

Outline proposal for investment of approximately €180,000 in Coaching and Development

As per congress motion “The registration fee for each member of the association be increased by €3.00 with this money ring-fenced for coaching and development”.

A working group has been appointed to make recommendations as to how this extra revenue might be invested to the benefit of coaching and development within Athletics Ireland.

Investment should be strategically focussed and should complement existing and evolving strategies within High Performance, Coaching and Development Areas.

This document outlines in summary format existing or new initiatives where this revenue could be strategically invested. For existing initiatives any extra investment should add value to the initiative and to the quality of athletics coaching in Ireland and should not displace existing investment already budgeted for in 2018 or prior.

1. Create the position of full-time Field-Event Coordinator

A central strategic coaching goal for 2019-2020 is the appointment/retention of 3 full time event-coordinators whose key remit is to ‘own’ and develop their event-group from grass-roots to high performance.

Athletics Ireland currently has full-time event coordinators in the Sprints and Endurance event groups (both appointed in 2018). These positions are already budgeted for. In order to better promote and advance the Jumps, Throws and Combined-Events groups we would like to create the role of full-time Field-Event Coordinator in 2019.

We recommend the contribution of **€20,000**, which would, when matched with other budgeted funds, facilitate the creation of this role.

2. Develop and Resource the Athlete Pathway

Event Coordinators will be tasked with developing, staffing and resourcing a comprehensive athlete pathway with a clear progression and graduated supports for athletes and their coaches, from club athlete through to podium performer at senior global level.

For the Event Group Coordinators to adequately support the development of their event group and the ‘building-out’ of the athlete pathway they must be sufficiently financed. They must be endowed with a preparation budget that will allow the successful implementation of the event-group programme, such as the design and delivery of an educational curriculum relevant to age, stage of development and event group, and the coordination of collective upskilling and preparation via domestic and overseas camp opportunities.

The Team of Development Officers will play a key role in implementing and coordinating aspects of the pathway at local and Provincial Level, while comprehensive event group structures from grass-roots to High Performance will also require the recruitment of provincial event group coordinators/coaches (e.g. Regional Sprints Coach).

We recommend the contribution of **€20,000**, which, when matched with other budgeted funds, would be a significant step in building an event-group pathway that can make a meaningful impact in the support of coaches and athletes in their event group.

3. Coach Mentoring Programme

Athletics Ireland intends to enhance the further development of our coaches via a mentoring programme that will focus its energies on targeted coach-athlete pairs across the spectrum of events. This programme would be driven by the full-time Event-Group Coordinator and would require the recruitment of high-impact, highly skilled coaches with a track record of producing world class athletes and a background in coach education to act as mentor. The key objectives of the mentoring programme include:

- Liaise directly with targeted coach-athlete pairs to challenge behaviours and influence change
- Drive performance planning amongst targeted coach-athlete pairs
- Drive evidence-based coaching practices
- Bridge the gap to World Class coaching practice
- Mentored coaches should be in a position, if requested, to extend the mentoring concept to the next tier of coaches

We recommend the following allocation per annum, when matched with funds from other sources, would facilitate the development of a world class coach mentoring and development programme:

- Endurance (inc. walks) Coach Mentoring Programme: **€20,000**
- Sprints (inc. Hurdles) Coach Mentoring Programme: **€20,000**
- Field Events (inc. Throws, Jumps, Combined Events) Mentoring Programme: **€20,000**

4. Coach Carding

The key aim of this programme is to enhance the capacity for AAI to provide critical financial support to personal coaches of targeted athletes, who in turn will have an enhanced capacity to engage with centralised training (overseas camps; domestic squad activity) and competition programme (qualifying opportunities; major championships) as directed by AAI. The programme is intended to foster greater cooperation between Athletics Ireland and our leading personal coaches towards shared performance goals and pathways, and which will directly influence performances at targeted events (e.g. Olympic Games 2020, 2024).

When combined with the 'Coach Mentoring' programme, referenced above, this initiative is intended to raise the standard of coaching in Ireland with a direct and immediate benefit to athlete performance levels.

We recommend the contribution of **€15,000** which would, when matched with other budgeted funds, facilitate the creation of this programme.

5. Enhanced Coach Education Workshop Development and Delivery at Local and Regional Level

The Development Team currently deliver a series of event specific workshops on an ongoing basis. The Development Team will develop, resource and deliver a series of additional workshop that are linked to the formal coach education pathway, and which will have a logical progression to the next step on the ladder. The new programme of workshops is heavily coach-focused with the emphasis on upskilling coaches and increasing the capability in clubs across the event groupings.

To date the following workshops are projected for 2019:

Level A: **Run, Jump, Throw** multi event workshops. These workshops are designed for and aimed at developmental level coaches that are typically coaching athletes aged 11-15 years. The workshops are held in a series of three nights, each lasting about two hours. The events are deliberately bundled across event groups to ensure coaches are exposed to events other than their “favourite” one. The combination is Sprints/Shot Put, Javelin/High Jump, Long Jump/Hurdles. The workshops may be held weekly or fortnightly, depending on local requirements.

Coaches will be strongly encouraged to attend all three nights to broaden the knowledge and range of events available in clubs. This concept was recently piloted in Galway. The feedback was extremely positive. It is expected that this programme will be very useful in areas that have limited numbers of technical coaches.

The workshops are aimed at coaches and limited numbers of athletes will attend for demonstration purposes.

Level B: **Event Specific** workshops. These are aimed at coaches that are progressing and may be coaching athletes in the youth / Junior or senior category. The format will be similar in that there will be a series of three sessions. The difference being that the sessions will be specific to one or two events. These are being developed currently and will cover Sprints/Hurdles, Long jump/triple jump, High Jump, Shot Put/Discus, Javelin, Hammer and extend to Walks and Pole Vault. These will build on the foundation laid by the Run, Jump, Throw workshops and dovetail with Level 2 and the Coaching Network Days.

Run, Jump, Throw Workshop

Q1: 8 x courses

Q2: 5 x courses

Q3 / Q4: 5 x courses

Advanced Event Workshop

Q2: 4 x workshops (2 x Speed, 1 x Jumps, 1 x Throws)

Q3 / Q4: 8 x workshops (2 x Speed, 3 x Jumps, 3 x Throws)

We recommend the contribution of **€15,000** which, when matched with other budgeted funds, would facilitate the creation of this programme.

6. Development-led Coaching and Development Activity

The membership of the organisation has trebled in the last ten years with almost 100 new clubs being formed and existing clubs also increasing in membership. The number of RDOs decreased during this time. This led to a gradual reduction in the RDO contact with individual clubs, county boards and provincial boards and an attenuated contribution from the Development team to the continued development of our sport at grass-roots level.

An important part of the 2019 strategy is to address this issue through expanding the remit and reach of the Development Team. Further investment in expanding the Development Team, in conjunction with partner organisations (3rd Level (Dublin City Council)) should allow a significant increase in visibility and productivity of the Development team.

Enhanced Coach Education Pathway

- Augment existing coach education pathway

- Develop enhanced resources
- Tutor Training Workshops
- Mentoring element at higher levels
- Continuity between levels

Enhanced Regional Development Squad Activity

- Further develop existing regional squads
- Stepping stone to national squads
- Integrate club coach of targeted athletes
- Develop and deliver standardised educational curriculum pieces

Enhanced Event-Specific Workshop Activity

- As detailed in above section

Club Relationship

- Direct contact with each club on regular basis.
- Strategic attendance of events to meet clubs: provincial / national / schools champs.
- Club support programme.
- County Board meetings.

Club Development Programme

- Development Workshop – arranged through Co Board. Min. 20 meetings in 2019.
- Situation analysis and goal setting process outlined.
- Template provided.
- Follow-up support.

County Board

- Targeted attendance to build stronger relationship and understand issues.
- Template for information on membership trends / coach ed. / squads / workshops, etc.
- Development workshop and support (above).

Club Development Manual (Finalised and distributed to all clubs).

- Club roles / structures.
- Club / school links.
 - Existing examples.
 - Creating and nurturing.
 - Daily Mile / Fit4Class / iRun4Fun / School Mile Challenge.
- Coaching structures.
 - Coach education pathway.
 - Event availability at club.
 - CDP opportunities – RJT, Reg. Squads, Network Days.
 - Regional Squads
- Recruitment Events.
 - Schools XC
 - Park Run
 - Open Days

An investment of **€50,000** in the Development Team would greatly enhance RDO capacity for engagement with club, county and regional bodies to further both Development and Coaching Activity at grassroots level.

This would facilitate the integration of existing initiatives into the Athlete Development Pathway so that event workshops, regional squads and coach education pathway add real value at local level.

7. Summary table of proposed allocation

Initiative	Proposed Investment
Full-time Field Event Coordinator	€20,000
Event Coordinator Preparation Budget	€20,000
Coach Mentor Scheme – Sprints	€20,000
Coach Mentor Scheme – Endurance	€20,000
Coach Mentor Scheme – Jumps & Throws	€20,000
Coach Carding	€15,000
Workshop Development	€15,000
Development Activity	€50,000
Total	€180,000