



BETTER  
BOARDS  
STRONGER  
SPORT

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# FOREWORD

**The ‘Better Boards, Stronger Sport’ project and toolkit is a European Commission funded project aimed at ‘promoting innovative approaches to strengthen the organisation of sport in Europe’ as part of the EU funding for Preparatory Action 2011 in the Field of Sport.**

We feel it represents an important step forward for the development of good governance in the sport and recreation sector across Europe. The power of the ‘Better Boards, Stronger Sport’ project and toolkit is that it is driven by the sports movement and demonstrates a real commitment from sporting organisations across Europe to improve their own governance.

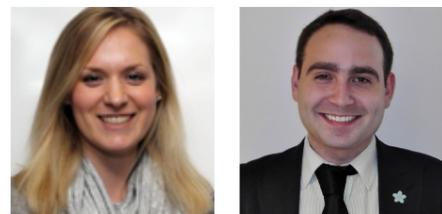
Sports organisations across Europe came together to answer the challenge of upholding good governance in the unique environment that sport operates in. The toolkit has been developed by sports organisations across Europe and as such should be viewed as sport helping each other and taking ownership for governance.

The Toolkit is drafted in a way that should make it relevant for sports organisations of varying sizes to adapt it and use it to best suit their own unique organisation

**The Toolkit is designed to:**

- Identify and agree the key features and requirements for an effective sports Board across Europe.
- Promote the importance of strategic leadership and the role of the Board in sport organisations.
- Empower sports organisations to take responsibility for governing their future successfully.

We hope organisations will be able to use the Toolkit to suit their own needs.



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“ We are proud to have received funding from the EU Commission for the delivery of this Toolkit and we look forward to their continued support with the development of good governance in sport across Europe. ”

BETTER BOARDS, STRONGER SPORT PROJECT TEAM

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PLEASE NOTE: Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this resource toolkit at the time of circulation. The intention of the resource is to assist sports organisations in reviewing and improving their governance structures, systems and ultimately the running of their sports. As such this resource is for information purposes only and should be applied within the parameters of legislation or policy set at national levels, whereby these are different in each country. Any review and assessment of information through the case studies, toolkit and templates are for sports organisations to consider and do not represent assessment or endorsement by the Better Boards, Stronger Sport project group.

# WHY WAS THE 'BETTER BOARDS, STRONGER SPORT' TOOLKIT CREATED?

The 'Better Boards, Stronger Sport' toolkit aims to help national governing bodies of sport improve their governance. Good governance can be defined as making sure an organisation is run effectively and therefore the toolkit will help sports organisations become more effective.

The production of the 'Better Boards, Stronger Sport' toolkit is based on three underlying principles:

## 1 IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLE OF THE BOARD

The 'Better Boards, Stronger Sport' toolkit is focussed exclusively on the role and the workings of the Board. The role of the Board is key to governance and can be viewed as the core from which all other elements of good governance flow. A competent Board often ensures that the organisation's governance is effective and the sport is successful. This toolkit demonstrates to sports organisations what an effective Board is, how it is created, and how it can improve governance.

## 2 SPORTS GOVERNANCE IS UNIQUE AND MORE CHALLENGING

Sport's "specificity" has resulted in the development of sport-specific principles of governance in the form of 'Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance of the Olympic and Sports Movement'. Much work has been done in the field of corporate governance – however it is clear that sports organisations face

different challenges and need to adapt the corporate governance learning from business and make it relevant for the sports movement – turn it into 'Sports Governance'. This toolkit demonstrates how to implement general governance principles in the most appropriate way for the sports movement.

## 3 IMPROVEMENT MUST BE 'LED BY SPORT FOR SPORT'

A regulatory culture is created when governance standards are linked to funding. This can result in organisations doing the bare minimum to achieve their funding and not really improving their overall governance.

The danger of this is that organisations do not see the value of making changes and approach governance as a tick-box exercise where change is superficial and based on policies rather than on behaviour and how an organisation actually works. This toolkit is a key driver in sport taking responsibility for its own governance standards and meeting the challenges that it faces. Real improvement is only achieved by the sports movement driving themselves forward.

This project and toolkit has been led and developed **by the sports movement for the sports movement.** This means that at every stage of development the project team have consulted with the sports movement across Europe.



The power to achieve 'Better Boards and Stronger Sport' does not sit with regulators. The real power for improvement in governance sits with the sports movement. ”

# HOW WAS THE 'BETTER BOARDS, STRONGER SPORT' TOOLKIT CREATED?

## CONSULTATION, CONSULTATION, CONSULTATION!

Each part of the toolkit was created through consultation with the sports movement across Europe:

- Consultation and consensus was achieved on the key features of an effective sports Board;
- Identification of case-studies across Europe of sports Boards demonstrating the key features was achieved through consulting with sports organisations across Europe;
- Development of tools and resources to help organisations implement the key features was again achieved through consultation!

## WHAT IS THE 'BETTER BOARDS, STRONGER SPORT' TOOLKIT?

The 'Better Boards, Stronger Sport' toolkit is organised into three key sections:

### 1 SECTION ONE: FEATURES

The first section outlines the key features of good sports governance as identified by the sports movement. The 'Better Boards, Stronger Sport' project team drafted a list of features and consulted with the sports organisations across Europe. This produced a final list

of features that sports organisations across Europe believe to be critical to the development of good governance.

### 2 SECTION TWO: CASE STUDIES

The second section demonstrates case studies from sports organisations across Europe. Each case study highlights how an organisation has managed to put one or more of the key features into practice. This section is designed to help organisations turn the theoretical features presented in section one, into practical differences that can be made to an organisation to improve governance. Learning from other sports organisations is crucial and also helps to show that good governance and implementation of the key features can be achieved and improving governance is a realistic goal.

### 3 SECTION THREE: TOOLS AND RESOURCES

The third section provides tools and resources that will help an organisation with implementing the key features of good governance. The second section has shown organisations how implementation has been achieved by various organisations – this section helps an organisation implement the features for themselves.

Overall the toolkit is a resource for sports organisations across Europe to use and adapt to help them **improve their own governance** in a way that is appropriate and sustainable.



Good governance is one of the priorities in the EU agenda for sport. This project delivers knowledge and real life examples of actions taken in that field. It also presents practical tools to assist organisations with reaching this goal. ”

# SECTION 1: FEATURES

This section includes the **key features of good sports governance** as identified by the sports movement across Europe.

# HOW TO USE THE FEATURES

There are four key points to note about the features:



The features of good governance are the same for every organisation – no matter what the size. However the size of the organisation will influence how the features are applied. ”



An organisation that says it has good governance and doesn't need to improve is an organisation that has not understood the quest for good governance. ”

## 1. CHALLENGE

The features all listed together may seem extremely hard to achieve. Each feature should be looked at individually in terms of its contribution to good governance overall. Achieving good governance is not something that can be measured – it is always evolving and changing – what looks good now and what it will look like in the future may change. The features will stay constant and therefore each organisation is encouraged to view the features as a challenge and something to aspire to and move towards.

## 2. SIZE MATTERS

The features are designed to be broad so that organisations of all different sizes can take them and adapt them to suit their own needs. It is recognised that the governance requirements for a larger organisation may be very different to the governance requirements for a smaller organisation. In this respect how an organisation takes each of the features and uses or applies them in their context will be different.

## 3. IMPORTANCE

The features are listed one to ten... however this does not indicate an order of importance. Each feature is as important as the next feature and all of the features should be worked on together. It is difficult to look at the features in isolation and therefore, whilst they are presented separately, in most cases an organisation needs to look at how the features all fit together.



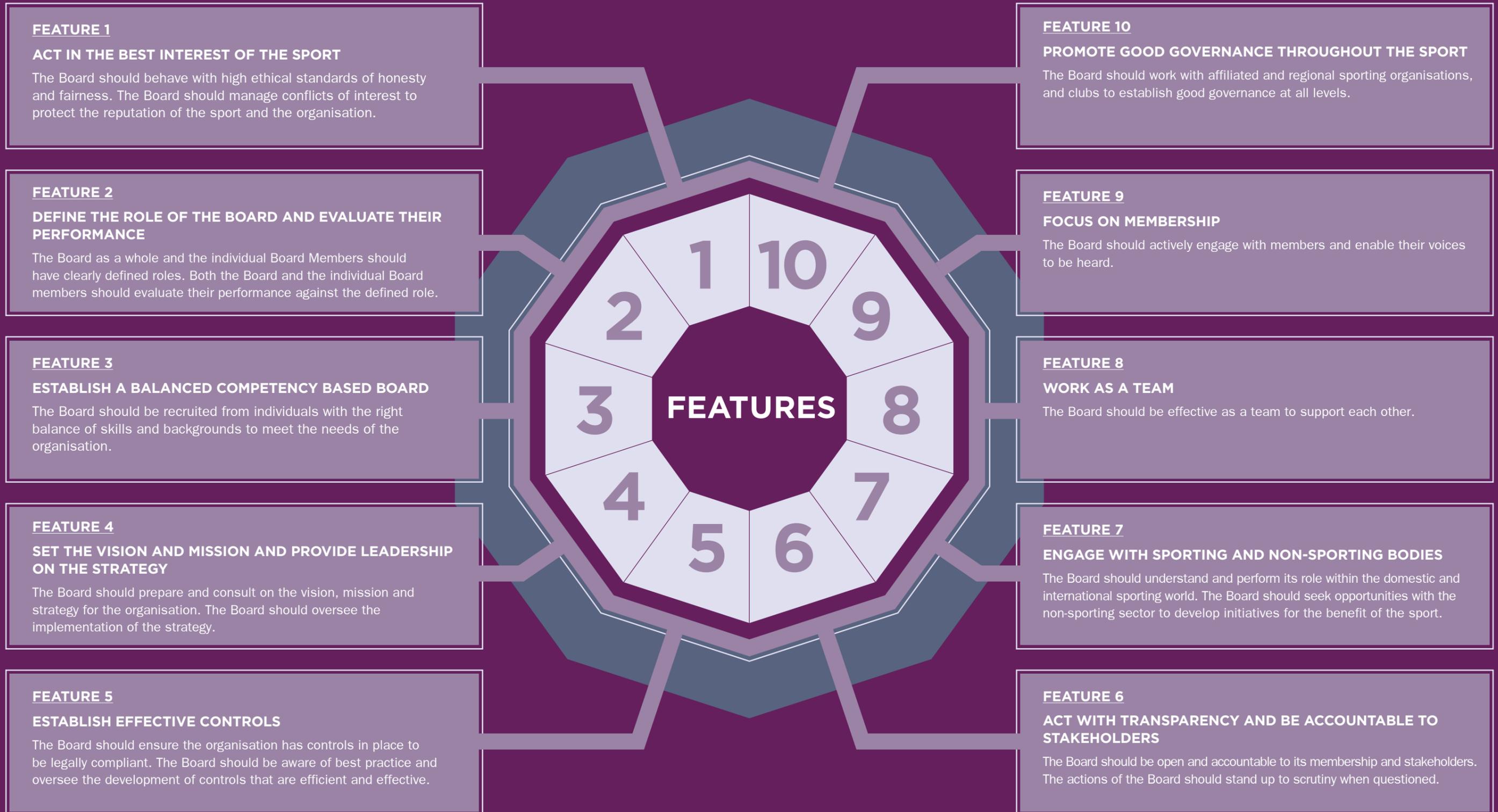
The ten features all fit together to indicate what good sports governance looks like. They should all be worked on together and not viewed in isolation. ”

## 4. TOOL

It is important to note that the key features are not listed as requirements of good governance. They are not impositions or obligations that organisations must meet. The key features are presented as tools and broad areas where an organisation should be examining the way they work and designing ways to improve for themselves.



The key features are tools for improvement. Organisations should not be held to account on the features but instead should use them as a guide of areas to design improvement plans under. ”



# FEATURE 1:

## ACT IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE SPORT

The Board should behave with high ethical standards of honesty and fairness. The Board should manage conflicts of interest to protect the reputation of the sport and the organisation.



### THIS FEATURE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- The development and growth of the sport is dependent on everyone acting for the common objective of the sport and the organisation.
- Without acting in the best interest of the sport there is no purpose or reason to exist as an organisation.



### THIS FEATURE CAN BE CHALLENGING BECAUSE:

- Individuals will need to put aside their personal views in favour of agreeing to and supporting decisions made as a group.
- Individuals will need to take responsibility and ownership for Board decisions that they may personally disagree with.
- Individuals may feel that they have a duty to represent the group that elected them onto the Board.



### DEFINITION Conflict of Interest:

A situation in which an individual has competing interest or loyalties. For example a competing interest may be a loyalty to the people that elected the individual to the Board instead of the sport as a whole. It may also be that the individual holds a position for another organisation that could benefit from certain decisions made by the organisation they sit on the Board for.

“ This is often the most difficult part of the voluntary board. You can get members who have never been Directors before and who struggle to understand that they must act in the best interest of the sport as a whole and not their region/club. ”

### Sport Organisation, IRELAND

#### REFERENCES FOR FEATURE 1:



Case Study:  
Royal Yachting Association ..... 46



Toolkit:  
Code of Conduct and Ethics ..... 132  
Conflicts of Interest Policy ..... 140  
Conflicts of Interest Register ..... 142

## FEATURE 2:

### DEFINE THE ROLE OF THE BOARD AND EVALUATE THEIR PERFORMANCE

The Board as a whole and the individual Board Members should have clearly defined roles. Both the Board and the individual Board members should evaluate their performance against the defined role.



#### THIS FEATURE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- This feature contains three important elements:
  1. Identification of the role, purpose and activities of the Board.
  2. Performance of the role, purpose and activities of the Board.
  3. Evaluation of how well the Board did against the identified role.
- The Board must know the role it needs to perform to be able to identify the skills needed by individual Board members.
- Recruiting the right people to the Board will be dependent on knowing the skills needed.
- Evaluation of the Board as a whole and each individual Board member will allow the organisation to benchmark and measure its performance.
- It is vital to the development of the sport that your Board add value as individuals and as a whole.
- Performance management allows an organisation to commit to continuous improvement.



#### THIS FEATURE CAN BE CHALLENGING BECAUSE:

- Directors are often volunteers who commit free time to sit on the Board. This may lead to an organisation being thankful for anything they do – rather than evaluating if what they are doing is useful.
- Directors will have to commit time to evaluation that would otherwise have been used on delivery of the role. Committing to continuous improvement is hard because it can sometimes be seen as a diversion from the ‘real’ work of the organisation.
- Taking the first evaluation can be daunting because there will be no procedures in place and/or no benchmark for an organisation to see how well they are doing.
- The role of a Director may be defined in legislation and the organisation will need to be mindful of legal duties when defining the role of their Board.



#### DEFINITION Role of the Board:

The Board’s key purpose is to ensure the organisation’s prosperity by collectively directing the organisation’s affairs, whilst meeting the appropriate interest of its members and stakeholders. The role of the Board needs to be defined clearly.\*

#### DEFINITION Evaluating the Board:

A well conducted evaluation helps the Board: assess the balance of skills within the Board, identify skills required for new appointments, renew practices and procedures to improve efficiency and effectiveness, consider the effectiveness of the decision making process and recognise the Board’s outputs and achievements.

#### DEFINITION Role of Individual Board Members:

Role descriptions should be created for individual Board Members so each individual is aware of their legal responsibilities in their position but also what is expected of them by the organisation. This may include an expectation of attendance at meetings and/or work in between meetings.

#### DEFINITION Evaluating Individual Board Members:

Evaluating Board Members does not need to be formal or in the style of a work review. For many organisations with volunteers on their Board it may scare them off to sit them down and grade them against their role – instead it is suggested that the Chair of the Board meets informally with each Board Member to have a general discussion about how well the Board member feels able to contribute and how the Chair feels they are conducting themselves in meetings etc. Individuals like feedback and often want to feel valued – evaluating them can often help achieve both objectives.

\* Legislation in your country may also define the role of the Board and you should familiarise yourself with the appropriate definitions provided in the legislation.

“ The members of the Board need to be clear on the role they are undertaking and what is expected of them during their term of office. Lack of clarity and lack of clear definition of responsibilities will lead to confusion, frustration and potential for conflicts of interest. Evaluation is critical for improvements to take place and the Board need to lead the way on this area. ”

**Sport Organisation, IRELAND**

#### REFERENCES FOR FEATURE 2:



**Case Study:**  
Rounders England ..... 52



**Toolkit:**  
Board Member Appraisal ..... 122  
Board Performance Evaluation ..... 126  
Board Skills Audit ..... 130  
Induction Programme for  
new Board member ..... 150  
Role Description for Board Member:  
Key points to consider ..... 160  
Role description for Board Member:  
Model Template ..... 162  
Role description for Chair ..... 164

## FEATURE 3:

### ESTABLISH A BALANCED COMPETENCY BASED BOARD

The Board should be recruited from individuals with the right balance of skills and backgrounds to meet the needs of the organisation.



#### THIS FEATURE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- Having individuals with a range of professional and sporting skills will lead to better decision making and better performance at Board level.
- Accessing specific skills will often be expensive especially to sports with limited income. Having access to a wide range of skills internally will limit the exposure to such costs.
- A balanced Board with a range of skills is the best insurance against insolvency.
- Individuals with the right skill-set will make decisions based on their knowledge and not because of a sense of personal loyalty.

#### DEFINITION Independent:

Independence of thought and decision making means that individuals do not bring a particular view or perspective to the Board room that influences their decisions. This may mean an individual needs to be completely outside the membership of an organisation or it may mean they should not hold any other roles in an official capacity for an organisation. The important point to note is independence is a state of mind and may therefore be found by taking an individual from outside your sport.

“ In order to continue to move forward, an organisation needs to ensure experienced personnel are brought onto the Board and to have Board members that will challenge the organisation to grow, develop and enhance what and how they offer their sport. ”

**Sport Organisation, IRELAND**



#### **THIS FEATURE CAN BE CHALLENGING BECAUSE:**

- Sport will be confined by the appointment procedure defined in its governing documents. Ensuring a competency based Board might mean an organisation has to change its governing documents.
- Board members will often be volunteers with no pay. It can be challenging enough to find people to volunteer their time to become Board members so being specific about the skill-set required may limit the individuals coming forward even more.



#### **DEFINITION Competency Based:**

The Board should consist of a balance of skills and competencies demonstrated by individual Board members. The range of competencies and skills could include:

- technical knowledge of the sport;
- business skills such as legal, finance, marketing, human resources etc;
- gender perspective;
- age perspective;
- disability perspective.

“ It is obvious that the more competent the Board Members, the more reliable and fair the decisions made by them. External representation will also allow an objective evaluation of the Board. Independent decision making is a key element of objective management of an organisation. ”

**Sport Organisation, POLAND**

#### **REFERENCES FOR FEATURE 3:**



**Case Study:**  
Polish Tennis Association ..... 58



**Toolkit:**  
Board Competencies: How to Guide ..... 112  
Board Competencies: Skills List ..... 116

## FEATURE 4:

### SET THE VISION AND MISSION AND PROVIDE LEADERSHIP ON THE STRATEGY

The Board should prepare and consult on the vision, mission and strategy for the organisation. The Board should oversee the implementation of the strategy.



#### THIS FEATURE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- The purpose of the organisation is defined by the vision, mission and strategy – without it there is no reason for the organisation to exist.
- Sport will often involve both paid employees and volunteers. Having a clear vision and mission will help guide the behaviour and activities of everyone towards a common goal.
- Having a written strategy will remind the Board of their role in the organisation and will help to ensure they do not get involved in the day to day workings of the organisation.
- The vision, mission and strategy need to reflect what the organisation is doing otherwise its members may feel dissatisfied and leave.



#### THIS FEATURE CAN BE CHALLENGING BECAUSE:

- Understanding the difference between vision, mission and strategy is challenging and many organisations either confuse the three or don't have all of them.
- Board Members can get involved with the operational side of running the sport and do not see the value of having a vision, mission and strategy.
- Board Members may not have the necessary skills and knowledge to define a vision, mission and strategy.
- Time can be invested in formulating a strategy which is then not referred to on a regular basis or not relevant to the full organisation.
- Keeping the document live and relevant so it is reviewed and updated can be challenging.
- Consulting with members can be a difficult process.
- Organisational statute will often define the realm of the organisation and these will have to be aligned with the strategy.



#### DEFINITION Vision:

A well formulated vision statement defines “where we want to go”. A vision statement should be a vision of what an organisation would like the future to look like. It is an aspirational statement.

#### DEFINITION Mission:

A mission is a statement of why an organisation exists and its reason for being. It defines which groups it will serve and how. In simple terms the mission of an organisation is often one statement that defines what an organisation will do to try to reach their vision.

#### DEFINITION Strategy:

A strategy document sets out goals and activities to achieve the goals in relation to the mission and vision statements.

“ Without a strategy and vision there is no objective or purpose. ”

**Sport Organisation, FINLAND**

“ Clearly defined and agreed upon objectives simplify the implementation of the activity plan for everyone. ”

**Sport Organisation, ESTONIA**

#### REFERENCES FOR FEATURE 4:



Case Study:  
Cricket Ireland ..... 64



Toolkit:  
Defining Vision, Mission and Strategy ..... 144  
Operational Plan: How to Guide ..... 156  
Strategic Plan: Guide ..... 166

## FEATURE 5:

### ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE CONTROLS

The Board should ensure the organisation has controls in place to be legally compliant. The Board should be aware of best practice and oversee the development of controls that are efficient and effective.



#### THIS FEATURE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- Where a sport receives public funding, it is important that the organisation can demonstrate that the funding is being used correctly.
- Board members can be individually liable for any mismanagement and misuse of resources. Having effective controls helps to minimise the risk for each individual Board member.
- Sport will often operate with limited resources and ensuring funds are used effectively is vital for the success of the sport.
- Having effective controls and good levels of transparency will help the organisation to demonstrate credibility and gain trust from external stakeholders making it easier to attract investment.



#### THIS FEATURE CAN BE CHALLENGING BECAUSE:

- Many sports will be run by a small number of highly committed individuals on a voluntary basis, finding the resources to establish effective controls might, therefore, be difficult.
- Accessing the knowledge to how controls are best designed can be both difficult and expensive. Many organisations will not have such knowledge internally and will have to access it externally.
- Board members will often be focused on sport development and the resources set aside to comply with more than the bare legal requirements might be limited.

“ Guidelines and standards are necessary for the management to facilitate decision making and act on principles, not based on individual persons or situations.

**Sport Organisation, ESTONIA** ”

### DEFINITION Requirements:

A sports organisation may be required to meet various standards either because of the law or because of funding contracts.

It may be possible to divide requirements into three types:

- legal – this may be from legislation of the country in which the organisation operates;
- funding – this may be from contracts with either the government or commercial organisations that set obligations on an organisation such as demonstrating they can manage funds appropriately;
- internal – an organisation may set their own procedures either in their governing document or in other policies which must be followed.

### DEFINITION Financial Controls:

Financial controls are the written rules and procedures for financial management that all organisations should have. Financial controls should cover, for example, who can sign payment of invoices, who maintains the accounts, and how money is administered.



“ The Board should unconditionally observe binding legal regulations and create their own control mechanisms to do so. ”

**Sport Organisation, POLAND**

#### REFERENCES FOR FEATURE 5:



**Case Study:**  
British Sledge Hockey ..... 72



**Toolkit:**  
Financial Procedures:  
List to be considered .....148  
Policies: List to create ..... 158

## FEATURE 6:

### ACT WITH TRANSPARENCY AND BE ACCOUNTABLE TO STAKEHOLDERS

The Board should be open and accountable to its membership and stakeholders. The actions of the Board should stand up to scrutiny when questioned.



#### THIS FEATURE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- Transparency is vital to increase participation and membership. Members act like consumers and will want to know how their money is spent and what service they are getting in return.
- Transparency is vital to gain trust from stakeholders and important in the success of the organisation. Being transparent makes it easier to work with stakeholders and get further investments into the sport.
- Transparency can also help to achieve good decisions because everyone has to be open about their motives and not make decisions without being able to justify them.



#### THIS FEATURE CAN BE CHALLENGING BECAUSE:

- Some information is sensitive and not suitable to be publicised such as commercially sensitive information. Finding the right balance between transparency and confidentiality can be challenging.
- For an organisation to be transparent you need to be able to share information with members and other stakeholders. Some organisations will struggle finding the right media to share the information through or finding the right time to share the information.

“ The Board should be absolutely transparent and open to its members. ”

**Sport Organisation, POLAND**

“ Transparency is always worthwhile. Only when everyone knows the truth, the right decisions can be made. ”

**Sport Organisation, FINLAND**



#### DEFINITION Transparency:

Being transparent does not mean that everything needs to be disclosed to everyone but instead that information that should be made available is made available and can be accessed by anyone who may have an interest in it. As a general rule, individuals should be made aware of everything at the earliest opportunity possible provided that the information does not need to remain confidential.

#### DEFINITION Accountability:

Being able to answer questions and demonstrate that decisions have been made in the best interests of an organisation and that funding has been spent in the way it was intended helps to demonstrate accountability. Being trusted to do the right thing, to follow procedures and follow up on actions that are promised can also help to demonstrate accountability.

#### DEFINITION Stakeholders:

Within the sports sector there can be a wide variety of stakeholders. In general a stakeholder can be defined as a person, group, organisation, member or system who affects or can be affected by an organisation's actions. This can mean for sports organisations: funders; sponsors; media; government; public; members and athletes.

“Accountability and transparency ensure that our members and stakeholders know how we, as an organisation, are operating and have a vehicle to address concerns. Unless members feel that the organisation exists for their benefit and stakeholders have confidence that an NGB operates in an ethical, robust and open way they will seek to find other activities and organisations to meet their needs.”

**Sport Organisation, UK**

#### REFERENCES FOR FEATURE 6:



Case Study:  
Estonian Olympic Committee ..... 78



Toolkit:  
Annual report: How to Guide ..... 110  
Communication Plan: Guide ..... 134  
Communication Plan: Template ..... 136

## FEATURE 7:

### ENGAGE WITH SPORTING AND NON-SPORTING BODIES

The Board should understand and perform its role within the domestic and international sporting world. The Board should seek opportunities with the non-sporting sector to develop initiatives for the benefit of the sport.



#### THIS FEATURE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- To achieve the goals and objectives of the sport the Board needs to engage with other sporting and non-sporting bodies.
- To increase influence it is vital that the Board represent the views of members and engage appropriately with international sporting federations.
- With the demographic development of many European countries and the increased focus on health, engaging with non-sporting sectors of society could provide the sport with an additional source of income.
- A wide range of legislation influences sport and by engaging actively with the political sector sport will be able to protect its interest and the interest of members.
- Engaging with sporting and non-sporting bodies will help identify areas of synergy with other sectors and opportunities for partnerships and/or funding.



#### THIS FEATURE CAN BE CHALLENGING BECAUSE:

- It can be challenging to decide who in the organisation should take responsibility for seeking opportunities and engaging with the sporting/non-sporting bodies; whether it is operational and for the senior management or whether it is strategic and for the Board to take on.
- Sometimes having the resources to identify and develop relationships with the right people domestically and internationally can be challenging.
- Sometimes knowing where to start with this feature can be difficult.



“It is very important to initiate international and domestic activities.”

**Sport Organisation, POLAND**

“ One of the main tasks of a sport organisation is to function as a link between the international federation and the sporting community. ”

**Sport Organisation, FINLAND**

“ A sporting organisation must utilise any opportunity it gets to develop itself. ”

**Sport Organisation, IRELAND**

### DEFINITION **Sporting Bodies:**

This may include regional and national federations of similar bodies with similar objectives. Sporting bodies may also refer to European and International Federations that may play a crucial role in setting rules and regulations and in potentially providing funds for projects. A sports organisation should seek to integrate itself with other relevant sporting bodies to ensure they have a role in key decisions which may affect how they run their sport in their own environment.

### DEFINITION **Non-Sporting Bodies:**

This may include government departments for Health and Education which may have cross-over aims and objectives with sporting bodies. It may also include commercial organisations with cross-over aims. It may be worth a sporting organisation mapping out all of the non-sporting bodies that it would be good to have a relationship with – casting the net as far as possible.



“ There is no other choice. Cooperation on both international and national levels is very important for the development of the sport. ”

**Sport Organisation, ESTONIA**

#### REFERENCES FOR FEATURE 7:



**Case Study:**  
Finnish Shooting Sport Federation ..... 82



**Toolkit:**  
Engaging non-sporting bodies:  
Key points to consider ..... 146  
Lobbying Government: How to Guide ..... 152

## FEATURE 8: WORK AS A TEAM

The Board should be effective as a team to support each other.



### THIS FEATURE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- For a sport to function effectively the Board need to get the most out of the time they invest. Time is often a limited resource and ensuring the Board work effectively as a team will allow the Board to have a larger impact than what each individual would have separately. Working as a team will also help the Board share the workload and assign tasks to people best capable of dealing with them – thus using the balance of skills and knowledge to the best advantage.
- For stakeholders to commit to working with the sport the perception of the organisation is important. Working as a team the Board can give a unified voice and be seen to be working towards the same objective.
- For the sport to be successful each Board members needs to take responsibility for all the decisions made by the Board even if they personally voted against them. Team work can ensure a loyalty to each decision and an increased feeling of group responsibility on the Board.



### THIS FEATURE CAN BE CHALLENGING BECAUSE:

- Board members can be split between the loyalty to the Board and the people that have helped him/her get elected to the Board. Breaking this conflict of loyalty is important if the Board is to act as an effective team.
- Team work will often depend on personalities and clashes of personalities can be a challenge for the Board.
- Board members are there to ask questions and have opinions to what is best for the sport. Disagreements will naturally occur and how such situations are dealt with is important to the team work of the Board.
- There may be a degree of compromise and negotiation needed on the Board and these can be difficult skills for individuals to grasp when balancing it with their passion for their views and opinions.



A Board that works well together as a group and that works well as a group of individuals is desirable.

**Sport Organisation, IRELAND**



The role of the team leader is very significant here to ensure all Board members are involved with the work.

**Sport Organisation, POLAND**

“Boards where opinion is divided cannot achieve anything constructive. You can have a different opinion but everyone should have a joint goal.”

**Sport Organisation, FINLAND**

### REFERENCES FOR FEATURE 8:



**Case Study:**  
Volleyball England ..... 88



**Toolkit:**  
Board Meeting Management ..... 118  
Team Building Activities ..... 168

## FEATURE 9: FOCUS ON MEMBERSHIP

The Board should actively engage with members and enable their voices to be heard.



### THIS FEATURE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- Members make up a sport. Focusing on members is important for any sport to better understand their needs and how they wish the sport to be managed.
- Sport is based on member democracy and allowing members' voices to be heard will be vital to achieve a thriving and diverse sport.
- Legitimacy for the Board and the management of the organisation is provided by the membership. If the membership become disengaged or feel the organisation is not moving in the right direction then the Board will lose its legitimacy to act on their behalf.



### THIS FEATURE CAN BE CHALLENGING BECAUSE:

- Board members need to consider what's best for the sport as a whole. Managing expectation that not everyone's input will be acted upon can be difficult.
- Sport will often be faced with a very diverse membership; reaching and communicating effectively with such a diverse group can be a challenge.
- Engaging the membership can be time consuming, time which will be taken away from other tasks the Board could perform.
- When dealing with the membership sport will often have to deal with difficult groups of members and resolve conflicts.
- A diverse group will often have multiple, sometimes conflicting, demands which can be demanding to handle.

“ The most important stakeholders of the organisation are the members. ”

**Sport Organisation, FINLAND**

“ An organisation is built on the members it has and the members it aspires to have. These members need to have confidence in the leadership of the Board. ”

**Sport Organisation, IRELAND**

“ If the objectives and the strategy have been agreed upon with the members, the primary focus should at first be directed towards implementation, and including as many members in the process as possible. ”

**Sport Organisation, ESTONIA**

“ The priority of the Board is to act for the benefit of the Federation and its members. ”

**Sport Organisation, POLAND**

### REFERENCES FOR FEATURE 9:



Case Study:  
Triathlon Ireland ..... 94



Toolkit:  
Membership Management ..... 154

## FEATURE 10:

### PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE THROUGHOUT THE SPORT

The Board should work with affiliated and regional sporting organisations, and clubs to establish good governance at all levels.



#### THIS FEATURE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- Helping to develop good governance throughout the membership will ensure more skilled people come through the sport to help with succession planning. For example if the governance of clubs or regions is stronger - the election process to the main Board of a sporting organisation may have a wider group of individuals to pick from and crucially individuals who understand the role required of them.
- Having good governance throughout the membership will ensure clubs and regions are more successful and a better product is offered to end users and individual members.



#### THIS FEATURE CAN BE CHALLENGING BECAUSE:

- For many sports, engaging with the regional or clubs' Boards can be challenging because any involvement from above is seen as a threat rather than help.
- Reaching and communicating the need for change and the benefits of change to the right individuals might be difficult.
- To implement some of the features organisations will have to commit certain resources which may be lacking at local or regional levels.
- The need for change might be lost on regional organisations and clubs which don't have the national perspective to worry about.

“ The Board must inspire its members to act according to good governance. ”

**Sport Organisation, FINLAND**

“ Working with affiliated organisations will help to improve the governance of the national organisation. ”

**Sport Organisation, IRELAND**

#### REFERENCES FOR FEATURE 10:



Case Study:  
Football Association of Finland ..... 100

# SECTION 2: CASE STUDIES

This section presents **case studies of national organisations** that have implemented one or more of the ten features of good governance.

# HOW TO USE THE CASE STUDIES

There are four key points to note about the case studies:

## 1. JOURNEY TOWARDS GOOD GOVERNANCE

Governance is an ongoing and dynamic process. Each of the case-studies looks at an organisation and how they have developed good governance over a period of time. Improving governance is like a journey and some organisations are further along in the journey than others. Changing the structure of an organisation can depend on relationships and decisions and this can be a long process. The case studies show how different organisations have made decisions and built relationships to help them make changes at a pace which suits their organisation at the appropriate stage of development. Organisations can be moving towards good governance at different speeds and take different steps to get to their goal. The common theme is that all organisations are moving forward and improving at a speed that is right for them. In this respect how an organisation takes each of the features and uses or applies them in their context will be different.

## 2. ALL OF THE FEATURES OR SOME OF THE FEATURES?

The ten features of good governance are highly connected. Many of them overlap and/or significantly influence each other. The case studies demonstrate this clearly. For example, one organisation sought to establish a balanced, competency-based Board (Feature 3) specifically in order to set the vision and mission and provide leadership on the strategy (Feature 4). Many other such overlaps exist. This means it is not straightforward to look at one aspect of governance in isolation. When looking to improve good governance the full wider picture needs to be examined and therefore an organisation should look at all the features of good governance together.

## 3. SIZE

Governance requirements vary between organisations, in part due to their size. As outlined, the ten features of good governance are broad and apply, in general, to all organisations. However, organisations may implement them in different ways, depending on their size. The case studies show that small organisations, especially those that have very few (or no) professional staff, face different challenges to larger organisations when seeking to implement certain governance changes. Having said this, the case studies also show that even very small organisations have implemented various features of good governance and have received significant benefits from doing so. Size does not mean organisations do not have to implement certain features. Instead size influences how the organisation implements the features. The implementation of features must be proportionate to the size of the organisation.

## 4 INTERNATIONAL SPREAD

Governance requirements also vary for organisations in different countries. That is, different countries have different institutional arrangements and different political systems in place. It is therefore important to remember that all of the elements within one case study may not apply in exactly the same way to organisations in all countries. Nevertheless, the case studies in this section have been selected in order to provide as much detail as possible on how and why particular governance processes were put in place. And even though they may have taken place in one country, many of the processes will be highly relevant and useful to organisations in other countries.

## KEY LEARNING POINTS FROM THE CASE STUDIES:

### 1. Funding Opportunities

By implementing the features of good governance organisations have been able to increase their chances of receiving funding from the public and private sectors.

### 2. Change can be threatening

Moving to a new structure or a new way of doing something can be viewed as a threat by individuals. It is important to see the change through other people's eyes so you can prepare for how to answer their questions.

### 3. Communication is important

Trying to make changes can be difficult and no matter how small the change, it is important to communicate with all interested stakeholders throughout the process to achieve support for the changes.

## CASE STUDY FEATURE 1:

### ACT IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE SPORT

The Board should behave with high ethical standards of honesty and fairness. The Board should manage conflicts of interest to protect the reputation of the sport and the organisation.

## ROYAL YACHTING ASSOCIATION

### BACKGROUND

Role	National Governing Body for all forms of recreational and competitive boating in UK
Members	More than 100,000 personal members (majority are recreational non-competitive) 1,500 affiliated clubs
Staff	170
Mission	To promote enjoyable, safe and successful UK sailing and motor boating

### BOARD SIZE AND COMPOSITION

Size	9 in total
Individual Roles	Chief Executive Officer Head of Finance Chair Deputy Chair 5 x Board members with specific skills and experiences
Election or Appointment process	5 elected by Council (bigger body made up of 40 people)



### WHY IS FEATURE 1 IMPORTANT FOR THE ROYAL YACHTING ASSOCIATION?

Surveys show that around 2.8 million people in the UK participate in some form of boating every year. As the Royal Yachting Association has more than 100,000 personal members and around 400,000 members in affiliated clubs, it has a direct relationship with a significant proportion of these participants and its activities affect all participants in one way or another. Acting in the best interests of the organisation as a whole is a legal and moral requirement placed on the directors.

“As a wide-ranging national governing body, it is vital that the Board considers the best interest of the sport as a whole when making decisions.”

**Sarah Treseder,  
Chief Executive,  
Royal Yachting Association**



### WHY, SPECIFICALLY, WAS FEATURE 1 IMPLEMENTED?

In many ways, Feature 1 is a fundamental, ongoing aspect of the Royal Yachting Association's governance. As such, it is difficult to talk about it being 'implemented'. Having said this, starting in 2009, the Royal Yachting Association did undertake a review of, and subsequently made changes to, their governance structure; and this can be seen as one important way that the organisation sought to 'implement' Feature 1.

The Royal Yachting Association was not at the time (and still is not) a 'failing' organisation, so it did not seek to implement changes in response to any particular crisis. The organisation was well run and the members of the Council (the decision-making body at the time) acted in what they felt to be the best interest of the organisation when making decisions. In fact, the review and subsequent changes emerged directly from the Royal Yachting Association seeking to act in the best interest of the sport. However, the Royal Yachting Association's governance structure had been in place for more than 12 years, during which time the Royal Yachting Association had grown significantly as an organisation – in terms of membership, turnover and purpose. The feeling was, therefore, that it was time for the governance structure of the organisation to keep up with the growth and evolve with the Royal Yachting Association's strategy for the future.

At the time, the Royal Yachting Association was governed by a large Council (around 40 members), which also acted as the Board of directors. The Council was made up of a wide range of appointed individuals: regional appointed representatives, personal member representatives and the chairs of the functional policy committees. One specific problem with the existing structure was that the large Council did not meet often enough to have full oversight of the company's operations. This risked wasting volunteers' time because the length of meetings did not allow for everybody to contribute.

“One of the main principles guiding the size of the new Board was that it should be a small, flexible team which was able to act quickly on issues and whose members could all contribute at meetings.”

**Sarah Treseder, Chief Executive,  
Royal Yachting Association**

In addition, there were certain considerations stemming from the new Companies Act in 2006; and public funding bodies, such as Sport England and UK Sport, were encouraging federations to examine their own governance structures to ensure they were as effective as possible.



## HOW WAS FEATURE 1 IMPLEMENTED?

The review and subsequent change to the Royal Yachting Association's governance structure proceeded as follows. In 2009, the Royal Yachting Association undertook a consultation on its governance structure; however, this consultation was actually put on hold relatively soon after it had started, as the then Chief Executive Officer was due to retire in 2010 and it was felt that the new Chief Executive Officer should be part of the process.

The process was reopened in March 2010 with the appointment of a Governance Review Working Party, composed of senior volunteers and staff. The Working Party made a series of recommendations, including the introduction of a smaller Board of directors, which would act as the executive decision-making body of the organisation. These recommendations were accepted by the general membership at the Annual General Meeting in November 2011 and new Articles of Association were adopted.

Before and during the change process, the Royal Yachting Association was very aware that it did not want to lose the skills and experience represented on the Council. So, from the start, it was decided that the Council would be retained – even if the Board function was to be carried out differently. As such, the process that led to the change of Articles and the new governance structure focused as much on redefining the role of the Council as on defining the role of the new Board.

The Royal Yachting Association had existing formal policies governing matters, such as ethical standards and conflicts of interest (key issues relating to Feature 1). These already applied to volunteers and staff, so the organisation did not consider it necessary to introduce new policies or codes of conduct.



## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING IMPLEMENTED FEATURE 1?

The change in governance structure has provided more flexibility, while retaining the skills and experience of the wider membership. The role of the Council is now to determine the Royal Yachting Association's policies in boating-related matters and to represent the interests of the various groups within the Association. Its membership is still based on the same constituencies (regional appointed representatives, personal member representatives and the chairs of the functional policy committees). The Council remains able to take the interests of the whole sport into consideration in framing its policies, and the Board can make decisions against the backdrop of these policies. Overall, this enables the organisation to act in the best interest of the sport.

As stated, one of the problems with the old structure was that the large size of the Council meant that the organisation was relatively inflexible and risked wasting volunteers' time. The new structure has secured the needed flexibility and, by reorganising the way in which the Council operates, the Royal Yachting Association is much better able to utilise all the skills and experiences that individuals on the Council possess.



## WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING FEATURE 1 AND HOW WERE THESE MANAGED?

There were no major, significant challenges associated with the governance review and subsequent changes. But this was due largely to the fact that these changes were neither imposed by an external body, nor made in response to an organisational crisis. This enabled the Royal Yachting Association to take the time to listen to everybody involved and design a process that fitted the history and culture of the organisation.

One challenge the Royal Yachting Association faced was the possibility that existing Council members would resist the changes, as they would affect their personal power and 'ownership' of the organisation. However, by focusing just as much on the new role of the Council as on the new role of the Board, the members of Council were able to set aside personal agendas and see how the changes would benefit the organisation. The possibility that existing members would reject any changes as unneeded were avoided by involving the Council fully throughout (providing Council members with written and verbal reports from the Working Party and involving them in an all-day workshop as its proposals were being finalised). The wider membership was informed about the process and the final recommendations through the medium of the quarterly Royal Yachting Association magazine.

The lack of external pressure was a key part of making change possible. It allowed the organisation to get all members of the Council to feed into the process and feel part of it.

“ Getting people to “buy in” to the process was much easier when communicating that it was done as a free choice, with the good of the organisation in mind, and not as a reaction to external pressure. ”

**Sarah Treseder, Chief Executive,  
Royal Yachting Association**

In addition, clear communication of what the duties and responsibilities of a director were actually lessened potential resistance among some Council members.

“ Some Council members were actually happy to get away from that and focus the Council on its new role as the advocate for issues – rather than being the Board. ”

**Sarah Treseder, Chief Executive,  
Royal Yachting Association**



### WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF FEATURE 1 HAD NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED?

It is clear that it would not have been a disaster had the changes not been implemented. The organisation would still have been able to function and it would not have acted against the best interest of the sport. However, what is clear is that volunteers' time is now used much more effectively, and the skills and experience of individuals on both the Board and the Council are utilised much better than before.



### WHAT ADVICE IS THERE FOR OTHER FEDERATIONS?

Communication on several levels was important: in particular, making sure that all Council members' views were heard and all felt part of the process. Communicating to the wider membership was equally important to ensure everybody knew why the process was initiated and what it was that the organisation was working towards. One very important point, however, is not to underestimate the time it takes to get changes like these properly implemented. Initial discussions took place during 2009 and, even though the process was halted and reopened in March 2010, it was not fully implemented until the Annual General Meeting in November 2011.

“ One final piece of advice is to do what is right for your sport and your organisation. Seeking inspiration is fine, but at the end of the day the solution has to fit your strategy and you have to believe the resulting changes are good for your organisation. ”

**Sarah Treseder, Chief Executive,  
Royal Yachting Association**

#### REFERENCES FOR CASE STUDY FEATURE 1:



**Feature 1:**  
Act in the best interest of the sport .....16



**Toolkit:**  
Code of Conduct and Ethics ..... 132  
Conflicts of Interest Policy ..... 140  
Conflicts of Interest Register ..... 142

## CASE STUDY FEATURE 2:

### DEFINE THE ROLE OF THE BOARD AND EVALUATE THEIR PERFORMANCE

The Board as a whole and the individual Board Members should have clearly defined roles. Both the Board and the individual Board members should evaluate their performance against the defined role.

## ROUNDERS ENGLAND

### BACKGROUND

Role	Governing body for Rounders in England
Members	600 schools, 200 clubs 3,000 coaches and umpires
Structure	Company Limited by Guarantee
Turnover	£1million
Vision	Ignite the passion
Mission	Increase and sustain nationwide participation in Rounders

### BOARD SIZE AND COMPOSITION

Size	9 in total
Individual Roles	Chief Executive Officer 4 x Board members elected by the membership at the AGM 4 x appointed through open recruitment process Each has a specific portfolio or area of responsibility
Election or Appointment process	Sub-committee of the Board acts as an appointment panel
Documents	Terms of Reference for all Board members Specific role descriptions for Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer



### WHY IS FEATURE 2 IMPORTANT FOR ROUNDERS ENGLAND?

The Board has to know what its purpose is; and it is necessary to evaluate performance to make sure the organisation is improving and moving forward. You have to define the role before you can evaluate it. Therefore the processes of role definition and performance evaluation have to be linked.

### Board evaluation is important on two different levels:

#### 1. Whole Board

It is important to evaluate the whole Board against its collective responsibilities and statutory/legal responsibilities;

#### 2. Individual Board Members

It is important for each individual to be evaluated, so their individual contributions can be acknowledged and so, as individuals, they are aware of what is expected from them.



### WHY, SPECIFICALLY, WAS FEATURE 2 IMPLEMENTED?

In 2009, Rounders England received a significant increase in funding (£2.2 million from Sport England for the period 2009-2013). This led to a change in the nature of the organisation. Until 1999, Rounders England had been run entirely by volunteers; and it had only employed its first full-time staff member in 2005. Now, with the increase in funding, Rounders England had to recruit more staff and the organisation felt it had to 'professionalise' (in particular, as a requirement of the funding, it had to put in place certain policies, procedures and guidelines). As part of this broad process of change, Rounders England considered that it needed to change the focus of its key decision making body from an operational role to a strategic role which would mean a change in its governance structures. At the time, Rounders England had an executive committee, where members had certain executive responsibilities (e.g. membership or finance), a structure that had been created when Rounders England was an entirely volunteer-run organisation. Looking forward, Rounders England considered that it needed a Board, which would have strategic oversight for the organisation. An important part of this change involved defining the role of the Board and putting in place a process for evaluating its performance, i.e. implementing Feature 2.



### HOW WAS FEATURE 2 IMPLEMENTED?

Rounders England began the process of defining the role of the new Board by running a workshop for Board members with an independent consultant. This led to the organisation needing to change its governing document, Articles of Association, company rules and terms of reference for the Board. These documents now function as vital reference points for the role of the Board.

Rounders England also put in place an annual evaluation process, which is led by the Chair and the Chief Executive. This evaluation process provides each Board member with a form, on which they evaluate the performance of the Board, in their opinion, against the defined terms of reference and role of the Board set out in the rules and governing documents. The results of this evaluation process are brought to the Board meeting in September each year and discussed.

The process, as it stands, is known as a 'whole Board evaluation'. That is, the main focus is on Board members evaluating the work of the Board as a whole, rather than each Board member individually evaluating his or her own performance. In the future, Rounders England intends to conduct individual Board member evaluations, as well as continuing with its whole Board evaluation.



### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING IMPLEMENTED FEATURE 2?

Defining the role of the Board and individual Board members more clearly has meant that each Board member is more aware of his or her responsibilities and, as a result, the Board is now more effective at a strategic level. The Board evaluations, while not yet focusing directly on individuals, have nevertheless given Board members more knowledge of their personal performance and of what training is needed to fill gaps in their knowledge in order to add the maximum value possible. The direct benefit of this is that Board members are happier to be up-skilled, as they can clearly see where they need assistance to meet expectations.

Defining the role of the Board and evaluating its performance has enabled Rounders England to be more strategic when recruiting new Board members. Specifically, ongoing evaluation has more clearly indicated the strengths and weaknesses of the Board, which has enabled Rounders England to appoint people with particular skills to overcome the challenges the organisation faces and to fill knowledge gaps that the organisation has identified. Having a more clearly defined role has also helped the Board to focus its efforts in other areas of responsibility: for example, communication with members, or appraisal of the Chief Executive.

“ Overall, the benefit of having a clearly defined Board and evaluating its performance is that our Board knows its purpose, so they can meet the challenges we face more effectively. ”

**Alison Howard, Chief Executive, Rounders England**



### WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING FEATURE 2 AND HOW WERE THESE MANAGED?

There were no really significant challenges to introducing a clearer role for the Board, or to implementing Board evaluation. The biggest challenge was finding the time to get all Board members together to do the initial workshop: there was willingness among Board members, but governance issues were, and are, not always considered a high priority.

“ Sometimes it is tough to bring everyone together to focus on the governance of the organisation, rather than what many see as the real business of running the organisation. ”

**Alison Howard, Chief Executive, Rounders England**

One of the main concerns about Board evaluation was that it could be seen as challenging for individual Board members (i.e. they might feel they are being negatively judged). Rounders England managed the ‘personal’ element by focusing first on a whole Board evaluation. In addition, Rounders England felt that using an independent consultant really helped, as the consultant was able to ask questions and challenge Board members from an external perspective, without this feeling like passing judgement. In addition the independent consultant was able to motivate the Board to get involved and ‘own’ the process; and, as such, to gain agreement on the best way to evaluate the Board going forwards.

### ROUNDERS ENGLAND MANAGED THE CHALLENGES BY TAKING TWO CLEAR STEPS:

1. Motivating the Board to realise there was a challenge and that work was needed to meet this challenge; and
2. Putting in place good planning to get the process completed within a clear time-frame, agreed upon by all Board members.



### WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF FEATURE 2 HAD NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED?

Rounders England felt that, if it had not defined the role of the Board more clearly and put in place a Board evaluation process, the Board would have remained very operationally focused, without much strategic skill. This would have hampered general organisational progress. Looking externally, Rounders England considered that funding agencies would have perceived the lack of clear role definition and performance evaluation as an organisational weakness, which would have disadvantaged Rounders England in bidding for public money. More internally, Rounders England considered that a continuing lack of Board evaluation would have led to difficulties between the Board and the wider membership. The most recent Board evaluation identified a weakness in the way the Board communicated with Rounders England members. As a result, Rounders England developed a 'Meet the Board' initiative to improve communication and get member feedback.



### WHAT ADVICE IS THERE FOR OTHER FEDERATIONS?

For organisations trying to define clearly the role of the Board and evaluate its performance against that role, the most vital piece of advice from Rounders England is to communicate throughout the process, especially when introducing it. In addition, Rounders England considered it really important to have an independent person take a leading role in the process. If the suggestion had come only from someone internally, it may have received less support and ownership. Having someone with expertise in governance and structures of organisations helped Board members see the importance of changing and developing.

“ Without the Board evaluation, we wouldn't have implemented this initiative and there would be a disconnect between our Board and our membership. ”

**Alison Howard, Chief Executive,  
Rounders England**

#### REFERENCES FOR CASE STUDY FEATURE 2:



**Feature 2:**  
Define the role of the Board and evaluate their performance .....18



**Toolkit:**  
Board Member Appraisal ..... 122  
Board Performance Evaluation ..... 126  
Board Skills Audit ..... 130  
Induction Programme for new Board member ..... 150  
Role Description for Board Member: Key points to consider ..... 160  
Role description for Board Member: Model Template ..... 162  
Role description for Chair ..... 164

## CASE STUDY FEATURE 3: ESTABLISH A BALANCED COMPETENCY BASED BOARD

The Board should be recruited from individuals with the right balance of skills and backgrounds to meet the needs of the organisation.

### POLISH TENNIS ASSOCIATION

#### BACKGROUND

Role	National Federation in charge of tennis in Poland Governs the sport Establishes rules Licenses players Organises the system of competition in Poland Exclusive right to appoint national team members
Members	288 clubs 1,700 licensed players 1,600 children under age of 10 years old 1,200 amateurs 250,000 regular tennis participants in Poland
Staff	10 at the Head Office 12 coaches and other sports staff operating on yearly contracts
Mission	Develop tennis

#### BOARD SIZE AND COMPOSITION

Size	9 in total
Individual Roles	President 3 x Vice-Presidents General Secretary Treasurer
Election or Appointment process	9 elected by 100 representatives who represent 16 regional associations No independently appointed Board members NOTE: board can co-opt individuals to replace anyone who has resigned or been dismissed during their term (this must not exceed 25% of full Board)
Term lengths	Elected every 4 years (year following the Olympic Games)
Documents	Organisational Regulation of Polish Tennis Association Board sets out main duties of Board and specific roles and functions for key individuals on the Board

According to Polish Tennis Association statute, Board members are elected only from entered delegates. During the term, however, the Board shall co-opt its members with new individuals to replace anyone who has resigned or been dismissed during their term. The number of co-opted members of the body may not exceed 25% of the total number of elected members. In such cases, individuals with high qualifications may be selected as 'independent' Board members (i.e. not representing regional organisations). This occurred in 2002, 2010 and 2012, because several elected Board members resigned.

The Board operates on the basis of a document entitled 'Organisational Regulations of the Polish Tennis Association Board', which was enacted for the first time in 1984 and amended most recently in 2009. This document sets out the main duties of the Board and its members; and it specifies the role and functions of the President, three Vice-presidents, the General Secretary and the Treasurer.



#### WHY IS FEATURE 3 IMPORTANT FOR THE POLISH TENNIS ASSOCIATION?

Every efficient organisation is founded on a strong management culture that comprises elements, such as vision, mission, strategy and operative goals. In each organisation, there are different management areas like marketing, communication, human resources, sales and finance. In order to achieve specified goals and to remain effective, an organisation must be governed by qualified and competent management personnel. This applies equally to sports organisations: they need on their Boards competent people who, in ideal circumstances, have both business experience and in-depth knowledge of the sport.

'Specialists' can facilitate the work of the Board, increasing its effectiveness and conserving the financial resources of the organisation by providing expert services and advice as part of their Board roles. In addition, people who are professionally connected within the 'business world'

may facilitate contacts with other people from their surrounding environment, creating conditions for attracting new financial resources.

It must be underlined, however, that in a sports organisation, outside typical management areas, there are unique aspects like sports development, professional sport and youth sport. It is important to strike the right balance therefore between individuals who have sport specific knowledge and skill-set and individuals from outside the sport environment who have a professional skill-set.



### WHY, SPECIFICALLY, WAS FEATURE 3 IMPLEMENTED?

The number of tennis players, registered clubs and coaches in Poland was (and continues to be) significantly lower than in other European countries, especially Germany, France and the UK. The Polish Tennis Association felt that tennis had a large growth potential. However, its development was threatened, in part, by the image of the sport as expensive and elitist, with limited access to infrastructure. In short, the Polish Tennis Association faced both opportunities and threats. It felt that, as an organisation, it needed to improve its direction, its management and its image.

In 2003, as part of this improvement process, the Polish Tennis Association revised its statutes and certain other management documents. Subsequently, it has sought to implement various governance changes, which together have focused on improving the efficiency of the Board. These have included attempts to establish a more balanced, competency-based Board.



### HOW WAS FEATURE 3 IMPLEMENTED?

From 2003 onwards, the Polish Tennis Association implemented various governance changes, with the intention of improving the competency of the Board. This involved:

- Redefining the tasks of the organisation, through internal discussion and wider consultation;
- Reducing the size of the Board (currently, its statutes mandate a Board of five to nine members);
- Setting out more clearly how it should co-operate with local Polish Tennis Association structures and local government;
- Redefining the rules concerning elections to the Board and the role of the audit committee.

Specifically, the Polish Tennis Association updated its rules of the procedure of the Board, a document that sets out how the Board should operate. Now, on the basis of this document, at the first meeting after her or his election, the President of the Polish Tennis Association divides functions and responsibilities among the members of the Board. The idea behind this approach was to dedicate the strategic responsibilities to the most competent members of the Board. In addition, since 2005, candidates for election to the Board have been asked to make available their CVs in the run-up to elections. This has enabled the delegates to know the candidates and their competencies.



### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING IMPLEMENTED FEATURE 3?

Overall, in the period 2001-2012, during which time the changes were implemented, the Board of the Polish Tennis Association has become more effective. This is primarily due to the combination of representatives of the 'movement' and experts with experiences in particular fields (e.g. finance and marketing). The engagement of Board members with specific competencies has enabled the exchange of experiences in various fields and the use of best practice.

One further element in this process was the necessity to communicate change within the organisation. Prior to the General Assembly, at which delegates were scheduled to vote on these changes, the Polish Tennis Association held a series of meetings with representatives of stakeholder groups, such as clubs, presidents of regional branches of the Polish Tennis Association and local leaders. This required a good deal of time and effort, as well as co-operation with independent experts (e.g. hiring a lawyer for the purpose of changing the statutes) and consultation with the Ministry of Sport (in order to amend the statutes).

These changes were not particularly far-reaching. That is, they did not decisively affect the system of election of the President and the Board of the Polish Tennis Association. However, they did force the regional structures of the Polish Tennis Association to accept the general direction of change. Moreover, they have led to more qualified candidates being elected onto the Board.

### Implementing, or part-implementing, Feature 3 has:

- Improved decision-making at Board level;
- Established a clearer approach to problem-solving, drawing on members' experiences within corporate organisations;
- Led to the development of a more sophisticated stakeholder management strategy, as the 'independent' Board members have wide experience of business planning and communications;
- Improved the image of the organisation: it appears more 'high-functioning' and 'business-like'.



### WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING FEATURE 3 AND HOW WERE THESE MANAGED?

The Polish Tennis Association faced several challenges when seeking to implement the initial changes; and it continues to face challenges now.

## The challenges fall into two main groups:

### 1. Election, representation and 'ownership' challenges

In relation to 'ownership', the members of the regional and local structures (the 'activists') are often resistant to the notion of electing members on the basis of particular skills or expertise, as they feel that this would limit the representativeness of the organisation and that they (the 'activists') would lose 'ownership'. As such, in practice, representatives of regional and local structures often do not elect members to the Board on the basis of competencies. Over time, members have become more convinced about the need to dedicate some of the tasks to professionals; however, strong resistance in the wider sport 'movement' and among some Board members is still present.

These two main issues are inter-related. The changes implemented so far, in pursuit of a more competency-based Board, have often been presented to the regional and local members as measures that will improve the effectiveness of the Polish Tennis Association. However, when this is not immediately forthcoming, due to reasons stated above, such as professionals' lack of time and disputes at Board level, this can make it seem as if the changes have not been successful, which can create further resistance.

### 2. Actual activities of the Board

As regards the Board itself, there are on-going issues of communication and team-working, with various divisions between the independently elected Board members (the 'experts') and those who were elected with the support of local structures (the 'activists'), concerning the ways of managing the organisation, building its image, work ethic, level of professionalism and so on. One major challenge is that 'independent' Board members are often not able to devote adequate time to work effectively for the association, due to their professional commitments. So, despite the involvement of 'professionals' on the Board, all the reports and opinions requiring greater effort continue to be done by external experts. In practice, therefore, the move towards a more competency-based Board has not resulted in financial savings for the Polish Tennis Association.

“ Each attempt to introduce to the Board the people with strong competency backgrounds meets on the one hand understanding, on the other the concern that existing activists will lose their importance. ”

**Polish Tennis Association**



### WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF FEATURE 3 HAD NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED?

If no effort had been made to introduce any changes to the functioning of the Polish Tennis Association, it probably would have resulted in a much worse financial and organisational situation. However, it should be noted that the changes introduced so far are perhaps not major.

“ Introducing persons selected on the basis of competence to the Board is a long-term process and takes time. ”

**Polish Tennis Association**

“ The most difficult task is to convince the individuals elected from the local structures and the acting members of the Board to implement the desired changes, mainly due to the fact that the changes are interpreted by them as a threat to their position. ”

**Polish Tennis Association**



### WHAT ADVICE IS THERE FOR OTHER FEDERATIONS?

One of the most important factors in moving towards a competency-based Board is communication.

Aside from the 'message' itself, there are other factors that influence this communication process. For example, often the nature of possible changes and the reasons behind them are only explained during the General Assembly. This small amount of time does not allow for in-depth analysis and full understanding of the possible benefits of the changes. It would be better to adopt a communication strategy based on meetings with representatives of local clubs, in order to accurately explain the proposed changes. The most positive effect comes from having the proposed changes presented by a leader, such as a President, who motivates the 'grassroots members' in a substantive way. Also, the communication process should focus on the opportunities the proposed changes might bring to the association.

The main problem is trying to create a sense of stability among Board members, in order to make them supporters of the changes rather than opponents.

The biggest single barrier at the Polish Tennis Association was the unwillingness of several Board members, who were afraid of losing their positions and associated privileges. Implementing specific changes to Board election procedures can be a very difficult process. Effective communication over time is vital.

## REFERENCES FOR CASE STUDY FEATURE 3:



**Feature 3:**  
Establish a competency based Board ..... 21



**Toolkit:**  
Board Competencies: How to Guide ..... 112  
Board Competencies: Skills List ..... 116

## CASE STUDY FEATURE 4:

### SET THE VISION AND MISSION AND PROVIDE LEADERSHIP ON THE STRATEGY

The Board should prepare and consult on the vision, mission and strategy for the organisation. The Board should oversee the implementation of the strategy.

## CRICKET IRELAND

### BACKGROUND

Role	Governing body for cricket in the whole of Ireland
Staff	20
Contracted players	23
Volunteers	Hundreds operating at national, regional and grassroots levels
Mission	To place cricket in the top 4 team sports in Ireland, and establish our position on the world stage in the global game

### BOARD SIZE AND COMPOSITION

Size	11 in total
Individual Roles	President (attend in ex officio capacity) Chief Executive (attend in ex officio capacity) 6 x members nominated by 4 of provincial unions 4 x selected by nominations committee 1 x Chair selected by nominations committee
Election or Appointment process	Nominations Committee proposes 4 board members to the Board and appointment is ratified at AGM 4 x independents are selected in relation to expertise: - law; - finance; - marketing/commerce; - international cricket
Role Descriptions	Not individual but required to satisfy skill sets established in advance
Induction	Full induction on appointment Annual training on duties of a Director for all



### WHY IS FEATURE 4 IMPORTANT FOR CRICKET IRELAND?

This feature is important because it seeks to use best practice in the business world and apply those principles to governing bodies to ensure that on-field efforts are as far as possible supported by a strong foundation off the field. Having a clear vision is the most important piece of work an organisation can do. It establishes a direction and purpose for the organisation. The mission puts 'flesh' on those bones, while the strategy breaks down the mission into achievable 'chunks' within a specific time-frame.

The role of the Board is to set policy and strategic direction, with the guidance and advice of the professional staff, particularly the Chief Executive Officer.

Adopting a strategic orientation allows a panoramic view of the 'big picture', an ability to see bumps in the road (i.e. identifying and mitigating risk), and enables Cricket Ireland to keep an eye on matters of strategic direction, rather than being side-tracked too deeply into operational issues.

“ The Board should, figuratively speaking, fly 30,000 feet above the business to ensure that the 'operations' of the sport are remaining faithful to the strategy, which itself is a product of the mission and vision. ”

**Warren Deutrom,**  
Chief Executive, Cricket Ireland



### WHY, SPECIFICALLY, WAS FEATURE 4 IMPLEMENTED?

The catalyst for change in Irish cricket was success rather than failure. On-field success in the 2007 Cricket World Cup brought Cricket Ireland significant and unprecedented global attention. Soon after, Cricket Ireland engaged a strategic consultancy company and asked how it might capitalise on the opportunity and how it could improve as an organisation. Specifically, Cricket Ireland sought to understand how it could ensure that its next 'rise to prominence' would come about by design rather than by accident.



### HOW WAS FEATURE 4 IMPLEMENTED?

Cricket Ireland provided the consultancy with a list of key internal and external stakeholders. In addition, the consultancy company consulted with experts in similar fields and in other sports, domestically and internationally, in order to benchmark with best practice. (At the time, Cricket Ireland had no full-time employees, other than the Chief Executive Officer and the national coach). The Chief Executive Officer took the lead in formulating the vision and mission and engaged with the consultant to help define the parameters for the consultation.

“ Throughout the process, we sought to keep in mind the mantra, “How can we be better?” ”

**Warren Deutrom, Chief Executive, Cricket Ireland**

### The Chief Executive Officer and the consultant went through the following process:

- Reviewed the primary elements of Cricket Ireland's recent success
- Examined the criteria necessary to take the next step in the global game
- Used the criteria as headline objectives
- Broke down the headline objectives into 'strategic action areas' and, further, into key initiatives, or projects, with specific timelines.

### Process:

#### 1. Stakeholder consultation

Held individual consultations with a broad number of stakeholders inside and outside the sport;

#### 2. Produce clear recommendations

Produced discussion documents (in governance, administration, performance), which were debated by smaller groups, facilitated by the consultant with a view to producing clear recommendations.

The Chief Executive Officer worked hard to get 'buy-in' on these proposals from the outgoing Chair and the incoming Chair and Honorary Secretary. In essence, it was presented and subsequently accepted by these and other key individuals as an important process of 'leaving a legacy for the sport'. Significantly, the Chief Executive Officer managed to obtain funding from the Irish Sports Council to pay for the consultancy. (The key point here is that once the Irish Sports Council had committed money towards the consultancy process, it was more difficult to ignore the recommendations.)

The process of getting 'buy-in' from existing Cricket Ireland members was helped by the 'carrot' of increased funding. That is to say, there was the suggestion that if these kinds of governance changes were implemented in order to improve the sport, there was an increased likelihood of Cricket Ireland receiving more public funding through the sports agencies. Furthermore, a potential main sponsor had indicated that were Cricket Ireland to put in place these kinds of 'strategic' governance processes, it would be a further incentive to provide sponsorship.

“ In many ways, the process went ahead with buy-in from key officers, paid for by a government agency, presented by an external consultant, with a promise of more funding and a reduction of liability to volunteer constituents. It was almost presented as a fait accompli to the Executive Committee who courageously agreed to vote themselves out to further the sport. ”

**Warren Deutrom, Chief Executive, Cricket Ireland**

The new Board, created through this process of change, is now fully aware that overseeing the implementation of the strategy is its key role. This is due in large part to the introduction of experienced, independent non-executives, the induction process for new Board members and on-going 'refreshers'.

### This strategic orientation is formalised in several helpful ways:

#### 1. Agenda

The Board agenda constantly refers to strategic objectives; and

#### 2. Risk Register

A risk register is maintained, in order to mitigate risks to the implementation of these objectives.

Overall, the pace of change was rapid. It took just one year from the start of the consultancy process to the first meeting of the new Board.



### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING IMPLEMENTED FEATURE 4?

Having an overall vision is the most important single factor in determining the direction the organisation needs to take. Without an overall vision, strategy is unfocused, objectives are unclear and unity of purpose is diluted. Especially in the case of small organisations, if narrow human and financial capital is not directed properly in focused priorities, then the organisation will fail to make the best of its resources.

“ There are 100 things we could do, 50 we should do, and about 20 we have the time, effort, money and manpower to do properly. Remaining focused is essential. ”

**Warren Deutrom, Chief Executive, Cricket Ireland**

Having a clear strategy makes it easier to identify goals and targets, which assist in aligning Cricket Ireland's objectives with those of a key stakeholder (e.g. reaching government targets for youth or female participation). In terms of commercial sponsorship, having a clear idea of objectives, a clear set of values and a clear 'target market' can help align the organisation with a possible commercial partner, who can identify synergy with their own commercial objectives, target market and brand values.



### WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING FEATURE 4 AND HOW WERE THESE MANAGED?

Cricket Ireland did not encounter major challenges. The key officers were supportive, Cricket Ireland had identified the consultant who would assist in the 'vision, mission and strategy process' and a sport agency (the Irish Sports Council) provided funding for the consultancy. The process of understanding what was needed to move the organisation forward led to Cricket Ireland identifying the skill-sets needed to populate the Board. Finding people with the appropriate skill-sets was not particularly difficult, because Cricket Ireland operated in a fairly small business community, in which its existing officers were well connected. Recruitment of Board members can be a challenge, but it did not prove so in this case: people did not have to be convinced to come on Board; cricket in Ireland was a sport 'on the up' and people wanted to be involved in a successful story of growth and change.



### WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF FEATURE 4 HAD NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED

Cricket Ireland could have continued without change, but it would very possibly have alienated elite players, and missed the chance to capture new participants. Crucially, it might also have missed the opportunity to secure the revenues that have helped grow the business, increase performance at the highest level, create a robust pathway for players, and implement a professional business structure that supports the on-field efforts. As outlined above, Cricket Ireland's first high-profile playing success occurred without much support from the national governing body; however, Cricket Ireland were very keen to ensure that further success would occur through 'back-room support'.

“ We were determined to be as successful off the pitch as the players had been on it. It was our duty. ”

**Warren Deutrom, Chief Executive, Cricket Ireland**

“ Simply put, the more robust we are in this regard, the more money we receive, which allows us to plough investment into the sport. ”

**Warren Deutrom, Chief Executive, Cricket Ireland**

If Cricket Ireland had not sought to implement changes in governance the following may have happened:

#### 1. Reduced sponsorship opportunities

It is possible that its major sponsor would not have joined and this in turn would have meant that Cricket Ireland would not have been able to afford the contracts system, which has helped professionalise the national team, which, in turn, has helped generate success;

#### 2. Reduced public funding

It is very unlikely Cricket Ireland would have received the level of financial support from the national sport agencies that it has done. The Irish Sports Council provided Cricket Ireland with a major financial boost, helping it out of a large deficit. Had Cricket Ireland not taken the advice of the consultancy that the Irish Sports Council paid for (i.e. advice to set a clear vision, mission and strategy for the organisation and to make accompanying changes to the governance structures), it is unlikely such funding would have been forthcoming. Finally, Sport Northern Ireland provides funding to national governing bodies based in part on adherence to good governance; without implementing Feature 4 and other governance changes, Cricket Ireland would be less likely to receive public funding.



### WHAT ADVICE IS THERE FOR OTHER FEDERATIONS?

The two most important parts of the process were as follows:

1. Identifying an external agency that could say things that internal people could not; and
2. Getting 'buy-in' from key influencers who were able to ensure buy-in at the political level.

The Executive Committee could have derailed the process had they refused to accept the recommended changes, or if they had watered them down to such an extent that the changes became meaningless. However, effective communication between the Chief Executive Officer and other executive members made sure that this did not occur.

“ What was presented, and how it had been positioned beforehand ‘in the corridors’ had been such that any refusal would have been regarded as nothing less than a failure to give the sport the best chance to succeed, and seize the moment based on the new-found fame to copper-fasten its future. ”

**Warren Deutrom, Chief Executive, Cricket Ireland**

The process of governance change is relatively invisible to fans of the sport and is not particularly glamorous. However, it carries great weight in terms of external perceptions; that is, it indicates a desire for high levels of professionalism and it suggests that the organisation is acting properly as the custodian of the sport and acting in its best interests.

“ The key question to answer is whether, through change, one will strengthen the sport in years to come and leave it in a better place than that in which you find it. If so, then that is the best legacy anyone can leave to their sport. ”

**Warren Deutrom,  
Chief Executive, Cricket Ireland**

#### REFERENCES FOR CASE STUDY FEATURE 4:



**Feature 4:**  
Set the vision and mission and provide leadership on the strategy ..... 24



**Toolkit:**  
Defining Vision, Mission and Strategy ..... 144  
Operational Plan: How to Guide ..... 156  
Strategic Plan: Guide ..... 166

## CASE STUDY FEATURE 5: ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE CONTROLS

The Board should ensure the organisation has controls in place to be legally compliant. The Board should be aware of best practice and oversee the development of controls that are efficient and effective.

### BRITISH SLEDGE HOCKEY

#### BACKGROUND

Role	National Governing Body for ice sledge hockey in the UK
Members	200 people playing ice sledge hockey in UK 8 established teams 1 national league that has run for 2 years National team competes in international tournaments and paralympics
Staff	Volunteer led
Turnover	Less than £50,000 per year
Funding	Some goes directly to clubs rather than through British Sledge Hockey
Mission	To expand the number of teams active in the UK (and by association the number of participants), to re-introduce a national league and to develop the national team to ensure qualification for the 2014 Paralympic Winter Games

#### BOARD SIZE AND COMPOSITION

Size	6 in total
Individual Roles	2 x appointed independents (subsequently been re-elected after their terms finished)
Role Descriptions	Each board member has a full role description reviewed annually at AGM



#### WHY IS FEATURE 5 IMPORTANT FOR BRITISH SLEDGE HOCKEY?

Effective controls are essential: British Sledge Hockey reviews all controls on a biannual basis. Fundamentally, legal and financial controls are necessary for any organisation. British Sledge Hockey is a limited company, so it has to adhere to company law in the UK. It is looking at becoming a charity, so the Board is also examining charity objectives; if British Sledge Hockey does become a charity, it will be subject to the Charity Commission, which will also demand specific controls are in place. Beyond this fundamental necessity, having effective controls is important in order to guard against a situation that might be detrimental to the sport as a whole, such as an individual operating beyond their job description to bring the sport into disrepute.



#### WHY, SPECIFICALLY, WAS FEATURE 5 IMPLEMENTED?

Prior to 2009, British Sledge Hockey was 'quite an ad hoc organisation'. It was run as a community club. British Sledge Hockey realised that it needed to operate as a national governing body and therefore that it had to establish effective controls, not only to meet legal requirements but also to be recognised as the national governing body of the sport in the UK by the national funding agencies (i.e. Sport England and UK Sport). As British Sledge Hockey sought to engage more directly with its stakeholders, it became clearer to the organisation that it was a legal entity and that stakeholders would not provide money to the organisation unless they were satisfied that it had appropriate controls to be able to manage the money effectively. Specifically, sledge hockey was a very small sport, which needed to recruit more participants. Indeed, the very future of the sport was threatened. More generally, it needed to fit into the 'established sporting framework'. In sum, British Sledge Hockey needed to start operating as a national governing body and put in place appropriate controls in order to grow and develop.



#### HOW WAS FEATURE 5 IMPLEMENTED?

First, British Sledge Hockey brought in codes of conduct and disciplinary procedures. This required it to review its Articles of Association and make a number of changes to them. In particular, it changed the membership structure of the organisation. Previously, individual players were direct members of the organisation. British Sledge Hockey felt that this might, in certain circumstances, lead to people from one club having undue influence over the organisation, which might prevent the sport from developing. As such, British Sledge Hockey decided that clubs themselves would be members of the association, rather than individual players.

In implementing better controls, British Sledge Hockey received assistance through a specific initiative run by the British Paralympic Association (BPA). This initiative, which was set up in the period leading up to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, involved partnership arrangements between national governing bodies and commercial companies, with the aim of helping national governing bodies to professionalise in specific areas. British Sledge Hockey was partnered with Cadbury, who ran a week-long assessment with the organisation, and identified a number of areas for possible improvement. The senior management team at Cadbury then put together suggestions for how British Sledge Hockey could make changes and improve; and one of the areas was in implementing stronger controls.

Now, following the initial changes, British Sledge Hockey has certain legal and financial controls in place. If there are legal changes, British Sledge Hockey reviews its legal controls as and when the changes happen; that is, they are monitored individually. It has stronger financial controls, with designated signatories, which has improved operational practice. These controls are reviewed on a regular basis.



### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING IMPLEMENTED FEATURE 5?

The most immediate benefit of putting in place effective controls is that British Sledge Hockey is now seen as a professional organisation by its stakeholders.

“ We were previously viewed as an amateur organisation and this had been a barrier to us receiving funding and support. ”

**Matt Lloyd, Chair, British Sledge Hockey**

One of the biggest benefits of implementing Feature 5 is that the Board has had to consider its role more closely. That is, the process of establishing effective controls has forced the Board to think more widely about the governance of the organisation. In particular, the British Sledge Hockey Board has concentrated on its strategic objectives.

And, moreover, it has affected the way British Sledge Hockey thinks about its recruitment of new Board members. Previously, when it recruited people to key volunteer roles, they automatically became Board members. Now, British Sledge Hockey recruits people specifically to the Board in order to benefit the overall direction of the organisation. The Chair of British Sledge Hockey provided the overall leadership to drive through the necessary changes and another individual worked full-time on the implementation process for five months.

“ It has given us focus and direction and has made the Board accountable. ”

**Matt Lloyd, Chair,  
British Sledge Hockey**



### WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING FEATURE 5 AND HOW WERE THESE MANAGED?

British Sledge Hockey faced significant challenges when seeking to establish effective controls, specifically because this process was accompanied by changing the procedure through which people were appointed, or elected, to the Board. The sport was small and there was a ‘section’ of individuals, who felt that they should be on the Board automatically, because of their involvement in the sport. When British Sledge Hockey sought to introduce documents and professional policies, these individuals felt threatened and were resistant to making the changes, because they felt such changes would jeopardise their positions on the Board.

In some ways, these changes were made more acceptable by the British Paralympic Association offering both the ‘carrot’ and the ‘stick’. That is to say, the British Paralympic Association provided support and encouragement to British Sledge Hockey, which helped influence the more intransigent members to accept the changes. But, in essence, the British Paralympic Association mandated the changes, making British Sledge Hockey aware that it would not receive funding without establishing internal controls and altering certain elements of its governance processes.

“ We were supported by the British Paralympic Association, who told us that if we didn’t make the changes to our Board then we would cease to exist in the future. ”

**Matt Lloyd, Chair, British Sledge Hockey**

In implementing effective controls, British Sledge Hockey also managed the change process by working with external advisors from Cadbury (its commercial partner) and individuals within the sport, who had experience of risk management and controls. Specifically, British Sledge Hockey sought to get the right balance between controls and trust.



### WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF FEATURE 5 HAD NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED?

In short, British Sledge Hockey would have failed to exist if it had not established effective controls. It is very likely that it would have been disbanded and another organisation would have had to try to perform its role. Specifically, British Sledge Hockey would not have received either public or private funding, because of a lack of internal controls for managing the money. The sport was small and required additional recruitment.



### WHAT ADVICE IS THERE FOR OTHER FEDERATIONS?

Looking back on the changes, British Sledge Hockey considers that it should have made them a lot earlier than it did. In addition, the process would have been improved if British Sledge Hockey had spoken to similar organisations that had implemented equivalent changes. Specifically, British Sledge Hockey could have been 'mentored' by another federation.

“Lack of recruitment would have led to lack of participation and without a strategic Board we would have never been able to pull together a recruitment strategy.”

**Matt Lloyd, Chair, British Sledge Hockey**

Thus, the establishment of effective controls (Feature 5) was linked closely with the process of new Board member recruitment and strategic leadership (pertinent to Features 3 and 4 respectively).

Now British Sledge Hockey is a more established organisation, which is able to attract corporate sponsorship and work with stakeholders effectively, because it has controls in place to manage their money appropriately.

“If we went through the process again, then we would look at sitting volleyball or wheelchair basketball to understand how they were established and how they received and managed their funding.”

**Matt Lloyd, Chair,  
British Sledge Hockey**

The new Board was committed to the project; long term commitment is vital.

Everyone has to get behind the change to make it work. Everyone needs to be involved in contributing to, reviewing and refining the controls to really make them work.

“Our advice is don't just put controls in place and assume they will work. Work with everyone to put controls in place and then give it 24 months to review and refine them and make sure what you have done is right for the organisation.”

**Matt Lloyd, Chair,  
British Sledge Hockey**

#### REFERENCES FOR CASE STUDY FEATURE 5:



**Feature 5:**  
Establish effective controls ..... 27



**Toolkit:**  
Financial Procedures:  
List to be considered ..... 148  
Policies: List to create ..... 158

## CASE STUDY FEATURE 6:

### ACT WITH TRANSPARENCY AND BE ACCOUNTABLE TO STAKEHOLDERS

The Board should be open and accountable to its membership and stakeholders. The actions of the Board should stand up to scrutiny when questioned.

## ESTONIAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

### BACKGROUND

Founded	1923
History	<p>1920 – 1936 entered teams into the Olympic Games</p> <p>1940 – 1986 suspended and Estonian athletes considered part of the Soviet Union Olympic team</p> <p>1991 – formal independence from Soviet Union and Estonian Olympic Committee re-integrated to Olympic movement</p> <p>2001 – Estonian Centre Sports Union merged with Estonian Olympic Committee</p>
Mission since 2001	Create the environment to enable sport to perform its role in society and more specifically to enter a team into the Olympic Games

### BOARD SIZE AND COMPOSITION

Session/ General Meeting	<p>Highest body of Estonian Olympic Committee</p> <p>Takes place once a year</p> <p>97 members (63 sports federations, 19 regional sports unions, 15 sport associations and 25 athletes and individuals recognised for their service to sport in Estonia)</p> <p>Role is to elect Executive Committee</p>
Executive Committee	<p>17 members (President, 2 x Vice Presidents and 14 members)</p> <p>4 year terms</p> <p>Strategic responsibility</p>
Secretariat	<p>9 executive staff</p> <p>Secretary General</p> <p>Implements strategy</p>



### WHY IS FEATURE 6 IMPORTANT FOR THE ESTONIAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE?

The Estonian Olympic Committee believes that it is important for information about the mission, the membership, the activities and the financing of the organisation to be made public because:

1. It demonstrates transparency;
2. It helps to develop and maintain trust amongst stakeholders, particularly those responsible for the development of sport (the state, local government, and sport federations).

“ Information about the mission, membership, activities and financing of the Estonian Olympic Committee shall be public and understandable. This principle makes the Estonian Olympic Committee a trustworthy partner to its stakeholders and ensures sustainable cooperation. ”

**Toomas Tõnise, Vice-President,  
Estonian Olympic Committee**



### WHY, SPECIFICALLY, WAS FEATURE 6 IMPLEMENTED?

There was not one single event or issue following which a decision was taken by the Estonian Olympic Committee to be a more transparent and accountable organisation. However feature 6 has been an essential and fundamental feature of the Estonian Olympic Committee since the merger with the Estonian Centre Sports Union in 2001.



### HOW WAS FEATURE 6 IMPLEMENTED?

The executive committee of the Estonian Olympic Committee is responsible for providing transparency to the members of the organisation as well as other stakeholders such as commercial sponsors and the general public. The executive committee of the Estonian Olympic Committee works with the secretary general and other senior managers within the organisation to ensure compliance to the required accounting practices. Although an internal process this helps to ensure that the organisation is accountable. A version of the annual report is made available before each general meeting. Externally the executive committee publishes a management and financial report on an annual basis which is approved by the general meeting of the Estonian Olympic Committee. The Estonian Olympic Committee also organises monthly sessions for its member organisations to provide information about any developments involving the Estonian Olympic Committee. Issues relating to transparency and communication to stakeholders are regarded by the executive committee of the Estonian Olympic Committee as a high priority.

“ Since the Estonian Olympic Committee has no alternative organisation in Estonia, many of our members have adopted working principles and methods similar to the ones used by us in their own organisations. At the Estonian Olympic Committee we have shaped several models of behaviour which have been successfully copied. ”

**Toomas Tõnise, Vice-President, Estonian Olympic Committee**



### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING IMPLEMENTED FEATURE 6?

The regular flow of information between the Estonian Olympic Committee and members has increased transparency and accountability which has benefitted the Estonian Olympic Committee through the development of better relationships with members and with the state. Over the course of the past 11 years the cooperation between the Estonian Olympic Committee and sports federations has improved significantly. The Estonian Olympic Committee has taken on the responsibility to deal with sport federations when it comes to Olympic preparations and financing of athletes. This was previously a role that the government took on but it is clear that being perceived as an accountable and transparent organisation has given the Estonian Olympic Committee more autonomy and responsibility. More widely, many of the sport federations in Estonia have looked to the Estonian Olympic Committee for best working practices and principles to implement in their own organisations. The transparency and accountability adopted by the Estonian Olympic Committee has helped to promote a culture of good governance across Estonian sport, demonstrating the link between feature 6 and feature 10.



### WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF FEATURE 6 HAD NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED?

Demonstrating accountability and transparency is critical to government. If the Estonian Olympic Committee was not an open and transparent organisation, it would not have been able to get involved in the process of shaping the sports policy at the governmental level. The Estonian Olympic Committee has demonstrated that it is a trustworthy partner to the state and the state has channelled the cash flows of many sectors through the organisation which is why its budget has grown approximately ten fold since the year 2001.



### WHAT ADVICE IS THERE FOR OTHER FEDERATIONS?

It is important for federations to be accountable and transparent as this helps to establish a good reputation. Where an organisation can be viewed as trustworthy it is easier for the organisation to build relationships with the state and sponsors.

“ Communication has also always been active with the state and representatives of all major member organisations regarding significant issues. ”

**Toomas Tõnise, Vice-President, Estonian Olympic Committee**

### REFERENCES FOR CASE STUDY FEATURE 6:



**Feature 6:**  
Act with transparency and be accountable to stakeholders ..... 30



**Toolkit:**  
Annual report: How to Guide ..... 110  
Communication Plan: Guide ..... 134  
Communication Plan: Template ..... 136

## CASE STUDY FEATURE 7: ENGAGE WITH SPORTING AND NON-SPORTING BODIES

The Board should understand and perform its role within the domestic and international sporting world. The Board should seek opportunities with the non-sporting sector to develop initiatives for the benefit of the sport.

### FINNISH SHOOTING SPORT FEDERATION

#### BACKGROUND

Role	National Federation for shooting sport in Finland
Members	307 member clubs 35,000 individuals within those member clubs
Staff	12 (5 of whom are coaches)
Mission	Promote and develop shooting sport, safeguard its operating conditions and offer experiences of success

#### BOARD SIZE AND COMPOSITION

Size	9 in total
Individual Roles	Chair 2 x Co-Chair
Election or Appointment process	All elected by General Assembly Each member has their own area of responsibility (e.g. lobbying, legal matters, finances, training and communication)



#### WHY IS FEATURE 7 IMPORTANT FOR THE FINNISH SHOOTING SPORT FEDERATION?

Engaging with sporting and non-sporting bodies is important, because it enables a federation to fulfil its vision and mission.

In general, participation in the sporting world and in society can work in two ways:

1. The Finnish Shooting Sport Federation can monitor changes in the sporting world and society and react accordingly;
2. The Finnish Shooting Sport Federation itself can contribute to these changes, with its own plans and projects.

Engaging with sporting bodies can help the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation to further its immediate objectives of international participation with sporting and non-sporting bodies to ultimately promote Finnish best practice on good governance issues.



#### WHY, SPECIFICALLY, WAS FEATURE 7 IMPLEMENTED?

In the early 2000s, the Federation (which was then known as the Finnish Shooting Association) was viewed differently than it is today. It was understood to be a 'special interest' group and its image was linked to areas other than sport. In 2001, the Federation made a choice to concentrate only on shooting sport and it eliminated from its functions those activities which were not purely sporting. A specific shooting incident in a sport shooting gallery in Helsinki also affected this process of organisational redefinition, as it caused the organisation to focus on public opinion and how it engaged with various sporting and non-sporting bodies.

After broadly redefining itself as a sport-focused organisation, the Board of the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation agreed on its core tasks and sought to identify which stakeholders it needed to co-operate with in the future.

Its conclusions were as follows:

- Finnish Shooting Sport Federation should be able to influence political decision making;
- Finnish Shooting Sport Federation should have an active role in the national sport 'world' (i.e. Finnish Olympic Committee, Finnish Sport Federation, Youth Organisation and so on);
- Finnish Shooting Sport Federation should have an active role in international shooting sport organisations, both at global and European level (i.e. International Shooting Sport Federation and European Shooting Confederation).

Since then, the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation has been very active on all these issues.



## HOW WAS FEATURE 7 IMPLEMENTED?

Finnish Shooting Sport Federation formally implemented Feature 7 as part of a broader process of strategy definition. In 2004, the Board initiated and led this broader process of long-term strategic planning. 150 people, including Board members, council members, elite participants and members of clubs, took part in the process, either in workshops organised by the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation, or via the Internet. The Finnish Olympic Committee and the Vierumäki Sport Institute (a national coaching and training centre for sports and physical education) also assisted in the process. As part of this broader process, respondents engaged in SWOT analysis (i.e. considered the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats pertinent to the organisation) and stakeholder assessment (i.e. identified the sporting and non-sporting bodies with whom the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation ought to engage). The Chairman and the Chief Executive Officer contributed significantly to this process of strategic planning; and the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation committees also discussed and debated many of the issues. Ultimately, the Board made the key decisions, or, where appropriate, referred them to the Council and the General Assembly.

## In seeking to engage with sporting and non-sporting bodies, Finnish Shooting Sport Federation has put in place several specific practices:

### 1. Forum for recreational shooting

It leads a forum for 'recreational shooting', which gathers together all stakeholders of shooting sport and the shooting industry.

### 2. National and International representation

It is represented in principal national organisations and also has several important posts at the international level.

### 3. Government engagement

It engages with key government departments. For example, it actively co-operates with the Ministries of Environment, Interior Affairs and Education and Culture on issues like protection of the environment, weapon safety and shooting infrastructure.

### 4. Guidance

It co-writes booklets and guidance with various public authorities.

As a result of these measures the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation has also been elevated to become one of the 'priority sports' in the national Olympic committee.

The Finnish Shooting Sport Federation reviews and updates its engagement strategy regularly, as part of a broader process of strategy review. This process, led by the Board, is conducted bi-annually. The latest review took place in 2010, and involved an update of the long term 'road map to 2020'.



## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING IMPLEMENTED FEATURE 7?

As a result of the broader strategic review process, the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation now engages regularly with a range of sporting and non-sporting bodies. There is a will within the organisation to participate not only in shooting sport issues, but also, more widely, to develop Finnish sport. Ultimately, the biggest benefit of this is that, in the long run, the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation will be able to fulfil its goals.

Specifically, co-operation with non-sporting bodies helps the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation to understand society and its trends and such engagement creates opportunities for the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation to put its own point of view 'on the table'. Co-writing booklets and guidance has helped to create common practices and understanding with public authorities. Furthermore, as a result of active lobbying, the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation is now automatically invited to join working groups run by public authorities and its opinion is always asked on issues which deal with shooting sport, weapon safety and so on.

Implementing Feature 7 has not automatically brought the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation new financial resources; however, active networking has in some cases brought extra funding to cover labour cost. For example, the 'Erasmus for All' programme funding is a potential new source of funding for the future. One financial benefit that may in part be attributed to the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation's more systematic approach to lobbying is its increase in public funding. Over the last ten years, the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation has been able to raise its share of the annual financial support from the state.

Intensive participation and widespread networking has also helped to create common understanding with other bodies around certain important issues. For example, the legislation that regulates shooting sport is very complex and the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation's more strategic and systematic approach to engagement has aided communication here. In particular, more simplified guidance has been produced for operators in clubs. In addition, there are almost 350 municipalities in Finland and the central organisation cannot communicate with all of them. As such, the more systematic approach to engaging with sporting and non-sporting bodies has helped.



### WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING FEATURE 7 AND HOW WERE THESE MANAGED?

The main challenge faced was deciding in which areas the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation should engage. Specifically, the organisation faced difficult decisions around which functions it should discontinue. The on-going process of engagement and lobbying also caused friction within the 'sporting world', with other federations undergoing similar processes. In general, when seeking to implement a more systematic strategy of engagement, the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation faced questions around what the organisation's main objectives were.

“ Federations are established to promote sport and so the sport and sportsmen should be the focus. However, operating conditions (e.g. legal framework, infrastructure, etc.) and social responsibility are essential tasks of a modern federation. ”

**Finnish Shooting Sport Federation**

In addition, the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation faced the familiar challenge of deciding which areas the Board should focus on and which the senior management should focus on: drawing a line between 'strategy' and 'operations' is not straightforward.



### WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF FEATURE 7 HAD NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED?

If Feature 7 had not been implemented, the development of the sport would have been hindered in several ways:

**1. General 'appreciation' would have diminished.**

Engaging with sporting and non-sporting bodies is very important for promoting the sport. Without adopting a more strategic approach to engagement, it would have been much harder to make the sport of shooting known to people and general knowledge about the sport would not have been so good.

**2. Participation in the sport would not have grown.**

**3. Government would not have understood the common sense approach to shooting.**

This is where engagement with non-sporting bodies has been particularly important. It has promoted a much greater understanding of the sport of shooting among government departments, other public authorities and, in a more diffuse way, the general public.



### WHAT ADVICE IS THERE FOR OTHER FEDERATIONS?

The clearest advice is that the process of engaging with sporting and non-sporting bodies should be on-going, because society and the environment within which the federation operates are changing all the time. Contacts and networks have to be actively updated all the time.

“ Patience is needed, especially in processes where there are many stakeholders and different interests. ”

**Finnish Shooting Sport Federation**

In terms of overall strategy, it is important to assess, from time to time, which functions can be eliminated, and which new 'practices' should be taken in. The most important decision in this case was that the Finnish Shooting Sport Federation decided to concentrate on sport and be active at all levels of the sporting and non-sporting world which they considered to be important.

When applied, in general, to other federations, this means:

1. Being clear about the federation's overall objectives;
2. Identifying the sporting and non-sporting organisations that can affect the process of achieving these objectives;
3. Engaging actively with the identified influential organisations.

### REFERENCES FOR CASE STUDY FEATURE 7:



**Feature 7:**  
Engage with sporting and non-sporting bodies ..... 33



**Toolkit:**  
Engaging non-sporting bodies:  
Key points to consider ..... 146  
Lobbying Government: How to Guide ..... 152

## CASE STUDY FEATURE 8:

### WORK AS A TEAM

The Board should be effective as a team to support each other.

## VOLLEYBALL ENGLAND

### BACKGROUND

Role	National Governing Body responsible for the development, promotion and delivery of Volleyball, Beach Volleyball and Sitting Volleyball in England
Members	403 clubs 532 registered coaches 343 registered referees
Mission	To be leading the growth of, and excellence in all disciplines of Volleyball in England

### BOARD SIZE AND COMPOSITION

Size	8 in total
Individual Roles	President Vice-President 5 x portfolio Directors (represent different specialist functions) 1 x co-opted Director
Future changes	At the AGM in 2012 an amendment was made to appoint Co-opted Director as an independent non-executive Director plus recruit 2 x independent non-executive Directors



### WHY IS FEATURE 8 IMPORTANT FOR VOLLEYBALL ENGLAND?

The issue of teamwork at the level of the Board is important on two levels:

#### 1. Good teamwork amongst Board members

While individuals on a Board should be open to discussion, debate and challenge, teamwork is important so that Board members work together to oversee the implementation of policy decisions.

#### 2. Good teamwork between Board members and executive staff

Volleyball England has increased the number of professional paid staff in recent years and reduced the Board numbers as the day to day operations and management have shifted from Board level to the executive staff level. It is important therefore that the Board and senior management team work together to ensure policy decisions at Board level are informed by up to date information from the senior management team and that the decisions are communicated to senior management team to ensure effective implementation.

“ The question of teamwork is also a question of team ethics. Richard [the president] doesn't remember the last time that any decision on the Board has actually come to a vote. Issues will be debated, a consensus will be reached and it is important that all members of the Board then back that decision externally. ”

**Lisa Wainwright, Chief Executive, Volleyball England**



### WHY, SPECIFICALLY, WAS FEATURE 8 IMPLEMENTED?

One of the reasons for the need for a good working relationship between the Board and the executive staff was evident in the Board meetings that used to take place. The challenge the incoming president faced was that Board meetings would take up to seven hours to complete as the Board tried to micro-manage the organisation and was involved in issues that needed to be left to the executive staff.



### HOW WAS FEATURE 8 IMPLEMENTED?

The president of Volleyball England has played a key role in encouraging Board members to work as a team. Prior to his appointment there were fewer executive staff and Board members at the organisation. As Volleyball England has grown the president has been responsible for dealing with possible personality clashes amongst Board members.

Previously Board members were elected because they had been involved in the sport for a long time rather than because of the skills and competencies that they brought to the Board. The president had to oversee changes that meant speaking with Board members who had been part of the organisation for a long time and explaining to them that it was time for them to step aside to let new people onto the Board, with new skills and vision.

The President is also responsible for making sure that the two new independent non-executive directors (when appointed) will be able to fit within the dynamic of the Board.

To support the development of teamwork between Board members and executive staff all members of the Board are given a portfolio which relates to the role description and skills when recruited for the position. The portfolio that each Board member is assigned is linked to a member of executive staff or a group of staff and it is the task of the president and the chief executive to work together to ensure that there is dialogue between the Board and executive staff.

### The president and the chief executive officer have a close working relationship by:

Meeting monthly to ensure they are up to date;

Reviewing the management control calendar;

Discussing any softer emotional intelligence from across the sector.



### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING IMPLEMENTED FEATURE 8?

The benefits that have resulted from a focus on teamwork at Board level have meant that the Board itself has been able to have a much greater influence on Volleyball England.

## THE BENEFITS INCLUDE:

The Board has been able to better understand its role and to also define what each Board member is responsible for;  
It has helped to develop trust amongst Board members;  
It has meant that the Board is more focused on the objectives and the strategy of the organisation with more of a focus on the role that each Board member plays in this.

The teamwork between the Board and the executive staff has also resulted in a situation where a young workforce has been able to turn to the relevant Board member to ask for advice and guidance where necessary. The trust between the Board and executive staff through better teamwork has helped to create an environment in which individuals know each other well enough to say “that’s my job” and for the chief executive to tell the chair that he is interfering in something that is not his role.

This has had clear benefits in regards to the Board meetings. The senior management team are asked to prepare papers for the meeting and the papers are circulated in advance of the meetings allowing Board

members to prepare. The president discusses the papers with the appropriate member of staff in advance to make sure he understand the issue and understand what this member of staff would like this paper to lead to and in some cases he will also have a conversation with members of the Board to know how they feel in advance of the meeting. This approach has meant that Board meetings are more focused on the key items or issues to discuss and the length of meeting has been reduced to a maximum of 3.5 hours.



### WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING FEATURE 8 AND HOW WERE THESE MANAGED?

There were few challenges faced in implementing a team-working approach. The Board members recognised the importance of working as a team and therefore have helped to facilitate this approach. It may well just be as a team sport we are already used to working as part of a team – one of unique benefits of team sports.



### WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF FEATURE 8 HAD NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED

The focus on team work has meant that there is clarity of purpose and a common understanding amongst Board members of the direction of the organisation. The clarity of purpose that exists at Board level and executive staff level is one of the reasons why the organisation works well with stakeholders, especially funding partners. A lack of clarity may have meant that the sport would not have developed as positively as it has done.



### WHAT ADVICE IS THERE FOR OTHER FEDERATIONS?

#### Communication

To facilitate teamwork communication is important. It is therefore a key responsibility of the president of the Board to communicate to Board members and to make sure that communication channels between the Board and executive staff are open to allow for a team working culture to develop.

#### Honesty and Challenge

It is also key for there to be a level of honesty at Board and executive staff level if things are going wrong, to not ignore them but instead to take responsibility to challenge and change.

“Teamwork also helps define who is responsible for what – having the trust internally on the Board and between the president and chief executive helps everybody to openly talk about what level of the organisation is responsible for what, not duplicating any work.”

**Lisa Wainwright, Chief Executive,  
Volleyball England**

#### REFERENCES FOR CASE STUDY FEATURE 8:



Feature 8:  
Work as a team ..... 36



Toolkit:  
Board Meeting Management ..... 118  
Team Building Activities ..... 168

## CASE STUDY FEATURE 9:

### FOCUS ON MEMBERSHIP

The Board should actively engage with members and enable their voices to be heard.

## TRIATHLON IRELAND

### BACKGROUND

Role	National Governing Body for triathlon in Ireland and is recognised by the Irish Sports Council and Sport Northern Ireland
Affiliation	European Triathlon Union International Triathlon Union
Members	7,200 individual members 69 clubs 168 sanctioned events annually
Mission	Promotion, development and safeguarding of the sport of triathlon in Ireland
Turnover	€500,000 in 2009 €1.8million in 2012

### BOARD SIZE AND COMPOSITION

Size	9 in total
Individual Roles	Independent President Secretary General Treasurer 4 x regional representatives (Ulster, Leinster, Munster, Connacht) 2 x co-opted on basis of skills and experience
Election or Appointment process	All elected via AGM
Term lengths	2 year terms



### WHY IS FEATURE 9 IMPORTANT FOR TRIATHLON IRELAND?

Feature 9 is important for Triathlon Ireland because it is fundamentally a membership organisation. Therefore understanding member needs is crucial and their views provide insight for the Triathlon Ireland Board and staff and help them move towards achieving the overall mission of the organisation. Whilst the organisation has other stakeholders many of these are involved with Triathlon Ireland as a result of the individual members. For example the investment that Triathlon Ireland receives from commercial sponsors and from the government is due to the membership numbers.

“ Member needs are crucial – their views provide insight for the Triathlon Ireland Board and staff to achieve the mission. Member engagement is undertaken to inform strategic and operational/structure decisions. ”

**Matt McKerrow, Chief Executive Officer, Triathlon Ireland**



### WHY, SPECIFICALLY, WAS FEATURE 9 IMPLEMENTED?

In 2009, Triathlon Ireland was struggling as an organisation. It had a reputation for being an organisation that did not focus enough on member needs and one that failed to engage with members or other stakeholders. A change took place in 2010 – driven by a small number of Board members – to better engage with members, recognising that they are the central stakeholders of the organisation, that it is logical to engage with them, and that there is a wealth of knowledge and insight within the membership that Triathlon Ireland could use.

#### The two key issues considered by the Board when making decisions are:

1. “How will the average member feel about this?”
2. “How does this improve members’ experience?”



### HOW WAS FEATURE 9 IMPLEMENTED?

In May 2010 the constitution of Triathlon Ireland was changed to allow for greater engagement with members through the annual general meeting and for a greater provision of timely information to members. The Board members involved in driving the process of change were also responsible for the recruitment of a chief executive officer and new Board members and promoted a culture of engagement, transparency and accountability between the organisation and the members.

#### Formal ways Triathlon Ireland engages with members:

- Annual General Meeting;
- A member survey is undertaken twice per year;
- Stakeholder forums take place on a regular basis;
- The chief executive officer also regularly engages with members through attendance at events and triathlon clubs (particularly club AGMs);
- In 2012 a comprehensive member, non-member, clubs and event research project was conducted by the Triathlon Ireland chief executive officer aimed at recommending ways that member loyalty could be enhanced.

More informal engagement takes place on a regular basis between executive staff and members at Triathlon events and when members contact the office. Although it is the senior staff that typically lead on member engagement the four members of the Board of Triathlon Ireland that represent the regions also seek to engage with members on an informal basis.



### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING IMPLEMENTED FEATURE 9?

The regular member surveys have provided Triathlon Ireland with a significant amount of material and data. For example figures on member retention rates and ratings on customer service often inform Board-level (and management) decisions.

#### Key Benefits:

- Triathlon Ireland can better understand member needs;
- Triathlon Ireland are in a more knowledgeable position about members needs and therefore more able to allocate appropriate resources to satisfy those needs;
- Member satisfaction has improved.

The continued practice of this engagement has helped to build trust in the organisation so that over time Triathlon Ireland has been viewed increasingly as a member centric organisation.



### WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING FEATURE 9 AND HOW WERE THESE MANAGED?

Triathlon Ireland has not found that there have been many challenges to the implementation of a member engagement strategy because the members are encouraged to enter into dialogue with the organisation.

Where disenfranchised members have made malicious attempts to attack the organisation Triathlon Ireland has adopted a policy of minimal/non engagement with unreasonable groups. Triathlon Ireland aims to manage expectations in line with key principles of fairness, transparency, accountability, safety and safeguarding.

“ The challenges were really only related to some of the requests which for one reason or another were not realistic or achievable. We regularly engage focus groups and member/club forums to gauge opinion and test potential programs/activities to ensure they are in the greater good. Just because a majority of members want something changed doesn’t mean it’s the right thing to do! ”

**Matt McKerrow, Chief Executive Officer, Triathlon Ireland**



### WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF FEATURE 9 HAD NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED?

If these forms of member engagement had not been put in place the annual general meeting would have been the only opportunity for members to put forward their views – this is not sufficient for a membership organisation. As a result of these engagement mechanisms one of the biggest issues that Triathlon Ireland faces is getting a quorum at an annual general meeting because there are so many other forums for engagement. The growth in membership numbers and the turnover of Triathlon Ireland have in part been due to the implementation of a member engagement strategy.



### WHAT ADVICE IS THERE FOR OTHER FEDERATIONS?

A critical factor for Triathlon Ireland was changing member perceptions that the organisation did not listen to members. This strategy needs to be supported from Board level to the chief executive and senior management and by all employees. In the case of Triathlon Ireland, they received opinions and views that they did not always agree with but the Board needs to take these views into account and work with them. It is also the case that the process of engaging with members, and the fact that the organisation needs to be seen to be doing so, can actually be incredibly valuable in itself.

“ There is a need to be open about a member engagement strategy and to communicate the aims and objectives so that members are aware of the ways in which they can engage and provide feedback. ”

**Matt McKerrow, Chief Executive Officer, Triathlon Ireland**

#### REFERENCES FOR CASE STUDY FEATURE 9:



Feature 9:  
Focus on membership ..... 38



Toolkit:  
Membership Management ..... 154

## CASE STUDY FEATURE 10: PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE THROUGHOUT THE SPORT

The Board should work with affiliated and regional sporting organisations, and clubs to establish good governance at all levels.

### FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF FINLAND

#### BACKGROUND

Role	To promote football at all levels, to provide services and represent the interests of its members, including players and professional and amateur football clubs. To represent Finnish football at international level.
Members	12 district associations Over 1000 member clubs in the district associations
Mission	Football for all
Vision	To be among the ten best football nations in Europe

#### BOARD SIZE AND COMPOSITION

General Assembly	100 representatives from 12 district associations Elects 30 members of the council every 4 years
Council	Meets twice a year Elects 8 members onto the Board for a 2 year term
Board	11 in total 8 elected by council Chair (President) elected by General Assembly for 4 year term 2 x Co-Chairs elected by General Assembly for 4 year term No independent appointed board members – not permitted by Finnish Association Act



#### WHY IS FEATURE 10 IMPORTANT FOR THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF FINLAND?

Governance is an important issue for all members at club and district level as it helps to ensure that activities are more efficient, transparent, and also enhances the commitment of clubs and individuals to pursuing common goals. It allows for a focus on the issues that can improve the quality of the sport, and can reduce the potential for disputes. Promoting good governance to member clubs and district associations also helps with understanding the appropriate division of work allowing the Board of these organisations to concentrate on strategic issues.



#### WHY, SPECIFICALLY, WAS FEATURE 10 IMPLEMENTED?

It is important for the Football Association of Finland to demonstrate support for the principles of good governance and to encourage members (clubs and district associations) to implement best-practice governance as it helps to improve the image of the sport and attract more people to football.

“ Good governance enables all operators to concentrate on essential things which improve the quality of the sport, instead of time wasting, quarrelling and dispute solving. ”

**Henri Alho, Development Manager,  
Football Association of Finland**



## HOW WAS FEATURE 10 IMPLEMENTED?

The Football Association of Finland has been promoting good governance across the football sector in Finland since the beginning of the century. Initially the Football Association of Finland put in place several initiatives in collaboration with the 12 district associations to help develop the standards of governance within member clubs. However the initiatives were not well coordinated, were often ad hoc, and did not link well with the overall strategy and vision of the Football Association of Finland.

In 2006 the Board of the Football Association of Finland consulted with members of the general assembly after which a series of regional seminars were developed during which best practice governance was disseminated to clubs. At the general assembly in 2009 approval was given to a strategy developed by the Board within which good governance was one of five key objectives. This was followed up a year later with the publication of a document titled 'Good Governance in a Football Club' that had been produced drawing on various stakeholders of the Football Association of Finland.

One of the outcomes of this document was the identification of nine minimum requirements that football clubs should adhere to in regards to governance, which are listed to the right:

## The Good Governance requirements for football clubs:

### Club Management

- The Board of the club should check and update the regulations of the club on a web page once a year;
- The operational plan is in the same context as the clubs strategic plan;
- The Board and full time staff have a timetable of main operations and tasks of the club in place;

### Club Members

- All the players of the club must also be members of the club;
- An up-to-date list of club members must be available;
- The operational plan and contact information of Board members must be available on a clubs home page;

### Finance

- All the money traffic of every team of a club must be in a clubs book keeping and financial statements;
- Clubs must have a finance guideline document in place;
- Official accounting company take cares of book keeping.



## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING IMPLEMENTED FEATURE 10?

There is a better understanding of the processes of good governance across district associations and football clubs which has improved transparency, efficiency and enabled a better focus on the development of purely football related issues. This has helped football club activities to become more attractive (for players, parents, and potential Board members).

The Football Association of Finland has made it a requirement that football clubs address the nine areas and it promotes this specifically to the Board members of clubs, team managers, and full-time employees.

“ If the clubs do not meet the minimum requirements they won't be able to receive their share of the financial or other resources allocated for club development. A one-size fit applies at the minimum level; above that there is differentiation according to club size and resources. ”

**Henri Alho,  
Development Manager,  
Football Association of Finland**

The Football Association of Finland has also implemented a further series of measures to promote and disseminate good governance to members. These include:

- Four annual seminars organised by the Football Association of Finland and the district associations including lectures and discussions of club's good governance;
- A European Social Fund project, part of which includes good governance lectures;
- The development of a nationwide education programme aimed at team managers in collaboration with the districts;
- A club tutoring system that will roll out to 100 clubs on an annual basis.

“ The fact that the same people are active in clubs and districts are also active in the Federation (Board, Council or General Assembly) they learn to observe good governance from different angles. ”

**Henri Alho, Development Manager,  
Football Association of Finland**



### WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING FEATURE 10 AND HOW WERE THESE MANAGED?

Whilst the clubs were positive about the need for good governance, the Football Association of Finland faced a number of challenges in trying to promote good governance throughout football.

#### The challenges included:

Changing the perception of the Football Association of Finland where some clubs had previously been suspicious;

Introducing district associations and clubs to the concept of good governance – a new phenomenon within football, and therefore trying to change governance practices and processes that had been in place for many years; and

Trying to encourage the Board of district associations and clubs to focus less on operational details.



### WHAT ADVICE IS THERE FOR OTHER FEDERATIONS?

#### 1. Be aware of social trends

There is a need for the Board of a federation to be aware of, and learn from, societal trends. For example governance is an important issue more generally within the private, public and non-profit sectors, and therefore there is much that can be transferred into sport to improve the way that federations operate.

#### 2. A need to change perceptions over time

It is also imperative that promoting good governance throughout a sport is a long-term process that involves changing the perceptions of many within the sport. The Football Association of Finland for example found there is a feeling that governance relates only to legal issues. In reality there are many aspects of governance and so the perception of governance amongst stakeholders needed to be changed.

#### 3. Make governance a key objective

The Football Association of Finland also found that the single most important factor when promoting good governance through the sport was the Board decision in 2009 to implement good governance as one of the five key objectives in the strategy of the organisation. In doing so it allowed for the development of minimum requirements and standards that are needed as a starting point where the process of promoting and improving governance across a sport can begin.

“ If the Football Association of Finland had not taken the lead on promoting good governance it would have meant decision making processes within clubs and district associations would not have been efficient and the image of the sport would have suffered greatly due to issues of match-fixing cases and general negative publicity. ”

**Henri Alho, Development Manager,  
Football Association of Finland**

#### REFERENCES FOR CASE STUDY FEATURE 10:



Feature 10:  
Promote good governance throughout  
the sport ..... 40

# SECTION 3: TOOLS

This section includes tools to help sport and recreation organisations to implement the **features of good governance** defined in section one.

Each tool has been created by the project group following consultation with selected organisations throughout Europe to ensure they are fit for purpose and easy to use.

# HOW TO USE THE TOOLS

There are three key points to note about the tools.

## 1. SUITABILITY

The tools are designed in a way that we hope organisations across Europe can use them. In some cases the tools will be used in full and in other situations the tools may need adapting so they suit the needs of an organisation. We encourage each organisation to examine its own circumstances and evaluate how each feature is best implemented within their unique environment.



The tools offer possible solutions and suggestions for implementation but they should not be seen as the only tools or resources to use. ”



We hope they provide the starting point for many organisations and we encourage organisations to take the tools and build on them for the future. ”

## 2. LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

Every tool in this section has been created with the European sporting sector in mind and selected organisations have been consulted to ensure each one is as useful as possible. Differences in legal requirements, however, mean that each tool may need to be adapted in relation to the legal environment and context that the organisation is operating in. The tools are generic so organisations will need to remember to match up the tools with the specific legal requirements of their own country.

## 3. TYPES

Some of the tools provide guidance and key points to consider and some of the tools are designed more as templates for organisations to adapt and develop into their own policies. Organisations should use the parts of the tools which work best for them and adapt them to suit their own needs.



Organisations should use the parts of the tools which work best for them and adapt them to suit their own needs. ”

# ANNUAL REPORT: HOW TO GUIDE

This provides a list of what to include in an annual report and some key points to consider when creating an annual report.

## SECTION 1: WHAT TO INCLUDE

Creating an annual report can be a great way of demonstrating the credibility, impact and vision of your organisation.

Annual reports are unique to organisations however a common structure will include:

- Company information.
- Chair's Annual Review/statement.
- Chief Executive's statement.
- Treasurers' report.
- Membership report/Event report.
- Elite performance review.
- Commercial report.
- Financial report.

## SECTION 2: WHAT TO CONSIDER

### 1. Who are you writing it for?

Before you start you will have to consider who this annual report is written for: is it for the membership to tell them about what has happened during the year, is it for funding agencies to justify the funding you have received; or is it to be used in attracting commercial partners or is it a combination of them. Knowing the audience is important because it will dictate the structure, what to include and how you make it available.

### 2. Include basic information

Don't assume your reader knows everything about your organisation. Include information on: the Chief Executive, the registered company address, the Board, the staff etc.

### 3. Tracking data and involving staff

One of the main challenges in writing an annual report is tracking proof of values and impacts. Set up a system which gets staff involved to track data throughout the year because this will significantly help in the writing process.

## 4. Avoid information overload

Be careful not to make your annual report too detailed and, therefore, too long. An annual report should not go through everything in detail that the organisation has done throughout the year, but instead it should give an overview of the most important things in an easy and accessible way.

## 5. Focus on a few quotes and figures

Highlight some memorable statistics and quotes to emphasise the good work your organisations has done throughout the year. Try, if possible, to focus on achievements rather than activities e.g. instead of writing about how many events you had focus on how many new people attended the events.

## SECTION 3: HOW TO MAKE IT AVAILABLE?

You may decide to make your annual report available to the following groups:

- Members;
- Funders;
- Key stakeholders.

Good practice suggests the annual report should be made available on the organisation's website.

Producing electronic versions of an annual report will make it easier and cheaper to distribute.

Having print versions available at annual general meetings is also considered good practice.

## REFERENCES FOR ANNUAL REPORT: HOW TO GUIDE:



**Feature 6:**  
Act with transparency and be accountable to stakeholders ..... 30



**Case Study:**  
Estonian Olympic Committee ..... 78

## BOARD COMPETENCIES: HOW TO GUIDE

This provides useful consideration points for the structure of your Board.

### THREE STEPS TO CREATING A COMPETENCY BASED BOARD

#### 1. UNDERSTAND YOUR GOVERNING DOCUMENT

Before you try to appoint or elect individuals to your Board you must make yourself familiar with the governing document for your organisation. It will contain the existing requirements for terms of office, eligibility, nomination and appointment processes.

The best situation is if your governing document allows you to have both elected and appointed Board members.

Elected Board members can provide useful insight into the sport. However if you only have elected or nominated Board members this may be restricting the skills available to your Board. By appointing Board members from outside your sport you are creating a more balanced Board in terms of skill and diversity.

#### DEFINITION Elected Board members:

Board members who have been elected into their position by the membership either from a region or a club or through a nomination form at the AGM by full membership. Usually they will come from inside the sport and will have gone through a nomination process.



#### DEFINITION Appointed Board members:

Board members who have been formally appointed and chosen for the role because of their skill-set. Usually they will be independent from the sport and will have gone through an open recruitment and application process.



If your governing document does not allow you to have appointed Board members so you can build up a balanced, skilled and diverse Board then you have two options to consider:

#### 1. Change your governing document

In some cases, the Board will want to change the governing documents to enable individuals with the right skills to be appointed or allow for independent Board members to be appointed.

Changing governing documents can be a long process and will need a highly committed Board and/or senior management team. Making changes to governing documents will, in member organisations, usually mean it has to be voted through by 75% of members at an Annual General Meeting.

Organisations will need to check their governing documents for exactly what is needed if they want to change the requirements to allow for appointed Board members.

Before you decide to change your governing document you must have in mind what you want to change the Board composition to. The following questions should help you decide what you want your new Board to look like:

1. What is wrong with our current Board composition?
2. Why do we want to have appointed Board members?
3. What should the new composition look like?
4. What should be the mix and balance of elected from the sport and appointed from outside?
5. What changes would be needed to the governing documents for this to be possible?
6. Would we need legal help to draft up the needed changes?
7. How would the membership react to such changes?
8. Who would be able to stop this proposal?

9. What do we need to do to secure buy-in from the membership to the changes?
10. What are the arguments for change?

Making changes to a governing document will not always be well received within the membership as members will often see it as giving up powers. It is, therefore, important that a well-planned strategy, including a strategy on how the changes are communicated to the membership, for the process is put in place.

## 2. Push skills needed through your election and nomination process

If your governing document does not allow you to appoint Board members it would be very easy to sit and say that you cannot do anything more to make your Board more skilled because you just get who you are given from the election process.

It is however worth considering how you can alter and tailor the process of election to get a more competency based Board.

## A few ideas for helping to produce a more skilled based Board through elections:

- See if it is possible for the Board to identify the skills needed in the Board so people can elect individuals who fit that skill-set or profile;
- List the skills currently missing from the Board so the membership can nominate or elect someone to fill the gap;
- See if it is possible for the Board to do an initial sift of nominations and suggest to the AGM a preferred individual because of their skill-set.

## 2. CREATE ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

Role descriptions and person specifications are often associated with paid roles but when you are trying to add a specific skill to your Board they can be a useful tool to identify what you need from the individual.



The role description will help people understand what is required by the role and what is required by the individual who applies for the role. ”

A role description can also give the Board a reference to which it can score the candidates – this will help the Board make recommendations on a candidate to the general membership in a transparent and open manner or help them decide who to appoint if their governing document allows them to do this.

## 3. CONSIDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

When building a competency based Board it is also important to consider the diversity of your Board. Sports Boards should aim to include men and women equally in decision making and seek to recruit/appoint male and female Board members. A few ways for the Board to consider improving Board diversity are provided below:

- By setting a target for equal representation, the organisation can actively work towards this with positive action and development programmes;
- The Board can co-opt a woman onto the Board so she gains valuable experience and can apply for full membership at a later date;

- The Chair and Chief Executive can ensure, through development programmes, that women in the organisation have access to leadership training and development and are better placed to apply for Board positions.

## REFERENCES FOR BOARD COMPETENCIES: HOW TO GUIDE:



Feature 3:  
Establish a balanced competency based Board ..... 21



Case Study:  
Polish Tennis Association ..... 58

## BOARD COMPETENCIES: SKILLS LIST

This provides a wish-list for the perfect skills needed on a Board for a sport or recreation organisation.



This list is not exhaustive and each organisation has to look at what the perfect Board would look like and build it's own list of the skills it wants on the Board. ”

When building the list you should think of:

**Hard skills**  
such as legal or finance knowledge;

**Soft skills**  
such as team-work, partnership or negotiating;

**Knowledge of sport**  
in general or your specific organisation.

1. Experience of setting strategy
2. Experience of establishing visionary outlook
3. Sport experience
4. Finance
5. Equality
6. Health and safety
7. Risk management
8. Media experience
9. International and European context of sport
10. Commercial development
11. Experience on other Boards
12. Funding knowledge
13. Income generation
14. Credibility in and knowledge of the sporting sector
15. Legal knowledge
16. Corporate governance knowledge
17. Partnership working
18. Safeguarding knowledge

### REFERENCES FOR BOARD COMPETENCIES: SKILLS LIST:



**Feature 3:**  
Establish a balanced competency based board ..... 21



**Case Study:**  
Polish Tennis Association ..... 58

# BOARD MEETING MANAGEMENT

This provides advice on chairing a meeting, structuring agendas and taking minutes for Board meetings.

## SECTION ONE: CHAIRING MEETINGS

The role of the Chair in good governance is often underestimated. Although the Board's authority comes from collective decisions the Chair play a major role in providing leadership to the Board.

The most fundamental part of the role as Chair of the Board is to run Board meetings and any other meetings of the Board in an effective and efficient way. The Chair must be clear on what the meeting outcome should be e.g. share experiences, generate new ideas, make decisions or identify best practice.

### A good Chair will ask the following questions before a meeting:

- Why are you having this meeting?
- What end results do you want from the meeting?
- What will you discuss at the meeting?
- Do you need more information to inform the discussion?
- Do you need anybody to present/prepare an introduction for an issue?
- What information do you distribute in advance of the meeting?

### A good Chair will make sure that:

- All business on the agenda is discussed;
- Everyone's view is heard;
- Clear decisions are reached;
- That the meeting starts and finishes on time;
- There is a balance between in-depth discussion and the objective of the meeting;
- Conversations focus on the agenda points and do not go off at tangents;
- Private conversations are stopped so there is only one conversation happening in the room;
- They never use their position as an opportunity to dominate the meeting or put forward their own view to the exclusion of others.

## KEY TECHNIQUES TO HELP A CHAIR:

### 1. Getting through the business on time

A few things to consider could be:

- Have a clear agenda with rough timings.
- Briefly introduce each agenda item or get the person responsible to do it.
- Explain why you are discussing each item.
- Always keep an eye on the time and move items on if necessary.
- Make sure to stick to the agenda items, don't get drawn in if people raise other issues e.g. "That's an important point which we can come back to later".
- Make sure to stop private conversations as soon as they start.
- Tell the meeting what decision you are making and why e.g. "I'm going to give this discussion another 5 minutes and then draw it to a close".

### 2. Involving everyone

A few things to consider could be:

- Stop people from talking to long – be firm but not aggressive: "thank you for your contribution, you've raised some interesting points. I'm going to stop you there for the moment so others can comment on this issue".
- Give preference to people that haven't spoken yet.
- Try going around the table getting everybody's view.

- Stop people from interrupting – but make sure you don't forget to come back to the person that interrupted when it's their turn.
- Make sure people expressing unpopular or minority views get heard and aren't intimidated out of saying what they think.

### 3. Reaching decisions

A few points to consider:

- Listen carefully to the discussion and jot down key points.
- Remind everybody at the start of the discussion what the issues are and what decision needs to be made.
- Focus on what people agree on, pull together the points people are making and suggest a constructive way forward.
- If more than one point of view, try to summarise each one and present them clearly to the meeting.
- Make sure to summarise what has been agreed before moving on to the next point on the agenda – this will also check if everyone agrees at the same time as providing a useful summary to assist the minute taker.
- Before moving on to the next point make sure to agree who is responsible for the actions thrown up by the decision. If not then you risk that nothing will be done about it.
- Don't assume silence means agreement – make sure people have been able to say what they think.

#### 4. Dealing with difficult people

A few techniques to consider:

- Remind people of the meeting rules, and that everyone has agreed to those.
- Make sure you as a Chair are firm and consistent – don't let the difficult ones get away with things and then come down hard on people you find easier.
- If two people get into a heated discussion try moving the discussion away from the individuals by summarising the points and ask what the rest of the Board think about it.
- Should people repeat the same point, then assure them that their point has been heard and turn the discussion back to the group.
- Turn the discussion around if people keep criticising ask "what suggestion do you have for how this could be improved".

#### SECTION TWO: CREATING MEETING AGENDAS

When designing a meeting agenda it is important to be clear on the objectives of the meeting and of each point on the agenda.

Prioritise agenda items by putting the high importance items early in the agenda.

For each agenda item the following questions need to be answered:

1. Why is this item being discussed?
2. What is the objective of the discussion?
3. How much time is needed for the discussion?
4. Do Board members require any additional reading to inform their discussion?

#### Make sure the agenda highlights the following for each agenda item:

- Objective;
- Sub-text to explain what the item is, why it is being discussed and the actions expected from it;
- Indicated start and finish time for discussion.

#### SECTION THREE: RUNNING THE MEETING

It is important that all Board members receive the agenda and all supporting material for the meeting well enough in advance for them to prepare for the meeting. The time in advance a Board member needs to receive meeting materials will, in some cases, be stated in the organisation's governing documents or other procedure documents.

#### Setting out rules for the meeting which should include:

- Allow the Chair to control who speaks – only speak when being given the word by the Chair.
- Don't interrupt people while speaking.
- Only discuss items on the agenda during the meeting.

- Be respectful to other people's views.
- Keep contribution short and to the point.
- Be prepared for the meeting and make sure the meeting can start on time.

#### SECTION FOUR: TAKING EFFECTIVE MINUTES

Minutes are an important tool for Boards and for sports organisations to communicate key decisions to their wider membership. Board minutes can remind Board members of the decisions made and they can also advise the absent Board members of action taken at the meeting.

Board minutes should not include the discussion in exact detail but instead should provide a summary of the key issues discussed and a record of the outcome or decision taken as a result.

#### Typical points to include in minutes:

- The date, time, and place of the meeting;
- The names of all present and the existence of a quorum;
- A statement as to whether the minutes of the last meeting were approved or amended;
- The agenda items with an outline of the discussion and key themes from it;
- The actions taken at the meeting.

#### Minutes should not include:

- Day to day decisions;
- No more detail than that required to demonstrate care and consideration by the Board;
- No personal observations by Board Members;
- No inaccurate or inflammatory statements.

#### REFERENCES FOR BOARD MEETING MANAGEMENT:



Feature 8:  
Work as a team ..... 36



Case Study:  
Volleyball England ..... 88

# BOARD MEMBER APPRAISALS

This provides an outline to help organisations run individual Board member appraisals.

A Board member should fill in the form and share it with the Chair of the Board. The Chair of the Board should meet the individual to discuss the form and the individual's contribution and effectiveness as a Board member.

**Name:** .....

**Date:** .....

1. How committed to the organisation do you feel you are as a Board member?

1 Against the organisation	2 Not Committed	3 Indifferent	4 Committed	5 Very Committed

2. What type of role do you feel you play on the Board?

Role	Explanation	Tick
Advisory	Providing free expert advice/management/expertise	
Regulatory	Ensuring legal compliance	
Democratic	Contributing to the resolution of stakeholders interests	
Educational	Providing opportunities for debate, learning and sharing of expertise	
Participatory	Engaging users/consumers of services	
Networking	Being an ambassador, linking to contacts, shaping and influencing others	
Involving	Motivating skilled volunteers	
Visionary	Bringing passion to the mission of the organisation	
Leadership	Steering the organisation in the right direction	
Supportive	Supporting, valuing and rewarding the chief executive	
Other	Please write more:	

3. What kind of expertise do you feel you bring to the Board?

Skill	Tick
Administration	
Business Development	
Campaigning	
Change management	
Conflict resolution	
Consultancy	
Customer Care	
Diversity and inclusion	
Event management	
Financial/budget control	
Fundraising	
Strategic planning and management	
Leadership	
Governance	
Knowledge of the sport and recreation sector	
HR/Training	
Information Technology	
Legal	
Management	
Marketing	
Media/PR	
Member relations	
Networks and sector relationships	
Public affairs	
Policy implementation	
Property management	
Research	
Rules	
Schools and Higher Education	
Sports development	
Systems and processes	
Understanding of sport structures	
Understanding of wider recreational activities/issues	
Add skills specific to your organisation	
Other ... please write more .....	

4. Do you feel the Board uses your skills appropriately? If no then please give ideas of how this could be improved.

[Empty text box for response to question 4]

5. What area of work in the organisation interests you the most and how would you like to be involved with it?

[Empty text box for response to question 5]

6. Are there areas of development that you would like the organisation to help you with on a personal level?

[Empty text box for response to question 6]

7. Do you feel you have enough time to continue your role with the organisation?

[Empty text box for response to question 7]

8. Do you have enough information from the organisation to continue in your role?

[Empty text box for response to question 8]

9. What one change would you like the organisation to make to enable you to perform your role more effectively?

[Empty text box for response to question 9]

10. What one change will you make to be more effective as a Board member going forwards?

[Empty text box for response to question 10]

**REFERENCES FOR BOARD MEMBER APPRAISALS:**



**Feature 2:**  
Define the role of the Board  
and evaluate their performance ..... 18



**Case Study:**  
Rounders England ..... 52

# BOARD PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

This provides a self-assessment tool for evaluating the whole Board in terms of effectiveness as a group against the role the Board needs to perform for the organisation.

Assessing the effectiveness of the Board as a whole can help you recognise areas of strength to build upon. It also allows the organisation to identify areas of weakness and put in place improvement plans to make the Board more effective.

Each individual Board member should be asked to complete the template by ticking the relevant boxes and then answers should be reviewed for common themes across the Board.

## BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT BASED ON COMPETENCY AREAS

Area	Consideration	1 Very Poor	2 Poor	3 Average	4 Good	5 Very Good
Contextual	Board members understand the organisation's vision, goals and values.					
	The Board has a clear organisational structure (Board, Committees, staff etc.)					
	The Board is the right size to be effective					
	The Board meets often enough to be effective					
	The division between Chair, Chief Executive and President is appropriate and effective					
Networking	The Board takes steps to ensure the Board members are well informed about the organisation					
	The Board ensures that the organisation complies with its legal requirements and governing document alongside internal procedures and requirements					
	The Board has a full and common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a Board					

Networking	The Board has the necessary range of skills, experience and knowledge needed to oversee the running of the organisation effectively					
	Individual Board members receive the necessary induction, training and on-going support needed to discharge their duties					
	The Board has a strategy for its own renewal and a succession plan in respect of the key officers					
Interpersonal	The Board puts energy into developing as a team and has a shared sense of inclusivity with staff and stakeholders					
	Each member of the Board feels involved and interested in the Board's work					
	The Board ensures that it upholds and applies the principles of equality and diversity and that the organisation is fair and open to all sections of the community in all of its activities					
Analytical	The Board has the capacity to look at situations dispassionately and analytically, drawing on multiple perspectives					
	The Board receives regular reports on finances/budgets, risk management, operational activities and other matters					
	The Board ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to identify, evaluate, monitor and mitigate risks					
	The Board make policy based decisions which effectively guide operational activities of staff					
	The Board reviews management performance appropriately					
	The Board makes proper arrangements for the supervision, support, appraisal and remuneration of the Chief Executive					
Political	The Board respects the governance processes at the same time as having respect for the authority of its staff at all levels					
	The Board acts according to high ethical standards and ensures that conflicts of interest are properly dealt with					
	The Board is open, responsive and accountable to members, partner organisations and other key stakeholders, and ensures there is a strategy for regular and effective communication with them					
	The Board effectively represents the organisation to the wider sport and recreation community					
	The Board ensures the organisation maintains an appropriate dialogue with its members					
	The Board is seen to act in the best interest of the membership and the sport as a whole					

Strategic	The Board takes responsibility for the long-term success or failure of the organisation					
	The Board provides sufficient leadership to the organisation					
	The Board sets out strategic aims of the organisation					
	The Board has clear goals and actions resulting from relevant and realistic strategic planning					
	The Board regularly monitors and evaluates progress towards strategic goals					
	The Board has made arrangements for the establishment and implementation of comprehensive and robust HR policies and procedures					

## BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT BASED ON FEATURES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Feature	Consideration	1 Very Poor	2 Poor	3 Average	4 Good	5 Very Good
Act in the best interest of the sport	The Board behave with high ethical standards of honesty and fairness					
	The Board manage conflicts of interest to protect the reputation of the sport and the organisation					
Define the role of the Board and evaluate their performance	The Board as a whole has a clearly defined role					
	The Board members as individuals have clear roles and responsibilities					
	The whole Board is evaluated against their effectiveness					
	The individual Board members are evaluated in terms of their contributions					
Establish a balanced competency based Board	The Board is recruited from individuals with the right balance of skills and background to meet the needs of the organisation					

Set the vision and mission and provide leadership on the strategy	The Board prepares and consults on the vision, mission and strategy for the organisation					
	The Board oversees the implementation of the strategy for the organisation					
Establish effective controls	The Board ensures the organisation has in place controls to be legally compliant					
	The Board is aware of best practice and oversees the development of effective controls					
Act with transparency and be accountable to stakeholders	The Board is open and accountable to membership and stakeholders					
	The actions of the Board stand up to scrutiny when questioned					
Engage with sporting and non-sporting bodies	The Board understand and perform its role within the domestic and international sporting world					
	The Board seek opportunities with the non-sporting sector to develop initiatives for the benefit of the sport					
Work as a team	The Board respect each other as individuals and work together to achieve common goals for the organisation					
Focus on Membership	The Board actively engages with members and enables their voices to be heard					
Promote good governance throughout the sport	The Board works with affiliated and regional sporting organisations and clubs to establish good governance at all levels					

### REFERENCES FOR BOARD PERFORMANCE EVALUATION:



**Feature 2:**  
Define the role of the Board and evaluate their performance ..... 18



**Case Study:**  
Rounders England ..... 52

# BOARD SKILLS AUDIT

This is a skills audit for evaluating your Board in terms of the skills they bring together to form the Board.

Assessing the skills of the Board can allow you to identify skill gaps that you can either choose to fill by training current Board members or by appointing new Board members with skills or experience in the area you are lacking. Ask each individual Board member to tick the areas/skills they bring to the Board. Then put the information altogether in the table below.

Skill Area	Board Member Strengths (column for each Board member)										
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Administration											
Business Development											
Campaigning											
Change management											
Conflict resolution											
Consultancy											
Customer Care											
Diversity and inclusion											
Event management											
Financial/budget control											
Fundraising											
Strategic planning and management											
Leadership											
Governance											
Knowledge of the sport and recreation sector											
HR/Training											

Information Technology											
Legal											
Management											
Marketing											
Media/PR											
Member relations											
Networks and sector relationships											
Public affairs											
Policy implementation											
Property management											
Research											
Rules of the sport											
Schools and High Education											
Sports development											
Systems and processes											
Understanding of sport structures											
Understanding of wider recreational activities/issues											
Add skills specific to your organisation											
Other ... please write more .....											

## REFERENCES FOR BOARD SKILLS AUDIT:



**Feature 2:**  
Define the role of the Board and evaluate their performance ..... 18



**Case Study:**  
Rounders England ..... 52

# CODE OF CONDUCT & ETHICS

This sets-out the appropriate behaviour for Board members. It is useful to ask Board members to sign a form to say they agree with the conduct and ethics so if they do not behave appropriately you can challenge them.

## CORE VALUES

### The Board must at all times:

- observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the management of the organisation;
- be accountable and give value to members and stakeholders for its activities;
- engage in a partnership with the organisation's senior management team.

## STANDARDS

All Board members must:

- follow the 10 Features of good governance outlined in this toolkit in section one;
- comply with this code of conduct, and ensure they understand their duties, rights and responsibilities, and that they are familiar with the function and role of the organisation and any relevant regulations;
- not misuse information gained in the course of their service for personal gain or for political purpose, nor seek to use the opportunity of service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons, firms, businesses or other organisations;
- new Board members should attend relevant training or induction courses.

The Board is responsible for:

- establishing the vision, mission and values for approval by the members of the organisation;
- designing strategy and structure and supporting budgets for approval by the members;

- delegating authority to management to implement policy and strategy;
- monitoring and evaluating the implementation of strategic and operational plans and policies and reporting on implementation to the members.

- respond appropriately to complaints;
- ensure that the Board does not exceed its powers or functions;
- regularly attend meetings of the Board and any Committees to which they are appointed, as well as attend events at which it is reasonable for them to be present.

## ROLE OF BOARD MEMBERS

Members of the Board have collective responsibility for the operation of the organisation. They must:

- engage fully in collective consideration of the issues, taking account of the full range of relevant factors, including any guidance available;
- have a strong commitment to the organisation and knowledge and experience of operations and be constructive within the context of a formal strategy/business plan;

## REFERENCES FOR CODE OF CONDUCT & ETHICS:



Feature 1:  
Act in the best interest of the sport ..... 16



Case Study:  
Royal Yachting Association ..... 46

# COMMUNICATION PLAN: GUIDE

The tool provides advice on what to include in a Communication Plan.

A communication plan should include information on the following:

1. A policy statement on why communication is important for the organisation;
2. Identification of the different groups that the organisation communicates with – these may include:
  - public;
  - member organisations;
  - media; other stakeholders (sponsors etc);
  - decision makers in the society (on all levels);
  - decision makers in the organisation; and
  - staff,
3. An outline of the different communication techniques and methods used;
4. An outline of the principles of communication under each of the following questions:
  - why something is communicated;
  - when it should be communicated;
  - what level of detail is communicated;
  - who the communication is to;
  - who acts as the spokesperson or lead communicator.
5. Visual identity – this will include guidelines on house style and branding.
6. Assessment of communication – the organisation should outline how it will measure if the communication is effective.
7. Clearly defined staff roles – this will include sign-off procedures for staff in addition to responsibilities for creating communication tools such as press releases.
8. Crisis management - organisations must be prepared to communicate also in crisis situations. For this a separate action plan should be made.

## REFERENCES FOR COMMUNICATION PLAN: GUIDE:



**Feature 6:**  
Act with transparency and be accountable to stakeholders ..... 30



**Case Study:**  
Estonian Olympic Committee ..... 78

# COMMUNICATION PLAN: TEMPLATE

This tool provides a template Communication Plan for organisations to adapt.

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

This Communication plan supports the values of the organisation which are (INSERT VALUES OF YOUR ORGANISATION HERE)

The values will be shown in all publications, photos and representations.

## 2. PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATION

The objectives of communication for our organisation are:

- implement our values across the sport sector;
- help grow our sport;
- create a positive and truthful image of our organisation and the sport;
- provide information on our activities and purpose as an organisation;
- strengthen our role in national and international sport.

Communication is an essential part of our organisation and management because it connects us to our clubs and the whole of our sport community together and to society.

## 3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Every employee is a "communicator" who creates image of our organisation. Everyone is responsible to submit relevant information to the Communications Team and to communicate according to values of our organisation.

Rules for external communication are outlined in the Staff Manual and everyone is obliged to read it. The responsibilities of unit directors for successful communication are emphasized.

The Communications Team is responsible for strategic planning, support, consultation and coordination of communication together with the management. They are also the contact point with media.

## 4. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION FLOW

Well governed internal communication improves the working atmosphere and helps our organisation to succeed in the challenges of external communication.

Internal communication includes:

- office
- decision making bodies
- regional organisations
- clubs

Internal communication is interactive and transparent.

## 5. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONS TO SOCIETY

External communication creates preconditions to interaction between our organisation and our main target groups and strengthens the role of our organisation.

External communication makes the activities of our organisation known and strengthens the positive image of the organisation and our sport.

### 5.1 Values and main objectives

Our employees and Board members commit themselves to communicate outward in line with the values and main objectives of our organisation. Their task is to make our organisation known through media, by participating in seminars and expert talks. Coaches and sportsmen (of national teams) have an important role in modifying and keeping the good image.

### 5.2 Visual image

Visual image is present in all publications, web services, events and happenings. Everyone must follow the Visual image manual.

### 5.3 Relations with society

Relations with society are tasks of all staff and Board members. Relations are maintained and created by active interaction with decision makers, authorities, partners, universities and other educational institutions and media.

#### 5.4 Relations with media

The Communications Team is responsible for media relations. Good service for the media is essential to create a good image of the sport and our organisation.

#### 5.5 International communication

The Communications Team follows international trends in the sport and complies with the requirements set by the International Federation.

Our organisation follows the guidelines of the International Federation when required and if they are not in contradiction with national legislation.



**Our organisation helps other National Federations in communication matters. ”**

### 6. CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Crisis communication means communication which differs from normal conditions and which needs more efficient and accurately managed action, where if possible, messages go through one appointed person. Crisis can materialise due to reasons which are out of the control of our organisation, but potential and possible crisis situations should be analysed in advance.

In crisis situations a crisis group must be established, which is lead by the Chief Executive and the Chair. The Communications Team Director and other experts can be invited to the group. All the discussions and actions of the group are confidential until otherwise decided.

### 7. THE MEANS AND CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

- Press releases
- Press conferences
- Publications
- Magazines
- Website
- Allocated messages to sportsmen through licence register
- Guides
- Rule books
- Extranet/Intranet
- Seminars/Workshops/Meetings/Events/Competitions

### 8. FOLLOW UP

Our organisation makes a qualitative and quantitative assessment on how successful our communication has been.



**Assessment of both internal and external communication is conducted. ”**

#### Internal assessment is done by:

- conducting an annual survey across staff, regional organisations, Board and committee members and clubs and other sporting stakeholders on the quality of internal communication;
- collecting feedback of the same actors and reflecting possible corrective measures.

#### External assessment is done by:

- conducting an annual survey among our most important stakeholders (partners, authorities, media) on the quality of external communication and services provided;
- following the quantity of our own media hits on a monthly basis;
- collecting feedback from all actors around the sport and reflecting possible corrective measures.

#### REFERENCES FOR COMMUNICATION PLAN: TEMPLATE:



##### Feature 6:

Act with transparency and be accountable to stakeholders ..... 30



##### Case Study:

Estonian Olympic Committee ..... 78

# CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY

This outlines how to manage conflicts of interest in an organisation.

## POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is designed to protect the organisation and the sport from the consequences of decisions being made because there was a conflict of interest. It is important to understand that the policy is focussed on how to manage conflicts of interest because it is impossible to get rid of them completely.

## DEFINITION

Conflicts of interest may arise where an individual's personal, business or family interest and/or loyalties conflict with those of the organisation. Such conflicts may create problems; they could for instance:

- inhibit free discussion;
- result in decisions or actions that were not in the interests of the organisation; or
- risk the impression that the organisation had acted improperly.



Within sport and recreation organisations examples of conflicts of interest may include where a Board member is a sports equipment manufacturer or where a Board member also has a close connection with a sub-group within the sport such as players, officials, or a club, league or regional association within the structure.

## RULES

Board members must:

1. Act in the best interests of the organisation;
2. Comply with the governing document;
3. Declare any potential conflict of interest upon appointment as a Board member and at the start of each Board meeting if items on the agenda may present a conflict;
4. Not take part in or vote on any issues where their conflict of interest may influence their input.

The Board overall record and report in the minutes of the meeting any approval of a conflict of interest. The report will record:

- the nature and extent of the conflict;
- an outline of the discussion;
- the actions to be taken to manage the conflict.

## REFERENCES FOR CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY:



Feature 1:  
Act in the best interest of the sport ..... 16



Case Study:  
Royal Yachting Association ..... 46

# CONFLICTS OF INTEREST REGISTER

This provides a form which you can ask Board members to fill in when they are appointed to help you record any conflicts of interest.

Conflicts of Interest Register			
Name:			
Position:		Paid	Yes / No
Date of nomination or appointment:			
Main tasks and responsibilities:			
Declared professional interests:	Name of company / organisation	Position and main responsibilities	
Spouse / Partner and other family members declared professional interests:	Name and relation	Position and main responsibilities	
Declared other interest:	Description		

Date: ..... Signature: .....



You must also remember there may be specific conflicts of interest for certain Board meetings so do ask at the start of every Board meeting for any conflicts of interest to be noted. ”

## REFERENCES FOR CONFLICTS OF INTEREST REGISTER:



Feature 1:  
Act in the best interest of the sport ..... 16



Case Study:  
Royal Yachting Association ..... 46

# DEFINING VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGY

This tool provides a definition of each and a list of questions to help your organisation create your own vision, mission and strategy.

## SECTION ONE: VISION

A vision is a statement on what the organisation wants to be, or how it wants the world in which it operates to look like – an idealistic view of the world. A vision is a long term view and it will always be focused on the future. The vision can be emotive and should be a source of inspiration for the organisation.

### Questions to ask when formulating a vision:

- How do we want the organisation to look in 10 years?
- What should this organisation look like?
- What do we want to achieve?

## SECTION TWO: MISSION

A mission statement should express why an organisation exists – what the core purpose of an organisation is and how on a day to day basis the organisation will be moving closer to the vision.

### Questions to ask when formulating a mission:

- Why do we exist as an organisation?
- What is our main purpose?

## SECTION THREE: STRATEGY

The strategy is how you plan to achieve the vision and mission in practice. In creating a strategy an organisation will need to:

- define some goals that will lead towards the organisation's vision;
- create strategies to show how those goals will be achieved;
- create an action plan to show the implementation of the strategy;
- devise a system for measuring progress towards achieving the goals.

### Questions to ask when formulating a strategy:

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- How do we plan to get there?
- How would we know if we achieve it?

## REFERENCES FOR DEFINING VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGY:



**Feature 4:**  
Set the vision and mission and provide leadership on the strategy ..... 24



**Case Study:**  
Cricket Ireland ..... 64

# ENGAGING NON-SPORTING BODIES: KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER

This is a list of things to consider when you are deciding how to engage with non-sporting bodies.

Sporting bodies operate in a complex environment. The success of a sport and any project related to sport is often dependent on the engagement of many different actors in the community and political environment.

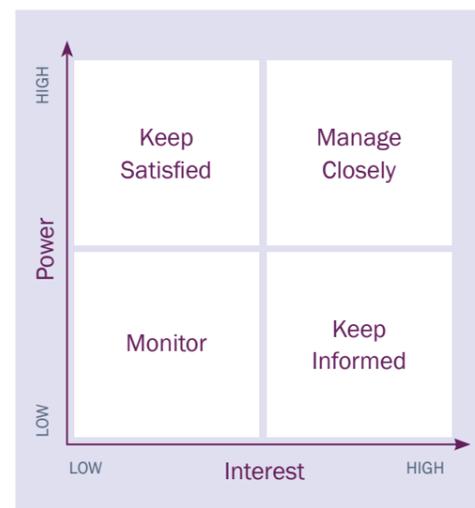
The key points of engagement are listed below:

## 1. IDENTIFY WHO TO ENGAGE WITH

Sit down and think about the objectives of your organisation and then try to identify other organisations that may have similar objectives. In sport one of the objectives may be to improve health and fitness – this is also an objective for many Government departments. Identify a list of organisations who share similar objectives with you.

## 2. PRIORITISE THE IMPORTANCE OF EACH ORGANISATION

Look at the list of organisations and try to evaluate which organisations to spend your most time trying to engage. It may be helpful to map them out on a power against interest grid such as the one below:



## 3. IDENTIFY WHAT STAKEHOLDERS MAY WANT FROM YOU

It may be useful to think about some of the questions below so you can get to know the key organisations better:

- What financial, strategic or emotional interests do they have in the outcome of what you do?
- What are their strategic objectives?
- What information would they need from you?
- How would they want to receive information from you?
- Who influences their strategic decisions?
- Who are the key people you need to speak with?

## 4. POSITION YOUR OFFER TO PROVIDE WHAT KEY STAKEHOLDERS WANT

Identify where there are similar objectives and make up a business case that would be appealing for the other organisation. Don't change your organisation to fit them but identify where working together would benefit both organisations.

## 5. ENGAGE WITH POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE

Don't leave it too late before going to an organisation for help or input. They will want to be involved from the start.

### REFERENCES FOR ENGAGING NON-SPORTING BODIES: KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER:



**Feature 7:**  
Engage with sporting and non-sporting bodies ..... 33



**Case Study:**  
Finnish Shooting Sport Federation ..... 82

## FINANCIAL PROCEDURES: LIST TO BE CONSIDERED

This is a list of financial policies and procedures that each organisation should consider developing.

The Board is ultimately responsible for the activities of the organisation it represents and individual members can be individually liable for any mismanagement and misuse of resources.



**Having effective financial procedures and controls helps to minimise the risk for the organisation and for each individual Board member. ”**

### Each organisation should consider creating the following financial policies and procedures:

- Planning – long term forecast
- Planning – annual budget (including events)
- Reporting – management accounts processes and reporting (board, management, budget holders)
- Reporting – month-end procedures/timetable including reconciliation of all key control accounts
- Reporting – annual accounts procedures/timetables
- Reporting – grant reporting
- Purchasing and payments – purchasing policy and procedure
- Purchasing and payments – tendering policy and procedures
- Purchasing and payments – delegation of Purchasing and payments – cheque signatories
- Sales and Receipts – receipts and banking (including grants)
- Employees – payroll
- Employees – employee and volunteer expenses
- Funds Management – bank/bank accounts
- Funds Management – reserves
- Funds Management – treasury/ investment management
- Funds Management – insurance
- Assets – capitalisation, asset register, depreciation policies
- Tax overall management – VAT, corporation tax, PAYE/NI
- System – accounting software
- System – chart of accounts/ nominal ledger
- System – record keeping as separate items if appropriate
- Planning – events budget
- Reporting – accruals
- Reporting – prepayments
- Reporting – deferred income
- Purchasing and payments – payment terms
- Purchasing and payments – credit cards
- Purchasing and payments – petty cash
- Sales and receipts – sales policy and procedures
- Sales and receipts – credit terms
- Sales and receipts – debt recovery/ credit control
- Sales and receipts – bad debt write-off
- Assets – asset register
- Assets – inventory/stock
- Assets – depreciation
- Assets – disposal

### REFERENCES FOR FINANCIAL PROCEDURES: LIST TO BE CONSIDERED:



**Feature 5:**  
Establish effective controls ..... 27



**Case Study:**  
British Sledge Hockey ..... 72

# INDUCTION PROGRAMME FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Each new Board member needs to be given an induction so they understand the key issues and functioning of the Board and the organisation.

The induction process should include a mixture of meetings and presentation of policies and documents.



This provides a list of the activities and policies to provide new Board members with. ”

## THE INDUCTION MEETING WITH A NEW BOARD MEMBER SHOULD COVER THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

### Information on the organisation

- Who's who on staff and the Board
- History
- Funding situation
- Strategy and purpose of organisation
- Administration information (e.g. expenses, access to office etc.)

### Board responsibilities

- Training options
- Code of Ethics
- Any portfolio responsibilities or sub-committees the individual may be interested in
- Board mentor options

The following documents should be supplied to a new Board Member:

- Strategic Plan
- Risk Register
- List of dates for all the Board meetings and events for the individual to attend
- Annual Review for previous year
- Organisation chart for staff and for Board
- Expenses forms
- Code of Ethics for Board members
- Committee structures for the Board
- Staff handbook
- Equality Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Whistle blowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy

## REFERENCES FOR INDUCTION PROGRAMME FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS:



### Feature 2:

Define the role of the Board and evaluate their performance ..... 18



### Case Study:

Rounders England ..... 52

# LOBBYING GOVERNMENT: HOW TO GUIDE

This tool provides ideas for how to conduct an effective lobbying campaign.



Lobbying is the practice of individuals and organisations trying to influence the opinions of Government. Methods of lobbying vary and can range from sending letters, making presentations, providing briefing material or organising events and rallies. ”

## COMMON APPROACHES TO LOBBYING

Listed below are some different approaches to lobbying to consider:

- Sending mass postcard, email, or letter.
- Hand-written or personalised letters.
- Telephoning the office of the legislator.
- Getting community and issue opinion leaders to telephone the office of the legislator.
- Getting an article published in a state/district newspaper.
- Working with a lobby or coalition to apply a variety of approaches.

## PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE LOBBYING

Listed below are some principles of effective lobbying to always keep in mind:

- Be accurate (and don't lie). If you get a question you can't answer, say so.
- Be brief: For a written communication, try to keep it to a page or less (unless it's an expose or well-researched position paper).
- Be clear: Have a specific goal.
- Know your opposition. Know the main arguments for and against a position or a piece of legislation.
- Show them how they win: Appeal to enlightened self-interest, if you will. Again, this ties in with the persuasion principles of liking them and showing support.
- See it their way: Try to find a way to make your position and argument fit in with the person's own values, viewpoints, history on the issue, etc.
- Consider the messenger: This is backed up by the research suggesting that someone is more likely to listen to someone who is like them and who likes them.
- Follow up. Send a thank you. Make a phone call. Recognise and appreciate any effort made.

## REFERENCES FOR LOBBYING GOVERNMENT: HOW TO GUIDE:



**Feature 7:**  
Engage with sporting and non-sporting bodies ..... 33



**Case Study:**  
Finnish Shooting Sport Federation ..... 82

# MEMBERSHIP MANAGEMENT

This tool provides some ideas for management and communication with membership. Some of these ideas might be useful to include in a membership strategy.

## SECTION ONE: RECRUITING MEMBERS?

Key points to consider:

- Find out how existing members found out about clubs and use this to plan where to target first.
- Include open days where existing members can bring friends etc.
- Make use of social media to maximise your profile,
- Establish a membership recruitment plan and a membership officer on the Board to oversee this.
- Make use of newsletters, website, social media, blogging, youtube etc. to keep members informed and make the sport visible in the community to attract potential new members.
- Establish links with groups and bodies that administer and provide information on sport.

## SECTION TWO: WELCOMING NEW MEMBER

Key points to consider:

- Create a welcome pack or starter pack which is distributed to all new members, to make them feel more at home and settled.
- Could include, welcome letter, including contacts, a calendar of events, policy documents, and programmes run in the organisation etc.
- Encourage an ethos in the organisation whereby new members are welcomed by all members and made to feel at home.

## SECTION THREE: RETAINING MEMBERS

Key points to consider:

- Ensure effective communication with members to retain existing members and to create a feeling that all members are valued and consulted in the running of the organisation.
- Have regular updates on the organisation website and social media pages to keep members informed and ensure they stay active.

- Inform members and volunteers of opportunities to achieve coaching qualifications, first aid awards etc. Give something back to members who make themselves available to help with the running of the organisation.
- Listen to the concerns of members and pro actively work to ensure all possible problems are solved asap.

## SECTION FOUR: MANAGING MEMBERSHIP DATA

Key points to consider:

- Maintain a database of members and their contact information.
- Ensure a process exists to ensure all data is up to date and accurate.
- Ensure proper data protection system are in place.
- Must use information collected fairly and inform those who are giving information who is collecting it, for what it will be used and who will have access to it.
- Must ensure each piece of personal data collected is for a legitimate reason.
- Secondary or future uses of data, e.g. sharing with clubs, relevant events etc., should be identified at time of collection and an option to opt out provided.

- Ensure that you use all people in your database when trying to get the word out about a new event, programme etc.

## SECTION FIVE: ENGAGING MEMBERS FORMALLY

Key ways to consider:

- Governing document requirements e.g. AGM;
- Regular member meetings through the year;
- Yearly or half-yearly membership surveys;
- Stakeholder forums at regular intervals.

## SECTION SIX: ENGAGING MEMBERS INFORMALLY

Key ways to consider:

- Personal relationships;
- Informal feedback loops;
- Workshops and targeted focus groups.

## REFERENCES FOR MEMBERSHIP MANAGEMENT:



Feature 9:  
Focus on membership ..... 38



Case Study:  
Triathlon Ireland ..... 94

# OPERATIONAL PLAN: HOW TO GUIDE

This tool outlines the difference between a strategic plan and an operational plan and provides tips on creating a dynamic operational plan.

## Operational plans should contain:

- Clear objectives.
- Activities to be delivered.
- Quality standards.
- Desired outcomes.
- Staffing and resource requirements.
- Implementation timetables.
- A process for monitoring progress.

## WHAT DOES AN OPERATIONAL PLAN HELP YOU DO?

A good evidence-based operational plan can help the organisation to:

- Improve the chances of attracting funding to your organisation by demonstrating to funders and commercial partners that you can deliver on your overall aims;
- Break down your aims into manageable chunks, making achieving your overall aims less daunting by working out step-by-step processes;
- Set-out roles for individuals that will contribute towards achieving the aims of the organisation and

therefore help to get everyone pulling in the same direction;

- Lay out the key priorities of the organisation so managers are able to manage their time and resources better.

## HOW TO CREATE AN OPERATIONAL PLAN

### 1. Clarify your direction

Make sure all projects and work areas contribute to what is stated as the overall strategy of the organisation.

### 2. Plan your impact

Be clear what impact you are aiming to achieve for your membership e.g. increasing access to the sport, making it easier or more flexible to be part of the sport or provide better facilities etc.

### 3. Identify your objectives

Be clear on what would constitute achieving the aims you would like to achieve. Many organisations set out aims with no measurable way of quantifying if they actually achieved what they set out to do. Objectives should be SMART:

- Specific
- Measurable

## DEFINITION Operational Plan:

Operational plan vs. strategic plan.

The Operational Plan focuses on the short term and what activities need to be done now in order for the strategic goals to be achieved in 5 years.

- Achievable
- Realistic
- Timed

### 4. Write the plan

Having gone through the first three steps and established the work that needs to be done, you can set out a timed programme of key tasks/ activities to be carried out and the financial and human resources needed to implement the plan.

### 5. Adapting to change

External and internal circumstances may challenge the plan and it is recommended to leave enough room in the plan for manoeuvre. Make sure to build in regular review dates from the start and look at the progress against the planned time frame and external factors you need to react to.

### 6. Ownership of the plan

Board and senior management ownership is crucial to the success of the plan. It is, however, also important that plans should be owned, managed and influenced by the individuals and teams who will be implementing them. Individuals and teams will be much more supportive of ambitious plans if they feel involved in the process.

### 7. Communication

In larger organisations, and even in some cases in smaller organisations, there will be a need for a more formalised way of communicating the plans as the operational plan of one team will influence how the other team will be planning their work. Project managers and team leaders will play an important part in this.

## REFERENCES FOR OPERATIONAL PLAN: HOW TO GUIDE:



**Feature 4:**  
Set the vision and mission and provide leadership on the strategy ..... 24



**Case Study:**  
Cricket Ireland ..... 64

## POLICIES: LIST TO CREATE

This is a list of general policies and procedures that every sport and recreation organisation should consider developing.

Effective policies and controls help to ensure that organisations conduct their activities in such a way to comply with legislation and laws.

The Board should consider the following points in relation to each policy it creates:

1. Are the policies reviewed regularly?
2. Is the policy highlighted and known to all staff and Board members?
3. Is there training provided on the policy?

The policies to consider creating are:

- Child Protection or Safeguarding
- Anti-doping
- Equality and Diversity
- Health and Safety
- Employment
- Data Protection
- Fraud Prevention
- Risk Management

### REFERENCES FOR POLICIES: LIST TO CREATE:



Feature 5:  
Establish effective controls ..... 27



Case Study:  
British Sledge Hockey ..... 72

# ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR A BOARD MEMBER: KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER

This provides information to help you create a role description for a Board member.

The role of a Board member has four key parts:

## STRATEGY

Board members should constructively challenge and contribute to the development of strategy.

## PERFORMANCE

Board members should scrutinise the performance of management in meeting agreed goals and objectives and monitor the reporting of performance.

## RISK

Board members should satisfy themselves that financial information is accurate and that financial controls and systems of risk management are robust and defensible.

## PEOPLE

Board members are responsible for determining appropriate levels of remuneration of staff and have a prime role in appointing, and where necessary removing, senior management and in succession planning.

## Board Members should:

- Bring a fresh perspective
- Support, constructively challenge and monitor the management team
- Arrive to meetings prepared and having read the Board papers
- May take part in sub-committees or working groups

## Board Members should NOT:

- Report to the Chief Executive
- Get involved in the day-to-day running of the organisation

## KEY POINT TO NOTE:

It is in the nature of small organisations in particular, that Board members may also be involved in more day-to-day matters.

However, the role of Board members is legally distinct from any management role.



## REFERENCES FOR ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR A BOARD MEMBER: KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER:



**Feature 2:**  
Define the role of the Board and evaluate their performance ..... 18



**Case Study:**  
Rounders England ..... 52

# ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR A BOARD MEMBER: MODEL TEMPLATE

This provides a template role description for a Board member.

## ROLE PURPOSE



To provide leadership and strategic direction focusing on the vision, core values and objectives of the organisation. ”

4. Monitor performance, financial expenditure, risk and resource allocation against the strategic plan at least quarterly;
5. Ensure the maintenance of a sound financial and resource platform at all times;
6. Build effective relationships with external partners as required by the Board;
7. Undertake training as appropriate and participate in an annual Board evaluation process and individual evaluation;
8. Attend events and meetings as appropriate and act as hosts to partners, sponsors and other stakeholders as required.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

In liaison with the Board Chair, Chief Executive and fellow Board members:

1. Establish a vision and strategy for the organisation;
2. Monitor progress annually against agreed goals and objectives;
3. Review the core values of the vision at least every four years;

## COMPETENCIES

1. Build effective relationships with the Chair, fellow Board members and Chief Executive ensuring all are committed to the common purpose;
2. Be capable of expressing, orally and in writing, ideas and information in ways that are appropriate, accurate and concise;
3. Listen to all fellow Board members, ensuring their views are heard;

4. Identify opportunities in pursuit of the achievement of the organisation's vision and strategic goals;
5. Follow the principles of corporate governance and the Code of Conduct;
6. Ensure that independent judgement is exercised on issues of strategy, performance, resources and standards of conduct;
7. Understand the purposes of corporate governance and management, the differences and relationships between them and frameworks for assurance and accountability;
8. Empathise with the volunteers who are vital to the running of the sport;
9. Understand and accept the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of being a Board member;
10. Have excellent interpersonal, leadership and influencing skills, the ability to contribute effectively to the Board and committees providing 'critical' support, communicating effectively with stakeholders at all levels.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

- Strong communication skills coupled with the ability to present own ideas in a clear, concise manner;
- Previous experience of high level committee activity in a voluntary or charitable organisation;
- Experience of setting and working to a vision and strategic plan;
- Previous experience of working in a senior position within an organisation where strategic planning was part of the role;
- Comprehensive numeracy and literacy skills;
- Proven numeracy and literacy skills demonstrated through current or previous employment;
- Experience of establishing financial policy and monitoring financial performance;
- Board experience;
- Knowledge of corporate governance;
- Awareness and understanding of issues facing sports organisations at domestic and / or international level.

## REFERENCES FOR ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR A BOARD MEMBER: MODEL TEMPLATE:



**Feature 2:**  
Define the role of the Board and evaluate their performance ..... 18



**Case Study:**  
Rounders England ..... 52

# ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR CHAIR

This provides a template role description for a Chair of a Board.

## ROLE PURPOSE



Working with the Chief Executive, the role of the Chair is to provide effective strategic leadership in achieving the targets set in the strategic plan. ”

## ROLE DESCRIPTION

- The Chair is responsible for leadership of the Board, ensuring its effectiveness in all aspects of its governance role.
- The Chair leads the Board in developing an ethical culture in line with the values of the organisation.
- The Chair is pivotal in creating the conditions for overall Board and individual Board member effectiveness and ensures constructive relations between Board members and staff.
- The Chair is bound by the Board's governance policies and decisions and thus has no authority to alter, amend or ignore these.
- The position of Chair does not create of itself a right to independent decision taking.
- The Chair may exercise those powers delegated to the position by the constitution or Board.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Represent the Board**  
The Chair is usually the Board's representative to outside parties.
- **Set the Agenda**  
The Chair takes a key role in setting the agenda and ensuring Board members receive timely and clear information - the agenda should take full account of the issues and concerns of all Board members who should have an opportunity to input items for consideration. Agendas should be forward looking and concentrate on strategy, rather than focusing on management issues.
- **Manage Board Meetings**  
The Chair will direct or control meetings to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for discussion of agenda items and proper decision-making takes place.
- **Liaise with the Chief Executive Officer**  
While the Board has responsibility as employer of the Chief Executive Officer, the Board is usually represented through the Chair in managing the working relationship with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) - in effect acting as line manager for the CEO.
- **Develop and Encourage Board Members**  
Taking the lead in inducting and developing individual Board members, with a view to enhancing the Board's overall effectiveness as a team and assisting with succession planning.
- **Performance Assessment**  
Ensuring that peer and self-assessments of performance are undertaken regularly for all members of the Board, including the Chair. The Chair may delegate certain aspects of his or her authority but remains accountable for the action of the delegate.

## REFERENCES FOR ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR CHAIR:



**Feature 2:**  
Define the role of the Board and evaluate their performance ..... 18



**Case Study:**  
Rounders England ..... 52

# STRATEGIC PLAN: GUIDE

This tool provides some points to consider when creating your strategic plan.

It is vital for a sports organisation to have a clear strategic plan that helps the organisation define:

- what they are about;
- their aims and how to achieve their external targets;
- what they do;
- by default – what they don't do.

When creating a strategic plan it is therefore important to ask the following questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- How do we plan to get there?

The process of creating a strategic plan should include:

1. Identifying the purpose of the organisation.
2. Selecting the goals that the organisation wants to reach in order to accomplish its purpose.
3. Identifying specific strategies for the organisation to reach the selected goals.
4. Creating an action plan to implement each strategy.
5. Engaging with membership, staff and stakeholders to create an action plan and to get input into the overall strategy.
6. Developing a system to monitor and update the plan.

## REFERENCES FOR STRATEGIC PLAN: GUIDE:



**Feature 4:**  
Set the vision and mission and provide leadership on the strategy ..... 24



**Case Study:**  
Cricket Ireland ..... 64

# TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES

This tool provides some activities to help build good team-work across your Board.

## ACTIVITY ONE: GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER



The team members establish a list of questions regarding the individuals such as: experience, hobbies, family or about their opinions on particular issues. ”

Then each of the team members has to introduce themselves by providing answers to each of the questions.

## ACTIVITY TWO: MY EXPERIENCE IN A TEAM

Each of the team members individually prepares a list of positive and negative experiences they have had in team environments. Everyone's experiences and thoughts are discussed in groups. Based on the individual experiences the groups suggest rules for the team to work with for future cooperation in a team.



This is an easy and relatively short activity which may be a good starting point for a new group. ”

## REFERENCES FOR TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES:



Feature 8:  
Work as a team ..... 36



Case Study:  
Volleyball England ..... 88

# GLOSSARY

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM):

May also be known as general assembly, general meeting, congress: an organisational gathering usually held after the end of each fiscal year, at which members and directors can discuss the previous year's performance and the outlook for the future. Key decisions focus on appointment or election of Board members, financial reports and future direction.

## ANNUAL REPORT:

A document presented to the membership. It may contain information on financial results, overall performance and comments on the future outlook. Depending on legal requirements of the country this report may need to be independently audited or confirmed at the AGM.

## ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION:

May also be known as governing document, statutes, by-laws, constitutions: document setting out the detailed internal rules by which the organisation conducts its business.

## AUDIT COMMITTEE:

Internal committee recommended in most codes of good corporate governance which usually reports to the Board. It establishes formal and transparent procedures regarding financial arrangements.

## AUDITOR:

An independent accountant who audits the organisation's financial documents.

## BOARD:

May also be known as Board of Directors, Trustees: the collective group of individuals elected by the membership (and in some cases appointed by the Board) to oversee the management of the organisation.

## BOARD MEMBER:

A person elected or appointed to serve on the organisation's Board.

## CHAIR:

May also be known as Chairman, President: a Board member elected or appointed to lead the Board and the organisation.

## INDEPENDENT BOARD MEMBER:

A Board member who is independent from the organisation. To be independent they should be openly recruited and not otherwise hold an official role for the organisation (for example not representing a region or group). This person may have a particular expertise in a specific area such as legal, finance, marketing, people management etc.

## MEMBER:

An individual, a club or a collective group which is formally connected to the organisation. Members may or may not have voting rights at the AGM.

## NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY (NGB):

May also be known as national federation or governing body: The recognised organisation for running each specific sport at a national level. For example the Polish Tennis Federation.

## NOMINATION COMMITTEE:

An internal committee responsible for setting formal and transparent procedures for the appointment of new Board members.

## NON-SPORTING BODY:

Any public or private or voluntary body outside the sporting landscape.

## STAKEHOLDER:

Any individual or organisation that is affected by or can affect the organisation.

