



*SECURING
SUCCESS
TOGETHER*

**STRATEGIC PLAN
➤➤ 2014-2017**





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» PREFACE

We are delighted to present the new strategy for the development of Irish Paralympic sport.

Paralympic sport around the world faces a new reality on the back of the huge success of London 2012. The level of athlete performance continues to break new ground, making it essential that Paralympics Ireland continues to focus on athlete development and performance support.

The revision of our mission to *“Leading elite Irish athletes to Paralympic Games success”* shows our intent to create an effective talent identification and development system to sustain long term success at the Paralympic Games. In order for us to provide this, we will seek to develop increased awareness of Irish Paralympic sport and drive greater investment from state agencies, commercial partners and the public. The cost of high-performance sport rises year-on-year; this plan recognises the challenge and aims to secure support across our movement to propel Irish athletes to Paralympic podiums.

This plan is the result of a collaborative process involving all stakeholders in Irish Paralympic sport. Our strategic priorities for the coming years have been identified and we intend to be a world leading National Paralympic Committee in a range of key areas. Through *‘Securing Success Together’*, we will pursue a shared vision for the disability sport sector. Our board and staff will now implement the plan and we look forward to working with you to achieve continued success for Irish Paralympic sport.

Finally, we sincerely thank everyone who contributed to the development of the plan and to Pinta Consulting who helped guide the process.

Now, let’s set about *‘Securing Success Together’!*

*Liam Harbison, CEO and
Jimmy Gradwell, President
May 2014*



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Paralympics Ireland is the National Paralympic Committee (NPC) for Ireland, recognised by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), and is responsible for preparing and managing the Irish team at the Paralympic Games which are held every four years in parallel with the Olympic Games.

While Paralympics Ireland did not previously have a formal remit to develop disability sports (other than in relation to two sports that are directly managed by Paralympics Ireland), it worked in collaboration with NGBs to identify, classify and prepare athletes to represent Ireland at the Paralympic Games.

During the lead up to London 2012, Paralympics Ireland worked to the then Paralympic Council of Ireland Strategic Plan 2010 to 2014. This involved five key priorities which were delivered prior to the expiry of the plan. The decision to embark on a new strategic planning process is based on expiry of the previous plan, opportunities presenting following the unprecedented success at London 2012 and the challenges arising from the changing international Paralympic environment.

This section sets out a snapshot of the background context at the time of development of the plan and a brief description of the plan facilitation and approval process.

1.1 SNAPSHOT OF BACKGROUND CONTEXT

HISTORY

The Paralympic Council of Ireland was established in 1987 as a coordinating body for Ireland's participation at the Seoul 1988 Paralympic Games and subsequently became the official NPC for Ireland following the formal establishment of the IPC in 1989. A high performance focus was adopted in 2002 and in 2011 the organisation re-branded as Paralympics Ireland.

1.2 STRUCTURE, FUNDING AND SERVICES

There are currently twenty affiliated members of Paralympics Ireland, within four distinct categories:

3 DISABILITY SPECIFIC MULTISPORT NATIONAL GOVERNING BODIES OF SPORT (NGBS)

- Cerebral Palsy Sport Ireland
- Irish Wheelchair Association Sport
- Vision Sports Ireland

8 SPORT SPECIFIC NGBS

- Canoeing Ireland
- Cycling Ireland
- Horse Sport Ireland
- Irish Sailing Association
- Irish Table Tennis Association
- Rowing Ireland
- Tennis Ireland
- Triathlon Ireland

7 SPORTS WITHIN THE DISABILITY MULTISPORT NGBS

- Archery
- Boccia
- Football 5-a-side
- Football 7-a-side
- Powerlifting
- Wheelchair Basketball
- Wheelchair Rugby

2 SPORTS GOVERNED INTERNATIONALLY BY THE INTERNATIONAL PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE:

- Athletics
- Swimming

While some NGBs employ dedicated development, coaching and administrative staff, many are resourced largely or entirely by volunteers.

Paralympics Ireland governance structures were changed during 2013. A Members Forum was established (replacing the former Council structure) and a number of external non-executive director positions with specific skills were added to the Board of Directors.

Paralympics Ireland is supported by the Irish Sports Council and the Irish Institute of Sport, together with support from Sport Northern Ireland, in addition to commercial sponsorship revenue and in-kind support. Recent years have seen significant expansion in terms of each of the number of member sports, levels of activity undertaken and staff employed.

The services provided by Paralympics Ireland include: finance, coaching, training camps, sports science and medical services, classification and other support to elite Irish athletes in prepara-

tion for and while attending the Paralympic Games. The organisation directly manages two sports at Paralympic level: (swimming and athletics) and manages classification of athletes for all member bodies. Some support is given to NGBs towards their own athlete development / talent identification work; however the level of which was limited as it was not explicitly within the previous Paralympics Ireland remit. In addition, Paralympics Ireland has engaged in some education work relating to promoting awareness of Paralympic sport amongst Irish school-children.

» *There are currently twenty affiliated members of Paralympics Ireland*



1.3 SUCCESS & TARGETS

The Irish Paralympic team achieved great success at the London 2012 games, attaining 19th position in official medals table, a ranking ahead of many larger nations. This achievement was attributed by Paralympics Ireland to the impact of a ten year high performance focus from 2002. The close proximity and cultural familiarity of London were also regarded as contributing factors.

Success at London 2012 was enormously positive for Paralympic sport in Ireland. Market research demonstrated that public awareness levels of leading Irish Paralympic athletes post the London Games measured favourably with other leading Irish sportspeople. It also demonstrated the commercial value to sponsors of Irish Paralympic sport.

The working target for Rio 2016 is to maintain a top 30 medals placing on the basis of anticipated increased competitive, logistical and travel challenges. The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) expects the number of competing NPCs at Rio 2016 to rise to around 200, compared with 167 at London 2012. In addition, the IPC has noted that the level of organisation and tactical strategy being used by NPCs is raising performance standards. The overall international Paralympic environment is changing at a rapid pace with numerous developments in the areas of classification and events listed between games cycles. Ireland is not currently represented at IPC governing board or IPC sports committee levels.



1.4 PLAN FACILITATION & APPROVAL PROCESS

Development of this plan was facilitated by Pinta Consulting through consultation with a range of internal and external stakeholders including board, staff, NGBs, athletes, coaches, service providers, state agencies and commercial partners. This included one to one meetings, workshops, phone consultations and an online survey. The process also included consideration of structures and initiatives in place in a number of other established National Paralympic Committees.

APPROVAL OF THIS PLAN TOOK THE FOLLOWING STEPS IN 2014:

- Strategic Plan Steering Committee on March 12th
- Board of Directors on March 19th
- Paralympics Ireland members at an AGM on April 30th

» *The working target for Rio 2016 is to maintain a top 30 medals placing*

➤➤ 2.0 A SHARED VISION FOR THE DISABILITY SPORTS SECTOR IN 2025

Paralympics Ireland members, athletes, board, staff, service providers and sponsors all agree that sustainable success at Paralympic Games requires a collaborative effort by all stakeholders in the disability sports sector. This necessitates clear definition of roles and activities across each of three levels of activity: participation, development and elite.

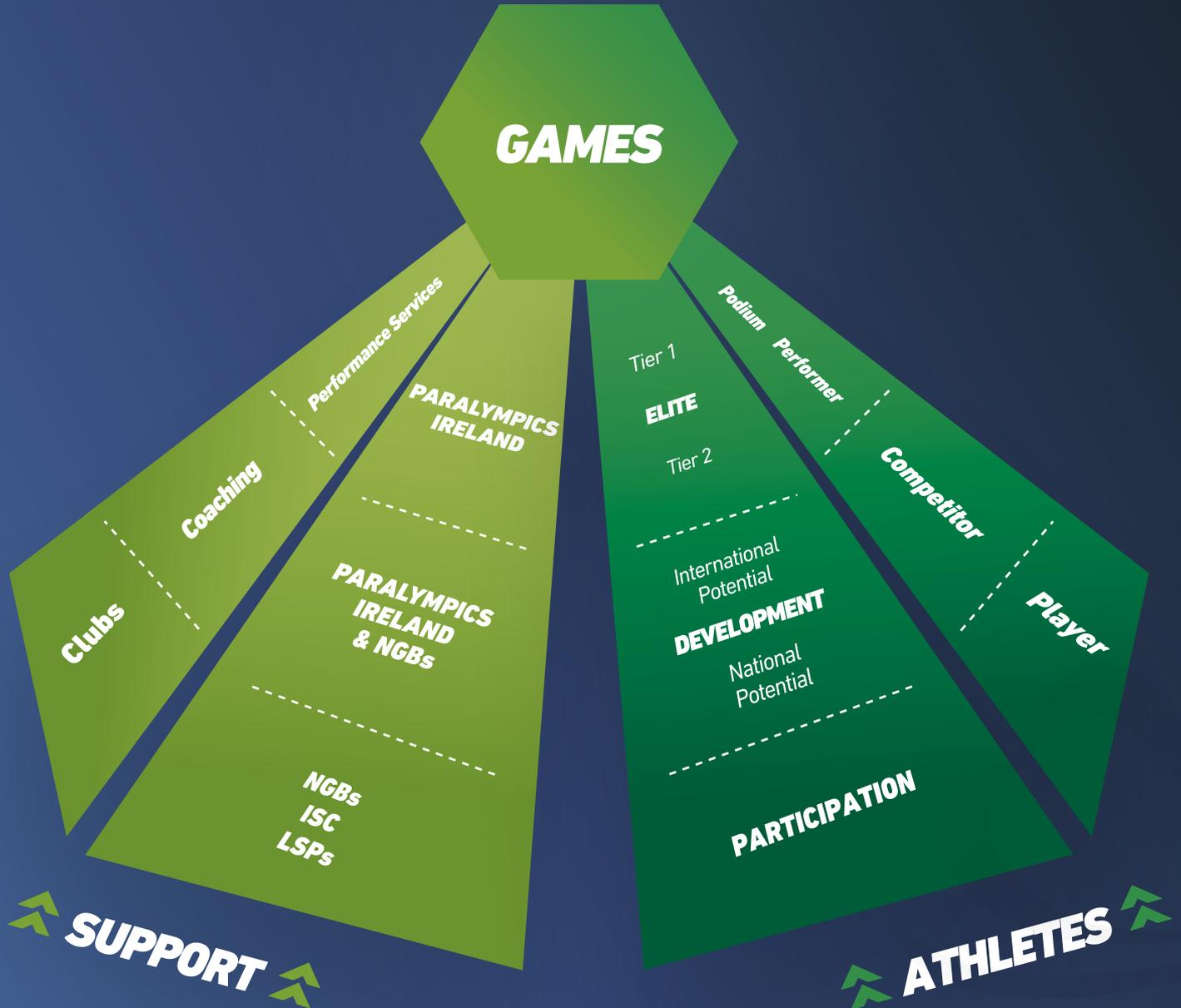
Within this vision, Paralympics Ireland continues to be responsible for elite level activity, which involves games preparation programmes for tier 1 (podium) and tier 2 (performer) athletes.

This vision clarifies a role for Paralympics Ireland at development level, specifically Paralympics Ireland driving talent identification and performance pathways, to support NGBs in their role at development level.

Paralympics Ireland does not have a role at participation level; this is the remit of NGBs working with the Irish Sports Council and the Local Sports Partnerships. This shared vision is illustrated on the page opposite.

Within this vision, the disability sports sector would include:

- All NGBs of Paralympics Ireland being fully committed to Paralympic development within their organisation catering for athletes with disabilities within their network of clubs and supported by appropriate coaching, equipment, programmes and competitive opportunities
- NGBs being appropriately resourced and structured to deliver on the Paralympic potential within their organisations
- Regional organisation of sports, with access for all athletes within a 100km maximum travel distance
- Irish representation on IPC and international sports federation structures, and
- Recognition of athlete success at Paralympic Games as shared by all and dependent on effective support at each step of the athlete pathway.



»» 3.0 THE PLAN



This section presents the mission, vision, values and goals for Paralympics Ireland to 2017 together with the objectives and measures of success within each goal, notes on staff resourcing and overall review.

3.1 MISSION, VISION, AIMS & VALUES

THE PARALYMPICS IRELAND MISSION IS:



“ Leading elite athletes with a disability to Paralympic Games success ”



VISION 2025

By 2025, Paralympics Ireland will have led Irish athletes to success at Rio 2016, Tokyo 2020 and the 2024 Games, and will be a world leading National Paralympic Committee in the following key areas:

- » GAMES PERFORMANCE
- » TALENT IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT
- » COMMUNICATIONS, EDUCATION AND EVENTS
- » SPORTS SCIENCE, MEDICINE & CLASSIFICATION
- » GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

GUIDING VALUES

Paralympics Ireland will strive for the highest standards of:

» LEADERSHIP, EXCELLENCE & INNOVATION

- » **LEADERSHIP**
of those we bring with us – Leadership is about respect for people, inspiring others to a shared vision and creating a sense of one team and mission.
- » **EXCELLENCE**
in how we do it – Excellence is about directors, staff, NGBs, coaches, service providers, athletes and all associated with the organisation following a dedicated and driven approach to all areas of their work, operating with commitment and integrity.
- » **INNOVATION**
in what we do – Innovation emerges from ambition, it is about seeing beyond boundaries, identifying and implementing new approaches, increasing standards and moving ahead of competition.

3.2 STRATEGIC GOALS, OBJECTIVES & MEASURES OF SUCCESS

The overarching strategic goals for Paralympics Ireland from 2014 to 2017 are to:

- 1** MAXIMISE MEDAL POTENTIAL OF IRISH ATHLETES AT EUROPEAN & WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS AND PARALYMPIC GAMES
- 2** ESTABLISH A TALENT IDENTIFICATION MODEL AND PERFORMANCE PATHWAY FOR IRISH PARALYMPIC ATHLETES
- 3** PURSUE ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE, UNDERPINNED BY SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES
- 4** INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS, DEEPEN UNDERSTANDING AND BUILD SUPPORT FOR IRISH PARALYMPIC SPORT
- 5** ACHIEVE AN INTERNATIONAL VOICE TO SERVE AND INFLUENCE THE GLOBAL PARALYMPIC MOVEMENT





GOAL 1

MAXIMISE MEDAL POTENTIAL OF IRISH ATHLETES AT EUROPEAN & WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS AND PARALYMPIC GAMES



Our primary goal is to maximise the performance potential of Irish athletes to achieve medal success at European & World Championships and Paralympic Games. This involves coordinating high performance preparation programmes and using available supports.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Expand the number of directly managed sports within the elite athlete programme
- 1.2 Deliver an effective performance programme for Paralympics Ireland governed sports

- 1.3 Ensure an effective performance planning programme for NGB governed sports
- 1.4 Deliver high performance sports science services in partnership with the Irish Institute of Sport
- 1.5 Secure a career path for Paralympic performance coaches
- 1.6 Develop a direct athlete support scheme for Paralympic sport
- 1.7 Work with other National Paralympic Committees to develop partnerships to share resources and opportunities
- 1.8 Deliver excellence in games logistics and management
- 1.9 Promote athlete welfare

MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- Ireland to achieve top 30 ranking in Rio 2016 medal tables
- Increase in number of sports at the Paralympic Games from 10 to 11
- Increase in the total number of qualifying athletes for the Paralympic Games to above 50
- Memorandum of understanding completed with other national Paralympic committees
- Strong rating by athletes on an Irish Paralympic satisfaction index

GOAL 2

ESTABLISH A TALENT IDENTIFICATION MODEL AND PERFORMANCE PATHWAY FOR IRISH PARALYMPIC ATHLETES



A key part of Paralympic Games success is a continuous pipeline of podium potential athletes. In support of this, we will establish a talent identification model and performance pathway to support national sporting organisations and Paralympics Ireland in identifying and developing potential athletes for future Paralympic Games.

OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Create a research based performance pathway that guides Paralympic athletes from participation to podium
- 2.2 Develop a sport specific implementation process for this pathway with each NGB
- 2.3 Research and deliver a centralised world class talent identification and talent transfer programme

MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- A minimum of four sports implementing effective performance pathways
- Clear talent identification and talent transfer strategy in place
- ISC engagement on identifying prioritised investment to support Paralympic performance pathways

GOAL 3

PURSUE ORGANISATIONAL
EXCELLENCE, UNDERPINNED BY
SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES



Consistent with our values of leadership, excellence and innovation, we must be well governed, structured and resourced.

OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Ensure the organisation operates to appropriate governance standards
- 3.2 Proactively manage organisational risks
- 3.3 Ensure best practice financial management standards are in place
- 3.4 Proactively manage key

- stakeholder relationships
- 3.5 Proactively manage and protect the Paralympic brand in Ireland
- 3.6 Ensure the staffing resource is sufficient to fulfil operational commitments
- 3.7 Support staff development and well being
- 3.8 Target increased public, commercial and donor investment to ensure that the organisation is adequately funded
- 3.9 Develop a portfolio of appropriate in-kind sponsors
- 3.10 Develop a Paralympic engagement / satisfaction monitor

MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- Compliance with voluntary and statutory sectoral governance standards
- Statutory funding to increase by 30%
- All staff positions filled
- Increase in commercial and private investment of 50%
- Sale of sponsorship rights
- Paralympic engagement / satisfaction monitor in place

GOAL 4

INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS, DEEPEN UNDERSTANDING AND BUILD SUPPORT FOR IRISH PARALYMPIC SPORT



Sport has the capacity to energise and enrich a nation. We will increase public awareness and deepen understanding of Irish Paralympic sport through multiple means of communication.

OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 Develop and maintain media relationships to boost coverage of Irish Paralympic sport and athletes
- 4.2 Identify the optimum future broadcast model for Paralympic sports coverage in Ireland
- 4.3 Maximise the coverage of the Irish Paralympic Team at the

- 4.4 Rio 2016 Paralympic Games
Develop an effective online presence that will excite, engage and inspire the Irish public
- 4.5 Develop a supporter's engagement programme
- 4.6 Develop and deliver an education programme to inspire and engage young people
- 4.7 Build a strategy to promote the delivery of Paralympic sports events in Ireland
- 4.8 Encourage commercial partner activation to complement Paralympics Ireland's communications objectives

MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- Increase in Paralympic media output
- Increase in public awareness and of Paralympic sports and athletes as measured by consumer research

GOAL 5

ACHIEVE AN INTERNATIONAL VOICE
TO SERVE AND INFLUENCE THE
GLOBAL PARALYMPIC MOVEMENT



Ireland is an established member of the International Paralympic Committee. By achieving a stronger international voice, we will be in a position to serve and influence the global Paralympic movement.

OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 Continue to develop relationships with the IPC movement to advance key areas of interest
- 5.2 Strengthen Ireland's position within the Paralympic movement
- 5.3 Secure appointment of Irish representation to key IPC structures
- 5.4 Create a model to support NGBs to achieve representation within their own international sports federations

MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- International collaboration resulting in the successful advancement of Irish priorities
- Achievement of three Irish representatives on IPC structures
- Achievement of three Irish representatives on governing bodies of their international federation

3.3 FUTURE STAFF RESOURCING

Successful delivery of the objectives in this strategic plan will require the addition of a number of new staff posts to the existing staff team at Paralympics Ireland. These are as follows:

- A talent identification and development director post to achieve the objectives within goal 2 of this plan, and
- Two further roles of head of sport 3 and head of sport 4 to achieve the objectives within goal 1 of this plan.

IN ADDITION:

- It is likely that temporary support will be needed for the expanding roles of commercial director and communications & events director, particularly during 2016, and
- Temporary supplementary administration support will be required during Games year (2016).

There is a need for access to HR expertise on an as needed basis. This should be obtained on an outsourcing arrangement rather than through a staff position.

3.4 REVIEW

This three year strategic action plan is ambitious in nature and presents a number of significant challenges in terms of people, resources and collaborative relationships, particularly where success is dependent on development of shared goals and commitments with third parties.

Delivery of this three year strategic action plan should be monitored twice yearly by a strategy review group representative of all stakeholders and should also include key partners such as the Irish Institute of Sport in addition to one other external party. The purpose of this group should be to review progress on the implementation of the plan and to make recommendations to the Board of Directors relating to identification of supports required and adjustments needed to ensure the continued relevance of the plan to the organisation.





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