



2021 – 2028

ATHLETICS IRELAND

STRATEGIC PLAN



About Us

This is the Athletics Ireland Strategy and statement of intent to 2028.

Our aim is to build a successful culture and organisation that delivers excellence for our members, as well as continuing to develop the sport of athletics in Ireland. This document provides an overall strategic vision for athletics in Ireland, from grassroots introductory level through to International level, and sets the context for future strategic decisions.

Until 2020 and the arrival of the Covid pandemic we had seen significant growth and continued improvement across all areas of our sport over the past strategic plan 2017 to 2020, with the number of people taking part in athletics (and running) across all disciplines increasing. This was primarily due to the significant contributions from our member clubs, event organisers, officials, staff and 'athletics people', the majority of whom devote their time voluntarily and for the good of others all year round. However, we are realistic and note that it will take time for us to rebuild to pre-Covid levels of activity.

This new strategic plan is about our sport working together, pulling in the same direction and recognising the importance of all our parts and individuals within our system. We undertook an extensive consultation process amongst the wider community to develop this plan. A system requires all parts to be working effectively

together, with everyone valued equally. That includes clubs, coaches, officials, athletes, event organisers, partners, supporters as well as Athletics Ireland as an organisation. Clubs and people will continue to sit very much at the heart of our operations and all we do.

We recognise that if we are to develop an integrated pathway and progressions for everyone in our sport at all levels, then the system that is developed must have clubs, a progressive pathway and integrity at its heart. Our sport is about people, and our role is very much about supporting people to be the best that they can be at every level of our sport. Athletics is, and will continue to be, the most inclusive and one of the most popular sports in Ireland. To ensure this continues, we need to operate in a way that reflects our organisations values of integrity, respect, inclusion and excellence. We must recognise and embrace the role we play in creating a healthier, more active Irish society. We will continue to develop these values to ensure that respect and inclusivity remain at the heart of all our activities.

We ask you all to share our vision to inspire our nation to be active, healthy and to perform through athletics and join us on our journey to success.

AAI Trajectory

Where We Are Now

2020

55,419 (62,700)*
Members

630
at coaching courses

359
Affiliated clubs

200,000
Participation Database

49%
Self generated funding

22
International podium medals *

27,000
Unique website visits per month

Where We Want to Get To

2024

70,000
Members

+25%
coaches

400
Affiliated clubs

290,000
Participation Database

60%
Self generated funding

30
International podium medals
including 1 Olympic medal

45,000
Unique website visits per month

2028

84,000
Members

+25%
coaches

440
Affiliated clubs

Growing
Participation Database

60%
Self generated funding

Growing
International podium medals

Growing
Unique website visits per month

* 2019 pre-Covid level

Note - metrics to be reassessed and reset in 2025. We have assumed no significant Covid19 restrictions from 2022.



Vision

Inspiring the nation to be active, healthy
and to perform through athletics

Mission

Athletics Ireland -
delivering excellence to all our stakeholders to
become the nation's sport of choice



What We Value

Integrity

We operate honestly, with fairness, transparently and to best practice.

Respect

We promote respect for everyone.

Inclusion

We welcome everyone and we embrace diversity.

Excellence

We have ambitious targets and support everyone to realise their full potential.

Leadership & Guiding Principles

We want to go from good to better to best. We will do this through leadership and our guiding principles.

People

Our athletes, volunteers and staff are our most valuable asset. We put people front and centre of everything we do. People make our organisation. We embrace diversity, equal opportunity and gender balance. We will continue to promote enjoyment, health and wellbeing for all.

Partnerships

We are a better organisation by collaborating with others at all levels.

Foundations

We value excellent leadership, with appropriate controls and risk management, being transparent and accountable, working effectively, and behaving with integrity. We will deliver excellence in Governance, Child Safeguarding, Finance and Risk.

Innovation & Sustainability

We will be innovative and creative in all we do. We will promote good practices in sustainability.

Technology

We embrace technology across the spectrum of our sport and business.

Communication

We value the importance of communicating with all stakeholders, whether listening or engaging. We value clarity of messaging in all we do.

Headline Objectives

By 2024 we intend to

1. Have a new Participation Strategy in operation from 2022
2. Have increased the number of participants on education courses at all levels by 25%
3. Have increased the number of clubs to 400
4. Have increased membership to 70,000
5. Have 90,000 participation opportunities per annum in Athletics Ireland owned and managed recreational events
6. Have a new High Performance Strategic Plan (linked to the Sport Ireland HP plan) in operation from 2022
7. Have increased the number of medals won at international championships at all levels by 20%
8. Have an Olympic medal
9. Have grown engagement in social media across all platforms by 40%
10. Have increased self-generated revenue to 60% of income
11. Have increased the gender balance on all national committees to a minimum 40% of each gender; and have broadened diversity on national committees

Headline Objectives

By 2028 we intend to

1. Have increased the number of participants on education courses at all levels by a further 25%
2. Have increased the number of medals won at championships at all levels by a further 20%
3. Have increased the number of clubs to 440
4. Have increased membership by a further 20%
5. Have increased participation opportunities in owned and managed Athletics Ireland recreational events by a further 20%
6. Have maintained self-generated revenue at 60% of income
7. Have an Olympic medal
8. Have relocated our headquarters to the Sport Ireland Campus

Note - metrics to be reassessed and reset in 2025

Our Strategic Pillars

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. Coaching | 4. Competition |
| 2. Performance | 5. Participation |
| 3. Community | 6. Marketing |

1. Coaching

Principle: To further develop coaching and technical education across all of our sport.

- Actions:**
- Employ an Athletics Ireland Coaching Lead.
 - Strengthen the link with Department of Education & Skills and educational institutions to maximise the number of teachers trained as athletics coaches.
 - Develop more world class elite coaches through mentoring and other means.
 - Explore the possibility of working with Sport Ireland Coaching Development structures and the National Framework of Qualification levels and align the system with a nationally recognised system.
 - Develop the coaching structures/enablers, to ensure:
 - A. Coaches are employed within our association e.g. two per event area.
 - B. Support for all volunteer coaches to have expertise in coaching and organisational skills appropriate to the level of athletes they work with.
 - Evolve innovative coaching initiatives annually.

2. Performance

Principle: That through planned development across our performance system, we will continually increase medal tallies at international level.

- Actions:** We will further develop our performance culture for our athletes, by:
- Delivering the actions in our High-Performance plan.
 - Providing quality competition opportunities for performance athletes.
 - Further developing a professional support system (medical, sports science, performance analysis, agents) for our HP athletes.
 - Creating and supporting world class coaches to work with our best athletes at identified performance hubs.

- Maintaining and further developing the talent pathway for young athletes to progress to senior international level athletes.
- Continuing to enhance and develop clear and transparent policies for selection for international championships.
- Continue to develop strategic partnerships e.g. third level, technology companies.

3. Community

Principle: We will develop supports and build our community around our sport.

- Actions:**
- Establish a club framework to strongly support club development and best practice. This will include:
 - A. Promoting diversity, gender balance and equity in all areas of our sport.
 - B. Building facility development expertise to advise clubs wishing to develop facilities.
 - C. Further development of best practice in club governance.
 - Develop and further enhance specific links between schools and clubs at primary, post primary and third level nationwide.
 - Develop strategies to increase the levels of retention of teenage athletes.
 - Increase the number of RDOs servicing our members in the community including targeted partnerships with third level institutions and local authorities.

4. Competition

Principle: We will build our competition structures to best provide appropriate competition opportunities at all levels.

- Actions:**
- Establish all our National Championships as premier Irish sporting events.
 - Continue to support international athletics events hosted in Ireland and aspire to host a relevant European or World championships at least once every 4 years.
 - Continue to embrace all the best technology and training to facilitate professionally organised and efficient competitions and expand incorporating live updates and results.
 - Complete the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) review and implement LTAD recommendations.
 - Review all competition organisation structures with the goal of having a central organisation unit.

5. Participation

Principle: We will remain the largest participation sport in Ireland.

- Actions:**
- Developing partnerships with local authorities to drive growth.
 - Supporting our clubs to deliver high-quality events to the public.
 - Establishing a corporate offering.
 - Increasing the number of social runners.

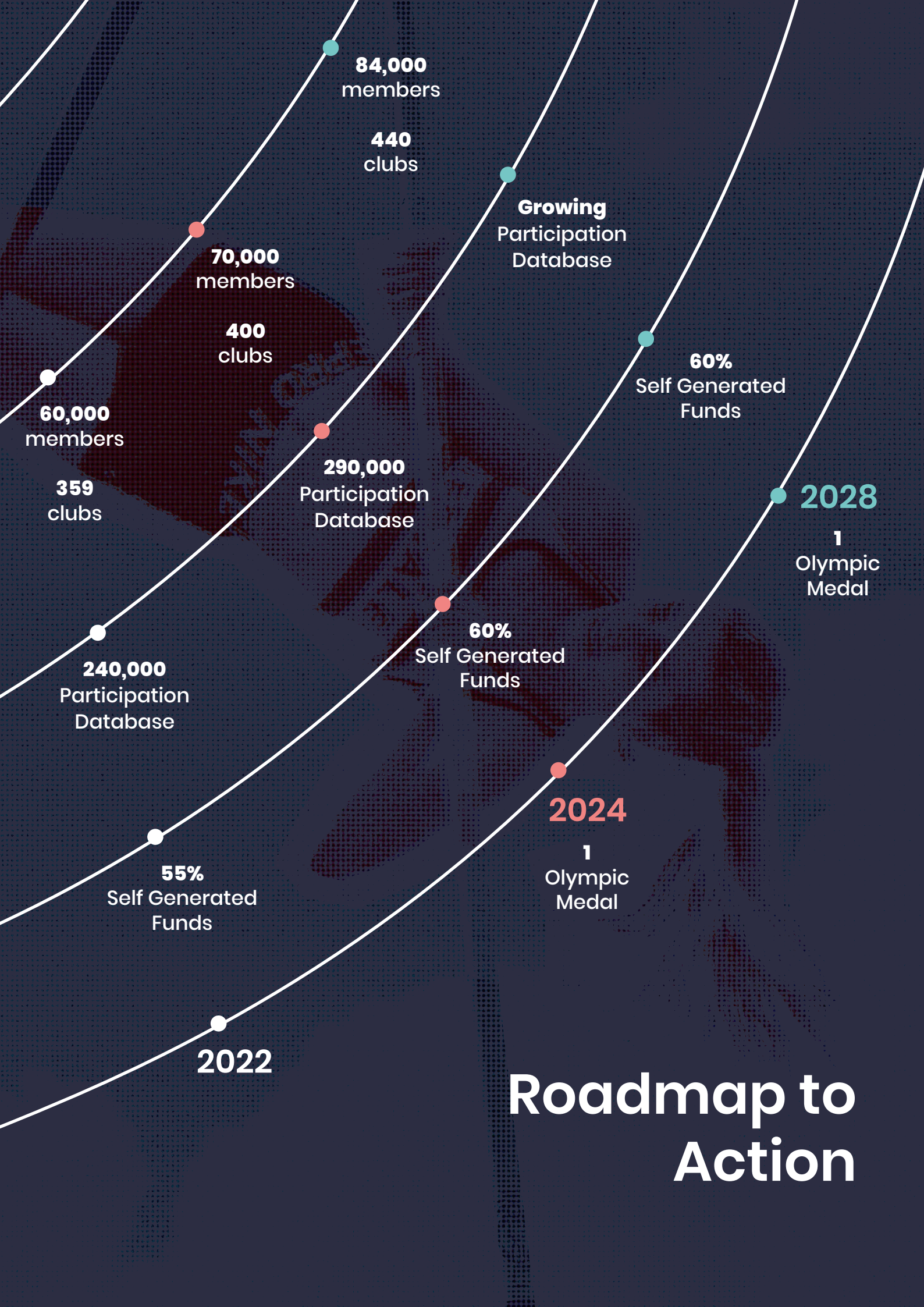
- Growing participation levels in our summer camps.
- Building “Get Ireland Running”.
- Continuing to expand the success of “The Daily Mile”.
- Engaging a social offering, including programmes such as “Fit4Life”.
- Establish a new role for a lead in Participation.

6. Marketing

Principle: We will ensure the Athletics Ireland brand is best in class and widely recognised.

- Actions:**
- Employ an additional staff member in marketing and communications.
 - Acknowledging champions and role models within our sport.
 - Increasing public awareness of our athletes and their performances .
 - Promoting the good stories from all areas of our sport.
 - Attracting and retaining partners who will help deliver brand objectives.
 - Increasing the awareness of the positive impact participation in athletics has on health and wellbeing.
 - Increasing the awareness that athletics is a fun and enjoyable social activity.
 - Increasing the number of broadcast athletics events.
 - Embracing data driven and digital developments to engage audiences and raise our profile.





84,000
members

440
clubs

Growing
Participation
Database

70,000
members

400
clubs

60%
Self Generated
Funds

60,000
members

359
clubs

290,000
Participation
Database

2028

1
Olympic
Medal

240,000
Participation
Database

60%
Self Generated
Funds

2024

1
Olympic
Medal

55%
Self Generated
Funds

2022

Roadmap to Action

We thank you for your ongoing support of Athletics Ireland



Acknowledgements

The staff and Board of Athletics Ireland.

All those who responded to the survey or gave their time in the consultation for this strategy.

The clubs, volunteers and athletes who make up athletics in Ireland.

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