



SPÓRT ÉIREANN
SPORT IRELAND

Sport Ireland
Paris Cycle Review



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Foreword

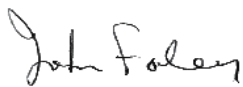
Quadrennial reviews have become a staple of the Irish high performance system since first being introduced in 2000, after the Sydney Games. These reviews provide an opportunity to identify key learnings to ensure Ireland's high performance system continues to progress and allow for reflection on the system's development from Cycle to Cycle.

While the aforementioned reviews have taken on different forms over the years, they have always incorporated both a Games and system component. In recognition of the system's maturity over the last near decade, it is timely to review the system and the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games separately, in order to give each the sole focus that is required. As such, the Paris Cycle Review is the first system-only review undertaken by Sport Ireland.

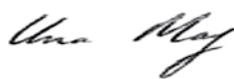
Using the seven pillars of the Sport Ireland High Performance Strategy (2021-2032) as a guiding framework, feedback, insights and opinion were received from the National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) in receipt of High Performance Programme Funding. In addition, key stakeholders such as the Olympic Federation of Ireland, Paralympics Ireland, Sport Northern Ireland, the Sport Northern Ireland Sports Institute and the Department, as well as colleagues in the Sport Ireland Institute, also heavily contributed to the review process. Based on this, Portas Consulting have provided a comprehensive and robust review of how the system has performed throughout the Paris Cycle, while identifying a series of 20 recommendations to ensure that Irish high performance sport continues on its upwards trajectory.

We would like to thank all of those who have contributed to the Paris Cycle Review. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the contribution of athletes; over 185 athletes engaged in the survey component of the review process. As reflected in the development of the Sport Ireland High Performance Strategy (2021-2032), Sport Ireland places a priority on capturing the athlete voice at critical points of the system's development.

The implementation of the identified recommendations will form a key piece of work for Sport Ireland, as we get ready to enter the Los Angeles and Brisbane Cycles.



John Foley
Sport Ireland Chairperson



Úna May
Sport Ireland CEO



Olive Loughnane
High Performance Committee Chairperson

Introduction to the Paris Cycle Review

The National Sports Policy, published in 2018, outlined a clear commitment to achieve a yearly investment of €30 million in high performance sport by 2027.

This year, 2024, investment by Sport Ireland reached an unprecedented €25 million funding for high performance sport. This record level of investment has followed a period of sustained growth in funding for Irish sport, with overall funding to National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) increasing by 60% since 2018.

Fuelled by increasing levels of investment and Sport Ireland's inaugural High Performance Strategy (2021-2032), the high performance system has matured significantly over the past decade. From a performance perspective, Ireland has seen an uplift in international success, with over 500 major medals won since 2017. This has bolstered Ireland's reputation on the global sports landscape, and demonstrates progression against the medal targets outlined in Sport Ireland's High Performance Strategy (2021-2032). As an organisation, Sport Ireland has also evolved significantly – with key successes including the recruitment of the first Head of High Performance Coaching, and the launch of the Campus Masterplan, which presents a clear vision for the development of the Sport Ireland Campus over the coming decade. Advancements to the International Carding Scheme have enabled increased levels of support for athletes, creating greater athlete-centricity and a clear, system-wide focus on welfare.

This maturity, and the increased levels of investment, have therefore created a greater need than ever for Ireland to make targeted and prioritised investments into the high performance system. In recognition of this, Sport Ireland has undertaken a strategic review to help guide its future investments and decision-making, with the aim of ensuring the system is well-positioned to maximise the potential of Irish high performance sport in future Olympic and Paralympic Cycles.

Reviews of Ireland's performances at the Olympic and Paralympic Games have been a feature of the high performance system since the Sydney Games in 2000, and are now seen as an integral component to enable continuous reflection and refinement of the system, on a Cycle-to-Cycle basis. Historically, the reviews have had more of a Games focus, while touching on elements of the system as a whole. As the high performance system has developed and matured over the last decade, it is now in a place where separate reviews for the Games and the system are warranted. The Paris Cycle Review is therefore a first-of-its-kind review, and is indicative of the increased maturity and professionalism of Ireland's high performance system.

In December 2023, Sport Ireland enlisted Portas Consulting, a global strategy consulting firm dedicated to the sports industry, to undertake Ireland's first high performance system review for the Paris Cycle (2021-2024). The purpose of the review was to provide an objective, evidence-based assessment of how the Irish high performance system has operated and performed throughout the Paris Cycle.

To do this, Portas Consulting undertook an extensive and highly consultative review process, delivered from December 2023 to April 2024. This involved the following methods:

1. Interviews with key personnel from a range of stakeholders

- Sport Ireland
- Sport Ireland High Performance Unit
- Sport Ireland High Performance Committee
- The Sport Ireland Institute
- The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
- The Olympic Federation of Ireland
- Paralympics Ireland
- Sport Northern Ireland
- The Sport Northern Ireland Sports Institute

2. Interviews with Chief Executives (or equivalent) and Performance Directors/Performance Leads at the 19 NGBs in receipt of High Performance Programme Funding

- Athletics Ireland
- Badminton Ireland
- Canoeing Ireland
- Cricket Ireland
- Cycling Ireland
- Golf Ireland
- Gymnastics Ireland
- Hockey Ireland
- Horse Sport Ireland
- Irish Athletic Boxing Association
- Irish Judo Association
- Irish Rugby Football Union
- Irish Sailing Association
- Taekwondo Ireland
- Paralympics Ireland (athletics and swimming)
- Pentathlon Ireland
- Rowing Ireland
- Swim Ireland
- Triathlon Ireland

3. Athlete Survey – completed by 187 athletes from the 19 NGBs in receipt of High Performance Programme Funding (See Appendix A for key survey insights)

4. Coach & Support Staff Survey – completed by 94 coaches and support staff from the 19 NGBs in receipt of High Performance Programme Funding (See Appendix A for key survey insights)

5. Focus Group with Heads of Performance Support (HoPS) and Heads of Services (HoS) at the Sport Ireland Institute

6. Analysis of Sport Ireland documentation – this included funding and support data, funding applications, NGB Mid-Year Reviews, Talent Profiles, and NGB Self-Assessments (completed January 2024)

7. International benchmarking – conducted detailed research into world-class high performance systems globally including, but not limited to, New Zealand, Denmark, Australia, Great Britain, Canada and the Netherlands. Case studies have therefore been included throughout this report, to provide a global picture of high performance systems/initiatives. Important to note that Sport Ireland, in conjunction with other key stakeholders, are already doing good work in related areas

¹ Athletes across the system were invited to complete the survey, through their respective NGBs. This included both non-senior and senior athletes, as well as those who receive/do not receive financial/performance support through the Sport Ireland International Carding Scheme (or equivalent).

This report provides a series of robust findings and recommendations on the current landscape of the high performance system, for Sport Ireland and other key stakeholders in the Irish high performance landscape. These are objective and evidence-based, drawing on data, insights and knowledge captured by Portas Consulting throughout the review process. Sport Ireland will leverage all findings and recommendations captured in this report to help guide future decision-making, investments, and strategies for the further development of the Irish high performance system in upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Cycles.



High Performance Sport in Ireland

Sport Ireland's Vision, Philosophy and Strategy

Sport Ireland's High Performance Strategy (2021-2032) outlines its vision, philosophy, and strategic priorities for the ongoing development of Irish high performance sport.

Vision

Ireland aims to consistently achieve podium success on the world stage, inspiring the nation and future generations to participate and engage in sport. Key targets include 8-10 medals at future Olympic Games and 12-16 medals at future Paralympic Games, as well as a significant increase in the number of medals won at World and European competitions.

Philosophy

Sport Ireland's athletes and people are at the heart of Sport Ireland's strategy. All activities are underpinned by a series of clearly-defined values: Ambition, Trust, Commitment, Innovation, Accountability, and Integrity.

Strategy

The High Performance Strategy will be delivered in partnership with the broader high performance community. The strategy is underpinned by a focus on seven strategic pillars (Figure 1).



* Including: Government, Sport Ireland, Sport Northern Ireland, National Governing Bodies, Olympic Federation of Ireland, Paralympics Ireland, higher education institutions

Fig 1. The Seven Strategic Pillars of the High Performance Strategy (2021-2032)

This report is structured around Sport Ireland's Seven Pillars. For each pillar, Portas Consulting have identified and developed robust findings and recommendations, which will help inform Sport Ireland's approach to further developing the high performance system over the Los Angeles (2025-2028) and Brisbane (2029-2032) Cycles.

Summary of Recommendations



PILLAR 1: FOCUSED PERFORMANCE INVESTMENT

1. Raise awareness of the need to maintain high levels of investment in the system
2. Undertake a comprehensive review of the funding allocation strategy to further inform the ongoing approach to funding high performance sport



PILLAR 2: ATHLETE PERFORMANCE & HOLISTIC SUPPORT

3. Invest in deepening and disseminating knowledge and research on para athletes
4. Collaborate internationally and nationally to develop policies and initiatives that better support NGBs to deliver athlete welfare initiatives
5. Conduct Culture Reviews to increase athlete-centricity in all future Cycles
6. Design a clear approach to support NGBs to keep retiring athletes within the system
7. Develop a strategy to increase investment and support for the development of formal, clear, and aligned athlete pathways for all high performance sports



PILLAR 3: WORLD CLASS COACHING & SUPPORT SERVICES

8. Support the Sport Ireland Institute on transitioning to a hybrid employment model and formalising the relationship with the Sport Northern Ireland Sports Institute
9. Support the Sport Ireland Institute to explore the potential of a regional model for delivering performance services to athletes outside of Dublin
10. Develop and communicate a clear 10-year vision for high performance coaching in Ireland with dedicated resources and investment



PILLAR 4: BUSINESS STRUCTURES & PLANNING

11. Continue to support NGBs on the development of professional governance structures
12. Design a strategy to increase proactivity and independence of NGBs – with a focus on addressing capability gaps within the system
13. Support NGBs to undertake independent strategic reviews in future Cycles
14. Continue to explore opportunities to maximise the commercial potential of Irish sport



PILLAR 5: PARTNERSHIPS

15. Prioritise collaboration and partnership-formation to support the growth of the system, specifically targeting third level institutions, the private sector, and other world-class nations
16. Increase engagement with stakeholders to raise awareness of successes within the system, create alignment, and secure buy-in to the High Performance Strategy (2021-2032)



PILLAR 6: WORLD CLASS FACILITIES & EQUIPMENT

17. Identify and target impactful, immediate opportunities to unlock funding for facilities development
18. Engage stakeholders on delivery of the Campus Masterplan to build clarity and confidence



PILLAR 7: RESEARCH & INNOVATION

19. Develop a comprehensive, joined-up strategy for innovation in Irish sport
20. Target partnerships with the private sector to gain a competitive advantage in this area

The System's Performance against Sport Ireland's Seven Pillars

Portas Consulting's Findings
& Recommendations

1






Pillar 1: **Focused Performance Investment**



Prioritisation and performance

FINDINGS:

-  **Increased investment in the system has had a significant and meaningful impact**
All stakeholders and NGBs highlighted the positive impacts of the projected record €90 million investment¹ in Ireland's high performance system during the Paris Cycle. Impacts included greater professionalisation, an increasing ability to focus on holistic support for athletes, and positive progression against the targets laid out in Sport Ireland's High Performance Strategy (2021-2032). This investment has enabled Ireland to surpass the target of 270 medals across the Paris Cycle, as laid out in the Sports Action Plan (2021-2023).
-  **The introduction of multi-annual funding had a positive impact for NGBs**
Multi-annual funding has had a significant impact on NGBs' abilities to plan in the long-term. This enabled the delivery of more long-term, strategic decision-making, and the recruitment of high-quality staff across the Paris Cycle. The provision of multi-annual funding should remain an integral component of the Irish high performance system going forwards.
-  **There is room for further prioritisation and focus of funding in future Cycles**
The allocation of High Performance Programme Funding to 20 programmes (across 19 NGBs) has been the right number during the Paris Cycle, according to stakeholders. However, international benchmarking suggests that increased prioritisation of funding could support Ireland to achieve the Olympic and Paralympic medal targets outlined in the High Performance Strategy (2021-2032).



CASE STUDY: HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT NEW ZEALAND



Prioritises high performance investment into 10 'Podium Sports' – those with a recent history of podium performances at pinnacle events, and strong potential of podium performances at future pinnacle events.

An additional 34 'Aspirational Sports' are supported through a separate fund – those with cultural significance or strategic alignment to New Zealand's objectives. These NGBs are supported with targeted investments, including campaign support for specific athletes, athlete wellbeing and pathway development.

¹ Final figure will not be known until the end of 2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS:



Raise awareness of the need to maintain high levels of investment in the system

Sport Ireland and other key stakeholders should continue to prioritise raising awareness about the importance of ongoing public investments in the high performance system, emphasising the importance of this funding for achieving targets outlined in the High Performance Strategy (2021-2032), over the Los Angeles and Brisbane Cycles. In addition, with social impact playing an increasingly important role in unlocking funding for high performance sport globally, awareness-raising initiatives should also highlight the social impacts of the government's investments to maintain and secure funding for high performance sport in all future Cycles.



Undertake a comprehensive review of the funding allocation strategy to further inform the ongoing approach to funding high performance sport

A comprehensive review of Sport Ireland's funding allocation strategy is required in the upcoming Cycle. Specifically, the review should aim to identify sports with the greatest potential to contribute significantly to Ireland's major international performance targets. This will enable Sport Ireland to identify an optimum number of sports to receive High Performance Programme Funding.

The review process should involve significant research and engagement with world-class high performance sports systems globally, to understand and identify best-practice in funding for high performance sport.

Portas Consulting preliminary hypotheses suggest that Sport Ireland should consider an increasingly focused approach to funding:

Sports identified as having 'significant potential' to contribute to Ireland's major international performance targets in the next two Cycles (i.e., Olympic and Paralympic medal targets) should remain within Sport Ireland's High Performance Programme Funding (the top funding category). Factors for consideration in this tier should include performance at elite events, talent depth in development pathways, and the calibre of NGB staff. It is critical that sports in the top funding category also have appropriate and professional structures to underpin performances.

The second category should include a wider number of NGBs, likely those in an earlier stage of development than the top category – i.e., those with 'future potential' to contribute to Ireland's international performance targets. These sports could be supported with tailored investment and services, focusing on developing pathways to build talent pipelines, enhancing professionalism, and ensuring sustainability through governance and business planning upskilling.

2



Pillar 2: **Athlete Performance & Holistic Support**



Athlete welfare, career, competition, and transitions

FINDINGS:



Unprecedented athlete performances in the Paris Cycle

In the Paris Cycle to date, Irish High Performance Programme Funded sports have won 309 medals², surpassing the Sports Action Plan (2021-2023) target of 270 medals in total across the Paris Cycle. Progression against performance targets also signals the positive impacts of increased investments in high performance sport in Ireland.



Challenges identified by Paralympics Ireland

Paralympics Ireland identified some challenges during the Cycle, which they have started working proactively with Sport Ireland to overcome. The review identified several factors contributing to Ireland's performances in para sports, including a series of high-profile athlete retirements, facilities not being equipped to support the training needs of para athletes, and limited knowledge of the needs of para athletes within the system.

Paralympics Ireland, in collaboration with Sport Ireland, has begun to take steps to address these challenges within the system for the 2028 and 2032 Cycles. This has included introducing the NextGen programme, aimed at identifying the next generation of Irish Paralympic talent, supporting the transitions of para swimming and para athletics to Swim Ireland and Athletics Ireland respectively, and implementing the Tokyo Review recommendations. Sport Ireland's ongoing support to Paralympics Ireland will be critical in future Cycles, particularly to ensure para athletes' experiences within the high performance system remain positive and impactful.



There is a need for increased emphasis on athlete welfare and safeguarding

Globally, and within Ireland, there is increasing pressure on high performance sport systems to deliver holistic environments for nurturing and developing athletes. Welfare, culture, and holistic support are critical to this.

In 2021, Sport Ireland introduced a Culture Evolution Programme to support NGBs to protect and maximise the experience of athletes, coaches, and support staff. This includes a Culture Review process, an audit delivered by the High Performance Culture and Integrity Advisor, which was undertaken by 30% of NGBs during the Paris Cycle. This highlights NGBs' increasing awareness of the importance of culture and welfare for their athletes.

However, consultation with stakeholders, including coaches and athletes, highlighted a need for greater and more comprehensive focus on athlete welfare, and a lack of understanding of 'best-practice' on this topic. Sport Ireland's ongoing support for NGBs to deliver robust, athlete-centric welfare policies and initiatives will therefore be critical in future Cycles.

² Including major medals won by non-High Performance Programme Funded sports, the total medal count sits at 324 (as of the 8th July 2024).

High proportion of NGBs are struggling with athlete transitions

Many NGBs are failing to keep retired athletes within their high performance programmes, despite the clear benefits of doing so – including retaining knowledge and maximising the athlete voice. Athlete consultation also highlighted concerns over the level of life skills support and services provided within NGBs, which are critical to supporting athletes’ smooth transitions from their professional career to life after sport. Collaboration between Sport Ireland and key stakeholders to enhance support in this area would therefore be beneficial for the system as a whole.

Athlete pathways have historically been neglected

Investments and support for pathway development are critical to ensure future performance outcomes. However, Ireland has historically neglected athlete pathways due to insufficient knowledge and resources. This has created a lack of formal, structured pathways for athletes to develop within Ireland – limiting NGBs’ influence over the development of athletes, and increasing the likelihood of athletes transferring to other national sports systems. All stakeholders acknowledge the need for greater investment and support for NGBs to develop stronger athlete pathways.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Invest in deepening and disseminating knowledge and research on para athletes**

Design a strategy to build knowledge and research on the distribution of individuals with disabilities across the country. Leverage this data to support Paralympics Ireland with implementation of a more targeted approach to identifying and developing athletes. Disseminate knowledge to increase stakeholders' comprehension of para athletes' needs, creating more positive and impactful experiences for para athletes within the system.
- Collaborate internationally and nationally to develop policies and initiatives that better support NGBs to deliver athlete welfare initiatives**

Sport Ireland should increase its collaboration with international sports organisations to understand best practice in athlete welfare standards. Partnerships with academic institutions (e.g., third level education) could also support Sport Ireland to identify insights and strategies to foster positive cultures within high performance sport. The identified knowledge and expertise should be disseminated to NGBs through a series of educational programmes (i.e., webinars, guidance), with a specific focus on ensuring all NGB staff understand the importance of athlete welfare in high performance sport. Sport Ireland should also facilitate knowledge-sharing opportunities between NGBs, to create alignment and raise welfare standards across the system.
- Conduct Culture Reviews to increase athlete-centricity in all future Cycles**

Sport Ireland should ensure all NGBs undertake the Culture Review process by the end of the Los Angeles Cycle. This will support each NGB to identify critical focus areas that require addressing to create stronger, more athlete-centric cultures, in line with Sport Ireland's athlete welfare policies. In the long-term, Sport Ireland should consider enforcing Culture Reviews within each Cycle – i.e., making this a mandatory process for all NGBs in receipt of High Performance Programme Funding. This would ensure NGBs are regularly considering culture in all aspects of decision-making, and ensure welfare is front-of-mind in all future Cycles.
- Design a clear approach to support NGBs to keep retiring athletes within the system**

Conduct benchmarking to identify high performance programmes (nationally and internationally) with strong transition programmes for retiring athletes. Facilitate knowledge-sharing and educational opportunities to educate NGBs on best practices in supporting athletes in their transitions out of competitive sport, whilst maximising their opportunities and incentives to stay within the system. Sport Ireland's focus should be on supporting and upskilling NGBs to enable them to deliver more formal and targeted support to retiring athletes, with the aim of retaining expertise and talent in the system.

CASE STUDY: HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT NEW ZEALAND



Supports current and retired athletes to undertake third level education and vocational qualifications alongside their careers in sport via the Prime Minister's Athlete Scholarship. Selection criteria is based on results achieved at selected international events. Financial awards of up to €10,000 per year, per athlete, enabling athletes to develop skills and gain qualifications that support their transitions to life after sport.

Sport Ireland should also explore opportunities to support transitioning athletes to access education and career opportunities – these could be incorporated into the Sport Ireland Athlete Career Transition Programme. Initiatives such as facilitating relationship-building between NGBs and the private sector and increasing funding to provide financial grants for transitioning athletes to undertake educational qualifications should be prioritised.

➔ Develop a strategy to increase investment and support for the development of formal, clear, and aligned athlete pathways for all high performance sports

Through extensive consultation with NGBs and pathway stakeholders, Sport Ireland should develop a clear strategy to support the development of athlete pathways. This should be informed by extensive international benchmarking, including engagement with Sport Northern Ireland, to identify best-practice learnings in pathway development. The strategy should also consider opportunities to capitalise on Ireland’s unique sporting culture by identifying and targeting high-potential athletes in other sports (e.g., Gaelic sports) to deepen athlete pathways in Olympic and Paralympic sports.

Portas Consulting preliminary hypotheses – Sport Ireland should consider the following principles in the development of its pathways strategy:

- *Targeted approach: Identifying the priority needs of emerging athletes will be critical to ensuring appropriate and proportionate resources are allocated to pathways.*
- *Tailored support: NGBs will require tailored support to develop and formalise their athlete pathways – not a “one size fits all” approach.*
- *Data: The use of athlete data will be critical to ensure the right pathway athletes are being supported in the right ways. Monitoring and evaluation will also be critical to ensure intended outcomes are being achieved – data will play a key role here.*
- *Collaboration: NGBs will need to take a proactive, engaged approach to selectively identifying support needs (e.g., of athletes).*

Critically, whilst a significant increase in pathway support for NGBs is required, it will be critical that NGBs lead and drive the development of their pathways. Pathways are central to the sustainability of NGBs’ performances going forwards, and should be a key priority for NGBs in the Los Angeles and Brisbane Cycles.





CASE STUDY: AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF SPORT



16% (~€16 million) of Australia’s high performance funding has been allocated to support the development of performance pathways across all high performance sports. This includes the development of a clear framework to support NGBs to develop athlete pathways.

Framework: Foundations, Talent, Elite and Mastery

This was disseminated throughout the high performance system, alongside practical tools and guidance, to create clarity over athlete development within Australia.

CASE STUDY: TEAM DENMARK



Team Denmark collaborates with 23 elite municipalities (regional hubs) to create clear high performance pathways in identified sports:

- Each municipality focuses on 5-10 sports
- Municipalities collaborate with sports organisations and third level education partners in their regions to develop sustainable talent pipelines in each sport
- Emerging athletes are nurtured in environments that consider their sporting, educational and personal development, and are provided with specific training to prepare them for careers in elite sport (e.g., nutrition courses).

3



Pillar 3:
**World Class
Coaching
& Support
Services**



The best possible people supporting our athletes

FINDINGS:



The Sport Ireland Institute's Statement of Intent (2024-2032) has created a clear strategic direction for the organisation

The Statement of Intent (2024-2032) outlines clear priorities for the Sport Ireland Institute to continue to contribute positively to the Sport Ireland High Performance Strategy (2021-2032) in upcoming Cycles. The international benchmarking conducted as part of the development of the Statement of Intent highlights a commitment to best-practice and evidence-based decision-making. In addition, the Sport Ireland Institute's strategic objectives, such as the provision of pathway support and reviewing the organisational structure, align with the findings from stakeholder consultation conducted as part of this strategic review, indicating that there is alignment within the system against this Pillar.



Challenges associated with retaining and recruiting world-class talent within the system pose a significant future risk

International competition for coaches and impacts of the contractor staffing model for Sport Ireland Institute staff were identified as clear barriers to ongoing retention and recruitment of world-class coaches and performance support staff. Specifically, the contractor model at the Sport Ireland Institute has the potential to restrict diversity among potential applicants due to the absence or limitations of benefits and policies such as maternity leave. Sport Ireland Institute's decision to review the contractor model and transition towards a hybrid employment model will be critical to address this risk to the system.



Inequalities in athletes' abilities to access performance support due to challenges of centralised support provision

The centralisation of support and services at the Sport Ireland Institute in Dublin is reflective of the demands from sports who base and deliver their programmes from the Sport Ireland Campus. However, this centralisation has resulted in athletes based outside of Dublin struggling to access sufficient or equal levels of performance support in comparison to athletes based in Dublin, or in centralised programmes near the Sport Ireland Institute. Given these access challenges, there is significant demand for a new, regional approach to delivering performance support to athletes via regional performance hubs.



Opportunities to streamline the provision of performance support

There are instances of performance support being delivered inefficiently, for example duplications of service provision by the Sport Ireland Institute and the Sport Northern Ireland Sports Institute. Stakeholders recognised a need for a more formal and collaborative relationship between these organisations. This would ensure that resources are optimised, and instances of duplication are minimised.



Significant challenges within Irish high performance coaching identified

Fifty percent of high performance coaches in Ireland are Irish. Stakeholders identified an over-reliance on international talent in Irish high performance sport, highlighting a clear risk to the retention of knowledge and expertise within the system. In addition, there is limited understanding of the requirements of high performance sport amongst coaches in Ireland, alongside technical capability gaps in specific sports. These challenges have stemmed from the lack of clear coaching pathways, insufficient NGB investments in coach development schemes, and a widespread perception that coaching is not a viable full-time career within Ireland.



Lack of appropriate, formal development opportunities for Irish high performance coaches

NGBs' insufficient investments and focus on creating formal development opportunities for Irish high performance coaches pose a significant risk to the system. This issue will limit the growth of coaches (and therefore athletes) within Ireland, but also increases the likelihood of coaches seeking development opportunities in other countries, exacerbating talent drain from the Irish high performance system. Recent efforts by the Head of High Performance Coaching, to address the lack of professional development opportunities for coaches in Ireland, should continue to be prioritised in future Cycles.



Sport Ireland's focus on coaching has had a positive impact – this should continue to be a priority in future Cycles

Stakeholders highlighted the value and impact of the Head of High Performance Coaching at Sport Ireland. The Coach Apprentice Scheme has supported the recruitment of 15 coaches to date into the high performance system, ensuring emphasis on gender diversity within coaching. Increased diversity within the Irish coaching pool should continue to be an area of focus for Sport Ireland.

CASE STUDY: HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT NEW ZEALAND



Launched the Te Hapaitanga mentoring program to support women in the region to pursue and maintain careers in high performance coaching. Each participant is assigned a mentor, who will support their professional development – with a specific focus on developing a range of leadership skills. Opportunities for network-building within New Zealand's high performance system are provided alongside the programme.



RECOMMENDATIONS:



Support the Sport Ireland Institute on transitioning to a hybrid employment model and formalising the relationship with the Sport Northern Ireland Sports Institute

Sport Ireland should facilitate increased collaboration between the Sport Ireland Institute and Sport Northern Ireland Sports Institute, with the aim of formalising the relationship and maximising knowledge-sharing opportunities. A priority for future engagement should be on identifying instances of resource duplication and inefficiency, and developing solutions to address these. In addition, given the Sport Northern Ireland Sports Institute's experience of transitioning to a hybrid staffing model, Sport Ireland should support engagement (e.g., a focus group) to identify learnings that will support the Sport Ireland Institute to deliver a smooth transition to a hybrid staffing model. The ongoing ability for the Sport Ireland Institute to hire new high-quality service providers is critical to the continued success of the organisation. Therefore, in-depth consideration to the varying needs of existing and future employees will be essential to ensure an optimum balance of permanent and contracted staff is reached.



Support the Sport Ireland Institute to explore the potential of a regional model for delivering performance services to athletes outside of Dublin

Sport Ireland should facilitate a consultation process, led by the Sport Ireland Institute, to understand stakeholders' perspectives on the potential introduction of a regional delivery model for performance services. Key stakeholders for consultation should include NGBs, athletes, coaches, and performance staff. Consultation should be targeted at understanding: i) existing needs within the system, ii) potential solutions to these needs, and iii) the feasibility of regionally delivered performance services. Findings from this process should inform the development of a clear, phased approach to increasing the provision of performance services to athletes based outside of Dublin, considering a regional delivery model.

Portas Consulting preliminary hypotheses suggest that a regional model for delivering performance services will likely require significant collaboration with third level institutions to establish regional "hubs" for performance staff to be based out of. Additional consideration to how the Sport Ireland Institute can maintain, attract, and retain world-class performance staff within regional "hubs" will be critical to maintain high quality service provision in future Cycles.



Develop and communicate a clear 10-year vision for high performance coaching in Ireland with dedicated resources and investment

Collaborate with the Head of High Performance Coaching and the Sport Ireland Coaching Unit to develop a 10-year plan outlining the vision for high performance coaching in Ireland, and a clear roadmap to accomplish this vision. This should include a plan to scale investment and resources dedicated to high performance coaching. Communication of the vision and plan to all stakeholders will be critical to ensure buy-in and alignment on the importance of coaching for the development of the system.

Portas Consulting preliminary hypotheses suggest that defining and developing clear high performance coaching pathways should be a critical focus area for Sport Ireland. This would help to facilitate coaching becoming a viable full-time career in Ireland, and support a mindset shift in Irish sport on the value of coaching to the system. In addition, supporting NGBs to develop formal coach development programmes, including the provision of new learning and skills-development opportunities, should continue to be a priority for Sport Ireland.

4



Pillar 4: **Business Structures & Planning**



Strong governance and the high performance business model

FINDINGS:



Sport Ireland's emphasis on strong governance has had a positive impact on professionalism and gender diversity across the high performance system

Stakeholders highlighted NGBs' increasing professionalism, aligning with the National Sports Policy's mandate for NGBs to comply with Sport Ireland's Governance Code for Sport. Gender diversity has also improved, with women now comprising 41% of board members across all NGBs, up from 24% in 2019. Future efforts should prioritise sustaining this progress in gender diversity across all levels of the system, including NGB workforces, coaching and performance staff.



Sport Ireland's emphasis on athlete-centricity has had a clear impact, and should continue to be a priority in future Cycles

Athlete-centricity improved during this Cycle, with several NGBs adding athlete representatives to their Boards and Committees. However, stakeholders highlighted a need for more support and training for athlete representatives, to maximise the impact of their roles. This would enable a greater number of NGBs to develop and maximise the impact of formal structures for athletes to input into decision-making processes.



NGBs are at risk of over-reliance on government funding

The review highlighted a clear risk to the long-term sustainability of the system: NGBs' over-reliance on Sport Ireland for funding and support. An examination as to the factors resulting in this over-reliance should be explored. This should also consider market environments, identify how competitive the sponsorship market is and how this will impact smaller sports, in particular.

As the system evolves, some NGBs need to take a more proactive approach to business planning and generating income, to protect themselves against variations in government sport investments and become increasingly responsible for the growth of their high performance programmes. This will also ensure the impacts of all investments into the high performance system are maximised and sustainable.



There is a lack of commercial and financial capabilities within the system

Some NGB management teams lack the capabilities and capacity to develop robust commercial strategies and financial plans, limiting income generation and increasing reliance on government funding. International benchmarking suggests that increased Sport Ireland support, such as investments in recruitment and professional development, could have a significant impact on the reduction of capability gaps going forwards.



RECOMMENDATIONS:



Continue to support NGBs on the development of professional governance structures

Sport Ireland should sustain its focus on supporting and advising NGBs to develop professional governance structures. Initiatives to support NGBs should include specific governance workshops and training programmes, educational content and resources, and the continued delivery of governance reviews.

In addition, Sport Ireland should consider developing specific support for NGBs demonstrating a strong commitment to gender diversity. This could include supporting the establishment of mentoring or development programmes to provide women in the high performance system with guidance, support, and networking opportunities, or supporting NGBs to unlock funding for research to identify barriers to gender diversity in high performance sport.

Partnerships and collaboration with other sports stakeholders, third level institutions, and the private sector aimed at improving governance and gender diversity within the system should be a priority for Sport Ireland in future Cycles.

CASE STUDY: RUGBY CANADA



Rugby Canada's **Women in Rugby Program** funds development opportunities for women in the sport. A dedicated €11,000 annual fund supports six recipients per year to improve their leadership skills and networks, creating clearer, formalised pathways to leadership for Canadian women in rugby.



Design a strategy to increase proactivity and independence of NGBs – with a focus on addressing capability gaps within the system

A clear strategy for NGBs to become increasingly independent and proactive will be critical to the long-term sustainability of the high performance system. Given evidence of capability gaps within the system, the strategy should prioritise the active provision of support for recruiting and upskilling NGB staff. In addition, Sport Ireland should consider the provision of educational guidance and resources to support NGBs to deliver robust strategic and business planning in future Cycles. This should support NGBs to become increasingly responsible for the growth of their high performance programmes, and foster a culture of proactivity within NGB leadership teams.

Portas Consulting preliminary hypotheses:

To address capability gaps within the system, Sport Ireland should take a more active role in supporting NGB leadership recruitment and professional development. This should be a collaborative effort, and will require significant support from the Sport Ireland Institute, the Olympic Federation of Ireland, and Paralympics Ireland in particular, to support capability development in a range of areas.

The strategy should involve delivering educational workshops to enhance specific skills and knowledge (e.g., business planning) of NGB leaders, and increased support for staff transitioning to Board roles. Sport Ireland should provide educational guidance and resources (e.g., NGB strategy toolkits) to support NGBs to take proactive, independent approaches to strategy development and business planning. Sport Ireland could consider leveraging external expertise to support the development of educational content and resources.

In addition, Sport Ireland should aim to take a more active role in NGB recruitment processes, to ensure the right leaders, with the right skillsets, are entering the system. However, this will need to be NGB-led – i.e., NGBs should proactively identify recruitment processes for Sport Ireland to take active roles in.



Support NGBs to undertake independent strategic reviews in future Cycles

NGBs should lead strategic reviews in each Cycle – these should be delivered internally, or by enlisting external support from a third party. Sport Ireland should design a clear approach that incentivises and supports NGBs to conduct regular strategic reviews. This should involve engaging and educating NGBs on the importance of strategic planning, and the significant role strategic reviews can play in supporting this process. Other support and incentive mechanisms Sport Ireland could consider include providing guidance to ensure NGBs are delivering best-practice strategic reviews, and financial subsidies for NGBs to contract specialist third-party expertise (e.g., consultants).



Continue to explore opportunities to maximise the commercial potential of Irish sport

Sport Ireland should collaborate with key stakeholders, including the Olympic Federation of Ireland and Paralympics Ireland, to develop a clear plan to raise the profile of Irish Olympic and Paralympic sports, and maximise commercial income to the system. This should include exploring opportunities such as the potential to collectively sell certain NGB sponsorship rights and leveraging the Sport Ireland Campus to generate additional revenue, thereby minimising reliance on government funding. Opportunities to leverage and build the brands of specific sports should be prioritised.

CASE STUDY: TEAM DENMARK



Team Denmark enters 'collaborations' (partnerships) with NGBs based on a clear set of criteria:

- **Strategic direction** – each NGB must develop a 'Master Plan' for the partnership, which outlines a strategic direction, a clear roadmap, and a financial plan for the duration of the partnership
- **Clear governance standards** – these ensure that NGBs partnering with Team Denmark are at the right stage of maturity and are capable of independently delivering on objectives

Monitoring and evaluation is critical to the success of these partnerships – 'Master Plans' are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure partnerships are having the intended impacts.

5



Pillar 5: Partnerships



Collaboration and alignment across the system

FINDINGS:



There is a need for greater collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and partnership formation in upcoming Cycles

Sport Ireland's relationships with its key stakeholders remained strong during this Cycle. Stakeholders identified collaboration within the system as a key strength to be leveraged in future Cycles. However, partnership formation was identified as an area requiring greater focus, and clear opportunities were identified for partnerships to address strategic challenges within the system. In particular, there is a need for Sport Ireland and key stakeholders to facilitate relationship-building between NGBs and third level institutions to support pathway development, and to engage the private sector on developing solutions to specific challenges facing the system (e.g., technology and innovation).



Limited awareness and understanding of the system's progression against its targets and Sport Ireland's long-term aspirations for the system

Amongst Sport Ireland's key stakeholders, awareness of the system's progression against the targets outlined in the High Performance Strategy (2021-2032) is limited. In addition, there is no clear, shared understanding of what "world class" or "excellence" is in the context of Irish high performance sport, with ambitions and expectations differing between stakeholders. This signals a need for greater promotion of successes, milestones, and progression within the system, and increased communication of Sport Ireland's long-term expectations and aspirations for the development of Irish high performance sport.





RECOMMENDATIONS:

➔ Prioritise collaboration and partnership-formation to support the growth of the system, specifically targeting third level institutions, the private sector, and other world-class nations

Sport Ireland should continue to facilitate relationship-building between NGBs and third level institutions. This will support the establishment of joined-up athlete development pathways in Ireland, and create greater alignment within the system.

In addition, Sport Ireland should capitalise on Ireland’s position as a hub for technology and innovation companies. This should involve identifying potential private sector partners to support development of a competitive advantage in specific areas (e.g., data and analytics, performance technology).

International benchmarking highlighted collaboration and knowledge-sharing with world-class high performance nations as critical to maximising the success of high performance sport. Therefore, in upcoming Cycles, Sport Ireland should also seek to identify opportunities to build and strengthen relationships with other world-class nations, to increase collaboration and knowledge-sharing, and strengthen Ireland’s position internationally.

CASE STUDY:
UK SPORTS INSTITUTE



The UK Sports Institute partners with BAE systems, a leading technological engineering firm in the UK. BAE Systems have developed technology solutions for over 30 sports since the partnership was established in 2009.

CASE STUDY:
HONG KONG SPORTS INSTITUTE



The Hong Kong Sports Institute collaborates with the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology on wind tunnel projects for cycling and windsurfing.



Increase engagement with stakeholders to raise awareness of successes within the system, create alignment, and secure buy-in to the High Performance Strategy (2021-2032)

Sport Ireland should review its communications strategy to understand the effectiveness of its current approach to engaging stakeholders, specifically athletes and coaches. This should inform the development of a new communications strategy, which should ensure key milestones, messages and decisions are communicated clearly and consistently to all stakeholders. A dedicated Sport Ireland communication resource for high performance sport would support delivery and progression against the strategy.

All future communications should be targeted at raising awareness of how the system is progressing against the Sport Ireland High Performance Strategy (2021-2032), and outline Sport Ireland's clear vision for success. Initiatives promoting successes of the system could also present new opportunities to attract and unlock funding for high performance sport (e.g., from the government, philanthropic investors, or commercial partners) – Sport Ireland and other key stakeholders should take a proactive approach to identifying and capitalising on these opportunities through targeted engagement.

Collaboration with other key stakeholders in the Irish sports landscape will also be critical to ensure effective communication and awareness-building with the Irish public. All stakeholders need to align on a clear vision for Irish high performance sport (i.e., 'Ireland consistently achieving podium success on the world stage to inspire the nation and future generations'), and collaborate to develop a joined-up approach to communicating this vision. Engagement with the public should focus on telling the stories of Team Ireland, to engage the population in high performance sport both during and between the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Aligning on clear roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder will be critical to the sustained growth of high performance sport in Ireland.



6



Pillar 6: World Class Facilities & Equipment



Advancing the infrastructure to support our system

FINDINGS:



Launch of the High Performance Equipment Grant is supporting NGBs to sustain their global competitiveness

The High Performance Equipment Grant, delivered in 2021 and 2022, has played a key role in supporting NGBs to access high-quality equipment throughout the Paris Cycle. This has been critical in enabling NGBs to remain competitive in the global high performance landscape. This scheme would benefit from an increasingly structured, formalised approach to ensure all NGBs have clear and equal opportunities to access world-class equipment in future Cycles.



Inadequate numbers of high-quality facilities present significant challenges for the system – highlighting a clear need for urgent investment

Many NGBs highlighted facilities as a significant challenge during this Cycle. Concerns included unsafe and damaged facilities and insufficient numbers of (or no) facilities to develop athletes within Ireland. Stakeholders agreed that some challenges are more urgent than others, but that all sports would benefit from increased investment in this area. Greater investments in facilities would also enable more athletes to remain in Ireland for training, increasing NGBs' influence over their development.



A need for greater engagement of stakeholders in the Sport Ireland Campus Masterplan

The development and publication of the Campus Masterplan has outlined clear, long-term aspirations and plans to develop high performance sport facilities in Ireland – a clear success of this Cycle. However, stakeholders exhibited limited comprehension and confidence in the delivery of the Campus Masterplan, due to concerns over its progression. This highlighted a clear need for increased engagement between Sport Ireland, the government and NGBs on planning and preparation for the delivery of new facilities in Ireland.



There are opportunities to maximise the commercial potential of Sport Ireland Campus facilities

Stakeholders identified a need to unlock the commercial potential of high performance sport facilities, raising the profile of the Sport Ireland Campus and generating increased income for the system as a whole. Specifically, NGBs would benefit from greater opportunities to leverage their facilities (not solely based at the Sport Ireland Campus) to attract sponsors and partners, thereby unlocking new revenue streams, and becoming increasingly financially sustainable.



RECOMMENDATIONS:



Identify and target impactful, immediate opportunities to unlock funding for facilities development

Leveraging existing relationships and efforts, Sport Ireland and its stakeholders should collaborate to raise awareness of the current challenges associated with sports facilities in Ireland, and highlight the urgent need for investment. This should involve targeted engagement with potential funding bodies, including government organisations to unlock and commit investment to implement the Campus Masterplan.



Engage stakeholders on delivery of the Campus Masterplan to build clarity and confidence

Communicate facilities updates to stakeholders on a more regular, consistent basis, to secure buy-in to the Campus Masterplan. This communication will need to be tailored to the specific needs of individual stakeholders, and should focus on increasing their understanding on how and when facilities will be developed (i.e., notify stakeholders of key decisions and provide progress updates).

7



Pillar 7: Research & Innovation



Understanding how to succeed and finding an edge

FINDINGS:



Satisfactory progress against this pillar

The Paris Cycle has seen progression on several important initiatives within the Research & Innovation Pillar. This includes the publication of the Sport Ireland Research Strategy, development of a formal partnership between the Sport Ireland Institute and Insights (a Science Foundation Ireland Research Centre for Data Analytics), the collaboration between Sport Ireland, the Sport Ireland Institute and other key stakeholders in the development of the Irish Sport and Exercise Sciences Association (ISESA), and the on going collaboration between a number of Sport Ireland business Units in the development of an innovation action plan. In addition, a significant number of NGBs have engaged with individual research projects during this Cycle.



Lack of a clear strategic focus for research and innovation in the Irish system

However, progress and successes in research and innovation have typically been delivered on an ad-hoc basis and are reliant on individual research interests (e.g., of staff within the Sport Ireland Institute). Whilst progress has been satisfactory, it is critical to acknowledge that there is significant room for further improvement. Specifically, this pillar requires a more focused approach and a clear strategy for Sport Ireland to drive significant, targeted research and innovation advancements in future Cycles. This will be critical for Ireland to develop competitive advantages in high performance sports.



RECOMMENDATIONS:



Develop a comprehensive, joined-up plan for innovation in Irish sport

Sport Ireland should continue in endeavours to develop a comprehensive High Performance Innovation Plan for advancing research and innovation in high performance sport – ensuring all initiatives align to, compliment, and enhance the existing Research Strategy. The plan should be anchored to robust KPIs to ensure targeted and measurable impact in future Cycles. Sport Ireland should also continue to explore the opportunity to establish an Innovation Hub at the Sport Ireland Campus to centralise coordination and delivery of the High Performance Innovation Plan. The Hub would support NGBs to capitalise on research and innovation projects, taking a targeted, phased approach by initially prioritising support to NGBs of greater maturity.



Target partnerships with the private sector to gain a competitive advantage in this area

There is a clear opportunity for Sport Ireland to leverage Ireland's position as a hub for technology and innovation companies to support research and innovation in high performance sport. Targeted partnerships with companies in these sectors could yield significant benefits for NGBs, athletes, and the system as a whole. Sport Ireland and other key stakeholders should take a proactive approach to identifying and engaging potential partners in the private sector to build impactful partnerships aimed at addressing specific challenges facing the system and advancing the research and innovation strategy.



CASE STUDY: NORWEGIAN OLYMPIATOPPEN

Established a centralised knowledge hub within 'Olympiatoppen' – the national elite performance centre – to collect and advance Norway's knowledge, research, and data on elite sports, to support Norway to become a 'world-leading' sports nation.

The hub leverages a cross-sport collective learning principle, including significant collaboration with third level education across the country to share knowledge and data across the system.



CASE STUDY: PAPENDAL – NETHERLANDS

The Olympic Training Center in the Netherlands, Papendal, collaborates with Lode to develop innovative BMX power meters to measure strength and power in elite sport.

Ahead of the Tokyo Games, Papendal also partnered with VU Amsterdam to develop a climate room designed to train athletes to cope with the environmental demands of the Games, supporting pre-Games preparation and acclimatisation.

Conclusion

The Paris Cycle Review has demonstrated that Ireland's high performance system has evolved, matured, and professionalised during the Paris Cycle (2021-2024).

Sport Ireland, NGBs, and other key stakeholders have successfully navigated the challenges of this Cycle, with confidence and optimism returning post-pandemic. There have been ongoing commitments and efforts to create positive, impactful experiences for all athletes within the system, demonstrating an increasing understanding of the importance of welfare and athlete-centricity to achieving excellence in high performance sport. This increased maturity and strong recovery post-pandemic is due, in part, to the government's sustained commitments and investments to Irish high performance sport, as well as the ongoing support provided by the Sport Ireland High Performance Unit to NGBs.

This review also identified a number of challenges facing NGBs and the system which are critical to address, as well as clear opportunities to evolve and transform Irish high performance sport in future Cycles. Ongoing and proactive collaboration between Sport Ireland, NGBs, the Olympic Federation of Ireland, Paralympics Ireland, Sport Northern Ireland, the Sport Ireland Institute, the Sport Northern Ireland Sports Institute, and the Department, will be crucial to ensure these recommendations are actioned, and to ensure the system is transitioning towards its shared goals. Clear roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder are required, alongside a system-wide culture of proactivity and ambition.

The findings and recommendations identified during this review should guide and support Sport Ireland's future decision-making, investments, and strategies. This will enable Sport Ireland, in collaboration with other key stakeholders in the Irish sport landscape, to maximise the potential of high performance sport in Ireland for future Olympic and Paralympic Cycles.

Finally, Sport Ireland and Portas Consulting wish to express their gratitude to the many stakeholders who contributed to the Paris Cycle Review. The active engagement of NGBs, athletes, coaches, and other key stakeholders played a crucial role in developing the robust, evidence-based findings and recommendations presented in this report.

Appendix A

In an effort to capture the 'voice' of the Irish high performance system, an anonymous survey was shared with the 19 NGBs involved in the review process, who were then asked to share it with the following cohorts:

- 1) Athletes on their National Teams and/or National Squads.
- 2) Coaching and support staff employed/contracted by the NGB.

In total, 187 athletes and 94 coaches and support staff completed the respective surveys. Key insights from the surveys are presented in the below table, as well as the associated Strategic Pillar for the Sport Ireland High Performance Strategy (2021-2032).

For the athlete survey:

- 1) NGBs were tasked with sharing the survey to their identified senior and non-senior athletes.
- 2) The final number of athletes who completed the survey (n=187) consists of a range of athletes across the performance pathway. This will include non-senior athletes at the start of their high performance journey, all the way to Olympic and Paralympic medallists.
- 3) Related to point 2, athletes who completed the survey will also have differing levels of support, be it from Sport Ireland, the Sport Ireland Institute or their own NGB, and their responses will be reflective of that. Some are part of the Sport Ireland International Carding Scheme, or equivalent (e.g., Golf Ireland Professional Scheme), and are therefore in receipt of financial support (and other associated supports that come with that).

Survey Insight	Associated Strategic Pillar
60% of athletes agree their NGB has prioritised athlete welfare during the Paris Cycle, however only 50% of athletes are satisfied with the welfare support they have had access to.	Pillar 2: Athlete Performance & Holistic Support
45% of athletes are satisfied with the life skills support and services they had access to (e.g., career development, dual-career support, educational or financial advice provided by their NGB, the Sport Ireland Institute or an alternate service provider).	
32% of NGBs 'strongly agree' that there is a clear vision for the athlete development pathway, which is nationally driven, regionally implemented and well understood by stakeholders along the pathway.	
45% of coaches and performance staff are satisfied with talent ID, athlete development, and pathways.	
51% of athletes are satisfied with the amount of performance support, and 57% are satisfied with the quality of performance support they received during the Paris Cycle (includes support provided by their NGB, the Sport Ireland Institute or an alternate service provider).	Pillar 3: World Class Coaching & Support Services
54% of NGBs 'strongly agree' that coaches that are critical to the high performance programme are in full time roles or have sufficient time to get the job done.	
50% of coaches and performance staff agree that their high performance programmes are resourced sufficiently to achieve their objectives.	
44% of coaches and performance staff are satisfied with the professional development opportunities available to them within their NGB.	
36% of NGBs are concerned about 'coaches in the pathway having the potential to lead on high performance coaching in 2032'.	Pillar 4: Business Structures & Planning
46% of NGBs 'strongly agree' that they have formal structures in place for athletes to provide feedback on governance of their high performance programme.	
49% of athletes and 43% of coaches and performance staff are satisfied with Sport Ireland's communication during the Paris Cycle (e.g., changes to policy, funding allocations).	Pillar 5: Partnerships
64% of athletes and 66% of coaches and performance staff are satisfied with the quality of training facilities and equipment provided to them.	Pillar 6: World Class Facilities & Equipment
75% of high performance programmes have introduced or benefitted from innovations and research projects during the Paris Cycle.	Pillar 7: Research & Innovation
46% of athletes agree that their NGB has invested in innovation and /or research projects to create an optimum high performance for training athletes.	





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