



Swim Ireland Strategic Plan

'From walking to running'

2013-2016

*To inspire and empower people in Ireland
of all ages and abilities to participate in our
sport and to embrace a healthy lifestyle*

Acknowledgements

An extensive consultation process was carried out to ensure that this plan was developed to reflect the needs of all those involved in the sport. The board of Swim Ireland would like to acknowledge and thank the support of the following:

- The 448 respondents to the online survey
- The 100+ attendees at the regional consultation meetings in Connacht, Leinster, Munster and Ulster
- The 40+ stakeholders that gave their time in one-to-one interviews
- All Swim Ireland staff members that participated in the shaping of the plan
- The Strategic Planning Group that gave their time voluntarily over a six month period to help shape, develop and finalise the detail of the plan. For the record the members of that group were:
 - Joe Gavaghan, Chair of the Strategic Planning Group
 - Barney Bree
 - Mary McMorrow
 - Mary Duggan
 - Mary Dunne
 - Tom O'Brien
 - Sarah Keane
 - Brian MacNeice

We hope that the plan reflects the input of all of the above and addresses the needs of the sport over the next four years providing a clear direction to all. We are confident that if all of the strategic goals and targets outlined in the plan are achieved then the sport and Swim Ireland will have made significant progress by 2016.

'From Walking to Running' 2013 - 2016



Introduction

Swim Ireland is the National Governing Body for the Aquatic Disciplines in Ireland, recognised as such by the Irish Government, the Irish Sports Council, Sport Northern Ireland, the Olympic Council of Ireland and FINA and LEN, the World and European Aquatic Governing Bodies. The role of a Governing Body is to organise and administer the sport; train and deploy coaches; organise representative level sport; and provide sporting opportunities and pathways leading from grass root sport to national and international competition.

While the 2007-2012 Swim Ireland Strategic Plan was not the organisation's first strategic plan, it is fair to say that it was a watershed for Swim Ireland. The plan identified a series of goals and acted as a focus for the organisation and its' activities and during the five year strategic cycle Swim Ireland and its' members have achieved much. It is recognised, however that there is still a lot more to do. When the planning group began the process to formulate the plan for 2013-16, the overriding belief was that while it should be a continuation of the preceding plan in terms of building on the successes of that period, the setting of new high level goals was again essential. We believe that this new Plan entitled 'From Walking to Running' is a strong statement of ambition and intent informed by the experiences and needs of our members, our stakeholders and our staff.

Where are we in 2012?

Positive progress made in the period 2007 – 2012:

- An organisation that is recognised by the Irish Sports Council as having addressed the fundamental problems within and that is now operating to a high level of governance
- Child Welfare and protection ethos and policies recognised as first class within the sporting family
- Achieving success at European Level in terms of High Performance Swimming
- An Education programme (qualifications, continued professional development and a licensing programme) that is recognised as best in class
- An organisation that has achieved financial stability
- A fledgling but emerging brand

Key issues that Swim Ireland need to focus on in the period 2013 – 2016:

- Shift from an organisation that is associated mainly with competitive swimming to one that is also seen as promoting and providing expertise in the lifelong sport of swimming
- At present we are seen as an organisation that is working on the development of our sport but is not viewed as providing sufficient support to Clubs and grass roots
- We are an organisation that has yet to properly engage with the commercial/private sector and bring additional resources from outside into the sport
- We need to develop the organisation to build a strong brand within the industry of swimming in Ireland and outside of it

Introduction

Across all areas of the sport and the organisation this is a summary of where we think we are today (in no particular order of priority):

- 4 Olympic FINA A Standard qualifiers and consistent medals at European level Junior & Senior in Swimming
- Education qualifications that are recognised as best practice and of a high standard but no clear idea of our market share and knowing that currently others have a cheaper and faster product
- A fledgling brand with the names of some Irish swimmers becoming well known and Swim Ireland being associated with Swimming as a sport as opposed to some of the more shameful history
- An organisation that is operating to a high level of governance
- Best practice Child Welfare and protection ethos and policies but it is vital that there is no complacency and we keep the welfare and protection of our participants at the forefront of our sport
- A mixed coaching workforce; some very committed and eager to improve, others simply wanting to continue doing what they have always done and not enough qualified at the highest levels who are providing strong leadership in clubs and delivering high performance swimmers
- Swim Ireland is known within the swimming industry as the governing body for swimming and our qualifications are known in the industry but we do not have a particularly strong or credible brand within the industry
- Swim Ireland is associated with competitive swimming and High Performance only by the Irish public
- Swim Ireland is beginning proper and comprehensive engagement in the aquatic disciplines other than swimming
- Strong and developing Masters and Open Sea programmes
- Swim Ireland and the Regions are considering their legal relationship and are working more closely together with the Regions working on aligning to this new Strategic Plan
- Clubs are progressing, some more than others but access and cost with regard to water-time is an on-going and escalating issue
- Many teenagers are dropping out of club swimming completely and we presently do not have any campaign aimed at either seeking to retain them or bring them back in again at a later stage
- Swim Ireland has overhauled its competition structure at National level and is piloting a meet licencing programme with a view to improving the entire competition structure
- We have achieved financial stability and addressed legal matters and begun to engage with the commercial/private sector
- An organisation and a sport with committed volunteers, members and stakeholders
- An organisation that is considering its own destiny and looking to be in control of it



Introduction

Where do we want to be in 2016?

In summary, we are setting the following high level goals for Swim Ireland to be:

- Recognised by the Irish Sports Council as one of the top 3 governing bodies of sport in Ireland
- Achieving at the highest levels of World/Olympic Swimming
- Supporting our Clubs and Regions and making them feel more connected and better supported by the organisation than ever before
- An organisation recognised as providing support and guidance and promoting lifelong participation in the sport of swimming
- The leading organisation in the provision of national standard qualifications and support programmes for teachers and coaches

Across all areas of the sport and the organisation this is a summary of the targets we want to achieve (in no particular order of priority):

- 6 FINA A Standard qualifiers for the 2016 Olympics, continuous Finals & Medals at European level & Finals and a Medal at World/Olympic level in Swimming
- Swim Ireland programmes continue to be developed and recognised as the best in class
- Child welfare and protection programme recognised outside of sport as being the best in sport
- An evolved child welfare programme together with continued emphasis and compliance with best practice on child protection
- Swim Ireland recognised as a strong brand both in and outside of sport
- Higher coaching standards across the sport of swimming with all Clubs operating with at least 1 Level 2 licensed Swimming Teacher or Coach and delivery of a specific coach support programme annually
- Swim Ireland has become a recognised player and a credible voice in the industry
- Swim Ireland is recognised for its work in promoting swimming generally to the Irish public
- A development Plan for the sport of water-polo is being implemented and a closer relationship between the swimming and water-polo communities exists
- The Swim Ireland Meet licencing programme is operational in all the Regions and being undertaken by all Clubs hosting club competitions
- A clear and sustainable structure for the sport of diving from fundamentals to performance in place
- The Clubs feel connected with and supported by Swim Ireland more than ever before
- The lifelong skill of swimming and the ability to reconnect at any stage of the pathway is promoted and Masters Swimming (O/19) has grown and Open Water Swimming continues to develop
- Greater awareness of Swim Ireland Child Learn to Swim programme and an increase of a minimum of 50% in the number of facilities operating the programme
- Have created commercial revenue streams providing considerable more resources to the sport from without as opposed to within
- An organisation that creates 46% of its own income and which is striving towards reaching 50% of income generated and not coming from grant support



Swim Ireland - Our Vision

Our Vision

To inspire and empower people in Ireland of all ages and abilities to participate in our sport and to embrace a healthy lifestyle

Our Core Value

To regulate our sport and operate to the highest standards of care to ensure we provide a safe and secure environment for all our participants and those who support and work with them

Our Strategic Goals

To provide visible, direct and practical support on the ground to regions and clubs, develop and grow the disciplines, promote a pathway to cater for all abilities and levels of interest within the sport and raise the profile of the sport

To improve coach standards across the board, continue to deliver high quality qualifications, continued professional development and licensing programme, promote the Swim Ireland Child Learn To Swim programmes and further develop the competitive programmes

To win a medal at World/Olympic level, qualify 6 swimmers on FINA A Standard and achieve performances at the 2016 Olympics, and deliver continued medal success at European level

To develop commercial revenue, increase the market share of Swim Ireland programmes within the industry, connect commercially with the recreational swimmer and increase self-generated (non grant or membership fees) revenue to 46% of overall turnover

To establish Swim Ireland as the established voice of the aquatic industry and providing strong leadership to the sport

Our Core Value

To regulate our sport and operate to the highest standards of care to ensure we provide a safe and secure environment for all our participants and those who support and work with them

Specifically to:

- Greater emphasis on the child welfare element of what we do whilst continuing to ensure best practice and compliance in the area of child protection. Constantly update our child welfare and protection policies document (every 2 years) to reflect best practice
- Monitor implementation of these practices in our clubs and across our sport
- Provide support, advice and assistance to our members
- Deliver training programmes and ensure all our children's officers are trained and supported
- Develop further the voice of the athlete and ensure it has real prominence in all that we do
- Play a pivotal role in the development of general policy in this area across all sport



Our Strategic Goals

1. To provide visible, direct and practical support on the ground to regions and clubs, develop and grow the disciplines, promote a pathway to cater for all abilities and levels of interest within the sport and raise the profile of the sport

What does this look like?

- Clubs feeling more connected with and better supported by Swim Ireland
- An organisation that is recognised for promoting and encouraging swimming generally and not just competitive swimming
- Swim Ireland and those associated with it recognised as a positive brand by the Irish public

Initiatives to get there

- Visible and direct human resource support on the ground in the Regions
- Strong and improved internal communications strategy implemented
- Strong developmental and training tools and programmes in place being accessed by clubs and regions
- Development Plans in place with clear measurable outcomes for Water-polo and Diving, sports that are more clearly supported to be part of the Swim Ireland family
- Regional and Club Accreditation programmes reviewed and updated to ensure they are practical and feasible to implement and add value to our Regions and Clubs
- Greater emphasis and promotion of Masters Swimming
- Continued support of Open Sea Swimming
- Development Plan being implemented with respect to Schools Swimming
- Conduct research to establish a fact base around what participants want and how we can encourage them to stay within the sport for longer
- Identify new initiatives that are focused on connecting participants with the 'fun' element of the sport and assist in improving retention rates
- External communications plan executed to promote and raise the profile of our sport and those involved
- Swim Ireland recognised as an organisation that promotes swimming and the lifelong participation pathway and not just competitive swimming



2. To improve coach standards across the board, continue to deliver high quality Qualifications, continued professional development and licensing programmes, promote the Swim Ireland Child Learn to Swim programme and further develop the competitive programme

What does this look like?

- Swim Ireland programmes continue to developed and recognised as the best in class
- Swim Ireland is the leading organisation in the provision of national standard qualifications and support programmes for teachers and coaches
- Delivery of a specific coach support programme annually
- All Clubs operating with at least 1 Level 2 licensed Swimming Teacher or Coach
- Meet licensing programme in place for all meets including Regions & Clubs
- Greater awareness of Swim Ireland Child Learn to Swim programme and an increase of a minimum of 50% in the number of facilities operating the programme

Initiatives to get there

- Continued and further development and delivery of the Swim Ireland education programme consisting of qualifications, continued professional development opportunities and mandatory licensing
- Recognition of one national standard qualification for swimming teaching
- A revised programme to promote the Swim Ireland Aquatic Pathway across all of the disciplines including the Launch of a new pathway document
- Greater emphasis on coaching and in particular delivery of a coach support programme which focuses on:
 - Delivery of an annual calendar of events for coaches including Clinics, Qualifications and Workshops
 - An increase in flexible options for coaches to gain Continued Professional Development
 - Provide for the delivery of a level 1 or 2 swimming coaching course per year in each region and consider other initiatives to promote progress by coaches in Clubs from Level 1 coaching to Level 2
 - Continue to provide the opportunity and encourage coaches to access a level three qualification with a view of having an additional 20 swimming coaches achieve this level of qualification by 2016 (approx. 40 in total)
 - An awareness campaign to ensure that 0 clubs are operating with Teachers or Coaches without a Swim Ireland License
- National competitions continue to be run to the approved standard and Regional and Club competitions run to a specified standard supported by the new Swim Ireland Meet licensing system
- Targeted promotion initiative with regard to the Swim Ireland Learn to Swim Programme and strong customer support and backup
- Continued and further development of training, qualification and licensing opportunities for teachers, coaches, children's officers, officials, team managers

Our Strategic Goals

3. To win a medal at World/Olympic level, qualify 6 swimmers on the FINA A Standard and achieve performances at the 2016 Olympics and deliver continued medal and final success at European level

What does this look like?

- 4 Swimmers qualified in 2015 for the 2016 Olympic Games and a further 2 athletes qualified in 2016
- At least one Finalist at the 2015 World Championships
- Medals or finalists at every European meet between 2013 and 2016 inclusive
- 3 Irish based Coaches producing swimmers who qualify for the 2016 Games

Initiatives to get there

- Implement a tiered national squad structure, providing a training and competition programme that will consistently produce athletes capable of competing on the international stage
- Promote and foster a team approach where top athletes and coaches are collectively working together for Irish success
- Operate 4 Performance Centres providing increased training and other opportunities for swimmers and support to clubs who cannot themselves provide the relevant swimmers with the required water-time
- Mentor and train Irish coaches who have swimmers on the National Squads to deliver at the highest levels of World swimming
- Build towards the 2020 Olympic Games by ensuring we have a structure that supports youth and junior development
- Develop and implement Open Water and Relay Strategies producing swimmers achieving at European and World level
- Develop strong links with educational institutions and provide lifestyle support to National Squad Athletes
- Develop a co-ordinated pathway and performance plan for regional programmes, linked to the National programmes

4. To develop a commercial revenue, increase the market share of Swim Ireland programmes within the industry, connect commercially with the recreational swimmer and increase self-generated (non- grant or membership fees) revenue to 46% of overall turnover

What does this look like?

- Swim Ireland increases its self- generated revenue to 46 % during the cycle
- Swim Ireland engages with the commercial/private sector
- Swim Ireland secures a major sponsor/partner during the course of the cycle

Initiatives to get there

- Work with the Irish Sports Council on a targeted plan to become more self- sustaining
- Develop a compelling picture of our sport generally to support the attraction of commercial partners
- Support and extend our relationships with existing commercial partners and attract new sponsors
- Develop a commercial offering targeted at the 230,000+ recreational swimmers most of whom are not currently members of Swim Ireland
- Leverage our education programmes to generate sufficient income to be more self- sustaining without compromising the primary aim of raising standards within the sport
- Establish revenue from Swim Ireland merchandise and events



Our Strategic Goals

5. To establish Swim Ireland as the established voice of the aquatic industry and providing strong leadership to the sport

What does this look like?

- Swim Ireland viewed as one of the, if not the primary contact point for all aspects of the aquatics
- Swim Ireland is recognised within the swimming industry as a credible brand and player

Initiatives to get there

- Identify the critical issues affecting the sport and become a strong voice in lobbying for and affecting change where needed and possible
- Target the insurance industry to highlight the need for Swim Ireland to act as an industry regulator/licensing body
- Continue to build on and develop effective relationships with relevant agencies/bodies



The Next Four Years

We are setting out an ambitious plan and series of initiatives over the next four years. We know that we cannot achieve everything in the first year given the scale of targets and scarce resource with which we are working. Therefore, we have mapped out – as best we can – the major milestones over each of the years within the term of this plan (in no particular order of importance). We will constantly review our progress against these milestones and update them as part of the normal review process of progress during the strategic plan cycle. Each of these milestones will be backed up by detailed operational plans within each functional area of the organisation.

2013

- New Strategic Plan 2013-2016 launched and operational
- Swimmers medalling and/or making finals at the European Swimming Youth Olympics, European Junior and Senior Swimming Championships & Swim Ireland High Performance Strategy 2013-2016 launched
- Swim Ireland generating 43% of its own income (i.e. not grant income)
- Club/Regional Support Officers who will provide visible support on the ground to Clubs and Regions appointed and operational
- New Child Welfare & Protection Policy Document launched
- Development Plan for Diving finalised and operational
- Club Accreditation Programme overhauled and re-launched
- Communications Strategy written and Internal Strategy launched
- Swim Healthy Initiative launched (this is the initiative to encourage people to get involved in swimming)
- Launch of specific coach support programme

2014

- Swimmers medalling and/or making finals at the European Junior and Senior Swimming meets and the Commonwealth Games
- Swim Ireland generating 44% of its own income (i.e. not grant income)
- Launch of revised programme to promote the Swim Ireland Aquatic Pathway
- Development Plan for Irish water-polo finalised and operational
- Swimathon (the 'Swimming' mile) launched in conjunction with a promotional campaign encouraging people to get involved in swimming
- Roll out of Swim Ireland Meet Licensing System
- Roll out of Communications Strategy
- Swim Healthy Initiative further developed
- Annual delivery of specific coach support programme
- Campaign launched with regard to ensuring all teachers and coaches in Clubs are licensed
- Commercial offering developed to target outside revenue
- Recognition of one national standard for swimming teaching

2015

- 4 Swimmers achieving the FINA A Standard for the 2016 Olympic Games
- Swimmers medalling and/or making finals at the European Swimming Youth Olympics, European Junior and Senior Swimming Championships
- Research carried out with regard to participants and keeping them longer in the sport
- Major sponsor secured & Swim Ireland generating 45% of its own income (i.e. not grant income)
- New Child Welfare & Protection Policy Document launched
- Targeted programme launched to promote progress by coaches from Level 1 coaching to Level 2 coaching
- Swim Ireland Child Learn to Swim Programme in a minimum of 40% more facilities
- Development Plan for Schools Swimming finalised and operational
- New Masters Development Plan finalised and operational
- Roll out of Communications Strategy
- Annual delivery of specific coach support programme
- Emphasis on delivery of a commercial programme
- Swim Healthy Initiative further developed

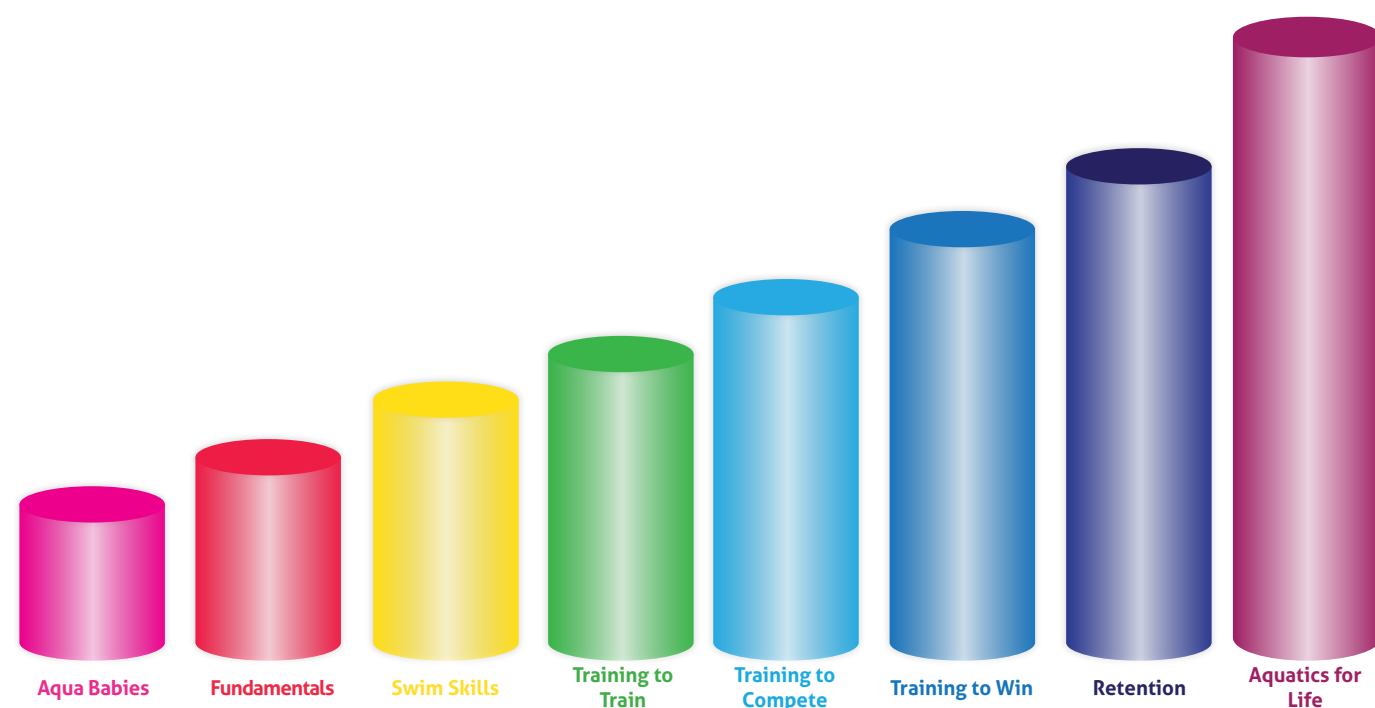
2016

- 6 Swimmers Qualified and Performing at the 2016 Olympic Games
- Swimmers medalling and/or making finals at the European Junior and Senior Swimming Championships
- Swim Ireland generating 46% of its own income (i.e. not grant income)
- Lobby group established and operational within the aquatic industry
- Development Plan for Open Sea Swimming prepared
- Swim Ireland Child Learn to Swim Programme in a minimum of 50% more facilities
- Continued promotion of recreational swimming in the form of new and existing Initiatives
- New initiative rolled out within Swim Ireland to encourage prolonged participation within our sport
- Roll out of Communications Strategy
- Annual delivery of specific coach support programme
- Commencement of development of new Strategic Plan 2017-2020

The Swim Ireland Aquatic Pathway – Aquatics for Life Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) Model



All of our programmes are built around the Long Term Athlete Development Pathway. As a sport we are unique in that our sport provides the opportunity for lifelong participation and a primary aim of our strategy is to encourage and promote our sport at all stages of the pathway and lifecycle.



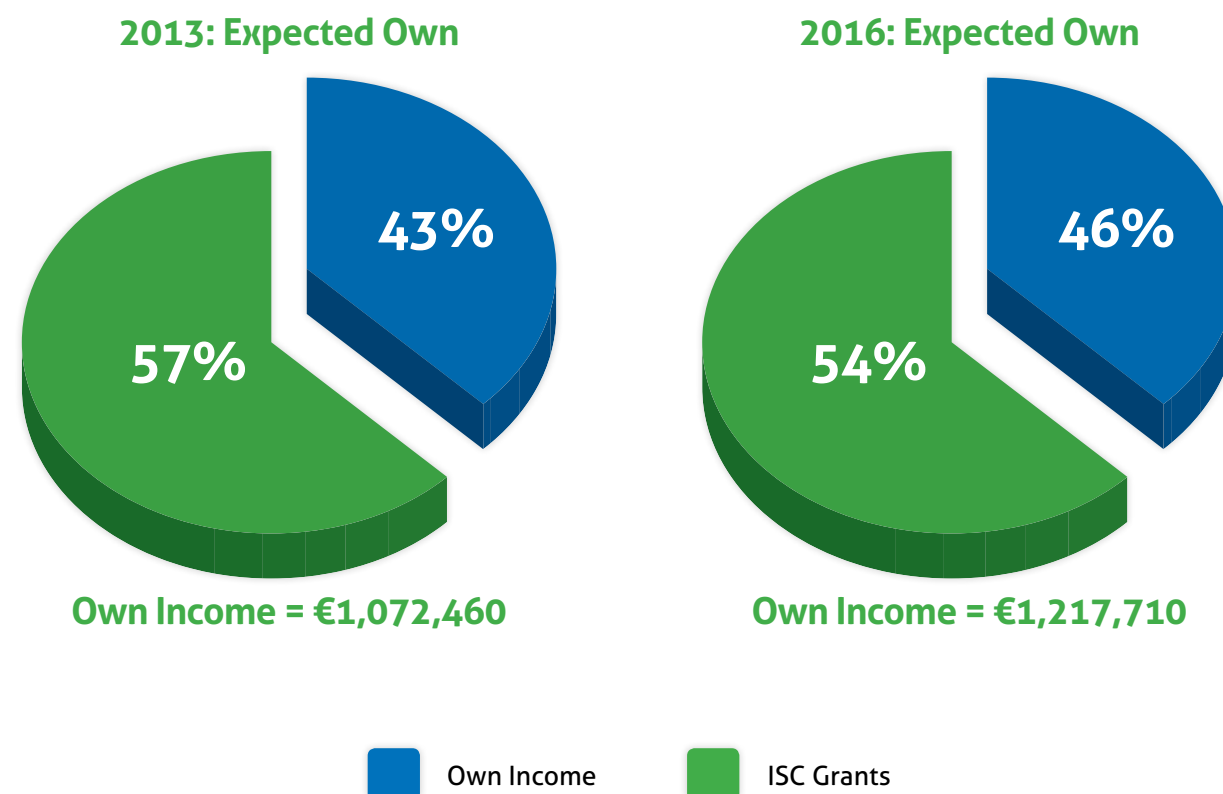
Finances

As a not-for-profit organisation, financial return for Swim Ireland is not the ultimate goal. That is not to say however, that a healthy financial position is not extremely important. Our financial performance is the means by which we secure the resources to pursue our aims. Our financial strategy will aim to enable the organisation to continue delivering best financial practice.

Our financial aim during this current strategic plan cycle 2013 – 2016, is to become significantly more self-sustaining financially. This will result in us becoming more independent and in control of our own destiny. Furthermore we aim to create revenue streams that bring funding into the organisation from outside sources rather than seek significant further funding from our membership.

In order to achieve this, we will need to increase our self-generated revenue streams significantly. Our long term aim is that 50% of our total revenue will be derived from self-generated sources. Achieving this goal will prove to be extremely challenging but it is vital that we strive towards this. Taking into account the budgeted income and expenditure for 2013, we would need to raise an additional €350,000 of funds this year alone in order to deliver a target of 50% of total income coming from non grant income. This amount would vary annually depending on the Irish Sports Council annual grant amount however it is likely to be around this amount each year.

Therefore it is unlikely that this will be achieved during this Strategic cycle however we should aim to reach 46% by the end of this cycle with the aim of reaching 50% by 2020 if not before.



Organisation Structure – Swim Ireland Functional Area Core Responsibilities Overview

We have reviewed the current organisational structure and functional areas to ensure that they are aligned to and support the strategic plan priority goals.

CEO Office

- Governance of the Organisation
- Delivery of Strategic Plan
- Implementation of Policies
- Setting & Controlling Budgets
- Financial Oversight
- Liaison with the Swim Ireland Board
- Management of Swim Ireland Staff
- Statutory Representation
- Leadership of Sport
- Act as the 'Voice of the Industry'

High Performance

- Oversight of national squad training and competition programmes
- Management of performance pathway (National & Regional)
- Development of Open Water and Relay strategies
- Management of transition from junior to senior swimming
- Management of HP staff
- Control of HP budget and plan
- Liaison with the Sport Councils, Irish Olympic Council & other HP bodies

Operations and Finance Department

- Management of accounts
- Financial reporting and budget control
- Sponsorship management
- Online revenue generation & management of on-line shop
- Manage sales revenue targets on Swim Ireland programmes
- Provide support and guidance to clubs and regions
- Support development of aquatic disciplines
- Maintain Swim Ireland website
- Deliver PR & Marketing programme
- Manage participation and retention rates
- Manage National Events & Competitions programme
- Roll out of Meet Licensing standards

Education Department

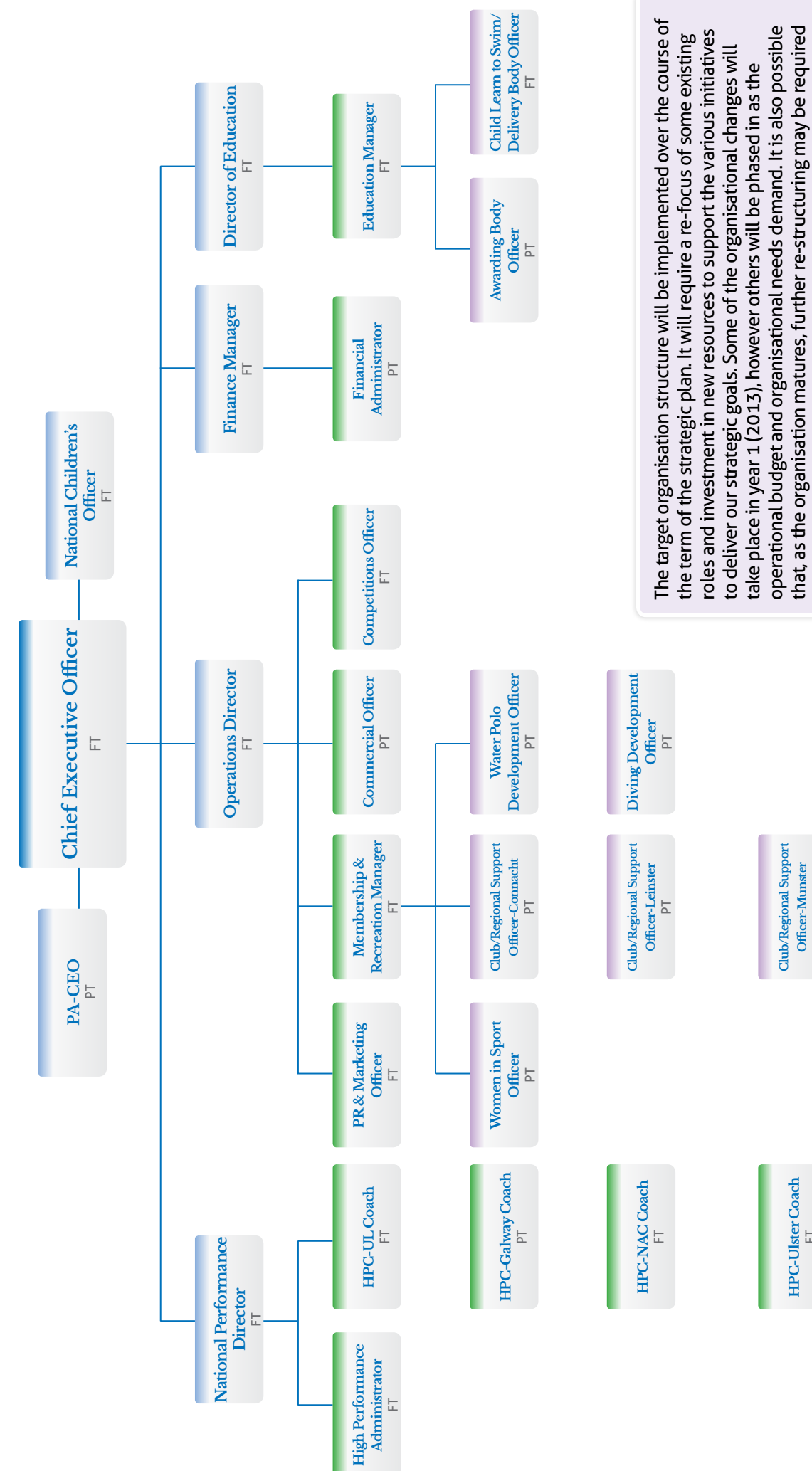
- Coach Development
- Long Term Athlete Development programme
- Roll out of Education programme
- Implementation of Child Learn to Swim programme
- Maintenance, administration and further development of qualification structures, CPD modules, licensing programme, tutor training and support programme, workforce initiatives
- Liaison with other bodies re qualifications and standards

Child Welfare Office

Roll out Child Welfare programme including:

- Training of tutors and others as required
- Auditing and visiting clubs
- Implementation of national policy
- Review and updating of National policy as required
- Monitoring of club compliance
- Communication with CCOs and others
- Administration of compliancy records
- Oversight of standards of care across all other areas of operations

Swim Ireland's Organizational Chart Target To Support Strategy To 2016



The target organisation structure will be implemented over the course of the term of the strategic plan. It will require a re-focus of some existing roles and investment in new resources to support the various initiatives to deliver our strategic goals. Some of the organisational changes will take place in year 1 (2013), however others will be phased in as the operational budget and organisational needs demand. It is also possible that, as the organisation matures, further re-structuring may be required within the term of this plan.



Swim Ireland, Sport HQ,
National Sports Campus,
Abbotstown, Dublin 15

e-mail: admin@swimireland.ie
web: www.swimireland.ie

THE
IRISH SPORTS
COUNCIL



AN CHOMHAIRLE SPÓIRT