



Creating a Cricket Island

Strategic Plan 2021 – 2023





Foreword

Irish cricket is about to celebrate its 230th year since the first recorded match was played on these shores. 230 years. And how many of us realise that cricket was the most popular team sport in Ireland until the advent of the GAA?

The rollercoaster of Irish cricket history involves many twists and turns, many ups and downs. From popularity to retreat, from niche to increasingly mainstream status. We succeeded spectacularly at times, and we fell short at others.

But one truth remains: this was once a cricketing island – now with this plan we are putting in place the means of making this a 'cricket island' again. We aim to consolidate the gains of recent years, invest in the grassroots, grow the women's game and ensure we are as diverse, inclusive and welcoming as any sport.

A Strategic Plan is often seen as a dry, technocratic document - a document that outlines the broad direction of travel, several sought after objectives, and a smorgasbord of activities that an organisation seeks to achieve within that timeframe.

This is not that document.

This Strategic Plan is the first stage of a two-step programme for growth:

- Stage One (2021-2023): will see us continue to develop a world-class high performance system, and seek to rebalance our decision-making and investment to ensure our sport is built upon sustainable and solid foundations.
- Stage Two (2024-2031): is where we will target substantial growth in the game, driven by what we hope will be an accelerated ICC funding cycle.

Over the last decade, we made no secret of initially prioritising the elite end of our sport. This was a necessary decision. International on-field success, growth in profile and revenue, and 'Full Membership' itself relied on us having our shop window in good order.

More recently, we have substantially increased investment in the Provincial Unions to create longer-term sustainability for our sport at home. The return on that investment comes in talented staff off the pitch supporting clubs and volunteers, bringing new money into the game, developing coaches, creating safe spaces for the enjoyment of the game we love, thereby ensuring talent flowers on the pitch.

But we recognise that we need to do more.

From the outset of this plan's development we had a 'north star' to orient our thinking – that is, we wanted to find a way of re-balancing our priorities and make this a truly sustainable sport in the long-term.

This plan is owned by the Board, delivered by the organisation – but requires the support of the whole Irish cricket family. It will be the yardstick by which we are judged, and by which we judge ourselves.

We are already seen by the Irish sporting community as an entity built on good governance and public accountability, but our next three years will be as much about doing the right things, as doing things right.

This plan commits Cricket Ireland to continue to work collaboratively with the provincial unions, to support clubs and grassroots, and to grow the women's and girls' game ensuring diversity, inclusivity and a welcoming environment are included whilst still meeting our high-performance objectives.

We recognise that all parts of our sport are connected - a sustainable and vibrant grassroots will provide that necessary pipeline of talent to the elite teams. It is finding the balance between these two areas – and also behaving like a responsible business in a time of constraint – that we seek to address.

And at the centre of many actions will be the fan. In the past the fan was often an afterthought, but we will work to address the needs of the fan through new programmes and activities to grow and engage those vital supporters of Irish cricket.

Are we going to fundamentally revolutionise our sport over the next three years? No.

Are we going to strengthen our sport so that we are in a position to benefit and grow when the new ICC funding cycle begins? That's the plan.

We already have a good base to work from – consider these facts:

- The cricket 'industry': more than 80 people are now engaged on a full-time basis helping to grow Irish cricket in playing, coaching, administration, sports medicine, facility management, and promotion at all levels of the game;
- The economic impact: cricket's impact has grown substantially in terms of employment, match/event hosting, service provision (hotels, catering infrastructure, security, insurance, transportation etc);
- Our visibility: has grown exponentially through broadcast, digital, media and promotion in partnership with national and local authorities; and
- Our investment: we have strengthened our sport through Provincial Union development, Inter-Provincial Series reinvigoration, creation of the Super Series, opening of the High Performance Centre, creation of the Club Fund, a first-ever broadcast deal, investment in talent pathways.

However, we are honest enough to admit we have fallen short in a number of areas, particularly in the real and perceived lack of responsiveness to the needs of the grassroots and clubs.

On a plaque on a wall at Pembroke Cricket Club there is a line that resonated with me and, I believe, guides the essence of what this plan is about:

"Behind every international cricketer, there is first and foremost a great family and a great club".

This is what we are seeking to achieve - the recognition that all parts of our sport are connected, valued and celebrated.

If we can achieve that, we will be back on that road to once more to making this a 'cricket island'.

Warren Deutrom
Chief Executive, Cricket Ireland

Snapshot of Cricket 2021

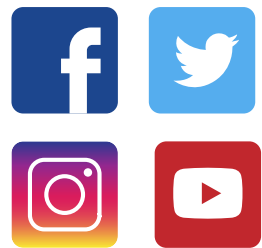


Irish Cricket in brief

- 1792:** Cricket was first formally played
- 1855:** First match by an 'Ireland' team
- 1923:** Irish Cricket Union formed
- 1993:** Ireland receives Associate Membership of ICC
- 2001:** Irish Cricket Union amalgamates with Irish Women's Cricket Union
- 2017:** Ireland receives Full Membership of ICC



1ST



ICC most followed global sporting body on social media

(ahead of Olympics and FIFA)



Global TV Reach

429 million global reach watched Irish home internationals in 2019

191 million global reach watched Ireland v India T20I series in 2018

The England v Ireland Test match was third most watched team to tour England after India and Australia in the last decade



Participation at a glance

52K people in Ireland play, officiate, administer, involved in school programmes a year (2007: 13K)

Domestic cricket:
5 Provincial Unions
120+ cricket clubs across Ireland

Gender:
81% male
19% female

27K kids participated in school programmes (2019)

In Leinster, 70% of participants from non-Irish origin



2.5 billion cricket fans globally

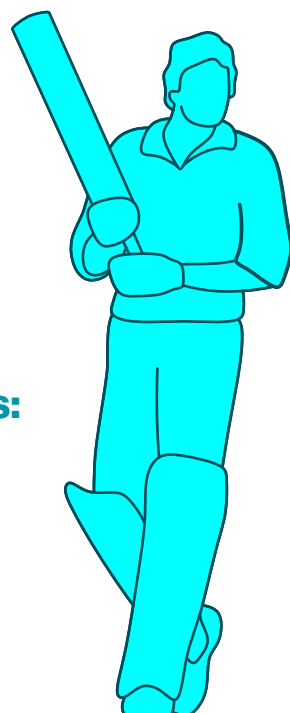
World Rankings:

Ireland Men

ODI: 11th
T20I: 11th

Ireland Women

ODI: 10th
T20I: 10th



World's second most popular sport

Irish players on senior contracts:

Men: 21
Women: 7

Cricket Ireland turnover

2005: €250K
2019: €10M



Context of Plan

Where are we?

Cricket in Ireland is a sport on the rise and is increasingly making itself felt off-the-field as much as on it.

The 'cricket industry' has grown to more than 80 people now employed, the economic impact of cricket is increasing and the sport's visibility is improving every year.

During the life of the last Strategic Plan (2016-2020) there were a numerous achievements of note, including:

- achieving Full Member status
- progressing Provincial Union development (governance and capacity building)
- major transitions of both men's and women's senior squads
- introducing our first cohort of contracted women's cricketers
- opening the High Performance Centre
- strengthening the Inter-Provincial Series and player pool
- creating the Club fund
- negotiating over 140 fixtures as part of the Future Tours Programme
- completing our first broadcast deal
- playing our first men's Test matches
- hosting the ICC conference
- drawing 20,000 fans to two sell-out T20Is against India
- being named Irish sports' National Governing Body of the Year 2019

While there were many successes, we recognise a number of areas that we fell short in. While progress was made, on many measures we are yet to be considered a 'mainstream sport' in the public's eye and further work is needed to build on this perception.

We are aware that the grassroots and clubs feel a sense of disconnection from Cricket Ireland – an area we have already started to rectify but this Plan addresses this area in greater detail.

Full Membership also created challenges, in that the funding that eventuated since the announcement was well short of that which we found was needed to transition the organisation to a truly 'Full Member entity'. This includes areas such as infrastructure and facilities, staff and resource levels and the financial resourcing to make the organisation sustainable. This has been exacerbated by the fact that we still do not have a dedicated national cricket stadium in Ireland, leading to consequential costs required to

continuously use temporary infrastructure at major matches.

Despite these challenges, we should not lose sight of the bigger picture.

We are now one of 12 full members of a global sport, and getting stronger all the time. Our progress at home and overseas is visible to our key stakeholders, and we have a vibrant future ahead.

Moving forward

We are splitting the strategic plan cycle into two phases, to move our planning cycle in alignment with the ICC funding cycle:

- Phase 1: Strengthening (2021 to 2023)
- Phase 2: Fresh growth (2024 to 2031)

To truly achieve our overarching goal of making cricket mainstream, there is an important need to allow us to consolidate after our achievements in the current cycle, in particular, achieving full member status 3 years ahead of schedule.

There is an important need to re-focus on the foundations of our game, ensuring our base is strong at club and regional level. It will also be a period which we will use to seek to take advantage of opportunities in the women's game, at the grassroots and in schools.

This means that this initial plan has a shorter planning cycle, but we will be more judicious in selecting our priorities and more focused on target outcomes and actions.

We cannot take on everything, but we will work closely with the Provincial Unions and other stakeholders within the game to deliver what we set out to achieve. In essence, this Strategic Plan aims to make cricket stronger – to make it more robust and sustainable, as well as diverse and inclusive.

Cricket Ireland Strategic Plan 2021-2023

The Cricket Ireland Strategic Plan 2021 is structured to provide transparency and accountability for our work over the next three years.

Our Strategic Goal

To strengthen Irish cricket from grass roots to international level and position our game for its next phase of growth.

Our Strategic Priorities

- Deliver on-field success and qualify for ICC tournaments
- Increase participation numbers at the grassroots of our game
- Establish infrastructure and facilities required as a Full Member
- Grow the women's game
- Support continued Provincial Union development

Our Building Blocks

The structure of this plan will be built around five key areas:

- A renewed **Club Game Focus**
- Invest in **Growth Opportunities**
- Create **Fit-for-Purpose Facilities**
- Deliver world-class **Talent & Performance Programmes**
- Enable an **Organisational Transition to Full Membership**

Through the development of this Strategic Plan, a number of key themes emerged and will be addressed in the following pages.

Key themes emerging



Building Blocks of Strategy

Club Game Focus

Our overall goal is to strengthen our club infrastructure in each province with practical, impactful and tailored supports co-ordinated through each Provincial Union that reflects the importance of the clubs as the core foundation of the game on the island.

What we're aiming to achieve

1. Every club has a development plan with a clear focus on the key priorities for that club
2. Dedicated support resources coordinated through each Provincial Union assigned to each club providing practical solutions/advice/tools to club officers/officials
3. Club membership base:
 - Player retention - adult playing members retained or growing
 - New members club membership up by 10%
 - Club volunteers recruited and retained
 - Club volunteers feel supported and appreciated
4. Two new coaching courses developed and delivered
5. Online coaching platform operational
6. Coach Developer workforce in place across our club network
7. 20% increase in the number of qualified coaches across the club network

We will achieve these by:

- Developing a clear model that identifies and recognises best-practice in all areas of club life
- Appointing dedicated personnel to support clubs across Provincial Unions
- Providing support services, resources and tools to ensure each club is supported in their development journey
- Creating 'club roadmaps' tailored for each club that clearly identifies each clubs' priorities to become more sustainable
- Developing volunteers (coaches, officials, groundsmen, administrators) at club level through targeted supports
- Working with Provincial Unions and clubs to build 'club clusters' to provide structured cricket opportunities for female players around Ireland
- Aligning the Club Connects programme across all provinces
- Creating an online coaching platform to enable access to coaching resources and courses
- Building a workforce of Coach Developers within the club environment to create sustainability and excellence from the ground up
- Developing and delivering new coach programmes to meet local needs
- Recognising the role of club volunteers through better understanding our volunteer base and put in place appropriate recognition actions





Building Blocks of Strategy

Growth Opportunities

Our overall goal is to target specific areas with potential for growth through nationally designed programmes and initiatives delivered through our provincial structures.

What we're aiming to achieve

1. High quality mass participation programme design with supporting materials in place
2. Programme reach through clubs, schools and communities increased
3. Collaborate and engage with Provincial Unions to empower them to deliver programmes in their regions and meet agreed targets
4. National sponsors supporting development programmes and delivering high levels of awareness and engagement
5. Increase in number of Women & Girls actively involved in the game through delivering on the Women & Girl's Cricket Roadmap
6. Diversity & Inclusion Strategy agreed and being implemented
7. Increase in engagement of culturally-diverse sectors of the community across the Provincial Unions

We will achieve these by:

- Creating and delivering mass participation programmes in clubs and schools targeting different age groups; one specific programme targeting girls
- Ensuring a consistent approach to cricket development and a clear pathway that is transparent to parents and kids, enabling provincial resources to roll out these programmes in a tailored way reflecting the local needs in each area, and attracting a national commercial partner to support our development programmes
- Delivering on the actions in Women & Girl's Cricket Roadmap
- Retaining our externally-funded resource in women's development to oversee delivery of the Women & Girl's Cricket Roadmap
- Building greater and sustained visibility around the representative women's game
- Delivering Diversity & Inclusion training to Cricket Ireland & Provincial Union Boards/Staff and workshops to our club network
- Developing coaching and officiating opportunities for women
- Develop an engagement strategy to increase the connection, reach and inclusion within our game of various cultural communities across the island with an existing love of the game
- Implementation of gender balance and diversification policies (and KPIs)



Building Blocks of Strategy Fit for Purpose Facilities

Our overall goal is to create the cricket facilities to support our equal access objectives at National, Regional and Club level.

What we're aiming to achieve

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High quality playing and practice facilities in each of the major Provincial Unions 2. High quality indoor facility available in each Provincial Union 3. Contracted players have regular access to high quality grass facilities | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. High Performance Centre - Phase 2 complete 5. Planning permission and funding in place for National Sports Campus Stadium Project 6. Improved range of facilities at International & Regional grounds to support our needs (playing and non-playing) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. 100% increase in cricket clubs accessing grant schemes for capital investment in facilities 8. Local councils providing high quality community facilities for cricket clubs |
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We will achieve these by:

- Providing support to clubs in maximising grant applications for investment in facilities giving expert advice, ensuring high quality application processes etc.
- Lobbying government and local councils to provide high quality community club facilities including well maintained public grounds, club houses facilities, changing rooms, toilets etc.
- Working with clubs to ensure there is an adequate base of pitches/infrastructure to deliver on all cricket under Cricket Ireland auspices including playing pitches, clubhouse facilities, good broadband/connectivity for consistent, quality and cost effective livestreaming options
- Enhancing regional playing and practice facilities through:
 - Purpose built high quality outdoor (grass and artificial) regional centre in each major Provincial Union
 - Access to regional high quality indoor training area for cricket in each Provincial Union
 - Irish contracted players able to train in each Provincial Union in high quality grass facilities
 - Good collaboration between Cricket Ireland & Provincial Unions in regard to sharing of facilities
 - Expert personnel (ground staff) to support the development and maintenance of International grounds
- Completing High Performance Centre - Phase 2
- Building a high quality indoor cricket facility at the National Sports Campus (NSC)
- Progressing the NSC Cricket Stadium project:
 - Securing stadium recognition in NSC Masterplan, and progress design and planning permission
 - Securing funding support from government and sponsors for International ground
 - Building playing pitch block (pitch, outfield, drainage works etc.)





Building Blocks of Strategy

Talent & Performance Programmes

Our overall goal is to ensure that our International teams at Men's, Women's and Underage level are competitive and consistently qualify for high profile ICC events.

What we're aiming to achieve

1. Men's Senior Team qualify for all major ICC tournaments
2. Women's Senior Team qualify for all major ICC tournaments
3. Strong fixture programming in advance of major events and for Wolves programme
4. More Northern Ireland-based players involved in Super Series
5. Increased number of players involved in T20 franchise cricket
6. Our best players are playing in our Inter-Pro/Super Series structures
7. Under 19's (Men & Women) qualify for respective world cups
8. Strong pathway programme in place to provide high quality development opportunities
9. Increased volume of player scholarship and placement opportunities

We will achieve these by:

- Ensuring we have a white-ball focus for our Men's High Performance programme:
 - Prioritise qualification for 2022 T20WC, 2023 CWC, WCSL 2024-26
 - Ensure appropriate number of ODI's and T20's ahead of major events
 - Ensure Wolves competition programme against high-quality opposition
 - Review Inter-Pro series and ensure it is fit-for-purpose to prepare players for international cricket
- Improving the competitiveness of our women's High Performance Team:
 - Prioritise qualification for 2022 Women's WCSL, 2023 T20WC
 - Ensure appropriate number of ODI's and T20's ahead of major events
 - Ensure Super Series fit-for-purpose to prepare players for International cricket; include more Northern Ireland-based players
- Increasing the opportunities for our Senior Men/Women to participate in T20 franchise cricket
- Ensuring the right level of High Performance coaching resource is in place to support our teams
- Developing the Talent Pathway Programme to continue delivering future talent to the High Performance squads:
 - Providing a competition programme of fixtures for under-age squads
 - Preparing for men's and women's under-19 world cups
 - Ensuring Academy player opportunities in Inter-Pro and Super Series competitions and ensuring quality fixtures for both men's and women's Academies
 - Developing closer collaboration with Provincial Union Pathway programmes
- Creating innovative player scholarships and placements to support High Performance Talent Pathway:
 - Reconnect with overseas men's and women's player programmes specific to the needs of each individual players
 - Seek further cost effective opportunities for players to be hosted by clubs
 - Establish further links with educational establishments for home-based contracted players and players who can qualify for Ireland

Building Blocks of Strategy

Organisational Transition to Full Membership

Our overall goal is to ensure Cricket Ireland is stronger, more robust, financially secure and is further on its journey to building towards 'full member' capability.

What we're aiming to achieve

1. Leveraging ICC influence positively in key decision areas (e.g. ICC Funding Model, ICC Events)
2. Financial stability and security achieved
3. Increased revenue streams from Broadcast, Digital, Sponsorship, Match Income and other commercial activity
4. Increased Government funding (Sport Ireland & Sport Northern Ireland) achieved
5. Well structured, robust management, budgeting, governance and risk processes in place
6. Organisational review and restructure implemented to support full member status
7. Cricket Ireland/Provincial Union alignment working well with clarity of roles & responsibilities and effective working partnerships in practice
8. Merit based financial policy for Provincial Unions in place
9. Digital Strategy agreed and being implemented

We will achieve these by:

Achieving long-term financial stability and security:

- Secure agreed minimum funding levels from the ICC for the next 3 years in advance of the new ICC Rights Cycle
- Agree a new robust Broadcast agreement to deliver a substantial, financially secure revenue stream
- Secure significant match income revenue streams
- Maximise sponsorship and philanthropy revenue income through regular independent valuation, exploring digital opportunities, building a CRM solution to manage existing sponsors, creating a sales pipeline for unsold/new inventory, identifying Philanthropy opportunities
- Increase Government funding through Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland
- Build robust and agile cost & budget management, governance and risk processes across all areas of operation

Building the organisational capability to support our objectives in the medium to long term:

- Review of Cricket Ireland organisational structure to ensure we embrace the opportunities afforded to us by ICC full membership

- Develop succession plans at Board and Executive level
- Ensure clarity of alignment between Cricket Ireland/Provincial Unions across a range of activities
- Make Cricket Ireland a great place to work, positive culture, staff development, recognition and retention
- Developing a financial policy for the Provincial Unions that ensures a minimum financial distribution to all Provincial Unions but empowers Cricket Ireland to reward merit based achievement by individual Provincial Unions
- Maximising our status as a full member to positively influence key ICC decisions (e.g. ICC Funding Model redesign, ICC event hosting)
- Developing a Broadcast & Digital Strategy to support high quality digital media and commercial opportunities including website redevelopment, fan-based platforms, commercial positioning, platform for sponsors, efficient national registration and administration platform for Cricket Ireland, Provincial Unions and Clubs (including livescoring, databases, admin resources etc.)





Implementation

Our approach to implementation of this Strategic Plan will be critical to its success. To achieve our objectives the following activities will take place.

Cricket Ireland's Senior Management team will:

- undertake regular reviews to ensure key activities are aligned with delivery of this strategy, and to ensure there is a continued balance between priorities and the financial/organisational resources to deliver the plan;
- deliver periodic staff review sessions on progress of the Strategic Plan;
- coordinate with Provincial Unions on progress of the Strategic Plan;
- provide confidence to key stakeholders (including the Board) with respect to the progress and achievements along the journey to 2023.

Cricket Ireland's Board will:

- undertake periodic Board reviews on the strategy progress, including review of key decisions and allocation of resources; and
- perform an annual 'deep dive' review of Strategic Plan progress.

For fans and stakeholders, Cricket Ireland will:

- post performance reports on its website for fans and stakeholders to review progress on the Strategic Plan.



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