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**Governance Code for Sport**

**Strategic Plan**

Framework

Disclaimer

Sport Ireland is making available a range of resources including guidance notes, policy documents and templates for selected areas aligned to the Governance Code for Sport which will support sport organisations, boards, management and staff in the development of relevant governance processes and procedures particular to their own organisation.

For the avoidance of doubt, the final decision on the nature, type, extent and format of approved governance policies, procedures and processes for each organisation is a matter for the board / highest governing structure of the organisation and the resources and material provided may assist the approval process.

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**Why an organisation needs a strategic plan**

A strategic plan is designed to help an organisation prepare for the future. It helps the organisation to have a long-term vision and it encourages a coordinated approach amongst staff and volunteers in order to achieve it. It is an important method for communicating with stakeholders. It is a roadmap, and all well governed organisations will have a strategic plan in place.

Having a strategic plan speaks to all five principles of the Code, but especially principle 1, ‘Leading Our Organisation’. Sub-principles 1 and 2 state that the organisation should:

* Agree our vision, purpose and values and make sure that they remain relevant.
* Develop, resource, monitor and evaluate a plan to make sure that our organisation achieves its stated purpose.

The strategic plan contains the vision, purpose and values, whilst the strategic plan should be properly resourced, monitored and evaluated to ensure the organisation is on track to achieve its goals within the plan.

There are a number of reasons why a strategic plan is important:

* It provides a clear direction for your organization
* It sets the vision, purpose and values
* It identifies the key goals/priorities
* It helps to focus your activities during the year
* It can help to attract new members and athletes/players
* It can help you retain your current members and athletes/players
* It can encourage the involvement of volunteers
* It ensures efficient use of resources
* It’s an expectation of funders/partners/sponsors
* It increases the chance of success for the organisation and helps it achieve its stated purpose

Whose responsibility is it to develop a strategic plan?

It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure that all the principles of the Code are being upheld and delivered. It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure there is a strategic plan in place in the organisation, and to regularly review the implementation of that plan and evaluate its effectiveness. The executive lead / Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is often tasked with ensuring that the principles of the Code are being implemented in the organisation and thus will be responsible for ensuring that the objectives and actions within the plan are being implemented internally.

How to develop a strategic plan?

**The following are the suggested ssteps involved in creating a strategic plan:**

Who should be involved?

The Board should assign a sub steering group, comprised of a small number of Board members and key staff/CEO. A project leader should be assigned to lead on the development of the plan and to ensure the process outlined below is followed.

1. Where is the organisation at now?

Make sure that your stakeholders are consulted during the strategic planning process (i.e., from practice 3.3a from the Code). Conduct research of various groups, i.e. staff, your fans, members, athletes/players, parents, coaches, public and communities, together with performing a situational analysis. A situational analysis consists of a SWOT, as well as Stakeholder Analysis and Resources Analysis.

1. Where does the organisation want to be in the coming years?

Create a vision, mission/purpose, values and key goals (priorities).

1. How does it get there?

Create SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound) objectives under each goal?

1. Writing and distributing the plan

Develop an external facing document which clearly sets out the direction of travel, goals and objectives. This external document will contain high-quality photographs and will take the key information from the internal plan and present it in a professional structure. The external plan should be sent to the key stakeholders e.g., members, sponsors, etc.

1. How do you know if the vision is succeeding?

Introduce regular monitoring of the plan regarding the progress against the targets set. This will ensure the organisation continues to move in the right direction and helps the Board and management to realise when something has been achieved.

What are vision, purpose and values?

**Vision**

A vision outlines the ambition of the organisation. It clearly outlines where the organisation is heading. The vision should engage all stakeholders, exciting and motivating them to actively support the organisation in achieving the vision. The vision must be clear and ambitious but realistic.

Vision statement: in one sentence, it describes a clear and inspirational long-term desired change, resulting from an organisation’s efforts and activities.

**Purpose/Mission**

The purpose/mission simply describes the organisation’s current purpose and activities: what the organisation does, for whom, and what are the benefits. It ensures that everyone is on the same page as to why the organisation exists and what it does, while clarifying its role and activities with the stakeholders (i.e. sponsors, membership, etc.).

Mission statement: A one-sentence statement describing the reason an organisation exists. It is used to help guide decisions about priorities, actions and responsibilities.

**Values**

Values outline how the organisation behaves to its various stakeholders.

Strategic plan template

The following template can be used to create a strategic plan

| Strategic Plan Template |
| --- |
| Results of the research (situational analysis, focus groups and surveys) |
| Notes   * Assess progress against previous strategy * Assess the organisation's principal risks when developing the strategy * Outline the output from the situational analysis: SWOT * Outline the findings from the focus groups * Outline the findings from the surveys * Gain an understanding of the international/European federation strategic plans and priorities (if one exists) * Conduct a review of the current governance structure and committees * Where applicable assess the Local Authority Plans i.e. LECP, County Development Plan etc. * Conduct an analysis of the organisation’s financial information * Conduct an analysis of the player registration/membership data * Conduct an analysis of all sporting programmes currently running throughout the year * Outline the key priorities from government and sports policies e.g., National Sports Policy and Sport Ireland's strategy |
| Outline the vision, purpose/mission and value statements of the organisation |
| Notes:   * Outline the organisation’s vision (where it is heading, what the ambition is) * Outline the organisation’s purpose/mission (why it exists, what the purpose is) * Outline the organisation’s values (how it behaves as an organisation) |
| Outline the key goals |
| Notes:   * Outline the broad areas where resources and efforts will be focused over the term of the plan, i.e. income generation, participation, governance, facility management, etc.   1.  2.  3. |
| Outline the key objectives under each goal |
| Notes: Outline the SMART objectives under each goal. For example   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **Strategic goal: drive commercial revenue** | | | |  |  | | **Objective** | **Key actions** | **Timeline**  **(when achieved by)** | **Responsibility**  **(who is the owner)** | **KPI/Measure**  **(Target/measurement)** | **RAG**  **(Red,**  **Amber**  **Green)** |  | | e.g. Secure sponsorship for referees | - Develop sponsorship package  - Develop list of businesses to target  - Develop sales presentation | 31 July 2023 | Commercial Manager | Contract signed |  |  | |
| Outline the resources and finances required (this will also include the governance and committee structure) |
| Notes:   * Outline the organisation’s structure. Include clear roles, responsibilities and reporting structure * Outline income (from membership, sponsorship, grants, etc.) and expenditure (salaries, programmes, etc.) based on the organisations’s operational costs and strategic plan |
| Outline how the plan will be monitored throughout the year |
| Notes:   * Outline how the strategic plan will be monitored, i.e., quarterly reports presented to the Board |

How to resource/implement, monitor and evaluate a plan

It is recommended that an external facing strategic plan should be shared with the various stakeholders (this could be online or in print and could be via an official launch). This is best practice and will provide the organisation with a tool to communicate with the key stakeholders, such as government, sponsors, funders, etc.

Ideally the final plan will include:

• A message from the Chairperson

• A review of the current position and ‘health’ of the organisation

• A statement of the new ‘vision’, purpose and values

• An outline of the key goals

• An outline of the objectives and key actions required to deliver these objectives

* An outline of the resources and finances required (this will also include the governance structure, and will have been evaluated and worked through carefully with the management/executive lead of the organisation)

• An outline of how the plan will be monitored throughout the year

Regular monitoring of the strategic plan is essential to ensure that progress towards achieving the goals, objectives and overall vision is being made. It is recommended that the Board review the goals and objectives every quarter at its meetings, or at least twice a year. The Board should be given an internal monitoring and evaluation report that shows the following:

* Progress against KPIs and targets
* Use of resources
* Highlight of any issues occurring
* Milestones being achieved

Once the organization has come to the end of the timeframe of the strategic plan, it should start the process again by conducting new research, setting up the various workshops to identify the goals and objectives for the years ahead.

Further links and resources