



Paralympics
IRELAND

**SUCCESS
TAKES
MORE**

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2019-2025**



Table of Contents

CEO's Address	2
Presidents Address	3
How we developed the strategy	4
Strategic Context	5
Paralympics Ireland – key facts	6
Our Vision	7
Our Mission	8
Headline Goals	9
Our Strategic Focus	10
Paralympics Ireland – A Personality Statement	11
Focus Area 1: Building an Effective High Performance System	14
Focus Area 2: Driving Leadership in Para Sport in Ireland	20
Focus Area 3: Creating a Sustainable Paralympics Ireland Model	24
Focus Area 4: Building the Profile of Paralympics in Ireland	27
Organisation to support our plan	29
Strategy Roadmap	30

CEO Miriam Malone



I am delighted to see this strategic plan for Paralympics Ireland come to fruition. It provides a clear direction for the organisation as we build on our success to date and embark into the future.

'Success Takes More' highlights the increasing challenge to perform and be successful on the world stage. This plan sets out our clear high performance ambitions for athletes with a disability and supports those capable of performing at the very highest level at the Paralympic Games. These elite athletes represent the top level of sporting achievement in Ireland and are incredible role models to highlight what is possible in sport.

The input into the consultation process to inform this plan was extensive. I am thankful to all who took the time to give their knowledge, experience and suggestions throughout, your input was truly invaluable.

This plan recognises the role many organisations play in the pathway of an athlete as they progress to the top of their ability in their sport. Partner organisations all play a key role from participation opportunities within the Irish Wheelchair Association, Vision Sport Ireland, Cara and the

Local Sports Partnerships to development and progression within the sporting National Governing Bodies through to competition and ultimately to elite high performance levels.

The role of Paralympics Ireland is to support the athletes at this top level. We realise that this is not possible without the work of the other sports bodies involved in each athlete's journey and we commit to working with our partner NGBs in a meaningful way to ensure that there is a steady supply of athletes progressing through the system and achieving their potential.

Hosting the World Para Swimming Allianz European Championships in August 2018 along with host partners Swim Ireland, Sport Ireland and Failte Ireland, certainly highlighted the benefits of working with great event partners including Allianz, Citi, Fáilte Ireland, Swim Ireland and Sport Ireland. I would like to thank Sport Ireland and Sport NI, for their ongoing support of Paralympics Ireland, which we very much appreciate. I am also grateful for our wonderful sponsors including Allianz Ireland, Toyota, Flogas and Citibank.

This plan highlights the exciting possibilities that lie in the future recognising that it will take a great effort to achieve the success we are aiming for. I look forward to exploring those possibilities and working with our dedicated staff, board and partners to bring it into reality.

President John Fulham



The 2016 Rio Paralympic Games demonstrated to the world, yet again, the immense power of what can be achieved through sport. Challenging circumstances did not prevent the global Paralympic

Movement from building on the success of London 2012, delivering higher standards of competition and better athlete performances. The public demonstrated their support, turning up in their thousands every day to celebrate the spectacle our athletes delivered. Paralympic Sport has achieved what some thought impossible, taking another leap forward and raising the bar.

Across the globe, high-performance sport is evolving as each country seeks to gain the edge. At home, that global evolution is mirrored through increased state investment and the new National Sports Policy. In presenting to you our new Strategic Plan, we demonstrate our ambition to grow while recognising the increasing demands being placed on our athletes, on the supports and the people required to deliver their performances. In such a demanding world, we cannot do it all. Being clearer and smarter about what we do and how we do it is reflected in our objectives.

Collaboration will be key as we seek to achieve the priorities set out in this roadmap to success.

I would like to thank Kotinos and, in particular, Brian McNeice for leading the consultation process for this plan. Thanks also to the Paralympics Ireland steering group of Miriam Malone (CEO Paralympics Ireland), Pat McGinty (Paralympics Ireland Board) and Lisa Clancy (Paralympics Ireland Board), who guided the process from creation to completion.

I, together with the Paralympics Ireland Board and Management team, look forward to working with you as we strive to be the best for our athletes. After all, that is what underpins everything we do, our athletes, leading the way today and in the future. Finally, thank you to everyone who has contributed to developing this plan.

How we developed the strategy

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. The membership is comprised of 21 National Governing Bodies (NGBs) including a combination of disability specific multi-sport NGBs and sport specific NGBs.

This strategic plan gives direction to the work of Paralympics Ireland over the next 7 years up to 2025 in carrying out its remit to prepare and enable Paralympic athletes achieve their full potential in elite Paralympic sport.

This proposed work is outlined under four core pillars and sets out a range of ambitious targets aimed at achieving an agreed, long-term vision for Paralympic sport in Ireland. In developing this plan, the Paralympics Ireland Board sought the input of a range of key stakeholders including:

- Paralympic athletes
- Paralympics Ireland staff
- Multi-Sport NGBs
- Sport NGBs
- Paralympic coaches
- Specialist support service providers
- Sport Ireland and the Sport Ireland Institute
- Various subject matter experts (within and outside of Paralympic sport)

We carried out a detailed SWOT analysis, hosted a range of focus group meetings on key strategic topics, conducted over 30 one-to-one discussions with key individuals across the Paralympic system, carried out international benchmarking reviews and completed an online survey open to all with an interest in Paralympics Ireland which attracted 139 detailed responses.

This plan reflects these inputs and sets out to provide a clear direction for Paralympics Ireland to 2025. The Board and staff of Paralympics Ireland are committed to delivering on this plan. Our goal is to further strengthen the focus of Paralympics Ireland and deliver continued Irish success in the elite world of Paralympic sport.

This plan reflects the inputs from extensive consultations and sets out to provide a clear direction for Paralympics Ireland to 2025.



Strategic Context

The recently published National Sports Policy 2018-2027 set out a clear strategic direction for sport in Ireland over the next decade. The policy document highlighted the need for increased investment in high performance sport. It highlighted the deficit in funding compared to countries of a comparable size and there is a commitment to triple high-performance investment support over the next decade.

Equally, there is a recognition that multi-annual funding must be introduced to enable sports to plan strategically over longer time periods, provide a more stable environment for athletes to train and grow their performance and enable the attraction of high quality coaching and performance director talent to Ireland. A measurement of high performance success in the policy is based on an increase in the Olympic and Paralympic medals in the future. As 11 of the 13 medals won in the last cycle in Rio were Paralympic medals, this highlights the strategic importance of Paralympics within high performance nationally. It also highlighted the need to source alternative funding models over and above state investment to provide the resource base to support the nations high-performance sport ambitions. The policy advocates more focused investment with clearer prioritisation of sports with proven track records of delivery and potential of future medal prospects.

All these factors set the context within which this plan has been developed. Paralympics Ireland



Rio 2016 Opening Ceremony

has an unparalleled track record of success in medal terms within Irish sport. The potential to continually deliver future medals is clear. The need for greater focus of priority across the Paralympic sports matches that of the wider National Sports Policy.

Therefore, this plan must set out a clear vision of the future for Paralympics Ireland. It must ensure our focus is clear and unequivocal in relation to our remit to support high performance Paralympic sport and support sports specific NGB's to provide a high performance pathway for para athletes. It must establish a framework for making difficult decisions in terms of priority allocation of resources – financial and human – to achieve our goals. It must be bold in its targets for raising additional sources of revenue beyond state funding to support our programmes.

This plan does that.

Paralympics Ireland – key facts

Sports affiliated with Paralympics Ireland

21

Number of Paralympic medals won by Irish athletes

226

- Gold 66
- Silver 66
- Bronze 94

48

Number of athletes that represented Ireland at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games

10

Number of sports that represented Ireland at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games

11

Number of medals won by Irish athletes at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. (4 Gold, 4 Silver, 3 Bronze)

28th

Ireland ranking at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games

5th

Ireland ranking per capita at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games

528

Number of events at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games in 22 sports

159

Number of nations that competed at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games

Our Vision

Our vision is for Irish athletes to win medals at the Paralympic Games.

As a nation, we want Ireland to continue to overachieve in Paralympic sport. Ireland has a proud track record of delivering medals consistently on the world stage. We believe we can continue to outperform bigger nations. This will require a planned, focused approach to ensure this happens by design and can be sustained through multiple Paralympic cycles.

The world of Paralympic sport is becoming increasingly competitive. We are competing against nations with much larger athlete talent pools, far greater resources (people and financial), and increasingly sophisticated approaches to their high-performance Para programmes.

To deliver on our vision, we must continually improve the national Paralympic performance system, leaving no stone unturned, in our efforts to be ranked in the top five nations in the world (in medals per capita). We must be agile, think differently and make the most of all we have to ensure we succeed in our ambition. By working with our athletes and ensuring that they have the optimum support structures, we believe that our vision is achievable.

We believe we can continue to outperform bigger nations.



Katie George Dunlevy and Eve McCrystal

Our Mission

Our mission is to support Irish Para-Athletes to reach finals and deliver podium places at the Paralympic Games. We will provide support and advice to NGBs in their delivery of a high performance pathway for athletes with a disability ensuring that the next generation of Irish Paralympians will be amongst the best prepared and most successful Para-Athletes competing in future Paralympic Games.

Paralympics Ireland is the national governing body for the sports of Para-Athletics and Para-Swimming and currently have the responsibility to prepare athletes within those sports to compete at all international competitions including European Championships, World Championships and Paralympic Games.

Paralympics Ireland is the National Member in Ireland of Boccia International Sports Federation (BISFED) and governs the sport as an Official

Sub-Committee of Paralympics Ireland called Boccia Ireland. The vision is for Boccia Ireland to become an independent autonomous NGB by 2021.

The International Paralympic Committee strategy has called for a greater focus on sports for athletes with higher support needs. Paralympics Ireland agrees with and acknowledges the need to support athletes with higher support needs and will reflect this throughout our operational plans.

Our singular focus is to support Irish Para-Athletes to succeed consistently in Paralympic Games and to deliver world class performances. Everything we do is centred around this core focus.

High performance sport is our business. We are in the medals business. We are clear that our remit is to develop the system, plans, support services and processes to maximise the sporting potential of Irish Paralympians and to enable their journey to become world class athletes. All our activity will be aligned to this mission.

In the past, Paralympics Ireland has played a dual role of driving high performance whilst helping to develop Paralympic sport in Ireland. This plan marks a clear change in focus. Paralympics Ireland cannot do both effectively with its limited resource base. Therefore the focus of Paralympics Ireland is more clearly defined as being centred on delivering high performance in Paralympic Sport. The responsibility for the ongoing development of Paralympic sport rests with the various National Governing Bodies and disability specific multi-sport national governing bodies.

Our singular focus is to support Irish Para-Athletes to succeed consistently in Paralympic Games and to deliver world class performances.

Headline Goals

1

Top 5 in the World in terms of medals per capita by 2020 & Top 3 by 2024

2

Medals in all our 'Gold' Sports in every Paralympic Games

3

Over 40% self-generated funds by 2021 & 50%+ by 2025

4

Portfolio of 6 top level commercial partners in place by 2021

5

Leverage our charitable status to raise additional funds by 2020

6

Establish brand recognition metrics for Paralympics Ireland and Irish Para-Athletes with the aim of achieving annual increases thereafter.

7

Memorandum of Understanding between Paralympics Ireland and every affiliated sport by 2019

8

Multi-Year service agreements in place to ensure appropriate athlete support services in place

9

Achieve a customer satisfaction rating of 75% or over with each affiliate annually.

10

Leading in the provision of reliable classification expertise to all affiliated sports

Our Strategic Focus

OUR STRATEGY IS CENTRED AROUND FOUR CORE PILLARS

1

Building an Effective
High-Performance System

2

Driving Leadership in
Para Sport in Ireland

3

Creating a Sustainable
Paralympics Ireland Model

4

Building the Profile
of Paralympics in Ireland

Paralympics Ireland A Personality Statement

The personality of Paralympics Ireland is unique. Our personality defines us.
Our personality guides how we behave.
Our personality is reflected in our athletes.
Our personality is a source of strength.
Our personality attracts partners to collaborate with us.
Our personality is who we are.







FOCUS AREA 1: Building an Effective High-Performance System

WHAT ARE WE AIMING TO ACHIEVE?

Ireland is a proud sporting nation. Paralympic athletes have added, and will continue to add, to the sporting success of the country. We are focused on supporting our athletes to compete on the world stage and win continually. Success breeds success. The impact of successful Irish Paralympians will be to drive greater awareness of Para-Athletes, inspire future generations to aspire to match their achievements and generate continued investment in the Paralympic movement in Ireland.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY HAVING A WORLD CLASS PERFORMANCE PROGRAMME WITHIN PARALYMPICS IRELAND. THE PROGRAMME WILL FOCUS ON:

- Prioritising resource – people and financial - in sports with a higher probability of providing a return on that investment;
- Building Talent ID and athlete pipeline systems that enable us to continually develop future generations of elite Para-Athletes;
- Creating an athlete centred approach to enable them to achieve personal bests, medal winning performances and develop their ability to perform on demand;
- Implementing high quality planning processes, systems and supports for our priority sports;
- Cultivating an elite performance culture and

mindset across everyone involved within the programme;

- Developing the coaches within our system to become world class;
- Continually pushing the boundaries of what is possible through innovative thinking and leaving no stone unturned in our pursuit of a competitive edge.

We will benchmark ourselves against the best performance programmes across all disciplines and all sports.

THE PROGRAMME WILL BE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING KEY PRINCIPLES:

- We are planning for long-term, sustained success not short-term one-off success;
- We are focused on building a repeatable system not a haphazard 'hope for the best' approach;
- People are at the heart of our programme – athletes, coaches, support service providers, support staff and classifiers – and we will continually develop their capabilities to world class standards to meet the objectives for our programme;
- We will target our resources on priority areas not spread them too thinly across the programme;
- We want this to be a positive journey for all involved and to make people proud of being part of it;
- We are driven to win.

WHAT ARE THE KEY INITIATIVES TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES?

1 FOCUS ON PRIORITY SPORTS AND ELITE ATHLETES

Paralympics Ireland will categorise all Paralympic sports into one of 3 grades; Gold, Silver and Bronze. Investment will be prioritised proportionally to these sports. The criteria for assessing the status of each sport will be based on:

- a. *Performance ambition of the sport;*
- b. *Profile of athletes with high performance potential within the sport;*
- c. *Quality of the performance planning within the sport;*
- d. *Quality of the coaches supporting the athletes within the sport;*
- e. *Quantum of medal opportunities available to the sport;*
- f. *Track record of success of the sport;*
- g. *Quality of governance and decision-making processes within the sport;*
- h. *Clear pathway in place for para athletes*

Sports that rate highly in each of these criteria will be categorised as Gold Para Sports and attract the highest level of support within the programme.

The Gold level sports at present are Para-Swimming, Para-Athletics and Para-Cycling. The aim of Paralympics Ireland is to maintain these sports as Gold Para Sports. All other sports will be encouraged to strive to reach Gold Level as they improve their structures in line with the criteria set out above.

Sports that rate moderately on each or most of these criteria and/or have individual athletes performing at 'medal potential' level will be categorised as Silver sports.

Sports that have a relatively lower rating against the criteria will be categorised as Bronze sports.

An environment will be created whereby individual sports aspire to be ranked as Gold Para Sports and demonstrate a willingness to work with Paralympics Ireland to meet their objectives.

2 HIGH PERFORMANCE ELITE ATHLETE SUPPORT PROGRAMME

A world class high performance programme will be implemented that maximises the potential of the athletes and ensures the optimal performance environment for all (athletes, coaches, support personnel) working within the system. The range of services provided to individual sports will differ based on the 'Gold/Silver/Bronze' model.

The core services provided to selected athletes, coaches and their NGBs will include direction, support and advice provided to ensure the completion of:

- Quadrennial plans for Gold and Silver sports (with a focus on 2020 and 2024 outcomes);
- Athlete trajectory and monitoring to track individual athlete milestones (winning and performance) within Gold and Silver sports to include performance profiling, 'on track' dashboard data, expected improvement rates, physical and technical development goals, competition planning and performance tracking, and elite athlete lifestyle assessment;

- Provision of a Sport Ireland/Paralympics Ireland international carding scheme for qualifying athletes;
- Targeted performance related investment for Gold sports including training camps, international competitions, service support and other priority initiatives designed to increase the performance level and preparedness of athletes within the programme;
- Development of a suite of support services delivered in an athlete centred approach including:
 - o Physiological support and development services;
 - o Nutritional advice, support and monitoring;
 - o Medical support;
 - o Strength and Conditioning programmes for athletes;
 - o Sports psychology advice and support;
 - o Duty of Care Lifestyle planning advice and support for Paralympic athletes.

Paralympics Ireland will focus the majority of available resources and services outlined above for Gold sports and athletes with medal potential in Silver sports.

For Bronze sports, Paralympics Ireland will provide general advisory and planning services to these sports to assist in their Para programmes with a view to increasing their capability and, over time, improving their ranking to become a Silver or Gold sport.

3 DEVELOPING HIGH QUALITY COACHES

We will establish a Paralympic Coach Leadership Development programme to support coaches working directly with athletes within the High-Performance system. The Leadership Development programme will be custom designed, and the objective will be to raise the standard of coaches working with Paralympic athletes to a world class level for success at the Paralympic Games.

The programme will focus on exposing coaches to best practice thinking in high performance sport, encouraging a continual personal learning and development mindset, improving their planning, organisational and athlete management skills and creating a shared knowledge pool and tools to increase their effectiveness. Paralympics Ireland will ensure that coaches see working within the Para disciplines as an attractive pathway and career option within elite sport.

In tandem with this Leadership programme Para Coach Development will be built to support current sports coaches getting involved in Para sports coaching. The course will provide information on various impairments, generic classification education and examples of appropriate coaching adaptations. The target will be to reduce any barriers to coaching Para sport and facilitate coaches to adapt to bring their sports technical expertise into high performance Para sport.

Coaches will be encouraged to apply for places on the programmes and commit to the learning journey involved. Places on the programmes will be limited and we will offer places to coaches with ambition, commitment and alignment to performance objectives.

The focus for the coach support programmes will be to create long-term coach capability within the system, not just short-term support for preparing for the next Paralympics event.

4 ADVANCE PLANNING & OPERATIONS

Paralympics Ireland will plan ahead for future Paralympic games (and major competitions for sports we are responsible for) to ensure high quality sports facilities, accommodation and services for athletes as they travel to compete in their sports. We will ensure all operations functions linked with each team's travel experience is catered for to a high standard so that it is a source of reassurance and support to athletes and does not detract from performance.

5 ELITE PERFORMANCE CULTURE PROGRAMME

Paralympic sport is becoming increasingly competitive as more nations approach the Games with the same level of planning, preparation and focus as the Olympic Games. If Ireland is to continue to compete and excel on the Paralympic stage everyone involved in the Paralympic system must embrace a culture of excellence and professionalism.

We will define explicitly and continually refresh the target culture that will drive the behaviours of everyone associated with the programme. Paralympics Ireland will aim to create a daily performance environment and mindset reinforced by rigorous standards across all activities. Anyone engaged within our programme – athletes, coaches, support service providers, classifiers, Paralympics Ireland staff – will be expected to formally commit and adhere to the standards and behaviours defined. It is also expected that everyone within the programme takes ownership for their continued development availing of support from people within and outside of the programme.

6 TALENT ID/PERFORMANCE SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

To deliver long-term, consistent medal success Paralympics Ireland will need to ensure there is a pipeline of elite talent capable of transitioning from talent programmes into Paralympic performance squads. This will be achieved through the adoption of the Gold, Silver and Bronze criteria across all Paralympic sports.

The aim is to ensure that all Gold Para Sports continue to have a healthy pipeline of potential elite talent. To achieve this, athletes will be proactively targeted and recruited into these programmes through Talent ID initiatives. Paralympics Ireland will work closely with these sports to develop their performance systems and maximise the potential of the athletes within these sports. Silver and Bronze sports will be supported and advised on how their NGBs can implement the pathways within their sport and provide tools and templates to assist them in this process.

7 PERFORMANCE SPORT RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

The competitive intensity of Paralympic sport demands that Paralympics Ireland has a continual focus on conducting research and to innovate to find a competitive edge across all sports. We will seek to identify game changer ideas and adopt marginal improvement initiatives where possible to help athletes go faster, further and perform better. Smart technology will be leveraged to assist in enhancing performance and enabling dynamic athlete feedback. These initiatives will be a key focus, in particular, for the performance leads, coaches and support service people across the programme.

8 HIGH PERFORMANCE ADVISORY GROUP

A High Performance Advisory Group will be established with a specific remit to provide a 'check and challenge' role to the High-Performance programme and its staff. This will be an advisory group as opposed to a decision-making body. The group will include an independent Chair and other independent high-performance sport experts. The group will meet regularly (3-4 times per year) across the quadrennial Paralympic planning cycle.

9 POSITIVE JOURNEY FOCUS

Becoming a Paralympian is one of the proudest moments in an athletes' life. Paralympics Ireland will ensure that the journey to get there is a positive one and the experience of all Paralympians is one that leaves them in a better place for having been part of our programme. The programme will take a holistic view of the athlete and provide support to them beyond their athletic endeavours including lifestyle support and advice, positive mental health, post career planning & assistance and creating a family support network programme.

A Paralympian Club will be established which will work closely with our Athlete Commission to create a network of Paralympians to acknowledge their connection as Paralympians and to celebrate their achievements.



Greta Streimikyte

WHAT ARE OUR TARGETS?

OUR TARGETS FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE ARE:

- 1** Top 5 in the World in terms of medals per capita by 2020 & Top 3 by 2024;
- 2** Win medals in each 'Gold' Sport (2020 & 2024);
- 3** 5 or more sports rated as Gold Para Sports by 2024;
- 4** An identified talent pathway in all Gold sports by 2022 ensuring sufficient numbers to support a sustainable pipeline of future high-performance talent in each Gold sport;
- 5** Positive assessment of high performance programme by all involved (measured annually through the Athletes Commission);
- 6** Paralympians give a high rating of their experience of the Games in 2020 & 2024;
- 7** Clear performance systems and measurement structures in place to support the programme;
- 9** Clear competition pathways to be mapped out for each sport with team and individual targets in place.

FOCUS AREA 2: Driving Leadership in Para Sport in Ireland

WHAT ARE WE AIMING TO ACHIEVE?

Paralympics Ireland's role is to ensure there are more opportunities for Para-Athletes to achieve their goals and deliver on their potential. We will ensure this by delivering a sustainable, structured pathway and system to support them to become elite performance athletes. We will work closely with the various NGBs to make sure that this works.

WHAT ARE THE KEY INITIATIVES TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES?

1 STAKEHOLDER MODEL

Relationships will be managed with the affiliated members of Paralympics Ireland through a stakeholder management model. A stakeholder map will be developed which will document and monitor the following key elements:

- Affiliate key contacts (e.g. Performance Lead, President/CEO, Key Officials etc);
- Paralympic Status (e.g. Gold, Silver or Bronze);
- Identification of the current key priorities for the affiliate;
- Outline of the strategy for engaging with the affiliate;
- List major next steps between Paralympics Ireland and the affiliate;
- Capture the planned outcomes that are being targeted with the affiliate over the next 6-12 month period.

- Ensure full compliance with the National Classification Policy & Standards.

Expert advice and support will be provided to all NGB's to ensure they are knowledgeable and confident in their navigation of the classification process.

A key role to support this will be a dedicated NGB 'facilitator' within Paralympics Ireland that will be responsible for managing the relationship with the NGBs on an ongoing basis. The NGB 'facilitator' role will act as the main contact point and will coordinate the support of other Paralympics Ireland staff as required and based on the affiliate specific plan developed within the stakeholder model. The NGB 'facilitator' will meet on a regular basis with the affiliates throughout the year.

2 CLARITY OF ROLES

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be developed with each affiliated sport to clearly outline our respective roles and responsibilities for Paralympic sport to ensure there is full alignment and understanding between all parties with a clear focus for Paralympics Ireland on elite performance sport and the various NGBs on helping to develop the grassroots pathways within Paralympic sport.

Activity will be continuously monitored through the stakeholder and NGB 'facilitator' model to ensure the continued development of Para

sport and the respective high-performance programmes within each sport.

3 DISCUSSIONS ON THE FUTURE OF PARALYMPICS IRELAND NGB STATUS FOR PARA-ATHLETICS AND PARA-SWIMMING

In most sports the NGB has a pivotal role to play and Paralympics Ireland acts as a support to those NGBs as they prepare for the Paralympic Games. As is the case with the International Paralympic Committee that held responsibility for Para Swimming and Para Athletics; Paralympics Ireland is the national governing body for Para-Athletics, Para Swimming and Boccia currently. In these sports, however; a much greater responsibility has been taken on by Paralympics Ireland and not the sports NGB's to date. Paralympics Ireland has begun initial exploratory conversations with Athletics Ireland and Swim Ireland to discuss the possibility of a greater partnership in the future for these sports. We will continue this engagement with 'Athletics Ireland, Swim Ireland and other relevant multi sport disability organisations with a view towards setting up positive partnerships that will provide more opportunities for athletes with a disability to participate and develop to their potential.

4 ATHLETE SUPPORT SERVICE AGREEMENTS

Paralympics Ireland will negotiate and agree long-term service agreements with appropriate service providers including the Sport Ireland Institute to ensure a range of elite athlete support services are available to the Paralympic programme and to tap into the expertise, facilities and shared best practice learnings available.

In some cases, additional supports are needed to facilitate elite athletes with higher needs and



Shot Put



Wheelchair Basketball

we will specifically target the provision of these needs as required.

The effectiveness of support agreements will be continually monitored and reviewed/amended as necessary to ensure they support our ambitions from a high-performance perspective. We will work closely with the service providers to ensure we maintain a strong relationship with regular communication and coordination.

5 PROVIDING CLASSIFICATION EXPERTISE

As classification of athletes into particular impairment categories per sport is specific to paralympic sports, Paralympics Ireland will lead in the provision of classification expertise to all sports. This involves the set up and consistent review of a classification system and structure per sport. We will lead on the recruitment and training of personnel for classification roles in the Gold and Silver sports and offer classification services as appropriate to other sports, in a planned and coordinated way.

6 ADVOCATING FOR THE PARALYMPIC MOVEMENT

Paralympics Ireland will advocate for the promotion and development of the Paralympic movement in Ireland. Whilst we will not have a direct role in the development of Para sport – this will be the responsibility of the affiliates of Paralympics Ireland – we will promote the work of other NGBs on their Para sport endeavours.

We will address general issues of concern to the sector (e.g. funding, facilities, participation rates etc.) as well as highlighting the high-performance pathway option for athletes with a disability through appropriate networks in Ireland such as the Local Sports Partnership's network of SIDO's (Sports Inclusion Disability Officers), disability NGB's and Cara.

We will work closely in partnership with Sport Ireland, Sport NI and the Sport Ireland Institute to ensure that the funding, services and supports for our Paralympic programme help us deliver



2018 European ParaAthletics Medallists

on our targets and objectives. We will explore the potential for working in collaboration with the Olympic Federation of Ireland on mutually beneficial programmes and activities.

We will create positive partnerships with organisations that can assist us in the promotion and development of the Paralympic Movement in Ireland, nationally and internationally (with the partnership of the International Paralympic Committee and European Paralympic Committee). We will advocate for the recognition of our Paralympic athletes as elite, high performance athletes.

7 **WOMEN IN PARA SPORT**

The time is right for Paralympics Ireland to demonstrate leadership with respect to women in sport. Paralympics Ireland will ensure that paralympic sports are more inclusive, embracing and encouraging of the involvement of women in Para sport.

- Paralympics Ireland will develop a programme to focus specifically on supporting an increase in women in Para Sport and to provide support and pathways for aspiring elite high performance female Para-Athletes;
- Paralympics Ireland will, where appropriate, positively discriminate to make it easier for women to get involved in all programmes as elite athletes, coaches, administrators and decision makers;
- Paralympics Ireland will celebrate and leverage positive female role models within paralympic sports to reinforce the commitment to attracting more women to Paralympic sport.

WHAT ARE OUR TARGETS?

OUR TARGETS FOR DRIVING LEADERSHIP IN PARA SPORT ARE:

- 1** High satisfaction rating of relationship with affiliates to Paralympics Ireland (measured annually);
- 2** All affiliated sports have an agreed MOU with Paralympics Ireland ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities;
- 3** Progressed engagement with AI SI and relevant stakeholders with partnership potential explored;
- 4** Long-term elite athlete support service agreements in place and working effectively with relevant service providers including the Sport Ireland Institute;
- 5** Paralympics Ireland playing an effective ongoing role on key issues affecting Para sport globally through proactive engagement with the European Paralympics Committee and the International Paralympics Committee etc.
- 6** Paralympics Ireland playing a key influencing role at the highest levels in Irish sport including the DTTAS, Sport Ireland, Sport NI etc.
- 7** Establish Women in Sport programme to encourage and support women who wish to become involved in Para Sport in any capacity

FOCUS AREA 3: Creating a Sustainable Paralympics Ireland Model

WHAT ARE WE AIMING TO ACHIEVE?

Paralympics Ireland is currently heavily dependent on public funds as a primary source of revenue with approximately 80% of annual revenue being grant income. The range of activity planned over the term of this plan requires an increase in financial resource. To fund our programmes, we need to grow and diversify our revenue base significantly. Implementing a more sustainable financial model will be created that will underpin the organisation into the future.

WHAT ARE THE KEY INITIATIVES TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES?

1 COMMERCIAL PROGRAMME

The existing commercial partnership programme will expand and increase by creating new revenue streams and broadening the base of sponsors. The following opportunities will be explored:

- Building a strong sponsorship proposition to increase existing sponsor revenues;
 - Creating new sponsorship categories to build a portfolio of partners and total value of sponsorship packages;
 - Developing a fundraising strategy to identify new sources of revenue building on the charitable status of Paralympics Ireland;
 - Exploring other potential new commercial revenue streams (e.g. merchandising).
- As part of our commercial proposition, Paralympics Ireland will seek to engage partners more actively to deliver value to them and increase the likelihood of renewal and increased investment. Additional support will be sought for activation programmes to assist in the awareness building and promotion of Paralympics Ireland.

The key components of the commercial programme will be to:

- Develop clarity on our brand values and proposition to ensure we can articulate what makes us compelling for potential commercial partners;
- Create and develop product propositions within our commercial portfolio and link our products to potential benefits for our partners (e.g. brand exposure, support for brand positioning, corporate social responsibility agenda, access to target audiences, employee engagement);
- Identify potential commercial partners and proactively target the market through a planned process using best practice sales and customer relationship management practices;
- Secure a portfolio of commercial partners across our products and service the partnerships to ensure that we continually add value and deliver target benefits;

- Secure athlete agreements, as part of a broader participation agreement, to ensure athlete participation and support for agreed commercial activation activities;
- Secure alternative sources of funding including Women in Sport funding to support our objectives.

2 **PARALYMPICS IRELAND FOUNDATION**

We will explore the option of establishing a dedicated Paralympics Ireland Foundation that is structured and supported to most effectively leverage the charitable status and the potential of the Paralympic brand in Ireland. The foundation will provide a platform for investment by philanthropic funds and corporations to support Paralympics Ireland activities.

The foundation would be the philanthropic arm of Paralympics Ireland and its goal will be to support the Paralympics Ireland programme achieve its vision and mission to support Irish Para-Athletes maximise their potential.

The foundation would raise revenue through a combination of:

- Corporate donations;
- Private donations;
- Fundraising campaigns;
- Para events;
- Cause marketing initiatives

3 **BEST PRACTICE COMMERCIAL MANAGEMENT**

We are aiming to increase self-generated funds significantly to support our activities. This will not be easy; however, it is essential to deliver the increased financial resources through our commercial programme. A key part of how we will achieve this is by implementing best practice sales and customer relationship management practices.



Ailbhe Kelly

We will design and implement new processes and utilise proven tools and techniques to support the commercial team.

A Commercial Advisory Group will be established with a specific remit to provide a 'check and challenge' role to the Head of Commercial and Paralympics Ireland staff. As with the High Performance Advisory Group, this will be an advisory group as opposed to a decision-making body. The group will include an independent chair and other independent sales, fundraising and commercial experts. The group will meet regularly (3-4 times per year) and will be a key component in creating a more structured approach to commercial activities.

WHAT ARE OUR TARGETS?

OUR TARGETS FOR A SUSTAINABLE MODEL ARE:

- 1** 40%+ of our revenue is self-generated by 2022 and 50%+ by 2025;
- 2** Paralympics Ireland Foundation explored with a view to additional revenue generation stream;
- 3** Portfolio of at least 6 top level sponsors in place by 2022;
- 4** High level of sponsor satisfaction ratings which will be measured annually;
- 5** Charitable status of Paralympics Ireland to be leveraged.



Pat O'Leary

FOCUS AREA 4: Building the Profile of Paralympics in Ireland

WHAT ARE WE AIMING TO ACHIEVE?

The Paralympic movement has grown in recent years and, in particular, the London 2012 Paralympics placed the Games on a different footing. Paralympics in Ireland has built a solid base of public awareness and goodwill on the back of our achievements in past Games. We must now build on this foundation to increase the profile of Paralympic Sport in Ireland.

Our approach will be centred on three core aims:

- 1 Increasing awareness of Paralympic Sports;
- 2 Creating new sports heroes for the country to get behind;
- 3 Getting people to see the athletic ability, not the disability, of our Paralympians.

WHAT ARE THE KEY INITIATIVES TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES?

1 SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

We will build our social media profile by engaging and building our community, leveraging the range of content rich resources and stories naturally generated by our Paralympians and volunteers who support us. The current social media following for Paralympics Ireland is 51,500. This places us 11th in terms of sports bodies in Ireland. Our aim is to increase our social media presence by at least 10% per annum.

2 DEVELOP ATHLETE PROFILES

Our greatest asset is our athletes. We aim to increase the profile of Irish Paralympians by emphasising their athletic achievements and prowess. We will work together with the Athlete Commission and the athletes within our programme to advise, support and enhance their public profile without compromising their primary focus as sports people. We will leverage opportunities to feature our Paralympic team throughout the year, not just in the immediate lead up to and during the Paralympics. The more coverage and features of Para-Athletes the better. We will drive this through our own platforms and through media platforms.

Our goal is to ensure that the general public are familiar with the athletes, their achievements and respect them in the same way they do other Irish sportspeople.

3 ATHLETE EDUCATION

We will develop, in partnership with the Athlete Commission, a programme of education for athletes within our system to ensure they are aligned to the brand attributes and personality of Paralympics Ireland. Our goal is to support athletes to act, behave, communicate and project themselves as high performance athletes because that is what they are.

4 MARKET RESEARCH

To date, we have carried out little or no formal market research on the awareness and perception of Paralympics in Ireland. We will develop an ongoing market research monitoring system to provide reliable data that we can track continually. This will help inform us on how we can improve our profile and to be clear about the communication tactics that are most effective in reaching our audience.

5 PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

We will work closely with our portfolio of commercial partners and other stakeholders to help grow our profile. In this way we will significantly increase our capacity beyond the internal communications team within Paralympics Ireland and create an extended team working to promote Paralympics in Ireland.

A key part of our commercial programme will be a focus on activation support to engage various audiences. For example, for any major commercial partner we will work with them to ensure they engage staff helping to create advocates for Paralympic sports, engage with the communities they are connected to through their day to day activities, and engage their customers through promotion and advertising campaigns.

WHAT ARE OUR TARGETS?

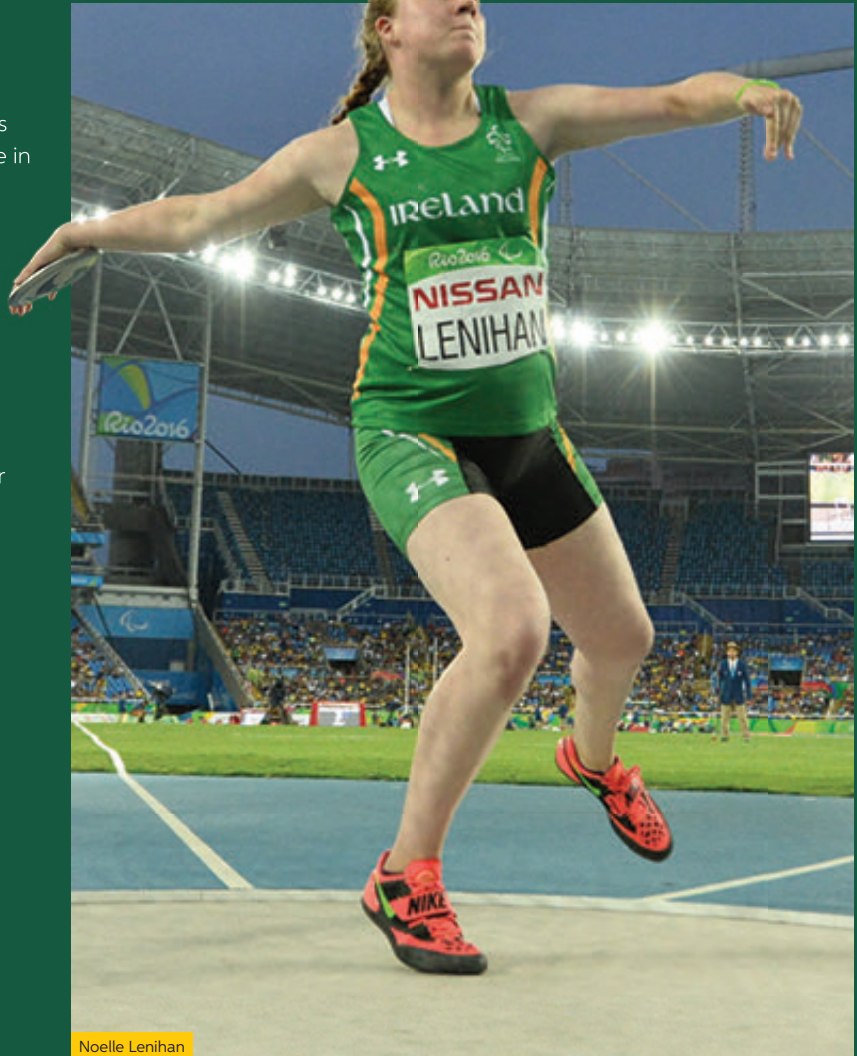
OUR TARGETS FOR A BUILDING THE PROFILE OF PARALYMPICS ARE:

- 1 Paralympics Ireland digital reach increase by at least 10% per annum up to 2025;
- 2 Paralympics Ireland will maintain a brand presence on priority social media channels and will adopt new channels and practices as they emerge;
- 3 Brand awareness baseline to be established in 2019 with agreed annual increase in brand recognition to take place each year thereafter;
- 4 A baseline for Irish Para-Athlete recognition to be established in 2019 and once that baseline is established an agreed increase to occur annually thereafter;
- 5 Increased capacity and capability through our partners, volunteers and stakeholders in promoting Paralympic sports and Para-Athletes in Ireland;
- 6 Communications protocol established with all National Governing Bodies with agreed guidelines established to ensure timely and accurate information exchange;
- 7 Internal communications protocol established to maintain and grow volunteer database;
- 8 Cultivate a panel of influencers to engage with Paralympics Ireland and Irish Para-Athletes.

Organisation to support our plan

In 2019 Paralympics Ireland became fully compliant with the National Governance Code. We will ensure that our processes and systems are best structures possible in place. Our goal is to ensure all stakeholders have total confidence in how we manage our programme.

We will continually review the skills required at Board and Advisory Group level to support our objectives and provide the capabilities required to achieve our targets. In particular, we will ensure that we have High Performance, Commercial and Public Relations expertise within our structures to support the focus areas in our plan and staff responsible for delivering initiatives in these areas.



Noelle Lenihan

Strategy Roadmap

2019 Key Milestones

- › Completion of detailed planning and preparation plans for Tokyo2020 Paralympic Games
- › Development of Team Principles and selection document
- › Conduct needs analysis for coach/leadership support programme
- › Completion of MOUs with each sport
- › Establishment of High Performance Advisory Group
- › Increase commercial revenue to support organisational plans
- › Creation of Athlete Commission plan
- › Development of communication plan to increase brand awareness and para-athlete recognition including baseline analysis of para athlete recognition.

2020 Key Milestones

- › Development of criteria for tiering of Paralympic Sports
- › Implementation of Women in Paralympic Sport programme
- › Establishment of multi-year service agreements for athlete support services
- › Establishment of alternative funding models (e.g. Paralympic Foundation Model)
- › Development and delivery of Tokyo2020 digital media strategy
- › Design of a Talent ID programme for Gold level sports
- › 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games
- › Review of Performance at Tokyo Paralympic Games

2021-2023 Key Milestones

- › Development of performance plans for Gold and Silver sports to 2024
- › Delivery of commercial partner portfolio programme
- › Delivery of coach support programme
- › Delivery of Talent ID programme for Gold level sports
- › Review of research and innovation initiatives across programme
- › Ongoing tracking of market research and brand/awareness profile
- › Review of elite performance culture programme and development of Paralympics Ireland 'Performance Book'
- › Completion of pre-Games planning and preparation for 2024 Paris Paralympic Games

2024 Key Milestones

- › Review of elite performance culture programme and refresh of Paralympics Ireland 'Performance Book'
- › Review of strategic plan and development of new plan 2026-2031
- › 2024 Paris Paralympic Games
- › Review of Performance at 2024 Paris Paralympic Games

