



2021–2025 Strategic Plan

**Special
Olympics**
Ireland

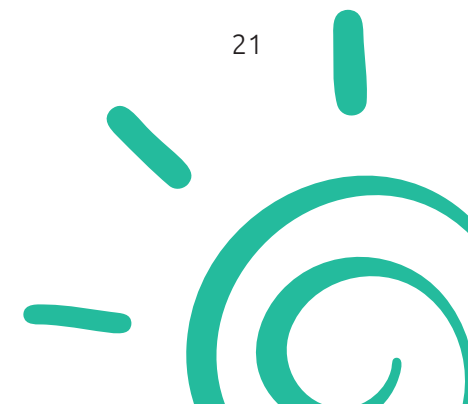


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Chairperson's Statement



It is a privilege for me to serve as Chairperson of Special Olympics Ireland as we enter a new strategic period of significant change and development. As a father to an athlete, I have first-hand experience of the importance of Special Olympics to Lorraine. For many years, I've witnessed the amazing impact of Special Olympics on the lives of persons with an intellectual disability and indeed the impact on their families and the thousands of volunteers that are so committed to the programme. The end to our 2020 Strategy and our new 2025 Strategy have been hugely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. We have deliberately taken more time to shape our new strategy as we look to manage and plan for an extended period of "Transition through Covid" and beyond to a phase of "Retain, Strengthen and Grow".

I, together with the Special Olympics Ireland Board and Management Team, would like to take this opportunity to thank the multitude of stakeholders that sustain Special Olympics Ireland. Through your dedication and efforts, our programme remains a leading light globally. I would like to thank our committed and skilled staff, our amazing volunteers, coaches and supportive family members. Our many funding partners and sponsors continue to demonstrate wonderful loyalty and support. On every level, the organisation is well-placed to continue upwards and onwards over this new strategic period.

Brendan Whelan
Chairman



Message from CEO



I am delighted to present the Special Olympics Ireland 2025 Strategic Plan which will guide us over the next five years. The plan is the end result of a very wide-ranging consultation process over an extended period as a result of Covid-19. The process included extensive input from our Board, athletes, clubs, volunteers, families and staff.

We very much recognise the importance of our volunteers in everything that we do to serve our athletes. We also recognise the competing pressures on people's time whilst there is a continual drive for improved governance. Expanding opportunities for athlete participation and making life easier for our clubs emerged as major themes. I'm pleased to report positive financial results at

the end of the 2020 Strategy which will serve us well to make a number of key and critically important investments in the years ahead. Enabled by carefully selected investments and improved leadership across the programme, we are confident that we will make significant progress during the strategic period ahead.

I very much look forward to working with our dedicated staff, board, volunteers and partners to bring our 2025 Strategy to fruition.

Matt English
CEO

Who We Are

Special Olympics Ireland is the National Governing Body for Sport for persons with an intellectual disability. Special Olympics Ireland is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. The organisation was founded in 1978 and is affiliated to Special Olympics International.

We provide a year-round sports training, development and competition programme for athletes with an intellectual disability participating in affiliated clubs around the island of Ireland and we offer the opportunity to compete up to International and World Games level. The Special Olympics programme offers 13 summer sports, 2 winter sports and a comprehensive Motor Activities Training Programme (MATP) for those who have not yet gained the necessary skills for participation in structured sports training. We also offer other programmes such as Health and Wellbeing, Athlete Leadership and Young Athletes™ programme.

The Special Olympics Programme is delivered through a club-based sports training programme offered at a community level. The clubs are independent entities that affiliate to the organisation in order to participate in a range of sports competitions and support programmes that Special Olympics Ireland offers each year. Entities that affiliate consist of community sports clubs, registered charities, such as services and schools for persons with an

intellectual disability, and other National Governing Body sports clubs. We have 7,351 athletes registered in 292 affiliated clubs across the island as at 31st December 2020.

The programme is organised across five geographical areas in the island of Ireland – Connaught, Eastern (Greater Dublin Area), Leinster, Munster and Ulster Region.

Our programme is underpinned by an invaluable team of volunteers without whom it would be impossible to deliver on our objectives. We have 14,520 registered volunteers who give freely of their time and effort in clubs, on committees, on sports teams and supporting the organisation and delivery of competitions.

Special Olympics recognise the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of our athletes, children and adults, our volunteers and staff. The organisation is committed to ensuring our safeguarding practices meet the needs of our people, reflect statutory and legal responsibilities and best practice guidance. Our sports clubs are committed to the ongoing implementation of our Code of Ethics and Good Practice which aims to foster a culture of understanding and compliance for all and to create a safe child-centred environment for young people to grow and develop within sport.



Our Mission

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Our Vision

To provide a quality year-round sports programme embedded in local communities, resourced by vibrant and strong leaders, incorporating health and well-being opportunities for athletes with an intellectual disability from 4 years of age upwards.

Our Values

- Passion & Pride
- Equipped For Empowerment
- Flexibility & Adaptability
- One Team

The ultimate goal is to assist persons with an intellectual disability to participate as productive and respected members of society at large, by

- Offering them a fair opportunity to develop and demonstrate their skills and talents through sports training and competition
- Providing social and leisure opportunities for them
- Helping to increase the public's awareness of their capabilities and needs.

By the end of this Strategy, we are confident that “new and existing athletes will find it easier to access quality sports and new development opportunities; clubs will find it easier to operate; and we will equip athletes, staff and volunteers to lead the organisation forward”

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By the end of this strategy

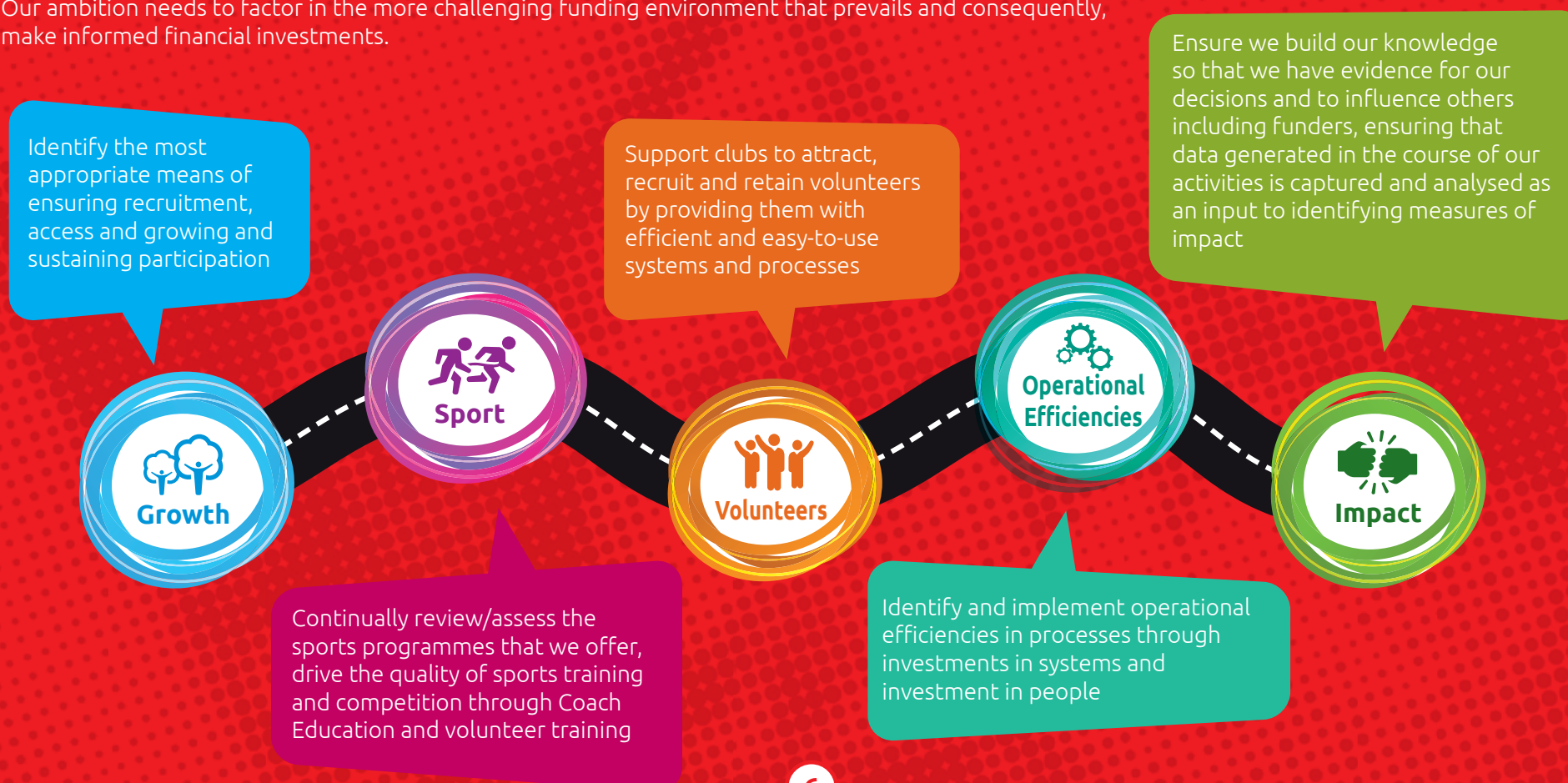
clubs will find it easier to operate”



Our Pathway

During the initial development of our Strategic Plan, five early themes emerged. We identified an action with each theme to lead us along our pathway to achieve our vision. These are outlined below.

A key driver in this pathway is to **'make it easier for clubs'**. Volunteers have many competing pressures on their time and with a continual drive for improved governance and compliance, we want to assist volunteers in clubs through support, training, resources and process efficiencies. Our ambition needs to factor in the more challenging funding environment that prevails and consequently, make informed financial investments.



How we developed the strategy

Initial strategy development discussions identified a number of areas for consideration by the Board of Directors and the management team. Through workshop sessions with the management team, followed by joint sessions with the Board, these areas were consolidated and transformed into five early themes. Consultation on these early themes took place with the wider staff team. These early themes informed the development of draft goals and objectives.

In early 2020, we recognised that the period ahead would be challenging as the Covid-19 pandemic continued to present restrictions and challenges on activities from sports training, competition and in-person engagement to fundraising and sponsorship. To acknowledge and take account of this ongoing challenge, we agreed that our approach to Strategy 2025 should incorporate a two-phase approach – the first, TRANSITION THROUGH COVID and emerging from this into the second phase of RETAIN, STRENGTHEN AND GROW.

Our goals and objectives started from a recognition of 'where we are now', in a context of:

- Reduced numbers participating
- Few clubs operating
- Likely repeated changes in restrictions over a prolonged period of time,

But also, a need and opportunity to accelerate digitalisation and benefit from new ways of working.

Further consultations were held with the Board and the staff team in 2020. Following the consultations, critical work was undertaken to develop the five-year financial budget and fundraising strategy that will underpin the implementation of the new Strategic Plan.

In February 2021, a wider consultation process took place with stakeholders including regional committees, affiliated clubs, coaches, volunteers, families and athletes in the form of six online consultation sessions. This Strategic Plan reflects the input from these consultations. Following completion of the consultation process, the goals and objectives and financials were reviewed and finalised for consultation with the staff team in preparation for presentation to the Board.

The final phase of development included refinement of the goals and objectives and content development of the strategy document. The Draft Strategic Plan was presented to the Board in April 2021 for final review and input. The Strategic Plan was circulated to stakeholders in mid-April 2021. The final plan was approved in May 2021.



Developing the strategy



Strategic Context

The development of this strategy began ahead of the Covid-19 pandemic, and while that has changed the context in which this strategy has been adopted and will be implemented, we have also preserved and even expanded the ambition of the Strategy. In addition to Covid-19, a number of other factors were particularly relevant to the development of the strategy:

- The changing composition and preferences of athletes, families and volunteers including how they participate; the evolving mix of structures in terms of affiliated clubs (includes community sports clubs, schools and services for persons with an intellectual disability and National Governing Body sports clubs).
- Digital channels and what supports best enable and empower them.
- The policy context, notably those policies and strategies with direct relevance such as the National Sports Policy 2018-2027 and the draft Sport NI Corporate Plan for Public Consultation 2020-2025, as well as policy and published research that addresses one or more areas of shared interest.
- Our developing relationships with other sports and their individual and collective steps in support of inclusion, in line with the National Sports Policy, as well as the plans and actions of other organisations with an interest in sports participation, health and wellbeing.

- The standards applicable to us including safeguarding and vetting, Sport Ireland's Governance Code for Sport and the Charities Governance Code, alongside our legal and regulatory compliance. These are essential and mandatory standards which do however require resources greater than in previous years.
- The strategy of Special Olympics as set out in the Global Strategic Plan 2021-2024, which adopts two goals of A) Improve local sports participation and well-being to strengthen communities and B) Remove barriers to inclusion and expand reach through digital technology.

In the formation of this strategic plan we considered the unprecedented impacts and learnings arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. We now find ourselves faced with a number of opportunities and challenges and these are reflected in this strategic plan.

Our Strategic Focus

Our two-phase approach to our Strategy – the first, **TRANSITION THROUGH COVID** and emerging from this into the second phase of **RETAIN, STRENGTHEN AND GROW** – splits our objectives across two periods. It anticipates that June 2023 will hopefully be the 'shift' from 'getting back on our feet' to 'growing again', and accordingly sets meaningful objectives in each period, while still building towards a better long-term position. As each of our goals has meaningful objectives in each period, we can be confident that these are substantial goals tied to our enduring mission and that we can progress them over the next 5 years. We have embraced this approach in setting our objectives over the 5-year period.



5-Year Goals and Objectives





DEVELOP AND EXPAND FLEXIBLE SPORTS OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION

Objectives

Review, evaluate and establish competition programmes in revised formats

Explore and develop an Inclusive Model of Sport to increase participation opportunities in the community

Grow the Young Athletes™ programme and build a Juvenile Pathway

During 2020, we adjusted and adapted how we delivered our sports programme. The pandemic has meant the competition cycle has been interrupted and events cancelled. This challenge presents us with an opportunity to reflect on how our competition cycle might adapt and adjust going forward, to look at the potential for new formats, not only to address the current interruption but to enhance and improve the experience and offering for our athletes.

We want society to respect and value our athletes and we want to work with communities and local organisations to be inclusive. We

believe in the power of sport to make an invaluable contribution towards an inclusive society. We will explore and trial an inclusive model that will deliver a wider range of accessible opportunities for athletes, particularly within their own community.

In addition, the launch of the Young Athletes™ programme in the last Strategy was highly successful. We want to continue to attract younger athletes to the programme and further develop the athletes' levels of physical literacy through a Young Athletes™ pathway that leads athletes towards participation in one or more sports.

Pathway to Sport

We will grow pathways to sport through the Young Athletes™ programme and pilot inclusion with National Governing Bodies of Sport



Goal 2

TO SUPPORT CLUBS TO BE RESILIENT AND ADAPTABLE

Objectives

Develop new tools and resources to drive club efficiencies

Enhance the knowledge and skills of coaches, volunteers and athletes to improve quality in sport, leadership and athlete well-being and fitness

Increase the integration of the Health & Wellbeing programme into a greater number of clubs

Our local sports clubs will play an invaluable role as we transition through, and emerge from, Covid-19. Undoubtedly, the Covid-19 pandemic will impact on membership retention and participation in our various programmes. Our clubs will need our support to re-open and to build with confidence and strength.

We will support clubs to resume activities. We recognise clubs have concerns on the retention of volunteers following the long periods of inactivity. We will assist clubs to recruit and train volunteers. We will also provide clubs with resources to enable local community recruitment. We will make it easier for all club members by delivering efficiencies through our technology, by streamlining processes and by providing digital offerings.

We want people with an intellectual disability to learn new skills, be fit and feel confident.

Sport contributes to higher levels of physical literacy, improved health and wellbeing and a sense of belonging and connection. Never before have the benefits of sports participation been more important for everyone as we prepare to emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic. Our stakeholders recognise the importance of their mental and physical well-being and the invaluable role of the sports clubs in promoting health and wellbeing.





Goal 3

TO NURTURE A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

Objectives

Develop and empower staff, athletes and volunteers to enhance leadership	Develop athletes' leadership skills	Encourage and enable the voice of athletes to enhance the programme
Increase efficiencies through investment in new software systems and tools	Streamline operational processes	Adopt research, evaluation and evidence-based decision making to inform strategies and activities

During 2020, the need to innovate and adapt using digital technologies and collaborative approaches was and continues to be of paramount importance. The drive for efficiencies is part of an ongoing transformation programme that includes pursuing new and sustainable ways of working, reducing manual processes through the use of technology, and capitalising on practices boosted by remote environment during Covid-19.

We will invest in training and development opportunities to help staff, volunteers and athletes to strive for excellence.

Using our data more effectively will drive better decision-making. The need for impact measurement is important so that our key funding stakeholders will know the good we are doing and so that their critical support will continue. This is important from an accountability, transparency and performance perspective.

Phased Objectives

As our Strategic Plan encompasses a two-phase approach, each phase has its own defined objectives. However, the approach allows for a period of a review, as we transition from Covid-19, to reassess the circumstances and environment at that time and to take the opportunity to refine, amend or add to our objectives in the second phase of the strategic plan. The first phase is heavily characterised by the ongoing pandemic.

GOAL	5-YEAR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	TRANSITION THROUGH COVID	RETAIN, STRENGTHEN AND GROW
		Objectives	Objectives
GOAL 1 Develop and expand flexible sports opportunities to increase participation	• Review, evaluate and establish competition programmes in revised formats	• Adapt sport training and competition programmes in revised formats • Initiate review of competition programme	• Adopt and pilot competition formats following review of competition programme • Evaluate learnings from any new competition formats
	• Explore and develop an Inclusive Model of Sport to increase participation opportunities in the community	• Pilot an Inclusive Model of Sport with 3 National Governing Bodies of Sport	• Develop and expand the Inclusive Model
	• Grow the Young Athletes™ programme and build a Juvenile Pathway	• Adapt the Young Athletes™ pathway to address current challenges	• Expand number of clubs offering Young Athletes™ • Transition young athletes into sport-specific programmes • Introduce basketball, floorball and football for juveniles



GOAL	5-YEAR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	TRANSITION THROUGH COVID	RETAIN, STRENGTHEN AND GROW
		Objectives	Objectives
GOAL 2 To support clubs to be resilient and adaptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new tools and resources to drive club efficiencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and sustain clubs to reactivate and retain athletes Support and assist clubs to reactivate, retain and recruit new clubs volunteers Support volunteers to become leaders in peer recruitment, onboarding, retention and succession planning Support clubs to engage and recruit youth volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set multi-year targets at regional level for athlete retention and recruitment Develop resources, guides and templates to support good governance and compliance in clubs Develop recruitment and retention models based on quantitative and qualitative data
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the knowledge and skills of coaches, volunteers and athletes to improve quality in sport, leadership and athlete well-being and fitness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide tools, resources and opportunities to develop coaches to engage athletes at a local level Provide tools and resources to support clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the range of online training opportunities available to coaches, volunteers and athletes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the integration of the Health & Wellbeing programme into a greater number of clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digitise/provide health & fitness programmes, education and resources to support athletes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the number of clubs offering health and wellbeing opportunities annually to athletes

GOAL	5-YEAR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	TRANSITION THROUGH COVID	RETAIN, STRENGTHEN AND GROW
		Objectives	Objectives
GOAL 3 To nurture a culture of excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and empower staff and volunteers to enhance leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen leadership capacity and capability for all staff and volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve communications and project management to support collaboration, knowledge transfer and execution
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop athletes' leadership skills Encourage and enable the voice of athletes to enhance the programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build the capacity and engagement of athletes through easy-use technologies Offer athlete engagement and learning opportunities through Athlete Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the number of athlete leaders Develop wider engagement and input opportunities for athletes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase efficiencies through investment in new software systems and tools Streamline operational processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Membership, Fundraising and HR systems Drive adoption & impact of new software systems and tools through a training programme for staff, clubs and volunteers Develop investment cases for other systems Identify and improve operational processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimise digital-led approaches to programming, fundraising, and operations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt research, evaluation and evidence-based decision making to inform strategies and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce and develop Impact Measurement Gather and analyse data on drivers of participation and attrition and gaps in provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure impact and evaluate our work Embed outcome-based approach to programme delivery and reporting



Year One Key Performance Indicators

GOAL	TRANSITION THROUGH COVID	RETAIN, STRENGTHEN AND GROW
	Objectives	Objectives
GOAL 1 Develop and expand flexible sports opportunities to increase participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt sport training and competition programmes in revised formats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the transition to Virtual Clubs to offer online participation for athletes, 140 clubs active Develop and deliver virtual competitions across 9 sports
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate review of competition programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process for advancement for World Games in 2022 and 2023 reviewed and approved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot an Inclusive Model of Sport with 3 National Governing Bodies of Sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memorandum of Understanding signed with the three NGBs Introduce Tennis to Special Olympics Ireland Programme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt the Young Athletes™ pathway to address current challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train 14 Coaching Children's Tutors 50 new coaches complete the Coaching Children's Course Establish 5 new Young Athletes™ clubs, one per region Develop Juvenile Pathway framework
GOAL 2 To support clubs to be resilient and adaptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and sustain clubs to reactivate and retain athletes Support and assist clubs to reactivate, retain and recruit new clubs volunteers Support volunteers to become leaders in peer recruitment, onboarding, retention and succession planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the implementation of the Return to Activities Protocol Promote and provide a suite of online offerings to support clubs' engagement of athletes in opportunities online, at home, at club in sports training, competition, athlete leadership and health and wellbeing Process in place for exit interviews /survey for athletes who disengage/ leave the programme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support clubs to engage and recruit youth volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch Volunteer Recruitment Campaign to assist clubs prior to re-opening where required Volunteer Recruitment Pack developed to support clubs to recruit locally Process in place for exit interviews/survey for volunteers who disengage/ leave the programme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide tools, resources and opportunities to develop coaches to engage athletes at a local level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link and deliver coach and officials development opportunities with National Governing Bodies of Sport Introduction to Coaching Practices Course Modules available online



GOAL	TRANSITION THROUGH COVID	RETAIN, STRENGTHEN AND GROW
	Objectives	Objectives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide tools and resources to support clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver 50 Safeguarding Training courses, 600 volunteers trained • Club Handbook published online • Intellectual Disability Modules training available online • Club Safeguarding template documents issued • Implement online training platform for club and volunteers self-paced learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitise/provide health & fitness programmes, education and resources to support athletes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & Wellbeing programme transformed to digital platform • Train 20 Health Promotion Facilitators • 10 Athlete Leaders in the role of Health Messengers • Deliver 2 Healthy Athlete disciplines virtually • Rollout the Health Promotion programme to 100 athletes • 20 clubs delivering the new Health Promotion programme
GOAL 3 To nurture a culture of excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen leadership capacity and capability for all staff and volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to an online training platform for staff and volunteers implemented
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build the capacity and engagement of athletes through easy-use technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote engagement in opportunities available online to athletes, by creating a range of offerings and by using different communications strategies to reach out to athletes - online, via clubs and directly by post
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer athlete engagement and learning opportunities through Athlete Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host 5 Athlete Leadership Forums – one per region
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Membership, Fundraising and HR systems • Drive adoption & impact of new software systems and tools through a training programme for staff, clubs and volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SportLoMo, HR and Fundraising systems fully operational by end 2021 • Training on new systems developed and delivered during 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop investment cases for other systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment cases developed and assessed for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning Management System and Content development to support athlete, staff and volunteer training - Risk Management System - Project Planning Tool

GOAL	TRANSITION THROUGH COVID	RETAIN, STRENGTHEN AND GROW Objectives
	Objectives	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and improve operational processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Athlete Participation Form and associated registration process reviewed Annual Affiliation process reviewed Business and operational processes reviewed Implement tools and processes to improve internal controls Achieve compliance with Sport Ireland's Governance Code for Sport
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce and develop Impact Measurement Gather and analyse data on drivers of participation and attrition and gaps in provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest to resource specialist skill-sets to drive impact measurement Issue two impact measurement reports

KPIs for year two to five will be developed as part of the annual planning and budget process. We will use the Strategy and any review of the Strategy as our guide





Resource Requirements

Financial Resources

The 5-year budget provides for €26.2m (Table 1) in expenditure and €28.5m (Table 2) of income, with the balance of €2.3m (Table 3) being funded from an investment from unrestricted reserves.

Table 1 sets out the high-level financial income plan for the five year 2021-2025 Strategy.

Table 1

Income	2021 €'000	2022 €'000	2023 €'000	2024 €'000	2025 €'000	Total €'000
Total Secured Income - Restricted	1,779	1,904	1,793	1,708	1,660	8,845
Total Secured Income - Unrestricted	2,185	1,667	1,677	1,687	1,697	8,914
Total Unsecured Income - Unrestricted	1,266	1,771	2,000	1,638	1,742	8,416
Total	5,230	5,342	5,470	5,034	5,099	26,175

Table 2 sets out the high-level financial expenditure plan for the five-year 2021-2025 Strategy.

Table 2

Expenditure	2021 €'000	2022 €'000	2023 €'000	2024 €'000	2025 €'000	Total €'000
Sport Programmes	2,016	2,289	2,264	2,217	2,312	11,099
Games (Ireland & World)	116	65	247	143	263	833
Volunteer & Training Programme	345	352	347	347	347	1,739
PR, Marketing & Communications	135	143	143	143	143	708
Strategic & IT	595	528	530	545	523	2,722
Financial Administration	562	523	523	523	523	2,654
Operations	1,025	1,073	1,073	1,073	1,073	5,319
Fundraising & Sponsorship	639	706	765	638	644	3,393
Total	5,434	5,680	5,893	5,630	5,829	28,467

The €28.5m of costs are relatively flat over the five-year period with the exception of 2023 and 2025. In these years, there is an increase in costs as a result of the 2023 World Summer Games in Berlin and the preparations for the 2026 Ireland Summer Games.

Table 3 sets out the investment from reserves for the five year 2021-2025 Strategy.

Table 3

Investments from reserves	2021 €'000	2022 €'000	2023 €'000	2024 €'000	2025 €'000	Total €'000
Total	(204)	(338)	(423)	(596)	(730)	(2,292)

The 2025 Strategy seeks to reinvest the €2.3m surplus generated in the 2016 - 2020 Strategy to support the €2.3m of investment required to deliver on the 2025 five-year plan.

Government Partnerships

Our partnerships with our various government funding agencies are greatly valued and continue to be strategically critical in maintaining levels of income to ensure the sustainability and further development of Special Olympics Ireland. We will continue to work to maintain core grants and with other valued public bodies who provide grants for specific projects valued by our stakeholders.

Fundraising

The fundraising environment in the initial years of the plan will be uncertain and challenging as we learn to transition through Covid-19, consider the possibility of an economic downturn and a potential further contraction of domestic revenues. Our fundraising strategy strives to create sustainable annual income to deliver our programme.

Our fundraising strategy will further diversify our offerings across corporate, community and campaign portfolios:

- **Corporate and Philanthropic:** Corporate sponsorship and fundraising remains a key component of our strategy. We will continue to strengthen, diversify and grow this income source with existing and new partnerships including eir, Gala Retail, Kerry Group, Johnson and Johnson, Bank of America, DELL and Microsoft. Partnerships with Rethink Ireland, the JP McManus Charitable Foundation, JP McManus Benevolent Fund and the Iris O'Brien Foundation continue to provide vital support and will remain very important throughout the new 2025 Strategy. Building philanthropic support through individuals, trusts and foundations will be a key element of the strategy.
- **Community:** Our community fundraisers contribute significant income across key events. We will continue to engage our loyal supporters, recruit new supporters and adapt to the challenges of living with Covid-19 and fundraising in a cashless society, while embracing the opportunities of digital and new technologies.
- **Campaigns:** Fundraising campaigns linked to Games (Support an Athlete and World Games Volunteers), present a significant opportunity throughout the cycle. Legacy, In-memory and Regular Giving campaigns will also be key areas of focus.





Human Resources

Our aim is to develop highly-skilled people that will be equipped and supported to implement this Strategy. Special Olympics Ireland will partner with LinkedIn Learning to ensure that there is an extensive suite of training courses available for our staff to continually develop their skill set on a flexible, online basis. Delivering on our Strategy is highly dependent on the support of dedicated volunteers, led and supported by our committed staff team. We will develop and expand the training opportunities afforded to our volunteers and athletes by introducing a Learning Management System and develop content to support volunteer and athlete training. Both online systems will help to build capacity, empower our people and create strong leaders.

Critical to the successful roll out of online systems will be the implementation of a training strategy for staff, volunteers and Club Management Teams that will support and assist the engagement in the online tools.

An external consultant was engaged in 2021 to facilitate an audit of our culture. Our culture is an important enabler for the achievement of the goals and objectives. As part of the process, we will review the organisational structure to ensure it is in line with

the demands of the new Strategy.

During the new strategic period there will be a focus on adopting research, evaluation and evidence-based decision making to better inform strategies and activities. An investment in specialist skill-sets may be required to introduce and develop impact measurement, gather and analyse data on drivers of participation and attrition

and gaps in provision and to embed outcome-based approaches to programme delivery and reporting.

Technology Resources

The Information Technology (IT) infrastructure touches all aspects of running the Special Olympics programme, from the software applications that help to manage the operational programmes, i.e. sports competitions and athlete and volunteer registration and information, to software systems that help to manage the systems of internal financial controls. Our aim is that the significant investment in technology will deliver value by improving the quality and timeliness of data and it will enhance productivity by facilitating more effective communications and better decision-making based on the information and data that we capture.

We will look to create effective tools and systems that will support the work of volunteers in clubs and, over time, reduce administration. Through access to Covid-19 special grants and the Friends of Special Olympics Ireland reserve, a reserve restricted for strategic purposes of either a capital or operational nature, a number of IT investments are either planned or started in 2021.

Technology is constantly evolving and will play a critical role as we progress through the next five years. The impact of social media channels has changed how we communicate, widened the potential reach of any enterprise and presents opportunities for immediate and widespread engagement with diverse audiences. We envisage that technology will have a critical role to play in supporting operations across the organisation in order to assist and support legal, regulatory, financial and administrative demands. In the current strategy the following investments are prioritised:

1. HR System - Appogee:

Streamline HR staff management processes and streamline online approval processes

2. Membership System - SportLoMo

Introducing an online system to capture athlete and volunteer registration, which also acts as an online membership system for clubs, will be a vital tool that will lead to better efficiencies generally and less demanding workload administratively on Club Management Teams. Clubs will be able to manage their own data. The new system will enable staff efficiencies and the removal of numerous paper documents from day-to-day operations

3. Fundraising system – Beacon CRM

Replacement of the legacy CRM system to support fundraising, enhance data quality and strategic decision-making and improve processes to support financial governance

We will identify and develop a range of business cases to support investment in other systems that will bring enhanced operational efficiencies.

**Implementation and Monitoring**

Strategic planning will be a continuous process, connecting our vision to the roadmap for execution and delivery. Our planning will include reviewing, tracking and monitoring performance against our strategic objectives on an annual basis.

We will:

- Revisit the question of our Culture and our Values from time to time throughout the strategy
- Set key performance indicators (KPIs) annually for each strategic objective, similar to those set out in this document for 2021
- Develop annual project plans and budgets with key tasks and milestones clearly identified
- Maintain and regularly assess the strategic risks associated with the strategic objectives
- Progress reports will be provided to the Board on a regular basis
- Conduct a review of the Strategy as we emerge from Covid-19 to re-validate the relevance and to recalibrate if required

RETHINK IRELAND**Polwarth Strategy**

*We wish to acknowledge the much-welcomed support of Rethink Ireland who made it possible for us to engage Alistair Hodgett, Management Consultant, Polwarth Strategy, to work with us on developing our Strategy.





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