators and media to follow the race in the terrain via TV broadcasting and a big screen in the event centre.

TV cameras and GPS tracking document the decisive moments of the race and transmit them to TV viewers and spectators. It brings the drama of the route choices and the competition out of the forest to the spectators: "We can see the competitors everywhere in the forest... and the choices and mistakes they make."

### **The environmental effect is minimal**

Ski orienteering is conducted to minimise or eliminate environmental impact at the events. Ski orienteers are keenly interested in environmental protection and mitigating climate



change, and they respect any restrictions in this regard. Ski orienteering events can be organised from an existing ski stadium utilising the permanent network of ski tracks for biathlon and cross-country skiing.

### **All doping test results negative**

Since 1982, in-competition anti-doping tests have been conducted at all major ski orienteering events. In compliance with the requirements of the World Anti-Doping Code, the International Orienteering Federation (IOF) also has an out-of-competition testing programme. So far, all the results of the doping tests have been negative.

### **Ski orienteering is available to all**

The ability to ski and navigate with the help of a map is a useful and practical every day skill. Through the challenges of route choice and navigation, orienteering develops self-confidence, independence and life skills. Ski orienteering is a lifelong sport, enhancing the quality of life. The youngest competitors are 6-7 years old and the oldest over 90 years old. Ski orienteering is also gender neutral; it promotes the inclusion of women and men equally, and success is equally recognised.

### **World-wide sport**

Ski orienteering is practiced on four continents. The events take place in the natural environment, over a variety of outdoor terrains, from city parks to countryside fields, forests and mountain sides - wherever there is snow. The leading ski orienteering regions are Asia, Europe and North America. The growth has been particularly rapid in Asia.

National teams from 35 countries are expected to participate in the next World Ski Orienteering Championships to be held in Sweden in March 2011. Ski orienteering is on the programme of the Asian Winter Games and the CISM World Military Winter Games. The IOF has applied for inclusion of ski orienteering in the 2018 Olympic Winter Games and will also apply to FISU for inclusion in the 2013 Winter Universiades.

### **Ski orienteering brings added value to the Olympic Games**

Ski orienteering has a perfect match with the goals and values of the Olympic Movement and is a fascinating addition to the Olympic Games programme as it

- shows a practical example of true gender equity;
- provides riveting viewing as the fast-moving story unfolds before the viewer's eyes, and
- adds a distinctive and exciting mental dimension to the Olympic motto Citius, Altius, Fortius.

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