



## **IFMGA Spring Technical Meeting, Kaunertal 2026**

Knowledge shared. Standards raised. – Kaunertal, Austria,  
11–15 May 2026.



# Spring Technical Meeting 2026

**Kaunertal, Austria — May 11–15, 2026**

International technical meeting organised under the auspices of the IFMGA, bringing together delegates from around the world to explore ski techniques, winter guiding and the future of professional mountaineering.



## Monday 11 May

Registration, opening session, ski technique theory (Leichtfried & Egger), workshop on snow activities beyond ski touring, winter entry test presentations and ski equipment rental.



## Tuesday 12 May

Practical ski technique demonstrations and training on the Kaunertal Glacier, led by V. Leichtfried, A. Leichtfried, B. Egger, B. Walser, M. Unterberger and C. Puggl. All techniques recorded on video.



## Wednesday 13 May

Collaborative video review and nomenclature discussion, two conferences by Laurent Vanat on the global ski market, ski entry test presentations by all associations, and a ski maintenance demonstration.



## Thursday 14 May

Morning workshop on women in mountain guiding (Angela Hawse, Zoë Hart, María Teresa Llampa Vásquez), afternoon association news and TC updates, followed by the Technical Delegates' Olympic Games.



## Friday 15 May

Snowshoe touring outing with No-Ski delegate presentations, final debrief, closing workshop on ski activity classifications, and official conclusion of STM 2026 at 17:00.



# About This Meeting

## Key Objectives

Standardise ski technique nomenclature across international guide training programmes

Review and align winter entry test requirements

Share innovations in risk management and professional tools

Advance gender equality and inclusion in the mountain guide profession

Establish consensus on global standards for mountain guiding

## Key Outcomes



Updated technical standards



Video documentation



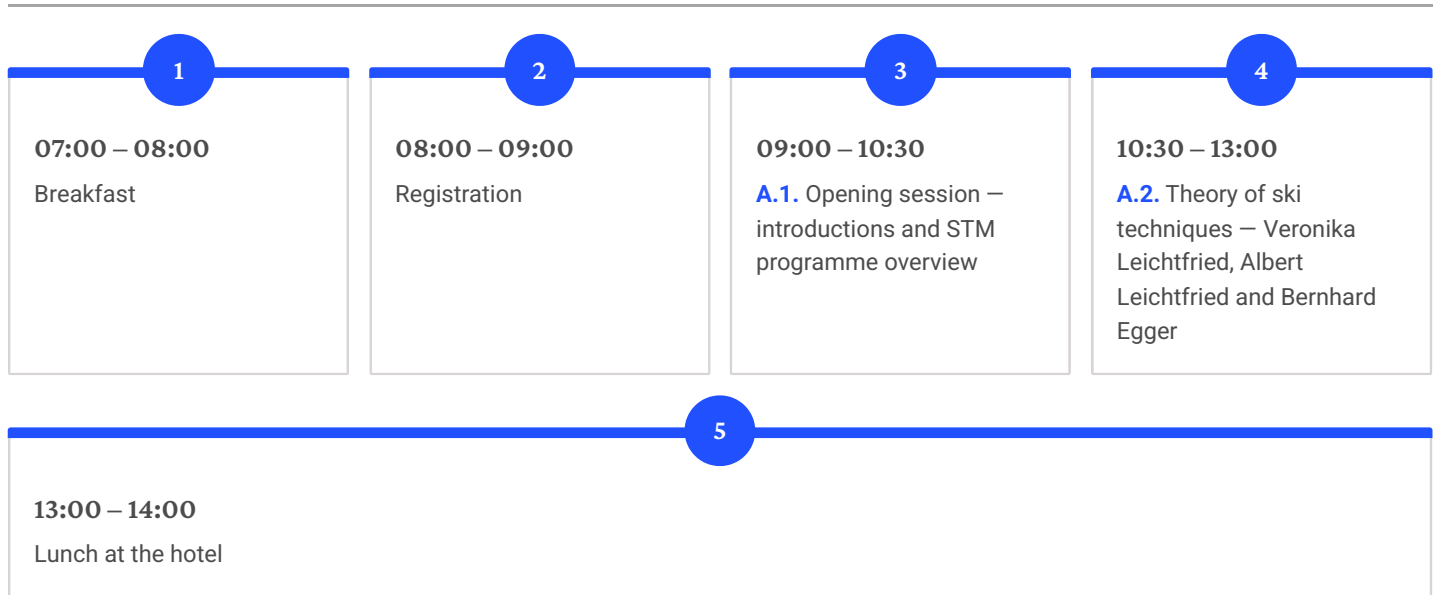
Collaborative decisions



MONDAY 11 MAY 2026

# Day 1 — Opening & Ski Techniques Theory

The first day brings everyone together for registration, the opening session, and afternoon workshops on ski technique in mountain guiding.



- ☐ Morning sessions set the pace for the week, from arrival and registration through to the technical opening and theory programme.

## AFTERNOON

14:15 – 16:15

### A.3. Workshop: Snow Activities Beyond Ski Touring

- Nordic skiing – Jørgen Aamot
- Splitboarding – Mike Adolph
- Ski guiding in ski resorts – Kurt Walde
- Snowmobiles – Mike Adolph
- Snowshoeing – Kurt Walde

## AFTERNOON

16:45 – 17:45

### A.4. Presentation: Winter entry tests

The four no-ski associations will present their criteria in 10- to 15-minute segments.

18:15 – 19:15

### Ski equipment rental

Skis, poles, boots and helmets are available on site for rental. Participants are encouraged to bring their own alpine ski boots.

- ☐ 📺 Associations with high-quality ski technique videos may present them during this session, in coordination with the TC.

- ☐ 🌙 Dinner at 19:30 – Meal at the hotel for all participants.



TUESDAY 12 MAY 2026

## Day 2 — Practical Training on the Glacier

Practical glacier training takes place under the direction of Veronika Leichtfried, Albert Leichtfried, Bernhard Egger, Benedikt Walser, Martin Unterberger and Christoph Puggl. Techniques from A.2. will be demonstrated, and non-ski associations must send a delegate with sufficient skiing ability to observe effectively.

1

08:00 – 12:30

### **B.1. Morning on the glacier**

Demonstrations and training on ski techniques from the Austrian mountain guide programme.

2

12:30 – 13:30

### **Lunch at the ski area**

Buffet-style lunch at the on-site restaurant.

3

13:30 – 17:00

### **B.2. Afternoon: continued training**

Advanced ski technique presentations and practice.

📺 All techniques are recorded on video for review during Wednesday morning's session.

🍽️ Dinner at 19:30 – Meal at the hotel for all participants.



WEDNESDAY 13 MAY 2026

## Day 3 — Review, Conferences & Standards

Wednesday is structured around three phases: a collaborative video review, two expert conferences by Laurent Vanat on the global ski market, and afternoon presentations on ski entry test requirements, followed by a ski maintenance demonstration.

**08:00 – 10:00**

### C.1. Video review & discussion

Delegates review ski technique videos and agree on a common nomenclature for techniques to be taught in guide training.

**10:00 – 10:30**

Coffee break

**10:30 – 12:15**

### Conferences by Laurent Vanat

- **10:30–11:15: C.2.** Facts and figures on the international ski market
- **11:30–12:15: C.3.** Issues and challenges in the ski market

Laurent Vanat is the author of the *Report on Snow & Mountain Tourism*, published annually. Each delegate will receive a complimentary copy.

**13:00 – 14:30**

Lunch at the hotel

**15:00 – 17:00**



### C.4. Presentations: Ski entry test requirements

Each delegate gives a 5-minute summary with a one-page PDF on their association's ski entry test criteria and hours devoted to piste skiing in guide training.

**17:30 – 19:30**

### C.5. Demonstration: Ski maintenance

Waxing techniques, equipment adjustments and preventive maintenance.

  **Dinner at 19:30** – Meal at the hotel for all participants.



THURSDAY 14 MAY 2026

## Day 4 — Women in Guiding, Innovation & Guide's Olympics

Thursday is devoted to two main themes: a morning workshop on women in mountain guiding, moderated by Angela Hawse, and an afternoon combining technical presentations, association news, and the annual Technical Delegates' Olympic Games.

1

08:00 – 10:00

### D.1. Workshop: Women in mountain guiding

Findings and opportunities presented by Angela Hawse and Zoë Hart, with special guest María Teresa Llampá Vásquez and short presentations by delegates on strategies to enhance women's participation in training schemes.

2

10:30 – 12:30

### D.2. Workshop continued

Further discussion on supporting women in the profession, with a closing session on the TC's 4-year plan, including remarks from Kurt Walde.

13:00 – 14:30

Lunch at the hotel

14:30 – 15:30

**D.3. Diverse Matters** – delegates share association notices, news and updates.

15:30 – 16:00

**D.4. News from the TC.**

16:30 – 20:00

### 🏆 Technical Delegates' Olympic Games

A fun competition celebrating unique guide techniques and safety equipment, fostering team spirit among international delegates. The TC encourages associations to incorporate similar safety awareness activities into their training programmes.

20:00

Dinner

# Day 5 — Field Trip & Conclusion

The final day begins with a mountain snowshoe outing, followed by a closing workshop and the official conclusion of STM 2026.

1

07:00 – 12:00

## Snowshoe touring outing

On-site presentations by No-Ski delegates; split-boarding and snowboard/snowshoe combinations also covered.

2

13:00 – 14:30

## Lunch at the hotel

Shared meal before the closing session.

3

14:45 – 15:15

## E.1. Debrief

Collective summary of the week's learnings and conclusions of STM 2026.

4



15:30 – 16:30

## E.2. Final Workshop

"When can a country be described as having ski activities? Laurent Vanat's classifications as reference data."

*"When can a country be described as having ski activities? How many national skiers are needed to classify it as such? Can Laurent Vanat's classifications be used as reference data?"*

– Theme of the final workshop, Friday 15 May, 15:00–16:30

  **Official conclusion of STM 2026 at 17:00** – Kaunertal, Austria.



## Kaunertal Glacier

Glacier ski area in Tyrol at 2,150–3,160 m altitude, with 30 km of pistes and a season running from October to late May. One of the highest and most snow-reliable ski areas in Austria.



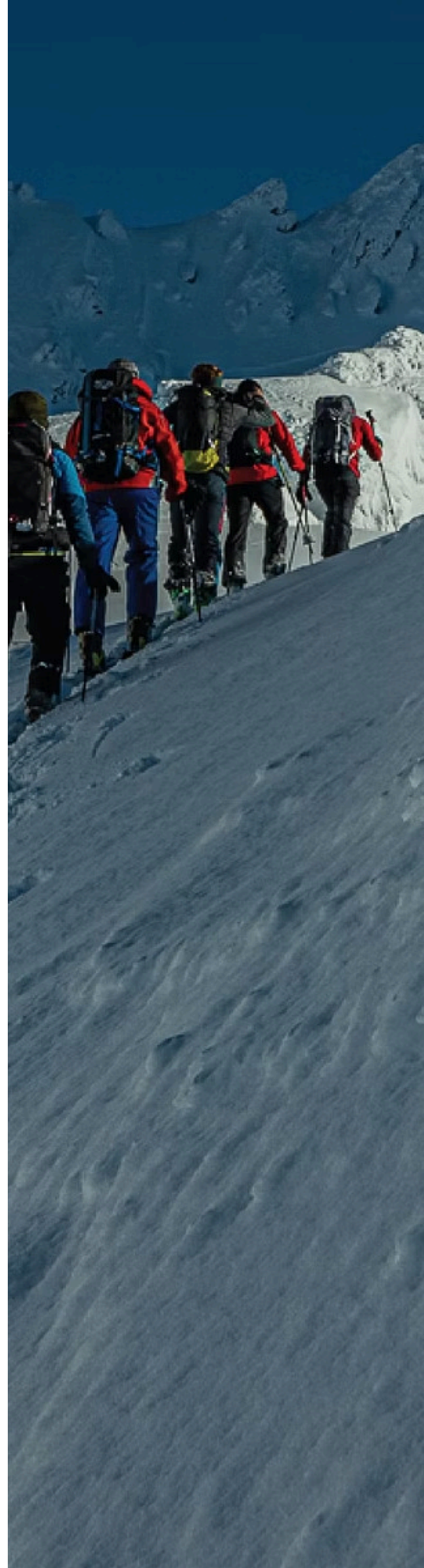
## International Delegates

Technical directors and training coordinators sharing knowledge and standards worldwide.



## IFMGA Standards

Recommendations shaping mountain guide training worldwide.



# Keynote Speakers and Facilitators

The Spring Technical Meeting 2026 brings together a group of experienced mountain professionals and researchers. Their knowledge and practical experience will help guide our discussions and inform future standards and practices in the mountain guiding community.



## Kurt Walde

As the President of the IFMGA Technical Commission, Kurt Walde is a visionary leader, always looking ahead to identify opportunities for the IFMGA's growth and evolution. Supporting the 28 training directors in their mission to educate future mountain guides worldwide is not just a responsibility for Kurt—it's his passion. He dedicates boundless energy to this cause, driven by his belief that the true strength of the IFMGA lies in its incredible global network. The STM is a shining testament to this commitment and vision



## Veronika Leichtfried

Veronika Leichtfried is an Austrian ski instructor and ski guide with roots in competitive racing and a degree in sports science. After completing her level 3 ski instructor and ski guide training at the Bundessportheim in St. Christoph on the Arlberg, she built a career instructing and guiding in the region, contributing to Austrian ski instructor training at levels 1–3 and representing Austria in the Interski Team. In 2024, she served as instructor for the East European Mountain Guide Training in ski technique and freeride.



## Albert Leichtfried

Albert Leichtfried is an Austrian mountain and ski guide as well as renowned ice climber whose name is closely tied to the evolution of Austrian guide education. A trained meteorologist, former ski racer and ice climbing competitor, he has been centrally involved in the Austrian mountain guide training system for more than a decade. He has led the Austrian mountain guide education (Österreichische Bergführerausbildung) since 2013, with about half of his professional time dedicated to training courses and the other half to guiding.

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## Bernhard Egger

Bernhard Egger is an Austrian, state-certified mountain and ski guide based in Bramberg am Wildkogel, Salzburg. Full-time in the profession since qualifying in 2012, he holds qualifications as state certified ski instructor and snowboard instructor, and guides primarily in the Hohe Tauern and Kitzbühel Alps. In the Austrian training system he is course leader for ski-technique modules and head of preparation courses, playing a key role in shaping the next generation of mountain guides.



## Christoph Puggl

Christoph Puggl is an Austrian mountain and ski guide, as well as a state certified ski instructor, who has been based in the Arlberg region during the winter for more than fifteen years. As a trained sports scientist, he works with the universities of Klagenfurt and Salzburg, where he teaches ski technique to sports students. In addition, he has been involved in the Austrian ski guide training program for the past eight years. This means that for over 15 years he has worked full time as a mountain and ski guide, dedicating approximately 40% of his time to training ski instructors and ski guides in Austria, and around 60% to guiding..



## Benedikt Walser

Benedikt Walser is a certified mountain guide and state-certified ski instructor, and has worked full-time in the profession since 2007/2008. Since 2016, he has been involved in mountain guide training through summer and winter courses, and since 2024 he has also served as a course leader for freeride courses. He is especially passionate about passing on his ski technique expertise to aspiring mountain guides.

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## Angela Hawse

Angela Hawse is an AMGA/IFMGA Mountain Guide based in Ridgway, Colorado, and one of the relatively few women to hold full IFMGA certification. Since 2006, she has been an instructor and examiner with the American Mountain Guides Association where she serves as a Senior Instructor Team member. Angela was the previous AMGA President and she is currently Vice-president of the IFMGA Technical Commission and a member of the IFMGA Managing Committee.



## Maria Teresa Llampa Vasquez

María Teresa was born in Huancané, a small village at 3,800 metres above sea level on the shores of Lake Titicaca, facing the towering peaks of the Cordillera Real in Bolivia. At 19, she enrolled in the University of Adventure Tourism in Peñas, where she discovered her aptitude and passion for the mountains and climbing. At 24, she enrolled in the AGMTB mountain guide training program and, at 27, completed her training to become the first female mountain guide in Bolivia and the second in South America.



## Laurent Vanat

Laurent Vanat is a leading expert in mountain tourism analysis and the author of the widely respected Report on Snow & Mountain Tourism. Through his detailed research and international perspective, he has become an essential reference for understanding the evolution, trends, and challenges of winter tourism in mountain regions.

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## Jørgen Aamot

Jørgen Aamot is a Norwegian IFMGA mountain guide based in Hemsedal, where he works as Technical Director at Nortind and as an instructor specialising in snow, avalanche, and ski-related topics. He also serves as an avalanche observer and forecaster for the Norwegian government, and guides extensively in Hemsedal and the Jotunheimen mountain range. He is the author of two guidebooks covering ice climbing and backcountry skiing in Hemsedal.



## Mike Adolph

Mike Adolph is a Canadian ACMG/IFMGA Mountain Guide who completed his certification in 2009 and has spent 16 years contributing to the ACMG Training and Assessment Program across all course levels. In 2021, he took on the role of Technical Director for the ACMG, where he plays a central role in shaping training standards and the future direction of mountain guiding in Canada.



## Cosmin Andron

Cosmin Andron is a Romanian IFMGA mountain and ski guide based in Chamonix. He served as Technical Director of the East European Mountain Guides Association. Since 2019 he has been involved in IFMGA mountain guide education and has the task of co-organising the Spring Technical Meeting of the IFMGA — a role he approaches with a genuine belief in the power of shared knowledge.

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# Sponsors and Partners

We are delighted to present our valued sponsors whose support contributes to the success of the Spring Technical Meeting 2026. Their commitment to innovation, safety, and mountain performance aligns perfectly with the values of our guiding community.



## Featured Product: Rab Superlite Shelter 4

In mountain expeditions and training, safety and the ability to respond to the unexpected are paramount. The **Rab Superlite Shelter 4** is an excellent example of how well-designed equipment can make all the difference. Designed as an ultralight emergency shelter, it provides instant protection from the elements for a group of four people, whether during a planned rest in difficult conditions or an unexpected emergency.



### Ultralight Design

Weight only 320g (11oz), stripped down to bare essentials.



### Windproof & Waterproof

Ultra lightweight windproof and waterproof ripstop nylon siliconised fabric with waterproof seats.



### Designed for 4 People

Compact emergency shelter for four people.



### High Visibility

Safety orange colour with reflective logos and piping for added visibility and safety.

Rab, a brand renowned for high-performance technical equipment, embodies the reliability and innovation that mountain professionals demand. We thank Rab for its continued support and commitment to providing solutions that enhance safety and mountain experience.

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## PIEPS

### Featured Products: PIEPS Avalanche Safety Range

PIEPS has been protecting mountain professionals since 1968. As the global technology leader in avalanche transceivers and rescue equipment, PIEPS provides the tools that mountain guides rely on when every second counts.



#### iProbe BT+ 260

Smart electronic avalanche probe with Bluetooth. Automatically detects active transceivers during probing with optical and acoustic feedback. 260 cm length, 420g, 100h battery life.



#### Shovel C720

High-performance avalanche shovel with large anodized aluminum blade and telescopic C-grip handle. Features rescue sled function, hoe/chopping function, non-slip footrest, and integrated bottle opener. 720g.



#### First-Aid Pro

Professional first aid kit developed in collaboration with mountain guides, mountain rescue teams, ski instructors and Austrian Air Rescue. Ripstop nylon, 450g, 260×180×75mm. Includes splint, rescue blanket, wound dressings, and more.



#### Probe Alu 260 Sport

Reliable aluminum throwing probe with Speed-Cone-System for fastest clamping. Centimeter scale for burial depth reading. 260 cm, 295g.

PIEPS, an Austrian brand with over 55 years of alpine safety expertise, is proud to support the IFMGA Spring Technical Meeting 2026. Their commitment to innovation and reliability aligns perfectly with the values of our guiding community.