
STRATEGIC



PLAN

2016-2020





TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message	02
Chief Executive Officer's Message	03
Introduction	06
Methodology	10
Vision, Mission & Values	12
Environmental Analysis	14
FAI Strategy Pillars	16
Pillar 1 - Participation	18
Pillar 2 - Club and Community Development	20
Pillar 3 - Women's Football	22
Pillar 4 - Player Development	24
Pillar 5 - SSE Airtricity League	26
Pillar 6 - National Competitions	28
Pillar 7 - International Football	30
Pillar 8 - Facilities	32
Pillar 9 - Organisational Development	34
Finance	38
Implementation and Operations	39

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The publication of this strategic plan comes at a very important time in the history of the Football Association of Ireland. In 2020, the Association will commence its 100th year while also in that year, the fruits of the FAI/Dublin City Council joint bid to host four matches in the UEFA EURO 2020 Tournament will also be evident. The time frame of this plan enables us to set out the key areas for development and change within football which will be the focus of our priorities in the 2016-2020 period.

The plan has been developed to reflect the views of our membership and our wider stakeholder base. The priorities agreed encompass the inputs of those stakeholders and are now brought together as a coherent and ambitious plan for the game. The FAI is hugely dependent on a wide range of people and organisations to fulfil our mandate and these relationships will also be key in our ability to grow and develop the game of football over the next five years.

Our volunteer base, our clubs and leagues, our coaches and referees, along with our partners in local and national government and our staff, those involved in football development and our administration, are all critical to the delivery of the goals in this strategic plan.

Today, football is in every village, town and city in the country and holds a special place deep in the communities which we, as sports administrators, serve. Our social, intercultural and community development plans deserve to be treated with the same focus and respect as the bringing through of the next generation of international players. While our game remains the highest team participation sport in the country, we must continue to strive to maintain and grow that position for all our members, for our communities and for the future development of the game.

This strategic plan serves all of our game – women and men, elite and grassroots, domestic and International, young and more mature players.

International success, particularly of our senior teams, is the focus of most people's attention and, like all Associations with an international dimension, its significance is always emphasised through qualification for a major tournament and such success is clearly a key focus for the next five years.

Equally, we must, through this strategic plan, continue to ensure the structures, the investment and football operations under our remit support, not just the achievement of ambitions on the international stage, but the construction of a platform for the development of every aspect of football in Ireland.

This strategic plan provides a route forward towards the commencement of the next 100 years of the Association but it is vital that we work hard in the next five years to ensure we enter our next 100 years with a track record of developmental achievements to act as a springboard for the game well into the future.

I believe that the path forward contained in this plan is an appropriate one and that by working collectively, we can ensure a very positive future for football in Ireland.

Tony Fitzgerald
President



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

The FAI's strategic plan for 2016 – 2020 sets out the Association's plans and priorities for the next five years. Our ambition is to ensure we maintain a clear focus on continuous improvement to the benefit of all key strands of the game.

In overall terms, the plan sets out our goals for delivering improvement in specific areas including:

OUR PLAYERS

OUR CLUBS AND LEAGUES

OUR FACILITIES

OUR INTERNATIONAL TEAMS

OUR ORGANISATION

OUR GRASSROOTS AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES

OUR WOMEN'S GAME

OUR NATIONAL LEAGUE

The platform from which we seek to deliver our ambitions is a healthy one. Despite the very challenging economic climate of the past five years, the goals and objectives delivered as part of our strategic plan 2011-2014 included strong grassroots and participation programmes, underage and senior international team progress, a new focus on High Performance and the growth and development of the Women's game.

These developments followed from four very significant strategic milestones - the construction of the Aviva Stadium, the transition to the FAI's new headquarters in Abbotstown, the merger of the SSE Airtricity League with the FAI and the implementation of the original Technical Plan.

As we look ahead to a very important period when the FAI will host four matches in the UEFA EURO 2020, we must ensure that our organisation - volunteers and administration - is geared to plan, manage and drive the sport forward, in a collaborative fashion, to achieve very clear objectives in nine Pillars, which will see all key strands of the game develop and progress in very clear ways.

To achieve the ambitions set out in the plan will require a continuously evolving organisation, the commitment of thousands of volunteers, the cooperation and support of our partners – sponsors, local authorities, national government and the general sporting public along with clubs, leagues, referees and coaches.

While the past four years have seen the Association make solid progress, the next five years will present new challenges but I am confident that with the support and goodwill of all stakeholders in the game, the future, as we approach our centenary year, can be a very bright one.

John Delaney
Chief Executive Officer



**“IN FULFILLING OUR PRIMARY
ROLE AS THE GOVERNING
BODY, OUR JOB IS TO PROVIDE
THE PROFESSIONALISM TO
ENABLE THE GAME GROW AND
PROSPER AT EVERY LEVEL AND
TO SUPPORT THE MEMBERS IN
FULFILLING THEIR AMBITIONS”**



INTRODUCTION

The overwhelming majority of the 450,000 people who are involved in football in Ireland are amateurs or volunteers. The players, referees, coaches, administrators and everyone attached to clubs, schools, universities and all the affiliated leagues in the country are the backbone of every football association.

In fulfilling our primary role as the governing body, our job is to provide the professionalism to enable the game grow and prosper at every level and to support the members in fulfilling their ambitions. We assist and provide supports across a range of disciplines and we also ensure that an appropriate framework with all the best practice structures are in place for the benefit of the sport.

The Association must also show ambition and strong strategic leadership and during the period of the previous Strategic Plan, we have worked hard to fulfil our goals while also fostering and developing the game on a continuous basis for the many strands of our game.

The FAI's Strategic Plan 2011-2014 set out the Association's key goals within a framework of five clear pillars – Participation, Competitions, International/High Performance, National Sports Campus Facilities and Aviva Stadium.

It is to the credit of all involved, staff and volunteers, that our record of delivery in all of the agreed pillars is extremely high. This is particularly the case in the context of the external environment presenting the most challenging economic and financial circumstances faced in the history of the FAI.

The many initiatives progressed and achieved over the past four years include:

Major increases in participation in Women's/Girl's football:

- 327% increase in Soccer Sisters programmes.
- 100% increase in number of Leagues.
- 19% growth in Primary Schools 5s.
- 14% increase in secondary schools Futsal and similar increase in 11-a-side.
- 23,000 registered players in 2016 (double 2006 levels).

Increased participation through Education Courses, including three UEFA Pro licence courses bring the number of holders of UEFA's top qualification to a record 69. Six UEFA "A" licences and fifteen UEFA "B" licence courses were also delivered.

Referees course education programmes delivered included 84 beginners courses and 20 grassroots development modules bringing total referee numbers to 1,350 with ongoing work targeted to further increase these levels.

Social responsibility programmes grew again with the Late Night Leagues (LNL) being recognised by many stakeholders, including An Garda Síochána, as a huge success. The LNL concept, targeted towards disadvantaged communities, now has 52 centres, with almost 3,000 participants and has recently spread its wings to Cork.









COMPETITIONS

The key achievements during the period 2011-2015 saw the introduction and development of the Continental Tyres sponsored Women's National League, the Men's Under 19 National League and in 2015, the Men's Under 17 league; the latter two competitions ensuring a bridge to the senior game at national level while providing a clear player pathway.

The implementation of a new player registration system is now scheduled for 2016/17 on a pilot basis following an agreement to engage with the German Football Association on a competition specific IT system.

A major consultation process with the stakeholders of the SSE Airtricity League took place in 2015 and its recommendations for the future of the League are being studied by all parties to agree the future direction of the national senior league.

INTERNATIONAL / HIGH PERFORMANCE

The Men's senior team qualifying for the UEFA European Championships in both 2012 and 2016 is the highlight of the top of the pyramid of elite football while significant success was also achieved at under age level. The most recent examples being the Ireland Under 17 and Under 19 men's teams along with the Women's' Under 17 team all reaching elite qualification status in 2015.

Hosting international tournaments has also been a success for the FAI and the country, with the UEFA Europa League

Final coming to Dublin in 2011 and the FAI acting as host nation for the men's Under 19 phase, Women's Under 17 Elite phase and Under 19 first phase in 2015, in addition to the UEFA Region's cup.

The two most recent and significant developments in the FAI have been the formulation of the new FAI Player Development Plan (PDP) and the new FAI Women's Strategic Plan. The PDP followed the appointment of Ruud Dokter as High Performance Director and a period of extensive consultation with all stakeholders in the game. Launched in 2015, the PDP is set out as one of the main strategic goals of the FAI for the coming 5 year period. The Women's Development Plan has been brought together with all the key stakeholders of the game and outlines a strong pathway forward for the game.

NATIONAL SPORTS CAMPUS

The opening of the FAI's National training centre including six pitches at Abbotstown in 2015 was a key achievement for the Association and the future development of players in Ireland.

The Campus now plays host to the National teams for training and coaching purposes. The FAI also reached an agreement with the DDSL for a shared use of the fine facilities at Abbotstown Campus on a multiyear basis.

AVIVA STADIUM

We were delighted to succeed in our bid to host four games, to be played in the Aviva Stadium, as part of the UEFA's EURO 2020. Receiving the 3rd best

technical bid and the 2nd best political bid from a pool of 19 entries was a key achievement by the FAI, together with Dublin City Council, national government and a host of other agencies and partners.

At a domestic level, the Aviva's use has been expanded significantly to incorporate and promote many strands of the game with the Irish Junior Cup final, the Women's Cup final, Primary Schools 5's National Finals and the Irish Daily Mail Cup Final all being held to a growing level of success at the home of Irish football.

The new stadium has also seen significantly increased attendances in 2015 with extremely strong fan support at season ticket, Club Ireland and general admission levels while in-house, the addition of Stadium TV and sponsor led activities has enhanced the experience at the Aviva. In addition to the specific deliverables in the Statement of Strategy 2011-2014, the FAI has also seen many significant developments across the strands of the game including new national leagues - Women's, Men's Under 17 and Under 19; the hosting of UEFA tournaments, the development of more facilities and the continued growth of the game across the country at community and club levels.

METHODOLOGY

As the FAI looks forward to the milestone year of 2020, we embark on a new Strategic Plan that will focus on the most important developments and issues facing the sport in the period 2016 – 2020. Over 12 months in 2015 the previous strategic plan has been reviewed in detail and numerous stakeholder consultations have taken place to inform this new strategy for the FAI. These included workshop sessions, focus groups and individual one to one interviews. The process was inclusive and widespread, creating opportunities for all of our partners to contribute to strategies which will enable the continued development of our game.

In-depth consultations were carried out for particular elements of the game such as:

- (a) SSE Airtricity League (SSEAL).
- (b) Player Development Plan (PDP).
- (c) Women's Football.

The SSEAL process involved a total of 98 separate interview sessions, including 20 club meetings and 78 separate individual face to face meetings. The 20 clubs were represented at the meetings by over 100 administrators and there were contributions from 1,774 supporters and members of the public via online surveys and questionnaires.

The PDP consultative process saw in excess of 30 meetings held across the country with over 900 representatives from clubs and leagues attending. Phase 1 of the Plan (implementation of Recommendations 1 and 2) commenced in September 2015 with the remaining recommendations to be implemented over the coming two seasons.

The consultation for the Women's Football Plan has spanned over two years and involved meetings at different levels to ensure maximum input into the process. National level meetings had over 140 people involved, while over 300 were present at the initial regional roadshows. This was followed up with detailed meetings in each of the eight regions to gain further insight.

In conjunction with the results from the consultations mentioned above

there was also a planning session with a team from UEFA on their Grow 2020 strategy, feedback from our Grassroots Stakeholders Conference participants and an open public survey online. This highlights the spread from grassroots football in Ireland, our partners in delivery, and also key objectives and direction from our parent body UEFA.

UEFA are working with all of its 54 associations on recording and growing their participation numbers by 2020. This is linked with the UEFA Charter System which is being updated from their current Star system, where associations can apply for up to six stars by fulfilling certain criteria, to a new bronze, silver and gold system. The criteria for this will be focused on overall growth of participation numbers as well as targeted areas such as adult football, women, drop off ages and recreational football. These goals and objectives have been considered and adapted into this strategy.

The FAI Stakeholders Conference held in October 2015 hosted 86 of our grassroots partners including the Irish Sports Council (now Sport Ireland), government Depts. of Tourism, Transport & Sport, Health, Children & Youth Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Justice as well as the Federation of Irish Sport, numerous local authorities, 3rd level institutions and LSP's. Workshop sessions were conducted to provide an opportunity for feedback from these partners.

The results from the public survey

administered on the FAI website, with just under 1,000 responses, provided the FAI with some quantitative analysis as well as some open ended questions which provided some rich qualitative data to assist in informing the content of the plan. Responses to the survey came from all aspects of our games including underage/schools, women's, youth, intermediate/junior, national leagues and international football.

Those that took part represented many different roles within football such as players, coaches, parents, administrators, volunteers, club members, supporters, Referees/ Officials, and recreational players. There was also a positive age span from under 18 up to 65+ (See Figure 1.0).

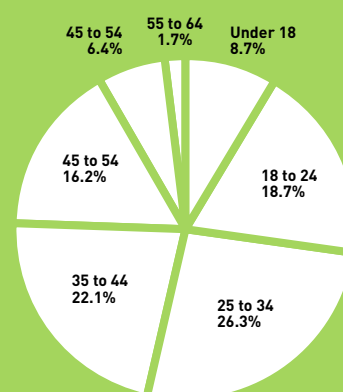


Figure 1.0 Age Span of online survey respondents

The key points from the various consultations are summarised below:

- The following areas of priority for the association were suggested from the online survey:
 - SSE Airtricity League.
 - Club Development.
 - Coach Education.
 - School boy/girl football.
 - Elite Player Development.
 - Grassroots Football and Social Inclusion.
- The philosophy and model of play introduced in the Player Development Plan (PDP) is welcomed and needs to be implemented consistently across the board to benefit all players.
- Coach education and competition frameworks need to be reviewed to ensure they are in line with the new Player Development Plan.
- Club and League support would be welcomed in terms of development of a good practice model to help the development of sustainable, quality clubs.
- There is support for the

establishment of the new structures within Women's Football to help develop and grow this area.

- Success at International level via qualification for major championship finals is viewed as the pinnacle of achievement.
- Grassroots participation will always be important to maintain the base of players to feed into the player pathway. Building the grassroots participation base is in line with the government's plan on Healthy Ireland.
- Existing communication methods can be improved to ensure cohesive communication across all levels and members of the Association, with particular attention to new methods available.
- Football is proven as an excellent tool for implementation of social inclusion programmes and this needs to be balanced with football development.
- Accurate data collection of players and customers is key to planning growth and sustainability into the future.

- The National League, as the pinnacle of our national competitions structure, needs specific focus and the development of its own strategic direction in agreement with the clubs, as a follow up to the publication of the Conroy Report.

The widespread consultation process has certainly been inclusive and thorough over the past year. One of the challenges of this strategy was to take all of this feedback into account when shaping the future direction of the Association for the next five years. The feedback has highlighted a very positive attitude and appetite to develop football and plan a direction for the game which this document aims to provide. It is an exciting time for Irish football as we work together with our affiliates and other stakeholders to lay the foundations for football for the next generation.



VISION, MISSION & VALUES

VISION STATEMENT

To enable every Irish person to participate in our game, to allow all involved in the game to reach their full potential, whatever level that might be, and to inspire the nation through international success at the highest level.

MISSION STATEMENT

To promote, foster and develop the game of Association Football in Ireland.



VALUES

RESPECT

On and off the field, respect is a central value of the Football Association of Ireland. Respect for the game, diversity, players, opponents, officials and supporters. As players are at the centre of what we do, their health and welfare also needs to be respected. Football in Ireland is administered by a wide range of people. It is essential that a collaborative dynamic is created, that is respectful of everyone involved in the game. Acknowledgement and appreciation of diversity is encouraged across the Association.

INTEGRITY

In all our dealings we strive for equity, consistency and fairness in our treatment of others and in our decision making. We will deliver competitions under the laws of the game in an honest and transparent manner and be accountable to all members of the Association.

PASSION

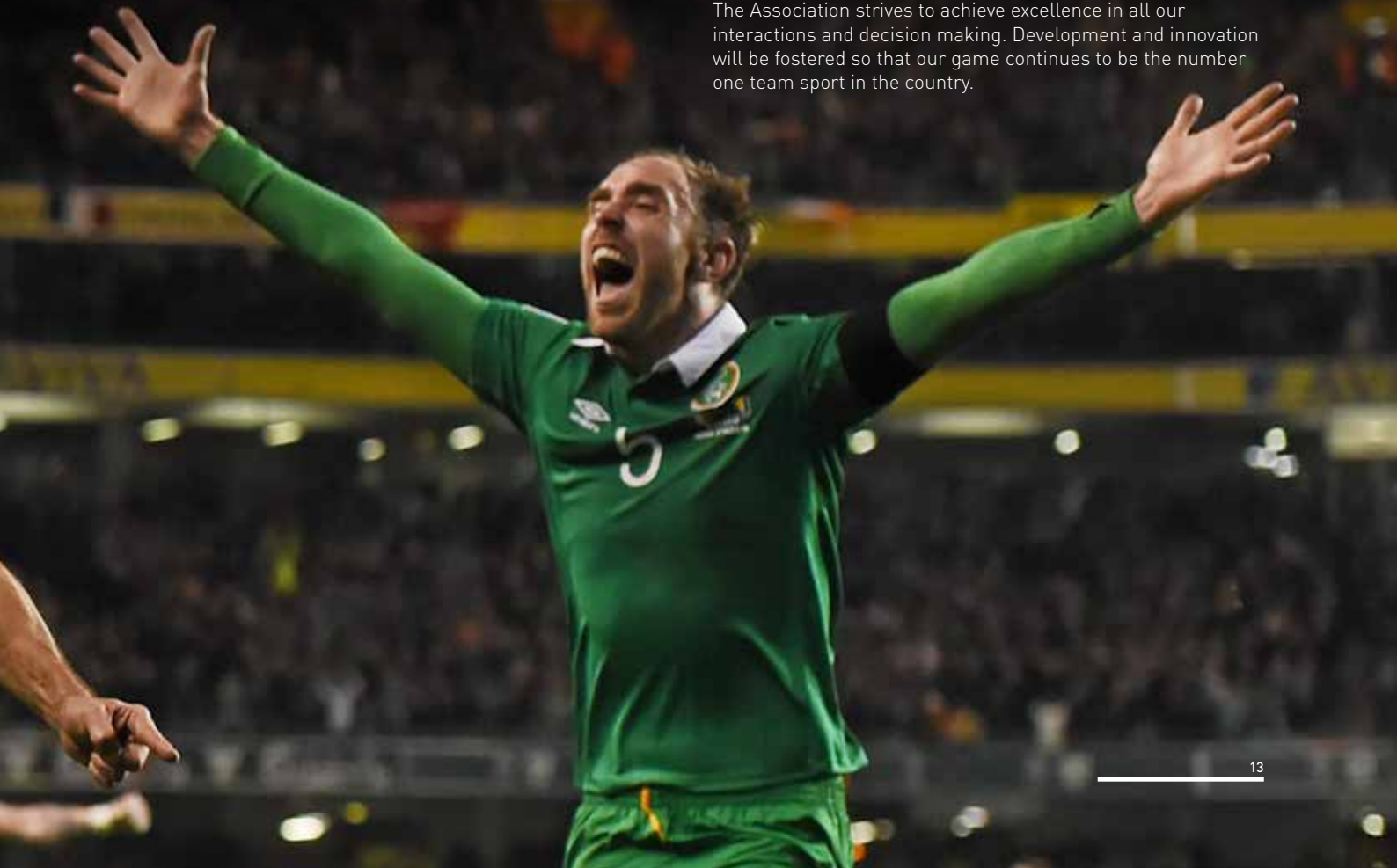
Football brings out a passion in people. The Association will encourage and nurture this passion in players, supporters and administrators so that it impacts the game and all involved in a positive manner.

TEAMWORK

Our success requires a commitment to teamwork at all levels of the Association. This will be seen by clear leadership, a spirit of consensus and unity. Teamwork involves combining the skills, talent, knowledge, and experience of all members – volunteer and executive – in a coordinated manner. We embrace teamwork through mutual support, collaboration, encouragement and accountability. By working together as a team and sharing knowledge, we can achieve greater results than by working as individuals.

EXCELLENCE

The Association strives to achieve excellence in all our interactions and decision making. Development and innovation will be fostered so that our game continues to be the number one team sport in the country.



ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

While football occupies a special place in the hearts and minds of Irish people, the environment in which it exists is experiencing an evolution on a very significant scale. The current technological breakthroughs represent both a challenge and an opportunity for football. The communication of the sport to a highly engaged audience make this a most critical period for us and our ambition is to get our messages out quicker and easier to the football family and beyond.

We know that football plays a hugely significant role in the social and economic landscape of Ireland. Furthermore, we know that football is also affected by changes in the social and economic fabric of the country. The impact of the recession in recent years and the resulting emigration of young people in rural communities and its effect on the ability of clubs to field teams is an example of how football can be affected negatively impacted by the wider environment. Conversely, population growth in urban areas or amongst particular demographic groups can be seen as an opportunity for new participation, even if this can bring challenges of its own.

As part of the development of this Strategic Plan we have considered the key factors which impact on our ability to achieve ambitious plans – from a sporting, political, technological, demographic and social perspective. These considered elements are essential in determining the environmental factors around the game and are an essential barometer in building a solid future for football as well as assessing the impact of the FAI's work. We know that political and environmental factors are key to the ambitions of any strategy, but more and more the social and technological elements are increasing in influence.

A historical analysis of the great successes of the past allows us to measure strategic targets for the future. Key amongst them are the sustainability and growth of football as the largest participation team sport in the country. The historical building blocks of the years gone by have helped us to roadmap a vision for the years ahead.

Assessing the current environment and the directional trends of the short and medium term allow us to prepare for a bright future in an optimistic and confident manner.

Football is as popular as ever across the country, but there are new challenges which we must consider as we look to chart a direction forward. In facing these realities and the multiple choices they present to young people, we must embrace this digital age to engage and attract participation and involvement for our audiences. This mobile agility has been embraced with great gusto in Ireland, not just amongst younger members of society, but also by parents, communities and clubs up and down the country. Gone are the days where newspapers, television and radio were the only tools to communicate with our audience. An exciting array of social and digital platforms now enable us to reach an even wider and more engaged audience and we will strive to serve this community through all new forms of media alongside the still strong traditional brands.

The most recent Digital Evolution Index (DEI) by the Harvard Business Review demonstrated just how highly engaged we are as a nation, putting Ireland as one of the 'Stand Out' countries on earth. We are part of an elite band of nations including the United States and Singapore as somewhere that is embracing new technologies faster than countries like Germany and Japan. It is our enthusiasm and reach in this global field that will allow us to embrace our audience and engage much quicker with our huge diaspora around the world for the betterment

of brand awareness and standing as a truly international Association. This environment is extremely fast-paced and we must continue to be a mobile and agile Association.

Reaching our audience is hugely significant and very obviously, success on the field of play brings with it great social, economic and community benefits to society. It increases participation and levels of interest, and with that come greater impacts on the health and wellbeing of our young participants. It is essential that we continue to work hard in all areas including building on the great work across women's football and through our underage development programmes.

We operate in a highly competitive environment with other team sports. The growth of individual pursuits and leisure interests are all ensuring the marketplace for our members is intense. Increased popularity and high engagement have clear knock-on benefits across society and we know that for every €1 spent on sport, a further €1.40 is generated in the Irish economy. As the largest participation team sport in Ireland, the benefits to the economy from the almost half-a-million people who partake in football are clearly valued.

The most recent review of the Irish Population, by way of the 2011 Census, has outlined that the demography of Ireland is undergoing significant evolution. Many of the key findings of the Census are having and will continue to have a significant impact on the development of football. The Association's strategy will take cognisance of this.

The increased urbanisation of the population is one area that will provide opportunities and challenges to the FAI. It is a fact that 62% of the population now live in an urban area, an increase of 11% on the previous Census. This trend is expected to continue and local

authorities in urban areas are focusing on the development of housing to meet this demand within their various Development Plans. They need to be continually challenged to ensure that the provision of adequate sport and recreation facilities are available for these new residents so they can reside in healthy communities.

Similarly, a peak in the number of births in 1980 can be seen in today's 30 year age group. This was followed by a decline in births in the late eighties and early nineties which, along with emigration of this age group in recent years, goes some way to explaining anecdotal falls in the number of adult male players playing organised, competitive football.

The increase of births in more recent years to a level similar to the peak of 1980 provides a real opportunity for the FAI to increase participation amongst children in the coming years.

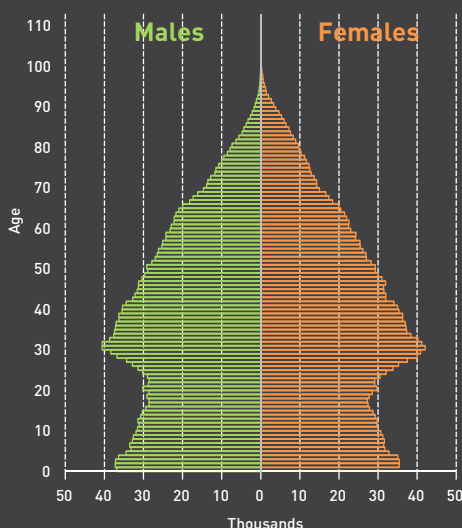


Fig 2. Population by age and sex, 2011

The key strategy for any sporting body is of course success, and as we face into the future these successes take on an even greater level of value and audience as we head towards our centenary.



FAI STRATEGY PILLARS



Pillar 1 - Participation	18
Pillar 2 - Club and Community Development	20
Pillar 3 - Women's Football	22
Pillar 4 - Player Development	24
Pillar 5 - SSE Airtricity League	26
Pillar 6 - National Competitions	28
Pillar 7 - International Football	30
Pillar 8 - Facilities	32
Pillar 9 - Organisational Development	34



PILLAR 1

PARTICIPATION

INTRODUCTION

With over 450,000 participants, football is the largest participation sport in the country (Irish Sports Monitor 2013) and makes a significant contribution to communities across the length and breadth of the country. Supporting the players we have parents, volunteers – the lifeblood of any sporting activity, referees and club and league administrators. They all deserve our support and guidance so that the experience of playing football, of being involved in football, is a memorable and rewarding one.

Grassroots football, put at its most basic level, is best described as all football that is non-professional and non-elite. Examples include children's football, school or youth football, amateur football, FFA (Football for All) etc. In short, it is football played by the masses at a level where participation and a love of the game are paramount.

Our Grassroots strategy is framed around the UEFA Grassroots Charter and the UEFA Grow 2020 Strategy. These are based on three sub-pillars, namely growth (focusing on increasing the number of registered players), retention (making specific efforts to retain players as they get older) and inclusion/social responsibility (ensuring that FAI Programmes are inclusive and provide opportunities to be involved in football to everyone).

There are a number of programmes that come under the Grassroots Department, these include: Football for All, Intercultural Programme, Summer Soccer Schools, Club and League Development, Project Futsal (Education Hubs), Women's Football, Schools and Colleges and Referees. All of these are experiencing continuous growth in participation which we hope to build on in this strategy in line with Healthy Ireland guidelines.

The Football For All (FFA) Programme has six core activities with 15 disability partners and over 3,000 participants. One of these core activities, the FFA Club

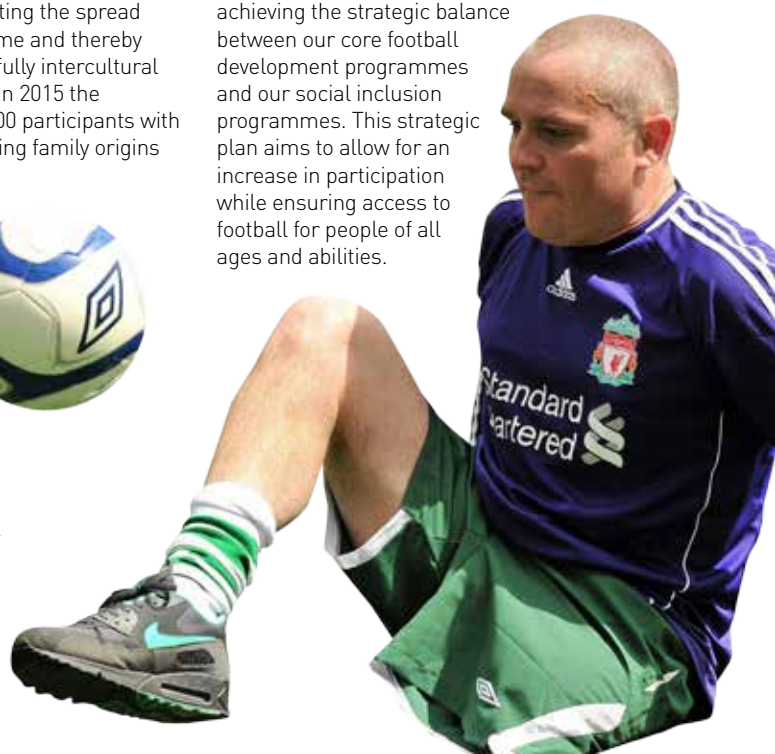
programme, saw the number of FFA clubs established rise to 34 in 2014/2015 from the initial six in 2010. This programme has enabled over 500 children with varying disabilities to join clubs and be part of regular training sessions and friendly festivals involving FAI qualified coaches. By January 2016, it is expected that there will be over 36 clubs providing football opportunities for children with disabilities in their community.

The Intercultural Football Programme seeks to increase participation in football among people from minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds, whilst also challenging and preventing the spread of racism within the game and thereby contributing towards a fully intercultural and integrated society. In 2015 the programme had over 700 participants with 45% of participants having family origins from overseas.

In partnership with national and local bodies, we run a wide range of social inclusion initiatives that make a real difference to the lives of thousands of people annually in some of our most disadvantaged communities. Our work in the social inclusion area uses the power

and attraction of football and contributes to increased social capital in communities throughout Ireland. The work is very diverse but immensely beneficial in helping to improve community structures by addressing issues as varied and complex as antisocial behaviour, mental health problems, youths' self-esteem, unemployment, local area tensions or even the experiences of children who have a parent in prison. These are all modern day challenges that are frequently present in the disadvantaged areas where our Development Officers work.

Part of the challenge going forward is achieving the strategic balance between our core football development programmes and our social inclusion programmes. This strategic plan aims to allow for an increase in participation while ensuring access to football for people of all ages and abilities.





STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Increase participation numbers on FAI programmes with a particular emphasis on females, ethnic minority groups and social inclusion activities.
2. Co-operate with recreational football providers with specific focus on adult 5-a-side football in terms of capturing participation numbers and developing partnerships.
3. Engage with our partners / stakeholders in delivery of Social Inclusion programmes, ensuring that programmes meet local needs. Explore methods to measure impacts of Social Inclusion programmes.
4. Support the development and growth of the Football for All programme to include a new four year strategic plan from 2017 to 2020 focusing on all strands of disability football in Ireland.
5. Review football education opportunities provided through academic courses for youths and adults.
6. Target new avenues for referee recruitment and retention with a focus on increasing the overall numbers of referees, male and female.
7. Ensure that Grassroots Department activities are communicated effectively across all media platforms.



OUTCOMES

1. Growth in participation numbers in the following areas:
Children/Youth:
 - An increase of 25% in participation numbers on the FAI Summer Soccer School Programme with over 33,000 children taking part annually.
 - An increase of 25% in participation numbers in the Primary Schools 5-a-side competition with over 24,000 children taking part annually.
 - Recreational football opportunities provided for students in Third Level Institutions across the country through a new participation programme.
 - New participation initiatives in disadvantaged areas and an increase of 15% in Late Night League participation numbers.
 Adult:
 - A minimum of 15% of participants on Intercultural Football Programmes to have origins from outside Ireland.
 - A Walking Football programme introduced across the country with a targeted focus on older adults.
2. Plan devised and implemented to capture and increase participation numbers for those playing recreational football. Partnerships developed with recreational football providers.
3. Evaluation conducted on all Social Inclusion Programmes with new programmes developed and implemented as result of evaluation.
4. Football For All Strategic Plan launched by January 2017 and a 20% increase in players with disabilities participating in football coupled with an increase of 5 FFA clubs per year.
5. Review of all football education completed and strategy agreed.
6. A net increase of 50 male referees per year and a 25% increase in the number of female referees.
7. Assist in the implementation of the Communications Plan by providing grassroots content.

PILLAR 2

CLUB AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

The importance of volunteer led local clubs in the provision of football in Ireland cannot be underestimated. Football has grown into one of the most widely played and loved games in the country and this is largely due to the fantastic work undertaken for years by the countless dedicated volunteers who administer, organise and coach local football across Ireland. They play an invaluable role in the provision of recreational and competitive football at all levels. As well as catering for mass participation, all players who eventually go on to perform at elite level start and develop their talents and love for our game at local level clubs.

There is no doubt that how a player experiences their sport is dependent on the club they are involved with. Well organised clubs with strong structures and strong volunteers are best placed to promote football, encourage participation, keep people involved, engage with their community and develop every player to the best of their ability, whatever level that may be.

This is a great privilege and source of pride of club administrators but it also brings a huge responsibility. More than ever it is essential that every club is well organised in all areas of club management. They must work to the highest standards of governance, planning, financial management and volunteer management. All clubs will have safety at the core of what they do and in the case of those working with children or vulnerable adults, adhere to FAI Child Welfare Policy. They must also be committed to quality coaching, player development, coach development, inclusiveness and raising the standards of behaviour in the game.

There are more than 2,000 football clubs currently operating in Ireland. They vary in size, age ranges, resources, philosophy and ambition but for any club to be successful it must constantly strive to make steady improvements in everything it does. The FAI has a key role to play in facilitating club development by identifying and promoting best practice and providing the necessary guidance, direction and resources to ensure clubs are empowered to implement it. This will also facilitate community development through closer club-community links.

An effective club support programme that incorporates a Club Quality Mark is essential for the long term development of clubs. Clubs should know what standards to work towards and those that excel should be rewarded and recognised for doing so. They should also be supported through a system of education, training, support materials and knowledge sharing to provide them with the information they require to run their club to the highest standards.

The FAI must oversee the formation of new clubs in order to ensure that where needs exist, new clubs are encouraged to form and build the foundations to make them last. We must also safeguard existing clubs in areas where there may not be scope for further clubs. What is required are bigger, stronger clubs serving the needs of the entire community. Support should be provided to existing clubs that are amending their structures to achieve this approach.

Further support should be also be provided to clubs to facilitate revenue generation. Financial security brings stability and allows clubs to develop their structures and governance. The FAI's National Draw must continue to provide a risk free and effective fundraising programme for clubs. Other options should also be explored. Clubs are the foundation stone of all football activity in this country. We must ensure this foundation is strong and secure to build on the success of the game as we move towards a new decade.





STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Develop and implement a system that identifies and promotes best practice in club governance, including adherence to FAI Child Welfare policy. Support clubs in implementing this club quality mark while recognising and rewarding those that run their club to the highest standard
2. Develop a programme of training and education to provide clubs with the information and guidance they require for all aspects of club management
3. Identify potential funding streams to support club development activities while working with external stakeholder agencies that have a mutual interest in the governance of clubs
4. Develop a process, in conjunction with leagues, to oversee and approve the affiliation of new clubs
5. Support clubs through an effective nationwide fundraising programme (e.g. 2015 FAI National Draw) along with additional revenue generating opportunities through existing FAI programmes
6. Assist in the roll out and implementation of the Player Registration System and use its data to facilitate effective communication with clubs and leagues



OUTCOMES

1. 20% of clubs engaged with the club development programme.
2. Club development training programme designed and rolled out to clubs annually
3. Secure a stable funding stream to support the club development programme
4. Process developed to coordinate the affiliation of new clubs
5. Criteria developed for Club of the Year that is in line with the club development programme
6. 30% of clubs taking part in a nationwide fundraising programme. 15% receiving funding through other FAI programmes
7. Player registration system rolled out and implemented across all leagues
8. Club and league newsletter distributed monthly. Database of contacts expanded to additional club contacts beyond club secretary.
9. 550 Club specific Child Welfare and Safe Recruitment training courses delivered

PILLAR 3

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

INTRODUCTION

Over the past number of years there has been significant progress in the development of the women's game since the initial Women's Football Development Plan of 2006. Numbers have grown, more girls are playing in clubs and leagues, elite programmes running nationwide, qualification and successes at Underage International level and improved performances and results at senior women's international level.

After much research and consultation as to the future direction of the women's game, the main areas of focus for female football will encompass five main pillars: Grassroots, Education, High Performance, Promotion, Marketing & Communications and Organisation & Infrastructure. Each of these will have specific objectives and aims over the coming years as we look to build on the foundations of the past decade and strong future for women's football.

We aim to increase female participation across all our grassroots programmes as part of the new strategic plan for women's football. We want to give everyone the opportunity to play in a fun and safe environment. We'll look to increase participation across existing programmes, while also introducing new programmes to target specific age groups.

As the numbers grow so too does the need for more coaches, referees, administrators and volunteers. The higher the number of individuals involved in the female game, the more beneficial the effect on women's football development inspiring women and girls to play. The provision of education courses for those involved in the female game, to enable them to develop specific expertise in the development of our game, is also a key challenge.

As our game develops we need to

have appropriate structures in place to enable players to play at the highest level possible. A clear player pathway for our players is essential for their development. The main aim of the High Performance Unit is to ensure players progression and increase the level players are able to complete at, at national and international competitions. Expansion and development of our Women's National League will allow players to play at the highest level possible within Ireland. Continued development of our emerging and elite players will ensure that our underage national teams will have success in their respective competitions. Our aim over the course of the plan is for the Women's senior team to qualify for a major finals and for our U17 and U19 women's teams to qualify beyond the elite phase to finals.

Marketing, promotion and attracting investment to women's football are vital to assist the growth and development. Building awareness and changing the perception of women's football in society is one of the challenges the game still faces today. It's important to challenge and change this perception. In an era where the women's game has grown considerably, we now need to take this to the next level. We have strong foundations and we want to provide structures for the women's game that will see it go from strength to strength. With technologies developing quickly

in an era when people have access to information in an instant, thanks largely to social media, this is a tool we need to take full advantage of. Working closely with the Communications Department, the implementation of a robust communication strategy will be vital.

A strong organisational structure is a key element in the development of women's football. The planned reform in governance will enable the association to build on the foundations of the development to date. Moving away from the traditional provincial structure to a new eight region structure will allow for more localised development. It provides clearer lines of communication from top to bottom and vice versa. It enables clear support for developing the women's game locally and nationally, through the new women's department, network of FAI development officers, departments within the FAI and the new women's football committee.

This new plan, enables greater interaction within all departments of the FAI. Ensuring that all departments are responsible for the inclusion of women's football within their respective departments. This, along with the changes in governance, will allow women's football have a stronger voice within the association.





STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Expand girls' and women's only programmes to increase participation.
2. Increased number of coaches and referees involved in women's football.
3. Maximise opportunities for increased exposure of women's football locally and nationally aligned with new communications strategy.
4. Increase key sponsorship activation in women's football.
5. Reform the current governance structure of women's football in Ireland.
6. Assist in the implementation of Player Registration System and review current women's structures and participation levels.



OUTCOMES

1. Three new programmes introduced by 2017 and increased participation in existing programmes by at least 10% per annum.
2. Four specific courses on women's football provided by 2020. Female only kick start course provided annually. Pilot female only referee course through the UEFA Free Kick programme. Female football opportunities presented in each education course.
3. Dedicated social media sites to promote women's football activities; balance reflected on all programmes within FAI social media.
4. Annual activation plan in place with all the key sponsors.
5. New FAI Women's Football Committee established. Eight new Regional Women's Football Committee established in line with the Women's Strategic Plan and FAI Player Development Plan.
6. Plans in place with our Development Officers to address potential areas of growth.



PILLAR 4

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Irish teams playing at World Cup and UEFA European championship finals is something that we as a nation and as a football community very much aspire to. We also want to see our underage International sides, boys and girls, regularly qualifying for the finals of major tournaments. To achieve this we need to increase the pool of players eligible and capable of playing International football for the Republic of Ireland.



Following the appointment of a High Performance Director, a Technical Advisory Group was established in 2014 comprising of coaches working across all levels of Irish football. The High Performance Director, working with the Technical Advisory Group, carried out a fundamental review of all aspects of how the underage game is played in Ireland. A comparison was done between the game formats in operation across a number of other countries and the various different playing formats being used in Ireland.

Following this review, 10 recommendations were presented to and adopted by the Board of the FAI, these recommendations form the basis of the FAI Player Development Plan and the outstanding theme running through all of these 10 recommendations is that any future model for the development of the underage game must be player centred.

To be successful in our goals we need the whole football community to work together to create uniformity in what young players experience when playing our game, no matter where they are in the country. Coaches and parents are of particular importance to the success of the Player Development Plan as is the football experience available to our young players especially at club level.

Player Development and players enjoying football is the core philosophy central to the Player Development Plan. It is essential that young players are free from the constant pressure of winning and are allowed freedom of expression on the pitch. The Player Development Plan is designed to facilitate all players to attain their highest possible standards, however the Player Development Plan is also designed to facilitate a pathway for our underage elite players by providing them with the appropriate levels of competitive football.

We acknowledge all of the good work that has been done by volunteers, coaches, clubs and leagues over the course of many years and the successes that have been achieved to date. The Player Development Plan, which is one of the key elements of the overall FAI Strategic Plan 2016/2020, aims to build on previous efforts and improve standards across all aspects of the game, especially in the area of coaching and competition structure.

All aspects of the welfare and wellbeing of young players are of paramount importance to the Player Development Plan. Young

players should be able to participate in an environment that is safe, inclusive and enjoyable. As a result, as they grow older and into adulthood, they will continue to be involved in our game.





STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Implement a player-focused model to reduce the emphasis on winning at all costs through a uniform playing and coaching style.
2. Restructure the playing model for underage football (boys/girls) to deliver a clear policy on the best age-specific formats of the game to be implemented by all leagues.
3. Increase coaching standards and recommended coaching levels at all age groups, to align with PDP
4. Establishment of FAI approved Underage Football Academies for age 6 to 12 years in local clubs.
5. Develop a consistent approach on Parent Education to help them understand the philosophy behind player development, its aims, goals and objectives.
6. Provide higher levels of competitive football for elite underage performers.



OUTCOMES

1. To assess if recommended playing and coaching style is being implemented and observed at key tournaments and competitions by 2020.
2. A clear age-specific playing format for underage football (boys and girls) implemented.
3. New coaching education pathway implemented with:
 - 8 annual CPD workshops (continuous professional development) delivered.
 - Introduction of new National 'C' and 'D' grassroots licence courses.
 - Increase the number of UEFA qualified coaches by 30% Pro licence, 10% for 'A'-licence and 10% for 'B'-licence.
4. 80 FAI Approved Club Academies established by 2020.
5. A clear pathway for all players established, linking in to the senior game and international football.
6. Parent Education workshops established and delivered across all Underage Leagues, outlining the role of parents in the player pathway.
7. New elite underage competition structures implemented by 2020.

PILLAR 5

SSE AIRTRICITY LEAGUE

INTRODUCTION

The SSE Airtricity League is the pinnacle of the game in Ireland and is the most competitive League in Europe with eight different clubs winning the Championship between 2004 and 2014*. The 2007 season was the first season of the agreed merger between the National League clubs and the FAI which saw the FAI take over the administration of all aspects of the League.

The U19 National League was introduced in 2011 season which was followed by the introduction of an U17 National League in the 2015 season. Both leagues are an integral part of the player development plan ensuring the establishment of an elite player pathway. Improved television coverage was secured with various broadcasters which was further enhanced by the introduction of a weekly hour long programme dedicated to Irish football on RTE. This in turn provides a nationwide platform to promote, the clubs, players and officials.

The merger is underpinned by the Participation Agreement which each club signs up to with the Association and is due to be revisited at the end of the 2016 season. At the commencement of the 2015 season a consultation process was announced by the FAI with all key stakeholders. The mandate was to:

SEEK VIEWS AS TO HOW THE CLUBS AND THE LEAGUE CURRENTLY OPERATE.

HEARS VIEWS ON HOW THE BEST CLUBS AND THE LEAGUE CAN MOVE FORWARD.

The process involved extensive dialogue with the 20 clubs, players, managers, referees, sponsors, partners and fans in addition to the many departments within the FAI which impact on the League. A total of 98 separate stakeholder interviews were conducted in tandem with contributions received from 1,774 supporters and members of the public via online surveys and questionnaires.

The stakeholder consultation led to a comprehensive 75 page report which was presented to National League clubs on September 28th and released to the general public the following day. The report suggests a vision for the future of the League and outlines a number of options for consideration as a path forward to 2020.

SSE Airtricity League "VISION"
"Healthier attendances at popular events which are well run by sustainable clubs and have high quality football played by players and clubs strongly embedded in their communities."

The suggested Goal area to encompass in a strategy for the League would include:

- Healthier attendances.
- Popular events, well run.
- Sustainable clubs.
- High quality football.
- Players and clubs, embedded in their communities.

To confirm this vision and adopt appropriate goals for the period to 2020, the report recommends a new structure, new brand, new marketing approach and a new club standards plan – Q Mark – for the League.





There are specific recommendations included in the proposed strategic approach including:

- Agreeing a new restructure for the Premier and First Division
- Re-vamping of League promotion / relegation
- Review of prize money for Premier and First Divisions and redistribution across Premier division
- Re-alignment of PR/Media activities – with one dedicated person for SSE Airtricity League
- Supplement the existing Broadcast agreements with revenues accruing to clubs
- Clubs (with FAI assistance) to develop a bespoke Q Mark system to raise and set standards - for graduated implementation from 2017 - 2020
- Establish a Board subcommittee to build on current successful facility development projects for SSE Airtricity League venues
- Develop a third level /Fetac education programme for club administrators
- FAI to assist Clubs on a pilot basis to create links with FAI Schools competitions and programme to target 50,000 schoolchildren

As the FAI strategic plan 2016-2020 is being finalised, the clubs and the FAI are engaged in a process of discussion and exploration of the preferred options recommended in the report for the development of the SSE Airtricity League for the next five years.

*UEFA Club Licensing Benchmarking Report 2014



PILLAR 6

NATIONAL

COMPETITIONS

INTRODUCTION

The FAI Competitions Department is tasked with administering National Competitions and Leagues in both the men's and women's game. Appropriate grassroots and elite competitions are at the heart of player development and enjoyment from recreational to elite. All competitions are based grounded on respect, integrity and fair play.

Currently the Association manages the following National Competitions:

- FAI Senior Cup
- National League
- National League Cup
- U19 National League
- U19 National League Cup
- U17 National League
- U17 National League Cup
- Intermediate Cup
- Youth Cup
- Youth Inter - Provincial Tournaments
- FAI Futsal Cup
- FAI Youth Inter-League Cup
- U17 National Cup
- Women's Senior Cup
- Women's National League
- Women's National League Cup
- Women's Intermediate Cup
- Women's Intermediate Shield
- Women's U18 Cup
- Women's U16 Cup
- Women's U14 Cup

The four provincial associations and their affiliates manage provincial competitions while their affiliated leagues manage local competitions. The Association provides support in areas such as administration, sponsorship, promotion, venues, match officials and various other logistics for the national competitions.

There are many discussions on competition development following the launch of the Player Development Plan. With this in mind, the FAI Board provides policy and leadership ensuring the appropriate competitions are in place to assist with the development of both the men's and women's game.

Player development is always a priority for the Association. A strong emphasis will be placed on achieving a balance between competitive and non-competitive participation for underage players. We will strive to roll out all national competitions to the highest possible standards



CLUB LICENSING

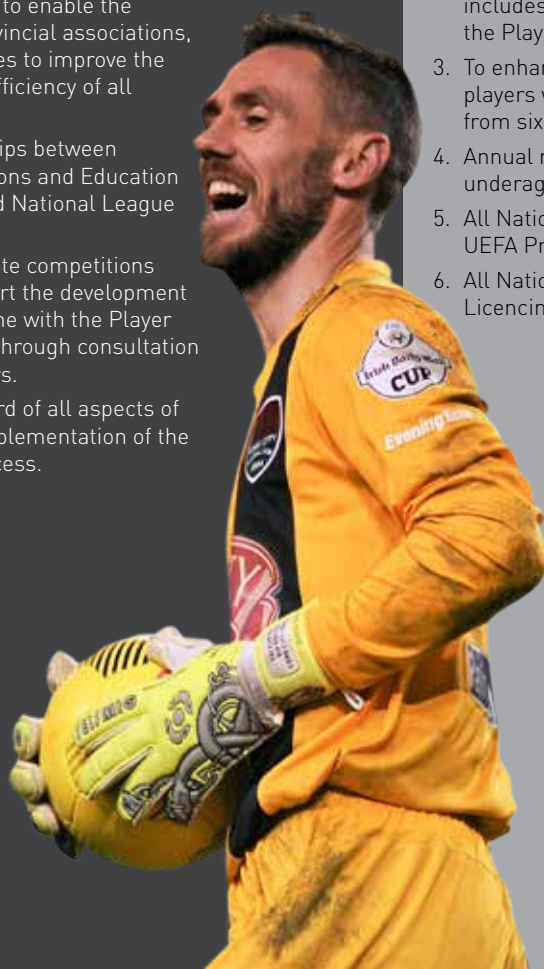
UEFA Club Licensing has been implemented in National League since 2004. During that period, the system has facilitated a culture of improvement within the National League. There are now more qualified coaches, grounds people, stewards, safety officers and event controllers, while improvements in infrastructure and financial reporting have been seen throughout the league.

Club licencing will be maintained and amended in line with UEFA guidelines and the Associations requirements to ensure a continuous pathway of improvement for all our participating clubs.



STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Improve the UEFA club co-efficient by providing enhanced support to the National League clubs in European competition.
2. Assist in developing and implementing a new online competition management and player registration system to enable the Association, its provincial associations, affiliates and leagues to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of all competitions.
3. Grow the partnerships between Third Level institutions and Education Training Boards and National League clubs.
4. Introduce appropriate competitions structures to support the development of elite players in line with the Player Development Plan through consultation with all stakeholders.
5. Improve the standard of all aspects of football through implementation of the Club Licencing process.



OUTCOMES

1. Online competition management and player registration system implemented on a phased bases beginning with the National League in 2016 and in full use by all department staff and participating clubs by 2020.
2. A national competition's framework developed which includes all national and regional competitions in line with the Player Development Plan.
3. To enhance the overall development and education of young players within the National Leagues through opportunities from six new Third Level partnerships.
4. Annual review of structure and participants in the National underage Leagues completed.
5. All National League Clubs first team coaches qualified to UEFA Pro Licence level
6. All National League Clubs in full compliance with Club Licencing at Senior and Underage Levels

PILLAR 7

INTERNATIONAL

FOOTBALL

INTRODUCTION

There is a recognition of the need to be constantly evolving to adapt to changes required to keep up with international football best practice. The Association is aiming high for its international teams with a desire for all teams to perform at the highest level, competing in Europe, where possible, and all underage teams qualifying for elite stages and finals.

To enable this to happen, a new high performance culture will be introduced for all international managers, coaches, staff and players. This begins with the philosophy introduced by the player development plan and builds up all the way to international level. It is supported by a number of other measures such as a National Academy in Abbotstown at various age groups and a scouting system for men and women. In addition to this, technology is an important element that must be embraced to maintain competitiveness.

The Association is committed to ensuring that all international teams are provided with excellent logistics, facilities, communications, kit and player support to ensure that our best compete with Europe's best at all levels of UEFA competition.

The Association organises over 160 matches for its senior and underage squads in Ireland and overseas every year. Perfect execution and delivery of this complex logistical undertaking is required every time. To continue to perform and deliver at the highest levels, it is imperative that the Association stays to the forefront of progress in the area; at the same high levels expected and delivered for UEFA Champions League club teams and top seeded European National Associations.

In so doing, the Association aims to nurture an environment designed for Elite Performance; an environment that enables and ultimately delivers success for all international squads. As part of this process technology, information sharing platforms, data analysis and performance analysis are playing an increasing role and the Association is committed to continued investment in this important area to remain among Europe's elite.

The Association aims to use the hosting of events such as UEFA EURO 2020 to showcase football, Dublin and Ireland and to enhance its reputation among important international and domestic stakeholders. The Association also intends to use this and similar events to deliver substantial, lasting benefits for the economy, tourism and the Irish football family.





STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Consistent qualification for the latter stages of all UEFA/ FIFA competitions for all International Teams through increased training programmes.
2. Host successful UEFA EURO 2020 group matches and submit applications for two additional underage tournaments.
3. Embed a high performance culture amongst all International teams.
4. Provide new scouting and support systems including a centralised database for both domestic and international (for men's and women's teams)
5. Launch a National Academy for Boys and Girls International Teams between the ages of 12-15.
6. Provide a comprehensive performance analysis system for all International Teams
7. Deliver the highest standards of International football operations.



OUTCOMES

1. Increased training and competition programmes implemented for each for each age group level (men and women) benchmarked against appropriate European countries.
2. Two applications submitted for underage international tournaments and thorough operation plan implemented for 2020.
3. Comprehensive policy document created for International coaches to highlight and implement the expected high performance culture.
4. Scouting and support system developed and implemented for eligible domestic and international players.
5. National Academy launched for age groups 12-15 by 2017.
6. New enhanced performance analysis system put in place
7. On-site barcoded kit-tracking, warehousing, stock control, and logistics operation developed to serve all international squads.

PILLAR 8

FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

The investment in football facilities has been and continues to be a key driver for the development of our game. The Association has played an active and progressive role in facility development since 2002, when funding via the Irish Government's Sports Capital Programme was increased significantly. The absence of a Sports Capital Programme that clubs could participate in between 2008 and 2012 on account of the economic crisis hindered but did not stop this progress.

This last decade has seen the development of key national infrastructure such as the Aviva Stadium and the FAI National Training Centre at Abbotstown. At Regional and Local level infrastructure developments have also been made. National League clubs, including Sligo Rovers, Galway United, Shamrock Rovers and Cork City Football Clubs amongst others, have benefitted from improvements in their grounds. Almost 60 full size artificial football pitches have been developed throughout the country and the vast majority of clubs have access to changing room facilities. The increased proliferation of floodlights throughout the country is providing greater flexibility for the playing of matches.

The FAI has developed close relationships with Local Authorities who have played a major role in supporting the development of the game. It is estimated that up to 80% of clubs in Dublin are dependent, in some way, on the provision of facilities by their Local Authority.

However, there are significant issues and challenges relating to the development and sustainability of facilities to meet the demands of the game. A lack of title to lands either by way of freehold title or long term leases disadvantages many clubs in their efforts to access funding streams to develop their facilities. Some clubs are also suffering under the

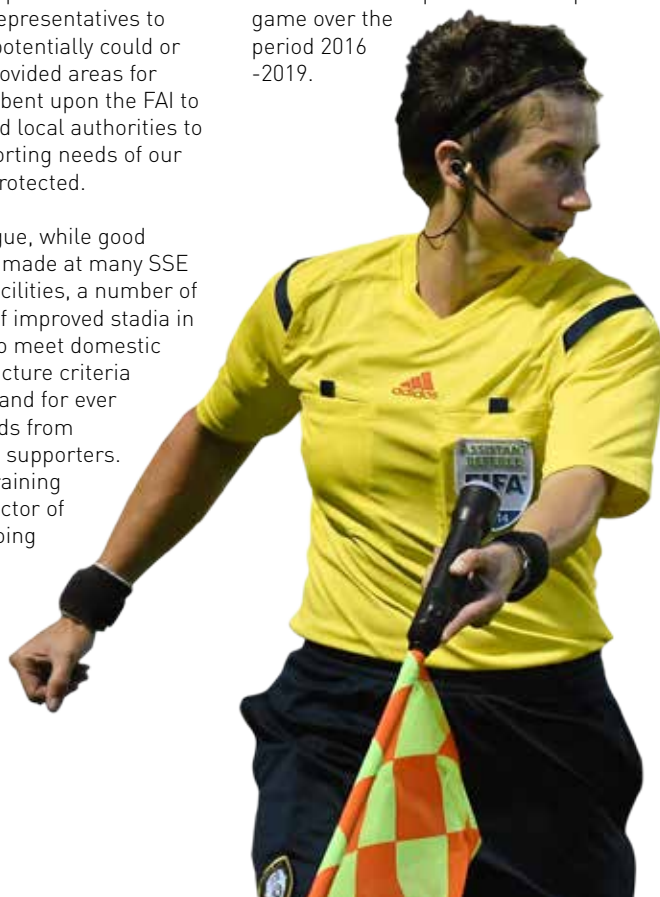
burden of debt arising from previous investment in facilities and the demand and strain on volunteers in their efforts to manage, maintain and sustain their facilities.

A resurgent issue is the current demand for housing, particularly in major urban areas such as Dublin City, where land is increasingly scarce and will in turn put pressure on land owners and local representatives to rezone lands that potentially could or have historically provided areas for pitches. It is incumbent upon the FAI to work with clubs and local authorities to ensure that the sporting needs of our communities are protected.

In the national league, while good progress has been made at many SSE Airtricity League facilities, a number of clubs are in need of improved stadia in order to continue to meet domestic and UEFA infrastructure criteria as well as the demand for ever increasing standards from players, media and supporters. Access to quality training facilities for this sector of the game is also going to be vital as they expand their youth development programmes in line with the FAI's Player Development Plan.

The development of the FAI's National Training Centre at the National Sports Campus has been a major achievement and provides the base from which a world class facility can be developed.

This section of the Strategic Plan will highlight how the Association will support the wider ambition of maintaining and developing the infrastructure required to develop the game over the period 2016 -2019.





STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Support the provision of new facilities and pitches in key locations to FAI Standards in order to sustain existing participation and support new participation
2. Provide opportunities for volunteers to build skills in the area of facility development, management and maintenance
3. Ensure that current playing pitches and facilities are protected from being developed for alternative non sporting uses for the benefit of current and future participants
4. Invest in existing facilities and pitches, ensuring that participation in the game is sustained as well as expanded
5. Continue to maintain and maximise a return in investment from key FAI assets such as the Aviva Stadium and National Training Centre



OUTCOMES

1. A 10% increase in the number of valid applications to the Sports Capital Programme leading to increased funding for Football via the Sports Capital Programme. Development of a new Centre of Excellence for Munster at Glanmire, Cork. Detailed plans in place for the development of a Centre of Excellence in the Greater Leinster area and the Connaught / Ulster area. 70 competition standard full size artificial turf pitches.
2. An updated library of printed and online materials for volunteers to access which will provide guidance for those seeking to develop their club infrastructure. A protocol in place to support clubs in their effort to own their own grounds
3. 100 Groundstaff / Pitch Maintenance personnel at Grassroots and National League level with FETAC accredited Turf Maintenance qualifications
4. Improvements in the quality of pitches at National League level. 10% Increase in the number of local authority pitches available for football in Urban Areas.
5. The redevelopment of Dalymount Park and the Brandywell Stadium and the completion of a new stadium for Finn Harps FC
6. Support the completion of an additional phase of works at the FAI National Training Centre to include the development of a full size indoor pitch and additional changing facilities

PILLAR 9

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

The development of the Association's organisational capacity is key to the game's progress. As the Association's administrative structures work in tandem with the network of volunteers and committees, the continued development of the structures and the people is an important component to delivering the ambitions within this Strategic Plan.

Governance throughout the Association is at a high level and will be maintained as such. The FAI is a company and as such is bound by the provisions of the Companies Act 2014. In addition the FAI rule book provides for a number of checks and balances in the governance structure. The Council is responsible for monitoring the Board's governance of the Association. The AGM is the supreme and legislative body and any changes to the rules of the FAI must be supported by a two thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote at an AGM or EGM. There are also a number of committees which oversee different areas of the Association including the Legal & Corporate Affairs Committee, the Domestic Committee, the Finance Committee, the Development Committee, the International Committee, the Underage Committee and the National League Executive Committee. Every year the FAI's accounts are audited by an external audit committee and in addition to this there is an internal audit committee monitoring the accounts throughout the year. The Association constantly strives to improve its governance and in 2016 the Women's Football Association of Ireland will be merged into the FAI and the Women's Football Committee shall be formed.

The organisation structure will be reviewed regularly to ensure efficiency, productivity and maintaining effective corporate and brand management. The staff within the Association work tirelessly and professionally with our football family to promote the Association and the required resourcing levels will be reviewed regularly to ensure effectiveness and maximisation of output towards the goals/strategy set out in this document.

The financial strength of FAI provides a solid base on which strategies for growth can be built. We have identified a number of key areas, within Financial Management, which will help towards resourcing this strategy up to and past 2020, these include:

- Revenue generation and elongation.
- Cost stability, with tight management.
- Identification and maximisation of opportunities available through our current facilities (i.e. National Training Centre, Aviva Stadium, qualification for Major Championships, etc.).
- Continuous investment in the game in a professional manner.





The financial planning for the Association is done both in the short term, via annual budgeting, and long term through a budget up to and past 2020. In the short term, during 2016, the management and restructure of our overall debt will provide/free up resources for use/investment in other areas.

Within our Association we aim to continually increase efficiency and effectiveness through the use of Information Technology (IT). One of the main areas of focus, from an IT point of view, during the life of this strategy is data, its collection at first and subsequently the analysis and use to benefit the Association. Two areas of focus lead from this; player information and commercial information.

The need for a fully functioning Player Registration system is evident throughout the Association. The current structure, where information about people playing football in Ireland is not owned by the Association, cannot continue and will not allow us to meet UEFA/FIFA regulations in the coming years.

We have identified and will implement a system that will allow us, at a minimum, to gather data about our football family in the following areas:

- Players
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Location
- Clubs
 - Location
 - No. of Teams
 - Key Officers (including contact information)

In line with our commitment to the UEFA GROW 2020 strategy, this system, which we will brand FANet, will support the Association to grow and retain participation numbers through data analysis and directed actions from the analysis.

As the governing body of football in Ireland, we rely heavily on our ability to manage, maintain and increase our Commercial income streams. These include, but not limited to, sponsorship, television, ticketing, coach education, Soccer Schools, etc. We also manage a large number of stakeholders and fans through digital and non-digital platforms. A Single Customer View (SCV) system would provide the Association with an aggregated, consistent and holistic view of our customers, fans and stakeholders. This will represent a vital element of the individual Commercial and Communication strategies

underlying this overall document. This is also a solid link between FAI and UEFA strategies, providing focus on the growth and image of the game in Ireland.

Specific to Communications, we will develop and implement a Communications Strategy which will aim to increase our audience in the short term, in advance of Euro 2016, and long term up to 2020 and beyond. A focus on digital will be at the core of this strategy with increased content, including video, on our platforms (websites + social media) communicating and engaging with our fans around all areas of the game in Ireland.

PILLAR 9

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Strong financial management, invest in Irish football and control the cost base in an effective manner.
2. Development, Implement and Manage a Player Registrations system (FAInet) including Competition Management, Education and Data management.
3. Commercial drive to maintain current income level and grow where possible using opportunities included, but not limited to, Euro 2016, National Training Centre and Aviva Stadium.
4. Adopt a proactive People Management strategy aligned to the overall strategy, allowing our team to remain agile and responsive to the fast changing business and football environment.
5. Develop and implement a communications strategy for the Association to provide quality content to FAI audience and stakeholders, with a focus on digital platforms, to maximise benefit from the IT infrastructure and digital services, allowing for adaptation to new digital trends; and to provide evidence based decision capability from web and social analytics.



OUTCOMES

1. Refinanced Debt by 2016 and reduced interest cost borne annually.
2. Develop, implement and continually manage FAInet.
3. Adopt the UEFA Good Governance Code in 2016.
4. Implemented Single Customer View (SCV) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software packages taking full benefit from qualification for Euro 2016.
5. Integrated IT as a core element of the Communications strategy to maximise impact across all channels.
6. People Management Strategy developed which has at its' core an enabled, motivated, committed and skilled staff, supported by a strong Leadership Team. Training, guidance, expertise, and effective processes and tools provided that support the implementation of our Business Strategy.

**“THE FUTURE, AS WE APPROACH
OUR CENTENARY YEAR, CAN BE
A VERY BRIGHT ONE”**

FINANCE

FINANCING THE ASSOCIATION INTO THE FUTURE

The focus on income generation and cost management remains crucial to the Association on an ongoing basis and will assist in funding the FAI Strategy 2016 -2020. The elongation and security of income streams, particularly in Commercial, Ticketing and Sponsorship areas, is the lifeblood of Irish football, providing a strong, stable base on which we can seek further opportunities to grow the Association through this Strategy.

It is vital to the success of the FAI to effectively manage the debt level. We continue to structure this debt to ensure it is both manageable and serviced but at the same time allowing for investment by the Association into the game. Throughout the life of this strategy, we will remain focused on managing our debt and we continue to aim to be debt free at the end of the 2020.

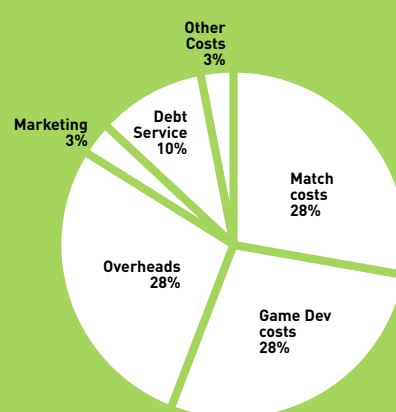
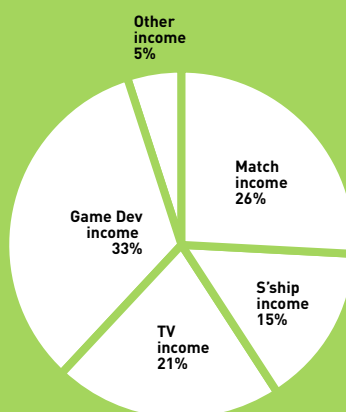
TOP LEVEL REVIEW OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

INCOME

- The importance of the Senior International Teams to each element of our Association is demonstrated by their impact on sponsorship, TV, commercial and ticketing income.
- Grant income from Sport Ireland, UEFA, FIFA and other sources on an annual basis assists in driving the overall goals of Association at all levels of the game from the International teams to Grassroots programmes.
- A key aim within the income generating areas is the elongation, where possible, of the income. This is done through long-term partnerships with strong businesses in Ireland and internationally. Long term ticketing options, corporate boxes, annual season tickets etc. which allows for greater stability of income generation from match days.

EXPENDITURE

- The cost base of our Association continues to be managed tightly with all areas of expenditure continually challenging to ensure effective use of available resources.
- Our Senior International Teams account for approx. 28% of total expenditure over the course of a five year period. This is inclusive of annual payments to the stadium to cover running costs.
- Games development costs is the next largest area of expense covering all costs of Non Senior teams, Technical Programmes, High Performance and Coach Education and FAS/ETB courses.
- Overheads consisting of payroll, normal business operations, Airtricity League, etc account for a further 28% of expenditure.



IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATIONS

The Statement of Strategy highlights the strategic direction that the FAI is aiming towards for the next five years. It indicates clear priorities through each of the nine pillars and sets out some challenging goals for the association. In order for these to be realised, a detailed implementation plan will be put into place to oversee and monitor the progress throughout this time period. It will be based on the implementation plan used successfully for the previous FAI Statement of Strategy from 2011. This will consist of the breakdown of the strategy into annual operation plans monitored by a Strategy Implementation Committee.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

A Strategy Implementation Committee will oversee the development and implementation of operational plans to realise the strategic goals as set out in the Statement of Strategy.

The Committee will be chaired by the CEO and contain representatives from the Board, executive staff members and an independent external consultant. The composition and terms of reference for this Committee has been approved by the Board.

This committee will meet on a quarterly basis to monitor the progress of the operational plans in line with the Statement of Strategy.

RESOURCES

The planning process will require detailed examination of the financial, human and technological resources required to facilitate achievement of the goals within the Statement of Strategy. These resources will be assessed and monitored by the Implementation Committee to ensure the effective budgetary management of the total resources required.



OPERATIONAL PLANS

Annual operational plans are to be developed to contribute to the achievement of the Association's Statement of Strategy. Details of the operational plans will include the development of:

- Specific operational activities aligned to the key goals.
- Key performance indicators to measure organisational performance against the strategic goals.
- Detailed timescales and milestone setting for each key goal.
- Identification of information flows and communications requirements.
- Specific revenue and expenditure estimates for each task associated with the key goals.

Operational plans are the framework for departmental and individual objectives which provide the foundation of performance management within the Association. In order to achieve these objectives the Association adopts a calendar approach to performance planning. Clear time requirements are placed on managers to complete objectives and conduct performance reviews.







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