

PULLING TOGETHER

Tug of war Strategy 2021 to 2025





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Message from Sport Ireland

On behalf of Sport Ireland, I would like to congratulate everyone involved in the development of the Tug of War Ireland Strategic Plan 2021-2025. A huge amount of hard work goes in to the preparation of strategic plans but it is vitally important work, laying out the vision for the future of the sport and the steps to get there.

I am delighted to see that strong corporate governance and compliance with the Governance Code for Sport is front and centre in Tug of War Ireland's mission statement and is one of the organisation's key strategic priorities. Compliance with the Code will ensure that Tug of War Ireland is operating to the highest of standards of accountability, transparency and responsibility. Sport Ireland will continue to work closely with Tug of War and will fully support you on your journey to adoption of the Code.

Sport Ireland has always stressed the importance of ensuring sport & physical activity is inclusive, attracts participants from every age group, from disadvantaged communities, from minority groups, and is community led. I am delighted to note the focus on participation at a community level and the commitment to increase participation among all age groups and genders. People are at the heart of any sport and by increasing the number of members and volunteers you will be able to increase the reach and longevity of the sport.

National Governing Bodies of Sport are at the very centre of Irish sport; they are key delivery agencies to achieve the strategic and operational goals of Sport Ireland and the actions identified in the National Sports Policy 2018-2027. Tug of War Ireland has set out a clear direction to grow the sport locally while preparing and enabling athletes to achieve their full potential at an elite level.

I wish you all the best and look forward to seeing the growth of Tug of War Ireland in the coming years.

John Treacy,
Chief Executive, Sport Ireland



Message from Tug of War Ireland

I consider that we in the Tug of War fraternity are extremely lucky to have such a great sport in which to participate, which at top level tests mental strength, physical strength and endurance, is enjoyable at every level, involves families and provides a community social and outlet, promotes regular exercise on an individual and team basis.

That said our membership is smaller than we would like and therein lies the challenge – to create the environment in which we can encourage new membership and secondly retain that membership for the long term where each member can give and receive something worthwhile from the sport at every level be it as an athlete, coach, official or administrator. It is incumbent on the present membership, clubs, officials and administrators to come together to address these challenges, we all are the last line of defence for our sport.

We can do this. We have proven that we can come together for the love of our sport – you all have overwhelmingly got behind the recent changes, you have participated and contributed to the formulation of this five-year strategy through one-to-one interviews and an online survey. For all of this positivity I would like to thank you all, our future is in our hands.

We need to build on our core base of clubs, and volunteers with the ambition to increase Tug of War clubs and participants at all levels nationwide.

Hard work yes, but above all everyone enjoy the process and have fun.

Eddie O' Malley
Chairman Tug of War Ireland.



Background

Tug-of-War is a competitive team sport with a sea-faring tradition. The sport was part of the Olympic Games from 1900 to 1920 but has not been included since. Irish Tug of War was founded at a meeting which took place at the Guinness Iveagh Grounds in 1967. The Tug of War International Federation (TWIF) is the international governing body for the sport of Tug of War. There are approximately fifty countries affiliated to TWIF. TWIF organises World and European Championships every other year at outdoor level and World Championships every second year at indoor level. Ireland is considered as one of the top countries in international Tug of War having won many medals at both club and country down through the years. Tug of war Ireland is the National Governing Body for the 26 counties to develop and promote the sport. The organisation is now embarking on an ambitious plan to ensure the sport thrives in the future.

Mission

To provide the structure and good governance to promote and grow our sport of Tug of War in an inclusive way - welcoming everyone to participate and compete at local level whilst aiming to excel at international level

Vision

Promote lifelong engagement with our sport in every community and delivering success on the world stage

Values

- Excellence** How we operate our sport at every level. We set, work towards and strive to achieve the highest standards in the community and internationally
- Respect** We respect each member, our goals and our organisation, whilst instilling trust.
- Equality** We provide an inclusive and equitable environment for everybody to participate at all levels
- Inspiration** We inspire all and future generations to take part in Tug of War
- Community** We instill a sense of community and fun throughout our sport
- Open, Transparent and Accountable** We uphold the highest level of integrity in all our dealings



Some Key Dates

First Irish National Cwt Championship Iveagh Grounds

Hosted European Championships in Cork

Won two Golds in World Games

Won gold at World Championships

Rebranded as Tug of War Ireland

1969

1985

2012

2020

1967

1984

1988

1993

1995

1999

2019

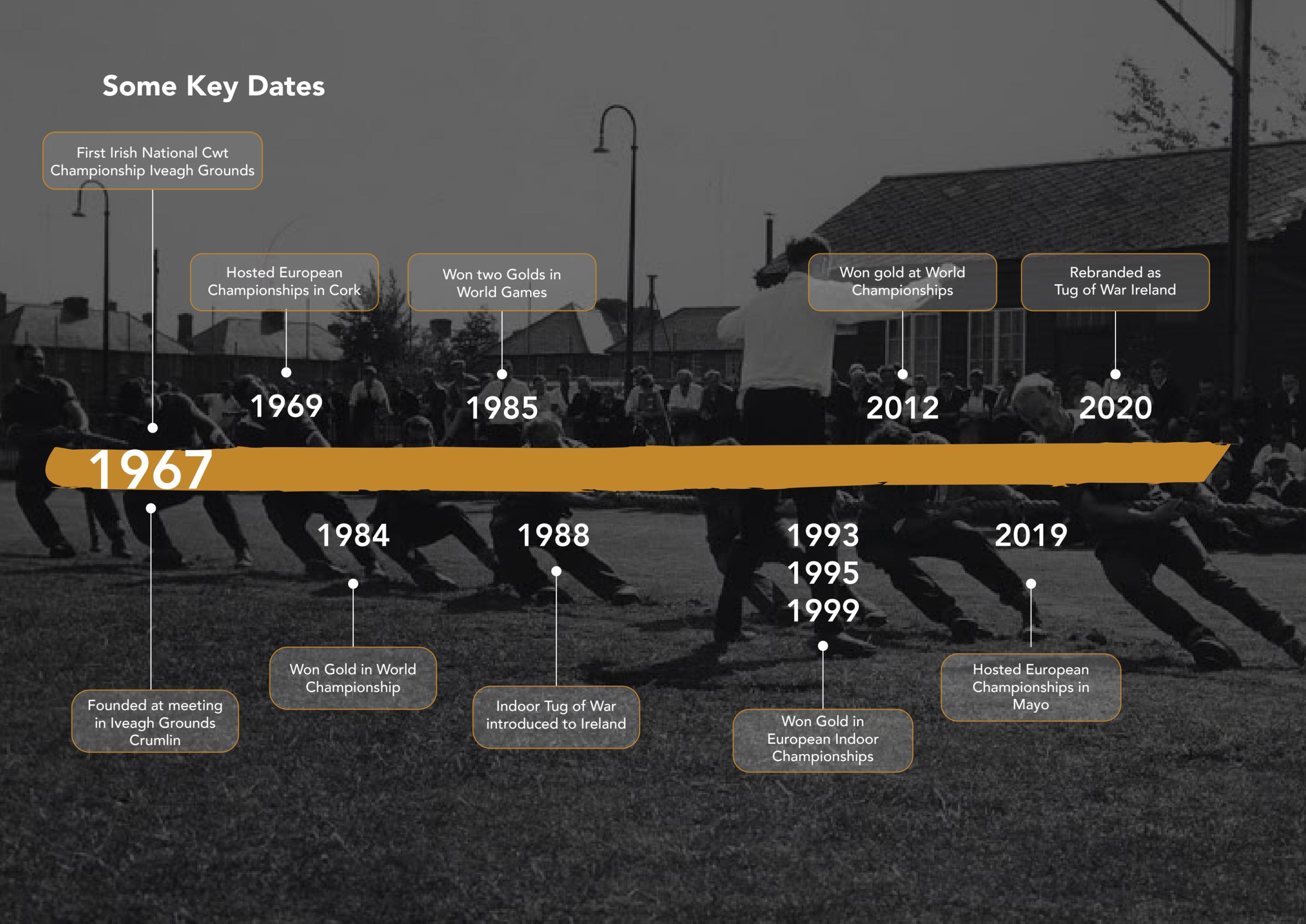
Founded at meeting in Iveagh Grounds Crumlin

Won Gold in World Championship

Indoor Tug of War introduced to Ireland

Won Gold in European Indoor Championships

Hosted European Championships in Mayo



Consultation

This plan has been developed following independent consultation with over 200 people. Members, clubs and those involved and interested in the growth of the organisation contributed. Stakeholders, athletes, referees, Sport Ireland, clubs, volunteers and corporate provided specific input through focus groups and one on one interviews and 166 people responded to an online survey. All stakeholders were invited to discuss and share their views openly on what is working well and what areas need to change to improve and strengthen the organisation.

Key Themes

- **Strategic Opportunities – Link with other sporting bodies**
- **Focus on High Performance - ability to represent your country be successful**
- **Engage with corporate partners for fun corporate event across the country**
- **Ensure more effective communication**
- **Build relationships with corporate partners to help spread word of Tug of War**
- **Utilise well known sports people as champions and athletes to “Tell the Tug of War Story”**
- **Identify unique selling points Tug of War has to offer - physical activity, teamwork, male and female mixed sport and mental health benefits**
- **Improve accessibility in communicating**

“Bring back fun community element of our sport”

“Focus specifically on development of female participation in Tug of War Plan.”

“Ensure we are professionally led at all levels”

“We want to be proud of our sport again”

“Focus on World Championship status not forgetting the local crossroads we come from”

This plan reflects these inputs and sets out to provide a clear direction for Tug of War Ireland to 2025. This strategic plan gives direction to the work of Tug of War Ireland over the next five years up to 2025 in carrying out its remit to grow our sport locally and to prepare and enable athletes achieve their full potential at an elite level.

Key Challenges

- Falling numbers of clubs and participants
- Focus required to encourage participation for females and youth
- Lack of commercial partners
- Implementing change at a rapid pace
- Creation of clear athlete pathways
- Competition from other sports

Where We Want to be in 2025

- Well governed organisation compliant with Code of Governance
- A gender diverse, inclusive welcoming organisation where everyone feels valued
- Strong club, school and third level network
- Communicating effectively
- Delivering world medals
- Working together to build a nationwide community of members

Overall Aims

- Increase participation by 50%
- Establish club in every County in Ireland
- Top two ranking in the world - female, male and mixed
- Establish robust corporate governance procedures at all levels
- Increase own income stream and diversify funding

Strategic Priorities

1 Increase Participation

Increase numbers who compete and get involved at all levels whilst establishing a strong sense of community which is essential for the growth and development of our sport

Goal 1

Build our Tug of War Community focus on what makes our sport unique - mixed, International pathway, fun and easy to start

Goal 2

Expand our club network and produce referee, officials and volunteers plan

Goal 3

Develop a Women in Sport Plan to increase participation by 100 % amongst women and girls

Goal 4

Introduce All Ireland Novice Competition

Goal 5

Focus on specific programmes for children and youth through schools, third level and clubs

Goal 6

Collaborate with other National Governing Bodies and Local Sports Partnerships to broaden reach

2 Build an effective High Performance system

Athlete pathways are key to our progression and operating at high performance level to deliver success is key

Goal 7

Develop Competition Pathway for females and males to clearly identify options for competing at highest levels

Goal 8

Set Up High Performance Committee to support athletes and instil best practice

Goal 9

Support athletes through production of training manuals and toolkits

Goal 10

Source appropriate Headquarters to operate and train in a high performance environment

Goal 11

Increase coach network through coach education and training

Goal 12

Retention of former pullers as coaches and ambassadors



3 Build Tug of War profile and communicate more effectively

Champion tug of war, tell our story, build our profile and image

Goal 13

Strengthen communication with clubs and volunteers through communications plan

Goal 14

Build digital profile for two way communication

Goal 15

Showcase Tug of War Athletes of both genders to inspire others

Goal 16

Build stakeholder relationships with key audiences including National Governing Bodies Local Sports Partnerships and media to build profile

Goal 17

Create, train and build a Public Relations Officer network at local level



4 Ensure Best Practice in governance and finance

Ensure we have the most appropriate structure and resources in place to maintain the highest standards of support, accountability and good governance

Goal 18

Comply with Code of Governance

Goal 19

Embed a culture of equality, integrity and inclusion

Goal 20

Roll out Corporate Fun Competitions

Goal 21

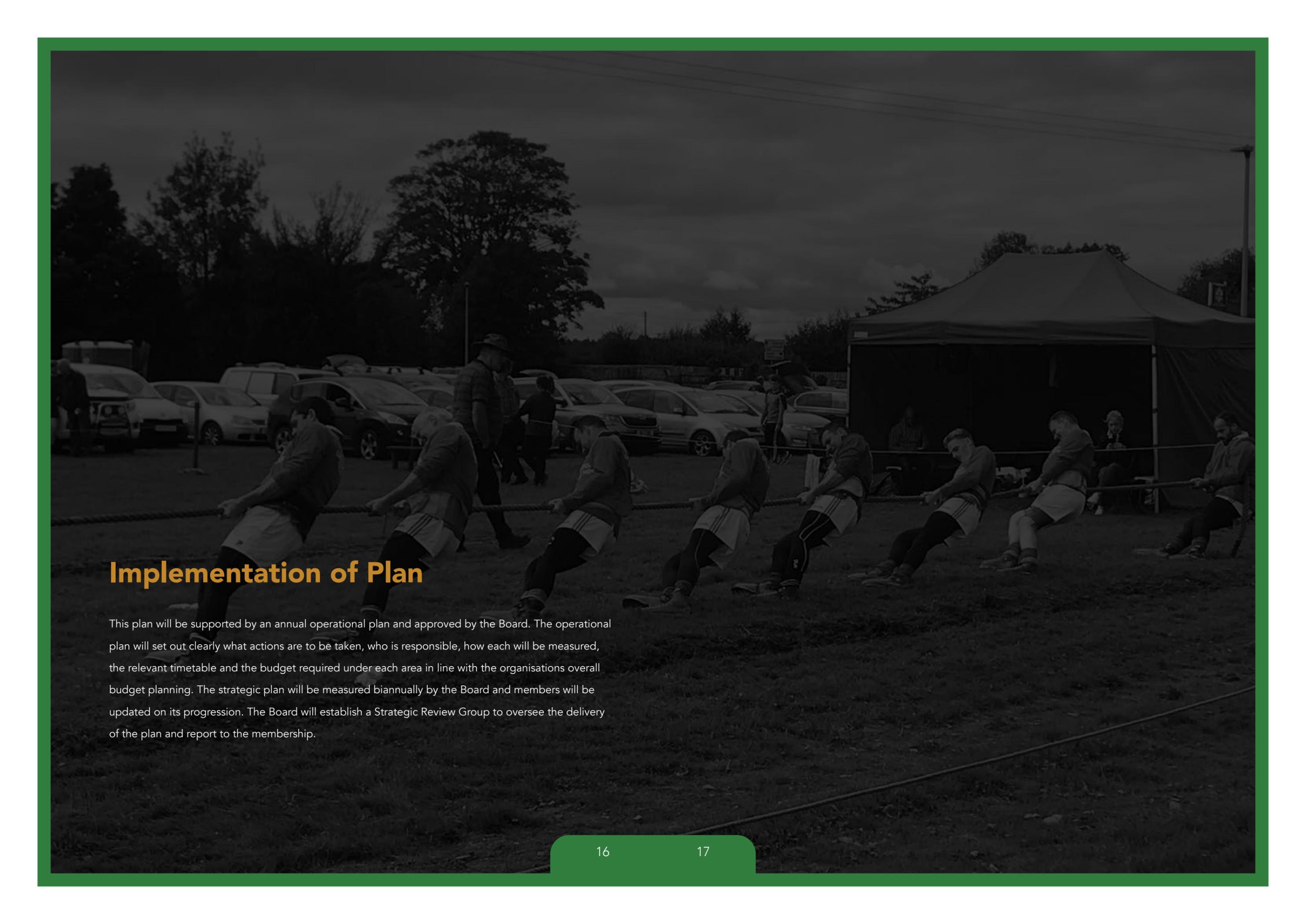
Identify new funding opportunities

Goal 22

Undertake commercial partnerships

Goal 23

Ensure our record keeping is up to date and compliant with GDPR



Implementation of Plan

This plan will be supported by an annual operational plan and approved by the Board. The operational plan will set out clearly what actions are to be taken, who is responsible, how each will be measured, the relevant timetable and the budget required under each area in line with the organisations overall budget planning. The strategic plan will be measured biannually by the Board and members will be updated on its progression. The Board will establish a Strategic Review Group to oversee the delivery of the plan and report to the membership.

Conclusion

This Strategic Plan for Tug of War Ireland is an important step in underpinning future success at national and international level. With a shared vision, passion and commitment we can plot a course to achieve our objectives together in communities across Ireland.

Acknowledgements

We would like to all who contributed to this strategic plan through focus groups, interviews, submissions and in the online survey. Thanks to the Tug of War Board members and Lisa Clancy of Clansult Ltd for their work on producing this strategic plan.

Appendix 1 Reports reviewed in consultation

The National Sports Policy 2018 -2027
Sport Ireland Statement of Strategy 2018 - 2022
Sport Ireland's Terms & Conditions of Funding
Sport Ireland's Code of Governance
Sport Ireland's Audit Programme
Sport Ireland's Ethics Programmes (Anti-Doping & Diversity, Inclusion and Safeguarding)
Sport Ireland's Women in Sport Policy
Sport Ireland's Policy on Participation in Sport by People with Disabilities

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