



## Top Line FAI Strategy 2022 - 2025

AGM Presentation

July 25<sup>th</sup> 2021

# Our Strategic Vision 2022-2025





## Our Core Goals and Objectives

# Driving Grassroots football as the heart of the game

We will cement football's position as the most popular team sport in Ireland by harnessing the sense of belonging that our clubs bring to their communities.

## Between 2022 and 2025 we will

1. Develop our Club Mark programme to help clubs to have a positive impact in their communities.

2. Enhance positive relationships with Affiliates and Leagues to attract, develop and retain players, coaches, referees and volunteers.

3. Attract and develop diverse, digitally-native volunteers of all ages by delivering targeted programmes and initiatives across our Club Mark network.

4. Debate and review our Grassroots structures to create the strong foundation for our football pyramid.

5. Use digital technology to transform our direct relationships with our Grassroots communities, recreational players, club players, parents, administrators, volunteers and referees..

6. Promote Football For All within the grassroots space to further develop our fully inclusive approach to the game, allowing everyone the chance to play the game safely where, how and when they want to.

7. Proactively drive relationships with teachers, schools and colleges to give them the tools to encourage children to play, learn and enjoy football across their educational years.

8. Partner with our clubs and local/central government to make top-class pitches and clubhouses accessible to all.



# Creating Football Pathways for All

We will create a culture, systems and pathways to enable every player regardless of age, ability or gender the opportunity to enjoy playing football in a safe and supportive environment and that will enable every player to develop to the best of their ability.

## Between 2022 and 2025 we will

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| 1. Establish a creative and progressive football and coaching style that reflects our identity and culture.  | 6. Integrate performance-based growth and maturation measurement systems to assist in player identification and development in Centres of Excellence and National Academies. |
| 2. Develop clearly defined, seamless Player and Coach Pathways with equal opportunities for men and women, girls and boys which take account of the non-linear nature of player development.     | 7. Increase participation and reduce drop-out rates via consistent and structured approaches to coaching and communications for teenage players.                             |
| 3. Promote player welfare and development by creating strong links and consistent approaches between Affiliates, League of Ireland clubs, Grassroots clubs, schools and colleges.                | 8. Deliver coach education programmes that promote participation, development and retention and suit the needs of players at every level.                                    |
| 4. Consult meaningfully with all Affiliates to improve relationships and develop structures and competitions to achieve lifelong participation for all players.                                  | 9. Deliver a coach education programme for players to provide educational qualifications and support their continuing involvement in a professional or voluntary capacity.   |
| 5. Make provision for the growing number of people who want to play recreational football where and when they want to using research and insights to identify and respond to their requirements. | 10. Increase the number of qualified coaches at all levels with a particular focus on female and age-specific coaches.   |



# Developing the full potential of football for Women and Girls

We will promote and develop football for women and girls so that every woman and girl will have the opportunity to play, coach, referee, officiate, administer and perform leadership roles on an equal footing with men and boys.

## Between 2022 and 2025 we will

1. Accelerate the growth and development of women’s football through a focused women’s and girl’s football development plan, with the Club Mark scheme at the heart of its delivery.	6. Promote gender balance at all levels of the Association – the General Assembly, the Board, Committees and FAI staff and among Affiliates, Clubs and Leagues, in paid and voluntary roles.
2. Develop and deliver bespoke programmes across the education system, but in particular at primary school level, to ensure every girl has the chance to play, learn and enjoy our game.	7. Increase the profile of the women’s game by bidding for and hosting international tournaments and events, bespoke marketing activities, and targeting a new generation of fans to both women’s international football and the Women’s National League.
3. Retain and develop young female players through the creation of innovative competition structures, including mixed gender football.	8. Invest in, and promote, women’s football by maximising media, commercial and brand partner opportunities, from Grassroots through to Women’s National League and international football.
4. Attract and retain women and girls of all ages and abilities to play recreationally by providing a fun and inclusive experience.	9. Develop the Women’s National League, providing our players with a platform to perform at the very highest level, ultimately feeding international success.
5. Identify, develop and promote our most talented female players through a targeted player identification programme.	10. Increase opportunities for female leaders in every part of Irish football, on and off the pitch and target female involvement at every level and in every facet of the game.





# Inspiring a new future for our League of Ireland

We will develop a regionally-balanced, professional league for top-level club football that will drive investment into sustainable, well-structured and diverse football clubs serving the needs of football in their region and creating a unique and quality experience for players and fans.

## Between 2022 and 2025 we will

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| 1. Be radical, innovative and open in our approach to creating a new model for both men's and women's top-level league football.  | 6. Market a new League of Ireland brand to target a bigger, more diverse, more family-focused audience, both within stadia and digitally across all key media platforms.                                     |
| 2. Work with all key stakeholders - but in particular central and local Government - to plan and finance the transformation of LOI club facilities to deliver a unique fan experience and community benefits.           | 7. Engage with LOI clubs around the options for creating a new football pyramid to ensure a route to the top of the domestic game is available for all clubs, with transparent entry criteria and processes. |
| 3. Maximise central commercial opportunities around the League via media, digital and sponsor partners and build a solid financial foundation for clubs utilizing income from FAI and club's own commercial activities. | 8. Review and evaluate all competition formats to ensure we have the best competitions to grow and develop the League of Ireland.  |
| 4. Develop closer links with the Grassroots game and the international pathway to ensure best-in-class platforms and infrastructure for the development of Irish players and coaches.                                   | 9. Work with clubs to create a talented, engaged, skilled and experienced full-time workforce in both business and football positions as we work towards creating a full-time football industry.             |
| 5. Develop an Academy structure to develop the best homegrown talent in their own environment, on a full-time basis, encompassing a new, transformative and aspirational Academy grading system.                        | 10. Give our clubs the best possible chance to compete regularly in the Group Stages of UEFA Club Competitions and to aim to consistently hold a top 30 UEFA League co-efficient position.                   |



# Building for International success

We will strive to be successful in International football by qualification for major tournaments at all age levels recognising the role of our international teams in uniting and inspiring the nation and especially our young players.



## Between 2022 and 2025 we will

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| 1. Be on track to have our senior Men’s and Women’s teams qualify for at least every second major finals tournament.  | 5. Drive forward our Talent ID and scouting operations, both within Ireland and abroad, ensuring we identify all qualified players and have the best players playing for our Irish teams.   |
| 2. Target a top 20 UEFA ranking consistently for all of our international teams, both senior and underage and to concentrate on the development of our young elite players into the senior squads.  | 6. Develop our ongoing relationships with Irish coaches and technical staff across the global football community and encourage a steady pipeline of experienced talent to support and guide all of our international teams.             |
| 3. Build strong and transparent relationships with the underage and LOI clubs to improve Irish player development overall, including delivering good on-field contact and playing time for our 16+ players given the potential opportunities for young Irish players post Brexit. | 7. Capitalise on our unique sense of Irishness and the positive reputation of Irish fans internationally to build our standing within the global game and use this influence to successfully bid for and host major footballing events. |
| 4. Provide the highest standards of facilities, medical, performance analysis, logistical, operational and administrative support to all of our international teams.  | 8. Revitalize the relationship and connection between our fans (in Ireland and abroad) and our international players, driving our #WeAreOne philosophy.   |





# Transforming football facilities and infrastructure

We will provide high-quality, safe, accessible and welcoming facilities for all who want to play or otherwise participate in our sport.

## Between 2022 and 2025 we will

1. Develop a Facilities' Investment strategy to provide appropriate, strategically-located facilities for Grassroots, elite and international football.

2. Work with central and local government to co-create and co-fund the long-term investment strategy so football has the right infrastructure to support Ireland's largest participation team sport.

3. Work with central and local government to review the funding of the ongoing development of LOI grounds to work to transform the match-day experience for players and fans and set the foundations for an enhanced LOI brand offering.

4. Work with central government, UEFA and FIFA to fund the development of LOI clubs' Academy infrastructure in line with best practice and improve our ability to develop young Irish talent at the highest level of the game.

5. Support Provincial Associations, Leagues, and Grassroots clubs - in particular Club Mark holders – to develop local master plans for infrastructure development and improvements and to develop innovative approaches to fund these developments.

6. Work in partnership with local authorities to deliver and upgrade playing fields – natural and artificial - with a long-term goal of having one full-sized artificial pitch in every county.

7. Work closely with commercial operators of football facilities to ensure that the FAI is fully aligned with the delivery of recreational football.

8. Develop our collaborative approach with Sport Ireland to ensure the ongoing development of our National Training Centre for all international football teams and as a base for the FAI HQ.

9. Work closely with the Grassroots game to help our clubs better understand the processes for accessing grant funding in Ireland so growing football's share of the available funding pots.

10. Ensure that our owned stadium assets, such as the Aviva Stadium, are utilised to maximum capacity and deliver best value for the Association whilst upholding high standards of sustainability.





## Our Key Enablers

# Build a best-in-class, fit-for-purpose organisation

We will rebuild trust in the FAI by developing strong relationships with all parts of the game and with FIFA, UEFA and other key stakeholders, and by demonstrating that the FAI is an effective, diverse and progressive National Governing Body run in accordance with best governance practices.

## Between 2022 and 2025 we will

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| 1. Continue to build a modern, diverse, inclusive, fit-for-purpose Association which is respected by all Stakeholders and viewed as continually striving for excellence and best practice.            | 4. Implement best practice corporate governance, including financial and risk management, and comply with Sport Ireland’s Governance Code for Sport.   |
| 2. Be a trusted administrator and efficient regulator of the game, applying rules and disciplinary regulations from League of Ireland through to our Grassroots in a fair, robust and consistent way. | 5. Provide safe and inclusive environments and programmes to develop our players, coaches and administrators and to gain the trust and confidence of parents and players.                                      |
| 3. Lead by example and so cascade good governance principles and practice throughout the entire Association and to all of our Affiliates, through to our Leagues, Clubs and individual teams.         | 6. Protect the integrity of the game through clear policies around club ownership, match fixing and anti-doping and pro-actively address discrimination, diversity, gender balance, inclusivity and fair play. |

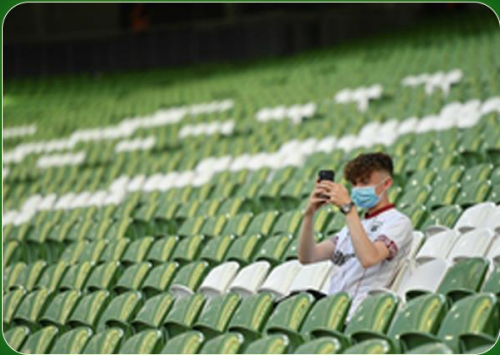


# Embrace Digital Opportunity

We will exploit new technology and digital tools to inform our organizational decision-making, improve our administrative and communication capabilities and continually enhance the overall experience of playing, participating in and watching our game.

## Between 2022 and 2025 we will

1. Transform the existing FAInet system to deliver a digital, web and mobile-friendly platform, to manage your Leagues and competitions, player registration, pitches and referees.	4. Work to upgrade our digital platforms including websites and social media and introduce a range of apps that fundamentally transform our experience of the game and our understanding of those playing and watching it.
2. Create a Player Passport and ID system that tracks and records the status and progress of players from Grassroots, to LOI through to international teams.	5. Exploit digital technologies to transform our commercial offering to partners, using CRM technology to build our single customer view, create a centralized content management system, fully digitize our ticketing processes and embrace all media and streaming opportunities.
3. Drive direct and two-way engagement and communication with fans of both the LOI and international teams to better understand and service the needs of existing passionate fan bases and grow new audiences.	6. Use modern and integrated software to transform how we manage the core business of the Association, in particular the finance function, and have a well-resourced and skilled IT department to support that transformation and ensure the integrity and safety of our data.



# Build a Trusted and Respected brand

We will develop the FAI as a trusted and respected brand, reinforce football’s position as the No. 1 team sport in Ireland and engage proactively with Members, participants, fans, commercial partners, central and local Government, FIFA and UEFA, the Irish diaspora and other stakeholders to promote the game



## Between 2022 and 2025 we will

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| 1. Deliver a consistent brand and communications strategy that communicates our purpose and objectives to key audiences.  | 6. Implement targeted marketing campaigns to support all aspects of football and in particular our Grassroots eg to increase participation at all levels from Summer Soccer schools through to club volunteers.   |
| 2. Articulate our Purpose, Vision and Mission and Values and how the Association intends to operate as a responsible governing body having a positive impact within Irish society.          | 7. Create a new brand structure and narrative for the League of Ireland, with men’s and women’s elite domestic football represented under one identity growing the value of, and audience to, the League.   |
| 3. Set the communications agenda through our own channels and engagement with the wider media to build positive and frequent engagement with all our football communities and stakeholders. | 8. Leverage the unique and globally positive reputation of our international team fans and attract new, younger and more diverse audiences through efficient CRM and insight-led marketing campaigns across all communication channels, making our matches “must see” events. |
| 4. Use research and insights to drive two-way communication with those stakeholders and inform our longer-term communication objectives.  | 9. Work with Government and other external sporting bodies and business partners at home and abroad to showcase Ireland as a world-class host venue for sporting events and conferences   |
| 5. Build out a social media strategy that serves and grows existing audiences and recognises how younger audiences consume content ensuring that football is fun and relevant.              | 10. Build our global reach by using new digital tools to create engagement with the Irish diaspora and increase our audience, creating connections and commercial value.  |





# Drive Investment to achieve our Strategic Goals

We will fully focus on delivering a robust financial strategy for the whole of Irish football to work towards securing a solid financial foundation, based on existing and new revenue streams, commercial partnerships and support from key stakeholders to support sustained, long-term investment into the game.

## Between 2022 and 2025 we will



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| 1. Review and challenge the cost base of the organisation and identify how we can prudently pay down our debts, balancing the needs of ongoing strategic investment requirements. | 4. Work with sponsors, media and digital platform partners to ensure they deliver more than just commercial value but also help us to achieve our wider strategic goals.  |
| 2. Deliver a systematic approach to invest in, develop and sell our key commercial rights and assets around Grassroots football, League of Ireland and our international teams.   | 5. Optimise the financial return on ticketing and hospitality revenues, especially around international matches at the Aviva Stadium and deliver the best possible customer experience for fans to encourage repeat attendance. |
| 3. Identify and inspire commercial partners to invest in sponsorship opportunities packages in these areas and particularly at lead level for our international teams.            | 6. Engage our key Stakeholders such as central and local government, Sport Ireland, UEFA and FIFA in the development of our strategy so they will continue to support the financing of football in Ireland.                     |

# Develop a collaborative and inclusive culture

We will strive, by developing a collaborative and inclusive culture, to develop the FAI as a high performing organisation that attracts and retains good people to work for it, attracts volunteers to work at all levels of the game and develops people capable of assuming football and business leadership positions within the game in Ireland and internationally.

## Between 2022 and 2025 we will

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| 1. Inspire a new generation of volunteers to participate in football at all levels by tapping into the desire for connection and community that has been evident during the Covid-19 pandemic. | 5. Identify clear qualification pathways for our coaches, referees, volunteers and administrators to ensure that we have the best possible workforce to service the game of football in Ireland. |
| 2. Harness the experience and enthusiasm of our current generation of volunteers to pass on what they know to that next generation.  | 6. Develop and grow our central FAI HR and people resources to ensure that we have a talented, engaged and diverse workforce.  |
| 3. Run targeted marketing campaigns to attract talented, enthusiastic and inspiring individuals (especially young parents and those coming to the end of their playing careers) to the game.   | 7. Commit to a performance measurement process that will set clear KPIs for the organisation overall, for departments and for individuals and be the basis for future staff progression.         |
| 4. Invest into our educational programmes, both physical and digital, to grow a high-quality, representative and diverse workforce.  | 8. Agree and commit to our Vision, Purpose and Values and connect and inspire our staff and the wider football communities to work together proudly for the greater good of Irish football.      |





## The Consultation Process

# Consulting the football community

We will consult widely in the next 4 months to understand Members’ perspectives and seek agreement on the key issues to be addressed over the next 4 years which will shape our strategy.

Consultation, Strategy and Culture	Research
1. Via our General membership - regional ‘town hall’ events.	1. Supported by UEFA.
2. Targeted discussions with 20+ key groups including individual affiliates, LOI Clubs, representatives of Grassroots Leagues, fans, players, volunteers, parents/guardians, sponsor partners, the media etc.	2. Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>understand needs of Irish football stakeholders</li><li>Understand perceptions of the FAI amongst key stakeholders</li><li>Identify opportunities to increase engagement and build trust</li></ul>
3. In co-ordination with our new Football, Business and Technical Committees.	3. Survey 5000+ people (players, coaches, parents, referees, fans, administrators.....)



# Consultation Indicative Timetable

Research and consultation will take place in the Autumn so that an agreed strategy can be agreed by the Board by year end and shared with Members and the media/general public for the start of 2022.

## August 2021

- Management finalise research questions and approach
- Detailed consultation plan developed
- Staff & Stakeholder workshops

## November 2021

- Meetings held with Board Committees to agree detailed workplan and approach
- Workplan and timetable shared with key groups for review and agreement

## September 2021

- Research carried out
- Regional 'town hall' meetings held
- Targeted discussions roll over

## December 2021

- Strategy signed off by Board
- Communications plan and materials agreed and communicated to Members

## October 2021

- Research completed.
- Regional 'town halls' and wider meetings completed
- Key insights from research and from member consultation shared with management, Board and relevant Committees

## January 2022

- Final Strategy communicated and launched publicly
- Workplans form basis for organisational, divisional and individual KPIs for the Association for 2022 and beyond





