



Ireland Lacrosse

NOVEMBER 2022

Prepared by 2into3



**Transforming
Not-for-Profits**

Together As One

Strategic Plan 2023-2026

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Introduction

Ireland Lacrosse CLG is the national coordinator and representative for the sport of lacrosse on the island of Ireland. The organisation’s aim is to enable and grow participation and high performance in lacrosse for players of all abilities and ages. In late 2021, Ireland Lacrosse engaged 2into3 to facilitate the development of a Strategic Plan. This document outlines the strategic development process and the finally agreed-upon Strategic Plan.

Strategic Development Process

A plan for strategic development is crucial to ensure the sustainability, growth and continued success of an organisation. It is an opportunity to learn and reflect on the past, and to look forward to identify and unite behind future ambitions.

In late 2021, Ireland Lacrosse engaged [2into3](#) to facilitate the development of a Strategic Plan and Fundraising Strategy. The Strategic Plan would be developed using 2into3’s highly participative process involving a broad range of stakeholders.

The process is visualised in Figure 1 below, and involved the following steps:

- **Mobilisation:** Desk research was undertaken into Ireland Lacrosse’s service and operations today, and a scan of the context it is working in.
- **Mission, Vision Values:** On 9 January, Ireland Lacrosse members from Ireland, the US and elsewhere were invited to participate in a virtual workshop. At the session, the 30+ participants were facilitated through interactive exercises that sought to gain their views on what should be Ireland Lacrosse’s Vision, Mission and Values.
- **Diagnostic:** Shortly thereafter, Ireland Lacrosse members received an e-survey in which they were invited to share their feedback about Ireland Lacrosse and to suggest opportunities and areas for development. In parallel, 2into3 had one-on-one interviews with key external stakeholders.



Figure 1 Visualisation of strategic development process undertaken by Ireland Lacrosse and 2into3

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- **Goals and Strategies:** On 24 April, a virtual workshop took place to review the findings from the Diagnostic and to start to identify Priorities, Goals and Strategic Actions. These were iterated with the steering group up to September.
 - **Plans:** At this stage the work to cost the ambitions in the draft Strategic Plan and to develop a Fundraising Strategy commenced.

A Steering Group was established to oversee the strategic planning and consultation process. The steering group met before and after each consultation to advise on process delivery and stakeholder engagement, to review inputs, and to produce recommendations.

The process concluded in November 2022 following the Board's approval of the Strategic Plan.

Ireland Lacrosse Today

History of Lacrosse in Ireland

Lacrosse is the oldest sport in North America and has its origins with the First Nations people there. For First Nations, Lacrosse is considered a spiritual endeavour and, today, the Haudenosaunee men's national team - formerly the Iroquois Nationals - are consistently ranked in the top three national teams globally. The first Haudenosaunee women's team in the modern era was organized and competed in 2005.

The history of lacrosse in Ireland dates to 1872 with the establishment of the Ards Lacrosse Club in Newtownards, Co. Down. Since then, Lacrosse has seen growth domestically amongst both men and women. The Irish Lacrosse League was established in 2009 and includes university-based club teams from Dublin, Galway and Belfast.

In the modern era, the Irish men's national team first participated in the European Lacrosse Federation (ELF) European Championships in Penarth, Wales in 2001. Since then, Irish national lacrosse teams have gone on to compete in a series of Federation of International Lacrosse (FIL) (renamed World Lacrosse in 2008) senior and under-age World Championships, and in various European Championships overseen by the ELF. In 2005, the Irish women's national team took home the trophy in the European Newcomers Championships in Copenhagen, Denmark which marked the re-establishment of the Irish women's national team.

About Ireland Lacrosse: frontline work

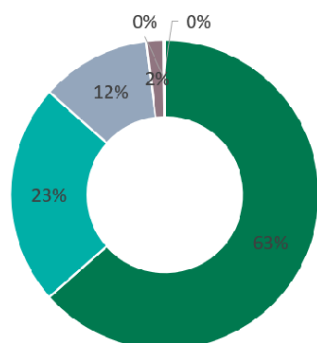
Ireland Lacrosse runs a variety of programmes for different ages and abilities to enable participation and to increase exposure to the game. There are different forms of lacrosse including field, box and intercrosse. In support of this, Ireland Lacrosse runs training programmes for coaches and officials, player development programmes, puts on events, and acts as a publicising body for major events and tournaments. In addition, Ireland Lacrosse oversees the management of all Irish national lacrosse teams and the Irish Lacrosse League (ILL), and in 2022 hosted, for the first time, a World Championship event in Ireland. Ireland Lacrosse also oversees the men's and women's Éire programme and its associated teams which travel abroad regularly for festival tournaments, exhibition games and other events. Ireland Lacrosse is recognised by the ELF and World Lacrosse, however does not yet have official National Governing Body status in Ireland with Sport Ireland.

About Ireland Lacrosse: operations

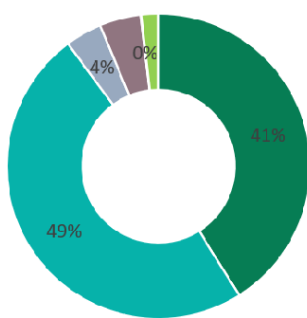
The organisation transitioned from Limited Company to CLG in 2016. There are currently no paid staff and the organisation is entirely volunteer-led and run. A new Chair, Rudi Wortmann, was appointed in 2021 and a new Board elected in summer 2022.

Ireland Lacrosse was significantly impacted by COVID both in terms of interruptions to opportunities to play the sport but also financially. In the financial year 2019-2020 Ireland Lacrosse had turnover of nearly €200,000, however the following year this had fallen to €24,310. Looking at data across the Irish nonprofit sector, or the Sport subsector, Ireland Lacrosse's income model by comparison is heavily dependent on earned income from membership fees and playing of the sport – both of which were heavily impacted by COVID (see figure 2 below). Ireland Lacrosse has a US registered 501c3 entity which supports fundraising and has an independent Board of Directors.

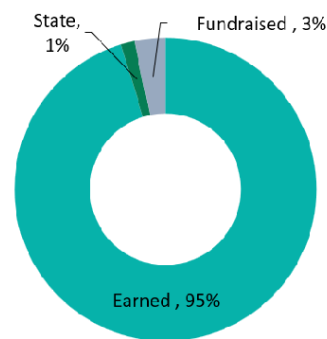
Irish third sector funding model
2019
(Giving Ireland report 2021, sample size 1735)



Recreation & Sport subsector
funding model 2019
(Giving Ireland report 2021, sample size 181)



Ireland Lacrosse funding model
y/e May 2021
(IL Annual Accounts 2021)



■ State
■ Earned
■ Fundraised
■ Other
■ Investment
■ Sponsorship

% of Total Income €24,310
(vs 2019-2020 income of €199,762;
similar proportional breakdown)

Figure 2 Comparison of Ireland Lacrosse's income model to the wider nonprofit sector in Ireland and to the Sport sub-sector

External Context: Social

In Ireland over recent decades – but particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic – there has been an increased understanding of the important link between sport and physical activity with physical and mental health and wellbeing¹.

¹ Government of Ireland (2018) 'National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027', p4
<https://assets.gov.ie/15979/04e0f52cee5f47ee9c01003cf559e98d.pdf>

Lacrosse is the fastest growing collegiate sport in the US over the past 15 years². It is played in schools and colleges, with men’s and women’s teams competing at club and varsity level. Although lacrosse is not commonly taught in schools in Ireland, its international performance is well-regarded. Lacrosse is growing internationally, and there is a vibrant international lacrosse community. This includes the World Festival – a lacrosse-focused event which emphasises the fun and social side of the sport.

External Context: Policy

Ireland’s National Sports Policy 2018-2027 seeks to “**elevate Ireland to the top of the table globally for both participation in sport and high performance.**”³ As the authority tasked with the development of sport in Ireland, Sport Ireland is a key body leading and supporting the implementation of the National Sports Policy.

On the participation side, Sport Ireland’s Participation Plan 2021-2024 sets out a long-term plan to achieve the government’s ambitious targets for increased participation, from 50% of adults regularly playing sport to 60% by 2027⁴.

Inclusion, diversity, and integration goals are an integral part of government programmes to increase participation in sport, with focus on increasing the participation of less-represented groups, those which face barriers to participation and experience poorer health outcomes, such as socio-economically disadvantaged groups, women, those with disabilities and ethnic minorities⁵.

On the participation side, the government is committed to increasing high performance funding, with a view to target funding at fewer sports which hold the most potential for success at international events, most notably the Olympic / Paralympic games.

While the inspiration effect of high-performance athletes can encourage an increase in participation, lacrosse is not currently a ‘priority sport’ in the Irish sporting landscape. However this may change with lacrosse gaining provisional recognition in November 2018 and full recognition by the

² National Collegiate Athletic Association (2021) NCAA Sports Sponsorship and Participation Rates Database; <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2018/10/10/ncaa-sports-sponsorship-and-participation-rates-database.aspx>

³ Government of Ireland (2018) ‘National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027’, p4 <https://assets.gov.ie/15979/04e0f52cee5f47ee9c01003cf559e98d.pdf>

⁴ Sport Ireland Participation (2021) ‘Participation Plan 2021-2024’, https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2021-09/participation_plan_final_eng.pdf

⁵ Government of Ireland (2018) ‘National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027’

International Olympic Council in July 2021⁶. An Olympic inclusion target has been set for Los Angeles 2028⁷.

Sport Ireland is the body which accredits National Governing Bodies for sport in Ireland. National Governing Bodies are ‘the delivery agents for the rollout of many essential programmes and will remain to the forefront in the Government’s policy and practice in sport and physical activity’. As such, it is important that any sport seeking to expand and develop in-line with the government programme for participation and performance in Irish sport have a representative body.

External Context: Economic

The Irish government’s investment in sport has increased significantly in the last decade – seeing 81% growth since 2008, with the stated objective to double funding for sport over the next ten years from €111m to €220m annually⁸. Targets for these additional investments include elite athletes and their programmes (including those with an Olympic focus), and the Sports Capital Programme and the Large-Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund which offers higher investments for capital projects than those available through Sports Capital⁹.

In August 2022, Ireland Lacrosse hosted the World Lacrosse Men’s U21 World Championship and World Festival in Limerick. This event was not only an international celebration and showcase of the game, but it is estimated to have had a wider economic impact for Limerick of €5.7 million and a projected total attendance of over 50,000 people. The event was an important opportunity for Ireland Lacrosse to partner with major sponsors, establish funding relationships and channels for future investment and funding opportunities for lacrosse in Ireland.

⁶ World Lacrosse (2021); ‘Historic Moment For Lacrosse: International Olympic Committee Grants Full Recognition To World Lacrosse’
<https://worldlacrosse.sport/article/historic-moment-for-lacrosse-international-olympic-committee-grants-full-recognition-to-world-lacrosse/>

⁷ World Lacrosse, (2021) International Olympic Committee Executive Board Recommends Granting Full Recognition To World Lacrosse,
<https://worldlacrosse.sport/article/international-olympic-committee-executive-board-recommends-granting-full-recognition-to-world-lacrosse/>

⁸ Government of Ireland (2018) ‘National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027’, p4
<https://assets.gov.ie/15979/04e0f52cee5f47ee9c01003cf559e98d.pdf>

⁹ Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (2018) ‘Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund’
<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/4113b3-large-scale-sport-infrastructure-fund-lssif/>

Diagnostic

There were two ways in which we sought input and insight about Ireland Lacrosse’s strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for growth and development. These informed the Priorities and Goals in the final Strategic Plan.

Member e-Survey

An e-survey was shared with Ireland Lacrosse members. From the 44 respondents, 82% respondents were cis-male, and an equal number of respondents were from Ireland and the US (44%).

Ireland Lacrosse’s biggest strengths were identified as: its inclusivity of all people regardless of skill-level, age, gender or background; its relationship with the international lacrosse community; and its safeguarding practices and policies.

Ireland Lacrosse’s areas for improvement were: its relationship with other sports in Ireland; its efficacy in increasing participation in the sport in Ireland; its external and internal communications; and its development and training opportunities.

Participants identified the following potential future priorities for Ireland Lacrosse: expanding participation in schools and universities in Ireland; increasing public and media awareness of lacrosse in Ireland; and training more coaches.

The survey also asked participants to give feedback on the first draft of the Vision, Mission and Values developed out of the first virtual workshop. There was broad agreement with the drafts (for example, 85% of people either agreed or strongly agreed with both the draft Vision and Mission statements).

Stakeholder 1:1s

Five external stakeholders were interviewed on a one-on-one basis by 2into3’s consultants (see figure 3). These conversations generated important learnings and advice into the areas in which Ireland Lacrosse should be seeking to prioritise or develop.

Below is a summary of some of the insights:

- Focus on Higher Education towns to build a critical mass of participation.
- The younger the player, the more passionate and sustained the relationship.
- College is a prime opportunity to engage talent. Position lacrosse as a ‘re-introduction’ sport. Connect to sports with comparable game flow. Promote the international opportunities.



Figure 3 Logos of the organisations represented by the individuals interviewed as part of this strategic development process

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- Clubs are much easier to start than to sustain.
 - Maximise opportunities for people to wear (and be seen in) the Ireland Lacrosse jersey.
 - Leverage the link with and financial opportunities in America to build the sport in Ireland.
 - High visibility US tournaments and events key opportunities for brand- and relationship-building.
 - Growth and organisational development happens in stages.
 - Good governance is critical. Ensure there are robust governing documents, defined responsibilities, strong skills-based Board in place.
 - Trust and communication are key to building and sustaining membership, volunteering, engagement.

Ireland Lacrosse Strategic Plan 2023-2026 - Together As One

Strategic Plan 2023-2026 - Together As One



Our Vision	Embedding the spirit and sport of lacrosse in Ireland		
Our Mission	Ireland Lacrosse provides opportunities for all to participate in lacrosse, across the island of Ireland and beyond, from beginner to elite		
Priorities	1. Participation	2. Communications	3. Organisational capacity
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase participation in lacrosse across Ireland, with a focus on young people • Increase homegrown talent • Invest in domestic capacity to enable participation: coaches, officials, development officers, equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase national media coverage • Increase social media following • Improve internal communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen our organisational structure and governance • Achieve NGB recognition in Ireland • Empower and retain volunteers • Increase income (inc. via teams, events and tournaments) to help achieve goals re: participation • Increase membership • Maintain a gender balance across our organisation
Our Values	Ambition Community Inclusion and diversity Excellence Accountability		

Vision

Embedding the spirit and sport of lacrosse in Ireland

Mission

Ireland Lacrosse provides opportunities for all to participate in lacrosse, across the island of Ireland and beyond, from beginner to elite.

Values

Ambition
 Community
 Inclusion and diversity
 Excellence
 Accountability

Priority	Goals	Strategic Actions (indicative)
1. PARTICIPATION	Increase participation in lacrosse across Ireland, with a focus on young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reconnect with our volunteer base, check their availability; run engagement & training events ● Reinvigorate the League to pre-COVID levels of participation ● Focus on increasing participation in secondary schools (e.g. one-day competitions among schools; provide Development Officer support) ● Create micro-league of third-level institutions ● Create a sixes micro-league for experienced players ● Create a box micro-league ● Support and strengthen existing teams ● Establish physical hub / pitch ● Attract new players through outreach in other sporting communities ● Restructure our coaching certification programming to increase number of coaches available at every level and to create progression opportunities ● Recruit and train coaches within and beyond the lacrosse community (e.g. PTs, international lacrosse coaches, from national teams) ● Recruit and train officials ● Put in place 2 but up to 5 Development Officers to lead and support outreach ● Increase equipment and practical supports (e.g. vehicles) for expansion
	Increase homegrown talent	
	Invest in domestic capacity to enable participation: coaches, officials, development officers, equipment	

Priority	Goals	Strategic Actions (indicative)
2. COMMUNICATIONS	Increase national media coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Re-vamp the website ● Develop social media strategy (how to get the most out of each platform) ● Establish strategic links with journalists and media ● Increase comms / social media capacity (e.g. explore job share with another NGB; establish sub-committee; recruit Board member with relevant skills) ● Improve internal comms and info sharing channels (e.g. newsletters) (asking other NGBs for advice re best practice)
	Increase social media following	
	Improve internal communications	

Priority	Goals	Strategic Actions (indicative)
3. ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY	Strengthen our organisational structure and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthen governance practices & transparency to NGB expectations (e.g. publish annual report) ● Implement new organisation structure, inc. empowered volunteer sub-committees with clearly defined roles (e.g. Coaching, Micro-leagues, ILL, Comms) ● Succeed in achieving NGB status ● Develop Leadership strategy: pathways for progression from players to volunteers to future leaders ● Put in place strategies for recruiting members & volunteers in all participation routes (e.g. via Development Officers, in comms) ● Explore shared services / job shares with other NGBs ● Develop & implement income strategy that covers teams, events and tournaments
	Achieve NGB recognition in Ireland	
	Empower and retain volunteers	
	Increase income (inc. via teams, events and tournaments) to help achieve goals re: participation	
	Increase membership	
	Maintain a gender balance across our organisation	