



FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND
**SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY**

SEES





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FOOTBALL & SOCIETY CONTEXT

Sport plays an important role when it comes to Environmental, Social, and Governance-related (ESG) issues.

At the FAI, we are convinced that football can, and should, be a part of the solution, whether through its impact on health and wellbeing, climate action and environmental sustainability or equality and inclusion. Football has the capacity to promote health and well-being among huge swathes of the population, and can facilitate education and employability among marginalised and non-marginalised groups. Indeed, football's reach as a communication channel is unrivalled by any other medium.

Throughout our 100-year history, the committed work of the Association and its experienced and expert staff has led to numerous success stories. The FAI was the first sport governing body in Ireland to appoint a national coordinator focused on delivering pathways for players with various disabilities from club to country. In the past number of years, it has established a number of associations to govern within Football For All programmes and now has approximately 3,800 participating players.

The Association was also the first to appoint someone with a specific responsibility and national oversight for interculturalism and football. The Intercultural Football Plan was established within the context of a more diverse Irish society, to strategically encourage increased participation among people from diverse minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds, whilst also challenging and preventing the spread of racism within the game.

Late Night Leagues in collaboration with An Garda Síochána and other Community actors have been run in local communities to engage youth, some who are at risk of anti-social behaviour. More recently, walking football initiatives have developed nationwide, to engage older adults to be more physically active and or return to football. These are just a few examples of the ways in which football has engaged with individuals and communities.

The current impact of football across social, health and economic indices has been estimated to be 1.80 billion euros according to the UEFA GROW Social Return on Investment Report Football Association of Ireland SROI Report 2021. With Social Return on Investment impact on health €1.14B, social €303.87M and economic €355.25M.

As the governing body of football in Ireland we recognise our responsibility to lead by example, which is why we're committed to addressing the issues that matter most - and we ask & encourage all football stakeholders to join us.

This Social and Environmental Sustainability Strategy (SES for short), in the wake of the FAI's overarching strategy, can be viewed as yet another expression of our new approach towards how we conduct our affairs. And we continue afresh on this new path in closer harmony with Sport Ireland, whilst seeking new or enhancing existing relationships with other relevant national and local state actors/partners, corporate sponsors and NGOs. These include the Departments of Environment, Climate, & Communications; Health (Healthy Ireland); Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youths, as well as expert equality and human rights organisations such as the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission. We have partnered with regional and local authorities and civil society organisations alongside our close collaboration with our allies in football, UEFA and FIFA, and we continually work to align with relevant in national, European Union and United Nations legislations, policies, and resolutions.

The FAI is committed to playing its part, and we look forward to working with our partners and other stakeholders to translate this strategy into long-term, meaningful outcomes.

FOOTBALL HAS A ROLE TO PLAY



OUR SES FRAMEWORK & PRIORITIES



OUR SES FRAMEWORK

OUR THREE SES PRIORITIES

1. CLIMATE ACTION & ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



Our Values

Our Vision
USING FOOTBALL TO
INSPIRE THE NATION
AND CONNECT
COMMUNITIES

PROGRESS



PASSION



Our Purpose
TO ENRICH THE LIVES
OF ALL THROUGH
POSITIVE FOOTBALL
EXPERIENCES

TOGETHERNESS



3. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

2. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



ETHICAL LEADERSHIP
Enabler



SES Priorities & Enabler

The principal driver within the process of defining our three SES Priorities was alignment with our overarching FAI strategy. As such, work carried out under each Priority will support progress towards our Strategic Pillars, facilitate the use of our Enablers, and stand to benefit our key stakeholders and other groups in society.

The FAI's three SES Priorities are:

1. Climate Action & Environmental Sustainability
 2. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
 3. Health and Well-being
- And Ethical Governance - the overarching organisational SES enabler.

The table below illustrates the alignment of the SES Priorities to the overarching FAI strategy.

Three SES Priorities & Organisational Enabler



Enabler

Strategic Pillars

	1.	2.	3.	Enabler
Transforming football facilities and infrastructure	✓	✓		✓
Driving Grassroots football as the heart of the game		✓		✓
Nurturing Football Pathways for All		✓	✓	✓
Developing the full potential of football for Women and Girls		✓	✓	✓
Framing the Future of our League of Ireland	✓	✓	✓	
Building for International success		✓	✓	✓

Enablers

Building a best-in-class, fit-for-purpose organisation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Embracing Digital Technologies	✓	✓	✓	✓
Building a Trusted and Respected brand	✓	✓	✓	✓
Driving Investment to achieve our Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Developing a collaborative and inclusive culture	✓	✓	✓	✓

Key football stakeholders

Players	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fans	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coaches	✓	✓	✓	✓
Administrators	✓	✓	✓	✓
Referees	✓	✓	✓	✓
Volunteers	✓	✓	✓	✓



CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The effects of climate change on football, people and planet are well publicised. Most common is the damage to facilities and infrastructure, training grounds, and pitches, caused by rising sea levels and extreme weather conditions. This leads to economic demise due to the necessity for reinvestment and revenue loss through fixture disruptions.

However, football is not just a victim of change, but an important contributor too. It's about using the unique power of football as a communication channel and reaching communities to make change that people can respond to. Our role as the governing body of football in the Republic of Ireland is to inform, educate, and collaborate with others to reduce the collective impact of football and wider society.



“We need football clubs to start mobilizing their social media to help their fans, because at the end of the day, clubs draw their legitimacy from their fans.”

Seán McCabe / Bohemians

Existing initiatives:

- **2022-2023 – GreenCode Accreditation** - a new sustainability drive aimed at improving the environmental footprint of Irish football. The initiative will see every club across the leagues given access to internationally recognised sustainability accreditation experts. Using their experience in football sustainability, GreenCode will help the clubs audit, measure, and drive their environmental initiatives towards full accreditation.
- **2021 – Common Goal** - Clubs encouraged and incentivised by FAI sponsor SSE Airtricity to engage in environmental sustainability activities.
- **The FAI’s Nissan EPower fleet** of vehicles helps reduce CO₂ emissions for journeys.
- **EU Green Foot project** - Increasing our HQ building’s energy efficiency through renovations with renewable energy installations is a key target for the Football Association of Ireland. Working within the GREENFOOT project has helped tackle the Association’s CO₂ production within our HQ building, for example through installing LED lighting. Waste segregation units are in place in the FAI HQ
- **Bohemian FC EU funded project “The Spark”** which will serve as the capacity-building strand of the Bohemian Climate Cooperative - a place-based and community-led initiative to enable ambitious climate action and local community wealth building.

Between 2024 and 2025 we will:

Raise awareness and advocate on climate action and environmental protection across the football community

Lead from the front by embedding sustainability action in FAI policies and operations at national and local levels

OUR ROLE AS THE GOVERNING BODY OF FOOTBALL IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND IS TO INFORM, EDUCATE, AND COLLABORATE WITH OTHERS TO REDUCE THE COLLECTIVE IMPACT THROUGH FOOTBALL AND THE WIDER SOCIETY IN THE COUNTRY.

1. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

How we will measure our progress:

What we need to do:	Targets	Key performance indicators (KPIs)	Timeline	SDGS & UEFA Alignment
ADOPT UN SPORT FOR CLIMATE ACTION FRAMEWORK	Become a signatory of the UN's Sports for Climate Action (S4CA) framework	Calculate organisational GHG emissions	2024 - 2027	     
		Reduction plan in place	2024 - 2027	
		% of Calculated emissions reduced	2024 -2027	
SUSTAINABLE SOURCING	Adopt a sustainable sourcing policy that sets out environmental, social responsibility, and local economy standards suppliers are expected to meet.	Policy in place	2024 -2027	
		% of tenders with an element of sustainability (social & environmental sustainability)	2024 -2027	
		% of relevant staff provided with training	2024 -2027	
TRAVEL	Adopt a sustainable travel policy aimed at reducing the emissions burden of travel including matchday traffic on local communities	Policy in place	2024 -2027	
		% of GHG emissions reduction, set in line with BL calculations.	2024 -2027	
		% of Carbon mitigation strategies in place for Team & Staff travel - Sustainable airline travel	2024 -2027	
SUSTAINABLE FUNDING	Research & develop ESG & other sustainable funding avenues to support SES (Social and Environmental Sustainability) work	% of Sustainability funding in place	2024 -2027	
		# of partnerships	2024 -2027	
		# funding staff in place		
WASTE MANAGEMENT	Implement a waste management plan at FAI locations and across owned events	% of FAI locations and owned events included in waste mgt plan	2024 -2027	  
		% of relevant staff and volunteers trained	2024 -2027	
		# of Recycling initiatives communicated	2024 -2025	
COMMUNICATE ON FOOTBALL'S SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY WORK	Communication plan in place	# of Ambassadors	2024 -2025	
		% of Communication strategy implemented	2024 -2027	
		#% of SES/ESG initiatives communicated	2024 -2027	

WHAT OUR STAKEHOLDERS SAID:

“Demonstrate how this will affect our future”

“Educate leagues and clubs on what they can do to help”

“Establish funding schemes for clubs to maintain training facilities and pitches in a green way”



SES PRIORITY 2



EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

One of our main goals as the national governing body of football in Ireland is, and has always been, to encourage and facilitate participation in our great game to all that want to be involved. We aim always to do so with due regard and alignment to the best equality, diversity, inclusion policy and practice in the state.



Sport Ireland's Research & Consultation Report (2021) set out a comprehensive overview of the barriers and challenges to participation in sport and physical activity for people with a disability, people from minority ethnic communities including Irish Travellers, and individuals from the LGBTI+ community. Among the most prominent barriers and challenges was a preference among LGBTI+ respondents for non-competitive, individual sport because of low confidence, self-esteem or perceived lack of ability; a lack of accessibility of facilities and equipment for disabled respondents; and attitudinal barriers - not feeling welcome or included within sport and physical activity settings for ethnic minority respondents. Our responsibility is to assess the policies, practices, and procedures that influence these areas within our organisation and ensure that those within the game – players, coaches, administrators, referees, and so on – have open and unrestricted access to the various areas of the game that would benefit from their involvement.



“Research carried out in 2021 found that 70% of people agree that sport clubs actively welcome those from diverse ethnic backgrounds, however lower proportions feel sports clubs are welcoming to those from LGBTI+ community (59%) or to those from Traveller or Roma backgrounds (32%).”

Sport Ireland Policy on Diversity and Inclusion in Sport (2022)

Existing initiatives:

- **Football for All programme** - provides participation opportunities for persons with a disability nationally
- **Walking Football** – a health and well-being social programme which targets older adults, providing weekly recreational Walking Football sessions. Some playing via initiatives led by the FAI and Local Sports Partnerships, and others with active age and community organisations, such as Age & Opportunity and the Irish Men’s Sheds Association. Walking Football is also active in some grassroots and League of Ireland clubs
- **Equal pay** for female national team players
- **Non-discrimination education** - preventative, reactive or restorative educational workshops offered to affiliates & FAI staff. These are designed to raise awareness, set out steps to challenge and manage discrimination, and promote the zero tolerance stance of the Association
- **Anti-discrimination regulations and protocols** – are specified in FAI disciplinary regulations with supplementary operating protocols for Referees
- **Late Night Leagues** - engagement initiative for youth in local communities in conjunction with Garda ‘UEFA Playmakers – participation opportunity for girls
- **Women-only** Coach Education courses
- **Refugee inclusion initiatives & projects** - with support from UEFA
- **EU sport and inclusion projects** – for example the pan European Sport Together, Sporting Chance and Football Including Refugees in Europe projects, and Football Memories – a dementia-friendly social initiative promoting well-being and combatting social isolation which targets older people in the community
- **Child Safeguarding** - policy and training aligned with Children First Act

Between 2024 and 2027 we will:

Focus on Representative participation and engagement - Build capacity to achieve a minimum representation and participation rate (%) reflective of diversity in Irish society, across all FAI departments’ activities

Focus on Inclusive football - Establish an inclusive football ecosystem that guarantees equal rights and opportunities to all active in the sport

Focus on Non-discrimination - Have all forms of racism and discrimination reported, managed & administered at all levels of football

Be a driving organisation and advocate for the implementation of SES best-practice engaging and supporting through education and partnerships

Focus on Barrier-Free Access - Assess & action barrier-free access for any individual wanting to play, attend events or work in football

2. EQUITY, EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

How we will measure our progress:

What we need to do:	Targets	Key performance indicators (KPIs)	Timeline	SDGS & UEFA Alignment
NON-DISCRIMINATION ACTION PLAN	Reviewed & implemented	# of departmental action plans in place	2024-2027	       
		% of action plans activities implemented & measured quarterly	2024-2027	
EDI POLICY	Create FAI EDI policy	% of Policy implemented	2024-2027	
		EDI Education strategy developed	2024-2027	
		% of all staff trained annually	2024-2027	
DISCRIMINATION MONITORING	Establish a centralised monitoring and reporting process across the football ecosystem, to observe all incidents of discrimination. The process will support the process of sign posting, tracking, and addressing complaints relating to discrimination	Annual review of policy and training	2024-2027	
		% of Leagues/Affiliates integrated within system	2024-2027	
		# of reports/incidents (weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly)	2024-2027	
		# of reports/ incidents administered	2024-2027	
NATIONAL FOOTBALL DIVERSITY ADVISORY PANEL	Establish a Football National Advisory panel to provide insights that support and enhance the Associations EDI work	# of awareness campaigns (B-T)	2024-2027	
		Call for members	2025-2027	
		# of scheduled meetings/year (B-T). Review Panel annually	2025-2027	
ASSIGN SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICERS FOR LOW PARTICIPATION GROUPS	Funding sourced, officers assigned	# of engagement officers for each low-participation group	2025-2027	
		% increase in participants across each low participation group	2025-2027	
WORKFORCE DIVERSITY	Develop Workforce Diversity action plan	% of staff from target groups in leadership positions	2025-2027	
		% of staff from target groups	2025-2027	
EDI STATEMENT	Create and publish	100% statement drafted, signed off & published	2024-2027	
CLUB MARK	Add appropriately scaled SES/EDI standards to 'Grassroots Club Mark' programme covering volunteering, coaching, participation, equality	# of club mark clubs meeting minimum criteria	2024-2027	
		% of clubs monitored	2024-2027	
		# of Equality officers	2024-2027	
RESEARCH, MONITORING AND INSIGHTS	Ensure a comprehensive cross-departmental data monitoring/ collection system is in place to enable review of barriers/enablers to participation across programmes	% programmes monitored # of actions based on insights	2024-2027 2024-2027	

What we need to do:	Targets	Key performance indicators (KPIs)	Timeline	SDGs & UEFA Alignment
ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL	Accessibility mapping leading to enhanced access Develop and deliver a Disability Football/Football For All Strategy to promote opportunities for players with disabilities to play football	Number of DAOs in place	2024-2027	   
		% of barrier-free venues	2025-2027	
		% of relevant staff and volunteers receiving training	2024-2027	
		Number of training sessions delivered annually	2024-2027	
		# of FAI channels and platforms where venue and/or activity accessibility information is available	2024-2027	
PARTNERSHIPS	Secure an SES Corporate Sponsorship partner for each of the 3 pillars		2024-2027	
COMP TICKETS	Complimentary live match opportunities for specific under-represented groups		2024-2027	
ORGANISATIONAL PARTNERS	Identify partnerships with football, community, EU, and state actors to develop and run programmes	# of partnerships	2024-2027	
		# of programmes/initiatives run	2024-2027	
SUPPORT LOI CLUBS TO DEVELOP SES CAPACITY	Work with partners to assist LOI clubs to develop collaborative partnership for programmes/initiatives centred on relevant SES/EDI thematic areas (e.g., inclusion, education, the environment, health and well-being etc.)	# of partnerships, state and/or private (B-T).	2024-2027	   
		% of LOI clubs with SES officers (B-T).	2024-2027	
		% of clubs with SES Strategies	2024-2027	
DESIGNATE SES CHAMPION (S) OR REPRESENTATIVE	Champion on Board.	# Champions	2024-2027	
	Commitments to SES performance clearly noted in FAI annual report	SES section in Annual Report	2024-2027	
GOVERNANCE	Ensure SES outputs are aligned with the Sport Ireland Governance Code for Sport, D&I policy and other legal obligations, codes/frameworks	% of policies/relevant legal obligations, codes & frameworks reviewed	2024-2027	
		% of policies aligned	2024-2027	

WHAT OUR STAKEHOLDERS SAID:

“Put emphasis on participation not competition.”

“FAI staff make-up should reflect the society we live in.”

“Assign engagement officers for low-participation groups.”



FOOTBALL FOR ALL

Promoting Inclusion

O'Neills

bcu
RAY CREDIT UNION





HEALTH AND WELLBEING



According to a Healthy Ireland survey, 92% of people in Ireland want to improve their health and wellbeing. The health and wellbeing benefits of football are well-known, with reported healthcare savings from football participation amounting to €1.14 billion. This includes €862 million from improved subjective wellbeing, €261 million from reduced incidence of CVD and diabetes, €13 million from reduced incidence of mental health conditions, €2 million from reduced cases of cancer, and €896k from health-related projects and programmes¹.

The FAI subscribes to Healthy Ireland's Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025, which is led by the vision that health and wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society, and is everyone's responsibility. The FAI acknowledges its role in ensuring that everyone should enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential. Our responsibility is to promote participation in our Game, while educating all on advantages of playing. But, we also must raise awareness about the potential dangers that arise through involvement in the game, such as overtraining injuries, anxiety and stress that can be felt by those performing frequently.



“One of the key strategies for the FAI going forward is to grow participation at all levels of the game for girls, boys, women and men and we can now see the positive impact increased participation will have on Irish life as well.”

Ger McDermott
FAI Grassroots Director

1. Landmark survey carried out for the FAI by UEFA and endorsed by the World Health Organisation, United Nations and the Council of Europe's Enlarged Participation Agreement on Sport (EPAS) <https://www.fai.ie/domestic/news/uefa-sroi-study-confirms-%E2%82%AC18bn-impact>

Existing initiatives:

- Kick Start to Recovery
- Walking football
- Cadbury Kick Fit
- National League Mental Health Campaign
- Healthy Ireland Fund to LOI Clubs for health and wellbeing initiatives

Between 2024 and 2027 we will:

Promote and further mobilise the football community to widen the engagement of players across age groups, particularly older people

Safeguard health and well-being through football activities across all age groups and through awareness-raising activities around non communicable disease.

How we will measure our progress:

What we need to do:	Targets	Key performance indicators (KPIs)	Timeline	SDGS & UEFA Alignment
RECREATIONAL FOOTBALL	Partner to provide regular playing opportunities for seniors and other target groups e.g., via walking football & other initiatives	# of programmes	2024-2027	  
		# of participants	2024-2027	
		# of programmes in new locations	2024-2027	
HEALTH & WELL-BEING PARTNERSHIPS	Establish partnerships including national expert organisations at state & other levels	# of partnerships with state actors	2024-2027	
		# of programmes	2024-2027	
MENTAL HEALTH IN FOOTBALL	Assess level of knowledge relating to football's impact on mental health including for mental health supports/ services for youth players	Assessment/review completed	2024-2027	
		# joint research conducted	2024-2027	
		% knowledge integration into relevant courses and programmes	2024-2027	
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS	Mental health awareness campaigns targeted at FAI staff and stakeholders (players - particularly youth, coaches, referees, parents, etc.)	# of campaigns	2024-2027	 
		# of participants	2024-2027	
HEALTH & WELL-BEING EDUCATION	Provide education about healthier diets, responsible alcohol consumption and smoke-free lifestyles	# of education initiatives	2024-2027	

WHAT OUR STAKEHOLDERS SAID:

“Build physical and mental health support and education into courses”.

“Commission research on how football impacts mental health”

“Decrease in drop-out rate in transition from youth to senior play”





ETHICAL GOVERNANCE

The FAI has undergone a transformational change programme that is unparalleled in Irish Sport. The absence of basic governance principles was laid bare in 2019 and a framework for reform was outlined. 163 recommendations were identified across a range of areas. Having completed 98% of the actions outlined (with the final 2% still committed to), we reflect on the MOU journey as having been hugely positive. With the help of Sport Ireland, the Association has transformed, and we believe now represents best in class for the Irish sports industry. The next step for the FAI is to ensure that robust Governance is cascaded down to our affiliates.².

A fundamental good governance obligation is the concept of checks and balances and the separation of powers. This is supported by having clarity of roles and responsibilities in our organisation. This principle has been adopted as part of the SES Strategy to ensure that tasks are clearly assigned, and a monitoring mechanism is in place to track and report on progress against objectives. Our responsibility is to ensure continual progress is aligned with our business goals as well as our stakeholder's regulations, recommendations, charters, and expectations. This involves acting as a custodian to clubs, leagues and affiliates helping them to develop similar SES strategies that can expand football's positive impact across the country.

2. Governance Code for Sport Comply or Explain Form <https://www.fai.ie/sites/default/files/atoms/files/FAI%20GCS%20Comply%20or%20Explain%20Form%202022.pdf>

"We believe that the progress that has been made has been really transformational. The organisation has become a very secure and solid organisation."

Dr Una May, CEO Sport Ireland (2024)

Ethical Governance is what underpins our entire SES strategy. We require ethical governance in order to:

BRING OUR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES TO LIFE ENSURING ORGANISATIONAL ALIGNMENT ON ALL ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES UNDER SES

MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF OUR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES, ENSURING PROPER COMPLIANCE

BE ORGANISATIONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR FOOTBALL SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS & INITIATIVES

Best practice in sport

The FAI complies with the Governance Code for Sport, a code of practice for good governance of Sport Organisations in Ireland. The FAI's Board signed 'Public Statement of Compliance' with the Code in July 2022, which certifies compliance with the principles and practices of the Governance Code for Sport until the next review in 2025.



OUR STRATEGIC PROCESS



OUR SES STRATEGIC PROCESS

As the governing body of Football in the Republic of Ireland, the FAI is best positioned to effect change in the areas closer to its remit of control. Primarily, these areas include the policies, practices, and procedures by which it runs operations as well as assets directly under its ownership.

It extends to the events, competitions, and matches that it organises, such as the men's and women's National Team matches, the League of Ireland matches, FAI cup competitions, and football development courses and camps, with a potentially greater impact. The FAI also has a responsibility to exert its influence in SES among affiliate entities, including LOI and Grassroots clubs, and, to a slightly lesser extent, among partner organisations. These include sponsors, suppliers, community-run organisations and NGOs, national & local government, and the wider football community in Ireland and internationally.



FAI SES CONCEPTUAL SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM

- 1. FAI organisation**
- 2. FAI Events, Competitions and Matches**
- 3. Affiliates**
- 4. Partners**

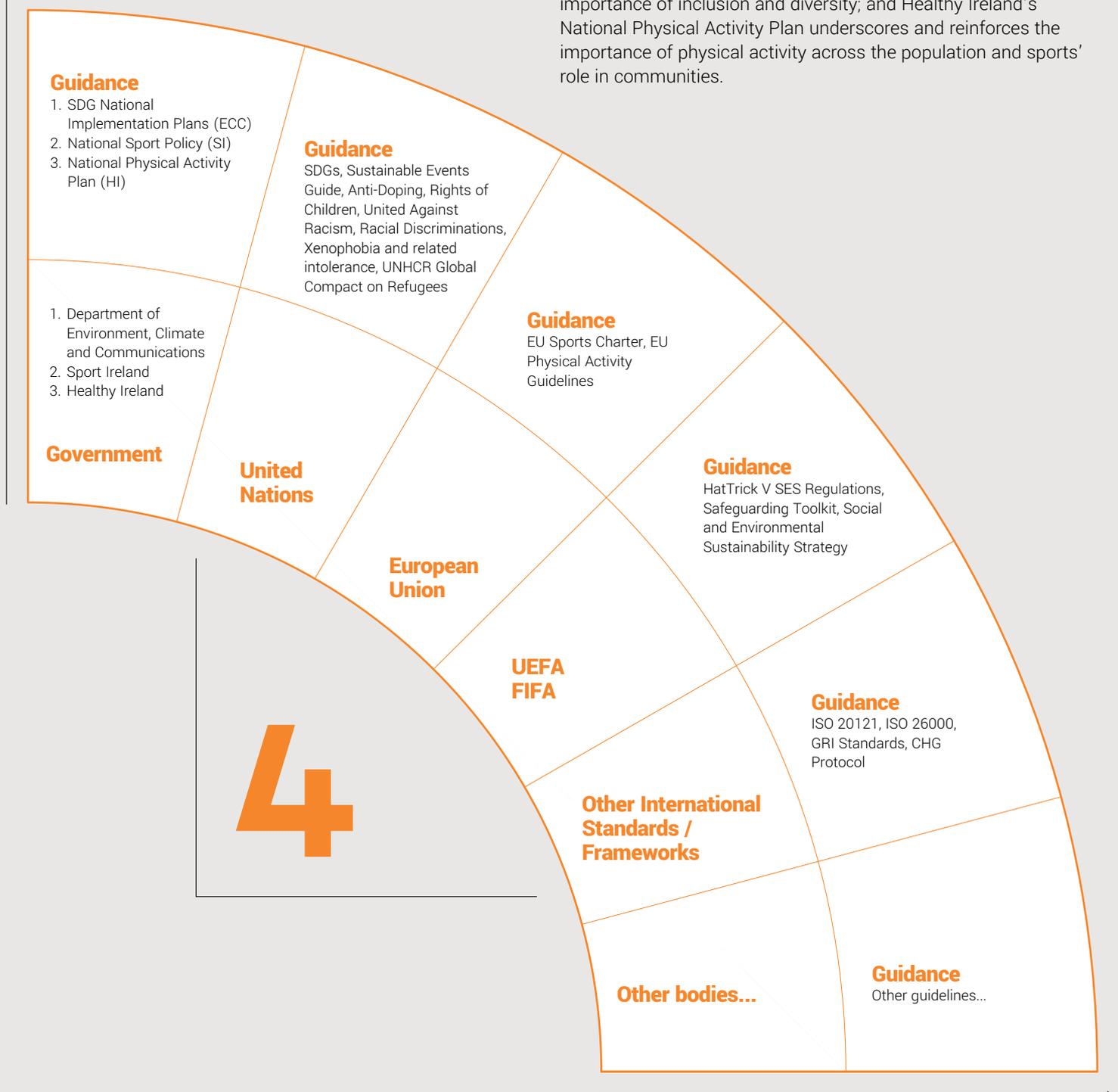
Our partners, although situated on the outermost orbit of our diagram, are no less important to the drafting and implementation of this SES strategy. In addition to our sponsors and suppliers, various national and international governmental and non-governmental actors have played a pivotal role in the development of the Association's SES Action Sheet (see Step 4 of the Process

- page 31). The next diagram zooms in on this particular group of partners to illustrate the type of frameworks, policies, legislation etc that have guided this process and will continue to drive implementation of the FAI's SES strategy – through financial, and various forms of operational, support.

4. PARTNERS

Diagram showing examples of guidance drawn from both governmental and non-governmental partner bodies

For example, the diagram shows that within the scope of national government, the Department of Environment, Climate, and Communications has been responsible for developing the SDG National Implementation Plans; Sport Ireland's National Sport Policy has set out the direction of sport, underlining the importance of inclusion and diversity; and Healthy Ireland's National Physical Activity Plan underscores and reinforces the importance of physical activity across the population and sports' role in communities.



OUR SES STRATEGIC PROCESS

Process³

1. SET UP FAI SES STEERING GROUP AND KICK-OFF MEETINGS

The Association used part of the funding from UEFA's HatTrick SES programme to invest into the further SES education of an existing staff member. This staff member was tasked with developing an SES strategy in collaboration with an internal SES Steering Group, consisting of key staff members representing various departments across the organisation. Together, these individuals identified and prioritised relevant environmental, social, and governance-related issues. It was at this point in the process that an initial orientation was taken from national priorities, such as the National Sport Policy and National Physical Activity Plan, as well as from international frameworks, such as the UN SDGs. The preliminary meetings convened by the group also led to mapping the Association's key stakeholders.

- With the support of UEFA, a Social and Environmental orientation and engagement session was held with the FAI senior leadership. This kicked off internal buy-in, commitment and the greenlight to begin the strategy development process.
- An internal cross departmental SES Steering Group was established with senior leadership members either sitting on the Steering Group or nominating a relevant person from their departments to sit on the group.
- In total 15 -20 SES Steering Group meetings were held to define the issues, as well as departmental or key individual meetings to define integrated Targets and KPI's.

2. CONDUCTED STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL PARTNER

An external specialist agency was commissioned to perform a broad-reaching stakeholder consultation with the main objective to understand which issues the various groups felt were most important and why. Close to 1,500 responses were received from 15 different stakeholder groups, including staff members, sponsors, and the public. Survey responses were used to rate the sustainability issues according to the affect that the FAI's sustainability performance has on them and the influence each stakeholder group has on the FAI's sustainability performance.

3. IDENTIFIED MATERIAL ISSUES AND VALIDATED MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

The previous steps informed a 'validation discussion' among the FSR Steering Group on the FAI's most relevant, or 'material', issues. The resulting Priorities – issues that the FAI commits to addressing, at least until the next strategic cycle review, in 2025, were based on a consideration of:

1. The FAI's overarching strategy;
2. Environmental, social, and governance-related challenges and opportunities understood to be on the horizon, in relation to stakeholders and including international sustainability frameworks, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards and the UN SDGs; and
3. A reflection of possible actions/ initiatives that might be conceived and the related human and financial resources that the FAI has – or has access to – to support them.

³ Based on the UEFA SES Strategy Development Roadmap (2019)

4. DEVELOPED ACTION SHEET

An Action Sheet was drawn up to serve as an implementation plan. The plan includes overarching goals for each Priority, specific targets for 2030 or earlier, as well as coinciding activities and key performance indicators (KPIs). The type of activities that were selected were generally based on consideration of:

1. Internal FAI documents,
2. Stakeholder survey responses,
3. International and national standards and frameworks,
4. UN conventions, and
5. Other football and sport organisations' guidelines and resources.

To promote meaningful integration of the plan across the organisation, owners or dependencies were assigned to each activity. Following bilateral discussions with several heads of departments during the annual business planning process, responsibilities were agreed and the activities, KPIs, and targets added to the following year's work plan. You can read about the output of this process – the goals, activities, and KPIs - in the next section of this document, Our SES Management Priorities.

5. COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

The communication and education of our strategic framework will be built as part of the overall Marketing and Communication plan for the association and will encompass the following areas:

- Staff education and engagement through online webinars and Q&A sessions
- Promotional and educational material distributed via email and social to staff and wider football stakeholders
- Build awareness using football ambassadors (e.g our international players)

6. MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND REPORTING

Delivery of this Strategy:

- In order to translate this strategy into planning and delivery, SES/ SES objectives will be aligned within the existing FAI Business Planning processes. Business Planning endeavours to deliver strategically aligned plans for each area of the business, defining the activities to be undertaken in order to achieve our stated objectives and the key performance indicators used to measure our progress. This is underpinned by processes that ensure accountability in delivering and reporting on objectives.

Reporting:

- Material updates will be reported (Quarterly, Bi-annually, Annually) enhance stakeholder and staff understanding of progress and assist with decision-making where further action is required.

OUR SES STRATEGIC PROCESS

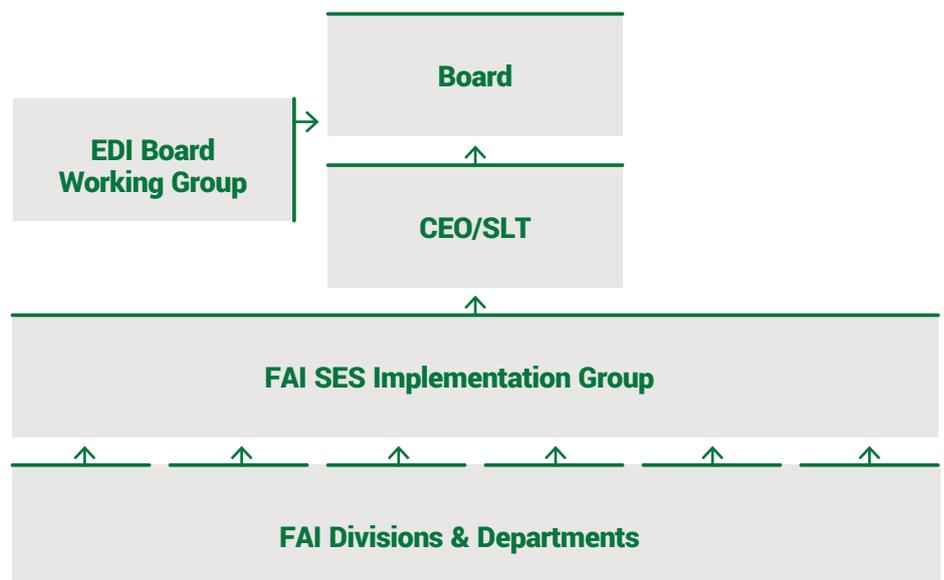
BUSINESS PLANNING 2024 TRANSLATING THE STRATEGY TO PLANNING



The FAI has commissioned a six-monthly strategy evaluation to assess progress against its pre-determined goals and targets.

- Internal – a SES cross departmental implementation group will meet quarterly and reports to the FAI Senior Leadership Team, and they to the Board and ED&I board working group.
- External – the FAI’s annual report will have a section on SES this will be publicly available

SES - GOVERNANCE REPORTING STRUCTURE



The FAI’s SES Department has the responsibility to oversee the coordination of the SES strategy with overall accountability for the delivery of SES Strategy with the People and Culture Director.



COMMITMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION



OUR SES APPROACH AND COMMITMENT TO IMPLEMENTATION

This strategy adheres to the guiding principles of the FAI's strategy document in the following ways:

Shared Responsibility

Ownership

There is strong cross-departmental cooperation on the SES topic to ensure meaningful, long-term integration. In practice, this will be things like the Human Resources department sharpening its policies on equal opportunities in recruitment and training, the Facilities department working with LOI clubs to ensure effective separation of waste for recycling and reuse, and the CEO informing the Board on SES progress to ensure SES-related decisions are made at the highest level of governance.

Education

SES is a relatively new topic in international football, which is why a keen focus has been placed on education to ensure that everyone is starting from the same page. We will look to raise awareness and understanding of the issues, starting with a justification of why these issues need to be addressed by our Association. We will work with stakeholders to educate them on FAI Priorities, to ensure ongoing fruitful collaboration, and to multiply impact. And we will sharpen our employees' technical expertise through skills training, to meet new responsibilities related to SES. As an organisation, we are committed to continued education, to engraining the principles associated with being a learning organisation, and to ensure that we maximise impact through SES tasks.

Our Approach

Impact

The FAI views the integration of an SES strategy across the business as a way to maximise the impact that we have through our work and to mitigate the risks of sustainability-related challenges affecting our performance. These are two sides of the same coin. Examples include: addressing climate change to save our pitches and general football infrastructure from the devastating effects of warmer global temperatures; and using our clubs and courses to raise mental health awareness, to educate on prevention and rehabilitation.

Stakeholders

The more extensive the collaboration with our stakeholders, including state partners, the greater our collective impact can be. We plan for ongoing, constructive relations with our stakeholders to ensure that we stay relevant and impactful through our work.

Reporting Progress

Integration

The implementation plan has been designed to ensure tracking within the FAI's organisation-wide tracking system. Objectives are attributed to goals, activities to objectives, KPIs to activities, and targets to KPIs. This allows us to monitor, evaluate and report on progress at every step of the journey.

Accountability

Our reporting holds every employee, coach, referee, partner organisation, etc. responsible for our SES activities. This ensures that when targets are not being reached, someone will be responsible for making the adjustments to put things back on track, to ensure maximal impact.

AS AN ORGANISATION, WE ARE COMMITTED TO CONTINUED EDUCATION, TO ENGRAINING THE PRINCIPLES ASSOCIATED WITH BEING A LEARNING ORGANISATION, TO ENSURE THAT WE MAXIMISE IMPACT THROUGH SES TASKS.

Government and Football Strategic Alignments

National Action Plan Against Racism:

- In March 2023, the Irish government published the second national action plan against racism (NPAR). The FAI contributed to the consultation phase to the NPAR.
- In line with our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion priority, we will align with & support the actions of the NPAR specifically Action 2.12, Action 2.13.



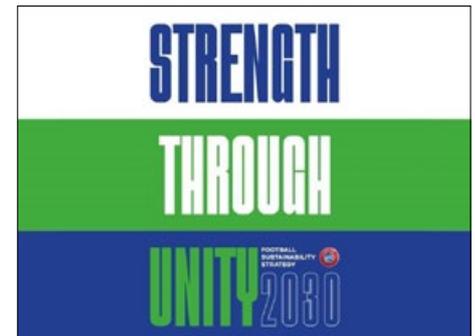
National Sports Policy:

- The National Sports Policy 2018 -2027 address SES and underlines equality, diversity and inclusion and the importance of increasing diversity, supporting and promoting equality and inclusion. Sport Ireland's Diversity & Inclusion Policy was published in 2022.
- Our Football social and environmental sustainability and responsibility strategy aligns with this focus.



UEFA Social and Environmental Sustainability Strategy:

- UEFA's 10 year Social and Environmental strategy 'Strength Through Unity' was launched in 2022. The strategy sits on two thematic strategic pillars and is brought to life via 11 key policy areas.
- Along with UEFA's other 55 member associations, our Football social and environmental sustainability and responsibility strategy is informed by, aligns with and supports the Social and Environmental ambitions, targets and outcomes of the UEFA's approach.



FIFA

We also sought to align with the most relevant aspects of FIFA's Sustainability strategy and approach

UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- With 17 Goals & 169 targets the SDGs have been developed to support sustainable development nationally and internationally.
- With our Football Social and Environmental Sustainability and Responsibility strategy, we have signalled commitment to aligning with the UN SDGs. In developing this strategy we are informed by the SDGs this is exemplified by our commitments under our priorities Climate action and environmental sustainability, Equality, diversity and inclusion and Health and wellbeing.
- In 2023 the FAI became an SDG Champion for 2023 -2024 with the aim of football providing good practice examples & helping to raise public awareness of the SDGs & that everyone in society can make a contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The FAI is also a member of the pan national UN Football for the Goals initiative.





SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: KEY INSIGHTS AND TAKEAWAYS

This document is FAI's commitment to using the power of football to tackle **ESG issues**, promoting health and well-being, fostering inclusion, and ensuring sustainability long into the future, aiming for impactful, long-term social and economic benefits.

We are addressing climate impact on football with **sustainability initiatives** like UEFA Carbon Footprint Calculator.

We are advocating for **equality and diversity** through programmes such as Football For All, targeting inclusive **participation** and **fighting discrimination**, on and off the pitch.

We are promoting health and well-being in line with the **Healthy Ireland** agenda, enhancing football's already important role in healthcare savings and supporting mental health & physical health.

Our SES priorities are Environmental Sustainability; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion; and Health and Well-being. These are all **guided by our enabler: Ethical Governance.**

We aim to influence **ESG practices** in football operations and partnerships, informed by **national and international policies.**

Following **UEFA's 2019 Roadmap**, a consultative process has shaped the FAI's strategic SES action, with **transparent evaluation and reporting mechanisms.**

Biannual evaluations and quarterly reviews ensure **progress tracking and public accountability** in SES delivery.

The FAI's **cross-departmental collaboration and educational integration** of SES aims for enduring impact, aligning with national and international frameworks to contribute to **sustainable development** via football.





APPENDIX



APPENDIX SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES, TARGETS AND KPI'S

Climate action and Environmental Sustainability

What we need to do:	Targets	Key performance indicators (KPIs)	Timeline	Organisational Divisions & Dept Owners	Organisational Supporting Divisions & Depts
ADOPT UN SPORT FOR CLIMATE ACTION	Become a signatory of the UN's Sports for Climate Action (S4CA) framework	Cut greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030	2024 - 2030	SES/SES	SLT, Board
		Calculate organisational GHG emissions 2024	2024	SES/SES	Facilities, all depts & Divisions
		Reduction plan in place	2024 - 2027	SES/SES	All depts & Divisions
		% of Calculated emissions reduced	2024 -2027	SES/SES	All depts & Divisions
SUSTAINABLE SOURCING	Adopt a sustainable sourcing policy that sets out environmental, social responsibility, and local economy standards suppliers are expected to meet.	Policy in place	2024	Procurement /Fin	All depts & Divisions
		% of tenders with an element of sustainability (social & environmental sustainability)	2024 - 2027	Procurement /Fin	All depts & Divisions
		% of relevant staff provided with training	2024	Procurement /Fin	All depts & Divisions
SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL	Adopt a sustainable travel policy aimed at reducing the emissions burden of travel including matchday traffic on local communities	Policy in place	2024	OPS	SES/Facilities, Travel & Accommodation, FIN
		% of GHG emissions reduction, set in line with BL calculations.	2024 - 2027	OPS	SES/Facilities, Travel & Accommodation, FIN
		% of Carbon mitigation strategies in place for Team & Staff travel - Sustainable airline travel	2024 - 2027	OPS	SES/Facilities, Travel & Accommodation, FIN
SUSTAINABLE FUNDING	Research & develop ESG & other sustainable funding avenues to support SES (Social and Environmental Sustainability) work	% of Sustainability funding in place	2024 - 2027	Grants & Funding	SES, LOI
		# of partnerships	2024 - 2027	Grants & Funding	SES, LOI
		# funding staff in place	2024 - 2027	Grants & Funding	SES, LOI
WASTE MANAGEMENT	Implement a waste management plan at FAI locations and across owned events	% of FAI locations and owned events included in waste mgt plan	2024 - 2025	Facilities	All Depts
		% of relevant staff and volunteers trained	2024 - 2027	Facilities	All Depts
		# of Recycling initiatives communicated	2024 - 2027	Facilities	Marcoms
COMMUNICATE ON FOOTBALL'S SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY WORK	Communication plan in place	# of Ambassadors	2024 - 2025	Marcoms	SES
		% of Communication strategy implemented	2024 -2027	Marcoms	All Depts
		##% of SES/ESG initiatives communicated	2024 -2027	Marcoms	All Depts

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

What we need to do:	Targets	Key performance indicators (KPIs)	Timeline	Organisational Divisions & Dept Owners	Organisational Supporting Divisions & Depts
NON-DISCRIMINATION ACTION PLAN	Reviewed & implemented	# of departmental action plans in place	2024 - 2027	SES	LGL Legal, LOI, Grassroots, FOO, All Depts
		% of action plans activities implemented & measured quarterly	2024 - 2027	SES	LGL Legal, LOI, Grassroots, FOO, All Depts
EDI POLICY	Create FAI EDI policy	% of Policy implemented	2024 -2027	SES	All Depts
		EDI Education strategy developed	2024 -2027	SES	All Depts
		% of all staff trained annually	2024 -2027	SES	All Depts
		Annual review of policy and training	2024 -2027	SES	All Depts
DISCRIMINATION MONITORING	Establish a whole of football centralised monitoring and reporting process across the football ecosystem to observe all incidents of discrimination. The process will support the sign posting, tracking and addressing complaints relating to discrimination	% of Leagues/Affiliates integrated within system	2024 -2027	SES	Grassroots, Safeguarding, Referees, DCU
		# of reports/incidents (per, week, month, quarter, yearly)	2024 -2027	SES	Grassroots, LOI, Safeguarding, Referees, DCU
		# of reports/ incidents administered	2024 -2027	SES	Grassroots, LOI, Safeguarding, Referees, DCU
		# of awareness campaigns (B-T)	2024 -2027	SES	Marcoms, Grassroots, LOI, Safeguarding, Referees,
NATIONAL FOOTBALL DIVERSITY ADVISORY PANEL	Establish a Football National Advisory panel to provide insights that support and enhance the Associations EDI work	Call for members	2024 -2027	P&C	SES
		# of scheduled meetings/year (B-T).	2024 -2027	P&C	SES
		Review Panel annually	2024 -2027	P&C	SES
ASSIGN SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICERS FOR LOW PARTICIPATION GROUPS	Funding sourced, officers assigned	# of engagement officers for each low-participation group	2025 -2027	SES	Grants & Funding, Grassroots, LOI
		% increase in participants across each low participation group	2025 -2027	SES	Grants & Funding, Grassroots, LOI
WORKFORCE DIVERSITY	Develop Workforce Diversity action plan	% of staff from target groups in leadership positions	2024 -2027	P&C	SLT, SES
		% of staff from target groups	2024 -2027	P&C	SLT, SES
CREATE FAI DIVERSITY STATEMENT	Create and publish	100% of statement drafted, signed off & published	2024 -2027	SES	Marcoms, P&C, SLT
CLUB MARK	Add appropriately scaled EDI standards to 'Grassroots Club Mark' programme covering volunteering, coaching, participation, equality	# of club mark clubs meeting minimum criteria	2024 -2027	Grassroots	SES
		% of clubs monitored	2024 -2027	Grassroots	SES
		# of Equality officers	2024 -2027	Grassroots	SES
RESEARCH, MONITORING AND INSIGHTS	Ensure a comprehensive cross-departmental data monitoring/ collection system is in place to enable review of barriers/ enablers to participation across programmes	% programmes monitored	2024 -2027	SES	ALL
		# of actions based on insights	2024 -2027	SES	ALL

APPENDIX SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES, TARGETS AND KPI'S

What we need to do:	Targets	Key performance indicators (KPIs)	Timeline	Organisational Divisions & Dept Owners	Organisational Supporting Divisions & Depts
ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL	Accessibility mapping leading to enhanced access Develop and deliver a Disability Football/Football For All Strategy to promote opportunities for players with disabilities to play football	Number of DAOs in place	2024 -2027	Grassroots FFA, LOI, OPS	Facilities, Licensing, LOI, SES
		% of barrier-free venues	2024 -2027	Grassroots FFA, LOI, OPS	Facilities, Licensing, LOI, SES
		% of relevant staff and volunteers receiving training	2024 -2027	Grassroots FFA, LOI, OPS	Facilities, Licensing, LOI, SES
		Number of training sessions delivered annually	2024 -2027	Grassroots FFA, LOI, OPS	Facilities, Licensing, LOI, SES
		# of FAI channels and platforms where venue and/or activity accessibility information is available	2024 -2027	Grassroots FFA, LOI, OPS	Facilities, Licensing, TEC IT, LOI, SES
PARTNERSHIPS	Secure an SES Corporate Sponsorship partner for each of the 3 pillars	# of engagements with sponsors on SES/ SES strategy/pillars	2024 -2027	CMR	SES
		# of SES partners secured for each of the 3 SES strategic pillars			
COMP TICKETS	Complimentary live match opportunities for specific underrepresented groups		2024 -2027	CMR	SES
ORGANISATIONAL PARTNERS	Identify partnerships with football, community, EU, and state actors to develop and run programmes	# of partnerships	2024 -2027	SES	Grassroots, LOI, CMR
		# of programmes/initiatives run	2024 -2027	SES	Grassroots, LOI, CMR
SUPPORT LOI CLUBS TO DEVELOP SES CAPACITY	Work with partners to assist LOI clubs to develop collaborative partnership for programmes/ initiatives centered on relevant SES/EDI thematic areas (e.g., inclusion, education, the environment, health and well-being etc.)	# of partnerships, state and/or private (B-T).	2024 -2027	LOI	SES
		% of LOI clubs with SES officers (B-T).	2024 -2027	LOI	SES
		% of clubs with SES Strategies	2024 -2027	LOI	SES
DESIGNATE SES CHAMPION (S) OR REPRESENTATIVE	Champion(s) on Board.	# Champions	2024 -2027	BOP	SES
	Commitments to Social and Environmental Sustainability performance clearly noted in FAI annual report	SES section in Annual Report	2024 -2027	BOP	SES
GOVERNANCE	Ensure SES outputs are aligned with the Sport Ireland Governance Code for Sport, D&I policy and other legal obligations, codes/frameworks	% of policies/relevant legal obligations, codes & frameworks reviewed	2025 -2027	LGL	SES
		% of policies aligned	2025 -2027	LGL	SES

Health and Wellbeing

What we need to do:	Targets	Key performance indicators (KPIs)	Timeline	Organisational Divisions & Dept Owners	Organisational Supporting Divisions & Depts
RECREATIONAL FOOTBALL	Partner to provide regular playing opportunities for seniors and other target groups e.g., via walking football & other initiatives	# of programmes	2024 -2027	Grassroots, LOI	SES
		#of participants	2024 -2027	Grassroots, LOI	SES
		# of programmes in new locations	2024 -2027	Grassroots, LOI	SES
HEALTH & WELL-BEING PARTNERSHIPS	Establish partnerships with relevant partners including national expert organisation's at state & other levels	# of partnerships with state actors	2024 -2027	SES	Grassroots, LOI, Grants & Funding
		# of programmes	2024 -2027	SES	Grassroots, LOI, Grants & Funding
MENTAL HEALTH IN FOOTBALL	Assess level of knowledge relating to football's impact on mental health including for mental health supports/services for youth players	Assessment/review completed	2024 -2027	SES	Coach Ed, Grassroots, Referees, High performance, Player development
		# joint research conducted	2024 -2027	SES	Coach Ed, Grassroots, Referees, High performance, Player development
		% knowledge integration into relevant courses and programmes	2024 -2027	SES	Coach Ed, Grassroots, Referees, High performance, Player development
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS	Mental health awareness campaigns targeted at FAI staff and stakeholders (players - particularly youth, coaches, referees, parents, etc.)	# of campaigns		P&C	All Depts
		# of participants		P&C	All Depts
HEALTH & WELL-BEING EDUCATION	Provide education about healthier diets, responsible alcohol consumption and smoke-free lifestyles	# of education initiatives		SES	All Depts

Key Divisions & Departments

BOP Business Operations – COO, Strategy, Major Events, Licencing and CoSec
CMR Commercial – Sales, Ticketing Operations and Partnerships
FAC Facilities – Infrastructure Development and Facility Management
FIN Finance – Accounts, Procurement, Travel & Accommodation and Grants & Funding
FOO Football – International Managers, Coach Education, Player Development, Performance Analysis, Regional High-Performance Coaches and Data Registrations and Competitions
GRA Grassroots, Football for All, Referees, Programme Coordinators, Development Officers
LGL Legal, Disciplinary Unit and Child Welfare and Safeguarding
LOI League of Ireland
MRC Marketing, Events and Communications (MarComms)
OPS Team and Match Operations
P&C People and Culture and SES/**SES**
TEC FAI Connect and IT Referees Depts/Leads

