

## Appendix 1

### ISA BOARD OPERATIONAL REVIEW -- *THE WAY FORWARD*

The Board have carefully considered the report of the **Strategic Review Group (SRG)** and in response to its recommendations have implemented a number of operational changes. It is planned to roll out a further program of actions over the coming months to address any outstanding aspects whilst ensuring the continuity of services to members and member organisations.

This root and branch review has been wide ranging and has focused primarily on Core Activities of the Association (rather than the High Performance Area). The area initially focussed on is judged to be the part of the organisation that was of the most concern to the members. The Board sees as its primary challenge the necessity to remodel the ISA as an organisation with improved relevance and accessibility to its members, affiliated organisations and training centres. This has to be achieved with tangible initiatives that have a directly positive impact at grass roots level. Its role has to be seen to change in emphasis from being largely a regulator of standards to one of providing guidance and support to its members and the organisations affiliated to it. This requires greater communication between the ISA and its stakeholders and we believe the initial steps we are taking will demonstrate our commitment to realising this ambition.

We are setting out in detail below some of the changes being made and the issues under review to give our members and stakeholders an understanding of the direction we are taking. We hope this open and transparent approach will help connect the Board and staff to the membership and lead to improved communication and consultation with our stakeholders.

### ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES

#### STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020

Under the Chairmanship of Neil Murphy (a member of Howth and Malahide Yacht Clubs), a Strategic Planning Group is developing a draft **Strategic Plan 2015-2020** which, following consultation with the clubs and affiliated organisations, will be presented for approval at the AGM in March 2015.

The **Mission** of the new plan is to: *“Develop the Sport in union with Clubs, Training Centres & Affiliated Organisations”*. The sporting landscape has changed significantly in recent years and it is essential that the association and its member clubs are moving with this change. The importance of having a sport founded on a strong network of clubs is seen as a key priority of the Association for the coming years. The plan is based on six pillars each supported by Strategic Activities, Implementation Measures and Performance Metrics.

These pillars are:

- Strong, Well Organised and Focused Clubs
- Access and Participation
- Skills Acquisition and Development of Skills + Safety
- Competition and Classes
- High Performance Competition
- Representation and Governance

The draft Strategic Plan will be introduced to members at a series of regional meeting planned for early New Year and we look forward to receiving the input of members and stakeholders into the final strategy document.

## **POLICY GROUPS**

A key issue arising in the SRG Review was the disconnection with the members. The SRG saw the introduction of specialist Policy Groups as an opportunity to harness volunteer expertise from amongst the sailing community and to better connect the ISA with its members and stakeholders. The Board has, in response, established seven policy groups in addition to the Olympic Steering Group which remains responsible for the High Performance Area. The composition of these groups, each of which is chaired by a member of the Board, is published on the ISA website. They are all actively working on the issues raised in the review; some have been brought to conclusion while others remain work-in-progress.

These specialist groups and chairman are: Training (Brian Craig), Participation & Access (Muriel Rumball) Communications & Membership (David Lovegrove), Cruising & Leisure (Peirce Purcell), Competition - Racing & Classes (Jack Roy), Risk Assessment (Mike O'Connor) and Government & Regulation (Philip Cowman). The Olympic Steering Group remains under the chairmanship of Colm Barrington while the posts of Treasurer and Company Secretary are held by fellow directors Roger Bannon and David O'Brien.

## **REORGANISATION OF PROFESSIONAL TEAM – CORE AREA**

The Association is organised and funded in two distinct sections – the Core Area and the High Performance Area. The Core or main body of the ISA has been reorganised. The High Performance Area remains unchanged. The Core professional Team has been restructured to allow resources be directed to providing more support on the ground at Regional and Club level. The reorganisation reflects the change in emphasis from being that of a regulator to that of providing guidance and support within a cost structure matched to the existing income profile. This restructuring will also enable resources be channelled into areas that will be of more direct benefit to sailors.

A key ingredient of this redirection of resources will be the recruitment of an additional Regional Development Officer (RDO) and the associated redefinition of territories covered by the existing regional officers. (See Appendix 2 - Organisation Chart for the new structure)

The main elements of the reorganisation are:

- The CEO now takes line responsibility for all operational activities
- The CEO, HP Director and RDO's will be supported by Administrative Assistants
- The previous, primarily office-based, roles of Training Manager and Racing Manager are no longer required
- The role of the HP Director and the operation of the High Performance Area remain unchanged
- The vacancy in the position of Communication Officer will not, in the short term, be replaced and where necessary media resources will be outsourced
- The RDO's, whose primary role is to support the Clubs will each specialise and support the CEO in a particular area of expertise, being Participation, Racing and Communication
- The geographical areas of responsibility covered by the RDO's will be redefined into three regions: East, South and West. An additional officer will, when finances permit, be recruited to the Eastern region
- The allocation of duties between the administrative staff has been reviewed and the hours for part time staff adjusted to enable the Administrative Assistants fulfil their roles effectively

The overall objective of the reorganisation is to have a flatter, more cost effective structure providing accessible expertise at a local level to help Clubs, Training Centres and Affiliated Organisations increase participation and retain members.

## **REFOCUS ON CORE ACTIVITIES.**

In an environment where the ISA's members and associated organisations are under pressure to sustain existing revenues it becomes essential to concentrate resources on the core activities whether sailing or motor-boating. Peripheral areas of activity are consequently under review and it is our intention to exit certain of these over time to ensure the focus of the ISA is not deflected from its core responsibilities to its members.

## **CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS AND SERVICE**

While it is often the changes and new initiatives that grab the attention, it is the continuity of activities and service that remain of paramount importance to the board and staff of the Association during this period of change. The ISA will continue to provide its current wide range of services and guidance to its customers in discharge of its obligations as the National Governing Body for Sailing.

There is no question but the association will move forward and we are confident that with your help and support we will get back on course by working together. The success of the ISA in fulfilling its mandate will be dependent on the contribution from and the interaction with all sailors, whatever their interests or needs. 2015 will be a pivotal year in executing these changes and we look forward to everyone's contribution towards achieving these goals.

**Though this organisational review has absorbed more time than was wished, it is fundamentally important that the future strategy of the Association is based on a structure that is suited to this changed environment and is financially sustainable into the future.**

## **ISSUES UNDER REVIEW BY POLICY GROUPS**

During the last six months, progress has also been made in a number of other areas of activity considered by the board, policy groups and staff. While it is intended that individual Policy Groups will publish an annual report in advance of the AGM we summarise below some of the initiatives that are underway at present and the direction being taken:

### **TRAINING POLICY GROUP**

While Training remains a key area of activity for the Association, a change in emphasis for the coming year will focus the resources of the ISA on the delivery of the existing training programmes rather than on further scheme development. It is planned to have a number of initiatives in place for 2015 season:

#### **The launch of an on-line logbook (Sailing Passport) for the Small Boat Sailing Scheme**

It is planned to reintroduce logbooks to help change the emphasis from acquiring certificates to acquiring skills. This initiative will help integrate the ISA course modules with club activities and provide for a wide range of lifelong skills. It will also help commercial centres operate successfully. Using an electronic format, the online Sailing Passport will facilitate a more detailed step by step approach to acquiring skills and also provide the clubs, training centres and ISA with valuable information on individual skill progression and retention rates through the training modules. It is proposed to run a Pilot Project in a number of Clubs and Commercial Centres in 2015 with a view to rolling it out to all ISA centres in 2016.

#### **A Junior Organisers Handbook to assist the organisers of ISA Training in member clubs.**

The ISA recognises the key role the club junior organiser plays in introducing young sailors to the Sport. The introduction of a comprehensive Training Handbook will provide additional support to these club volunteers and improve the interaction with ISA Regional Development Officers on training activities.

#### **The Appointment of National Trainers for Sailing, Windsurfing and Power-boating.**

The appointment of the three voluntary National Trainers will place the ISA Instructor Trainers in more of a lead role in the delivery of the schemes and bring more consistency in the assessment of Instructors. The role of National Trainers will be key to improving the standard of Instructors available to centres throughout the country and to building a cohesive panel of Regional Instructor Trainers.

It is proposed to have the National Trainers and Trainer Assessors in place at the beginning of 2015.

#### **A pathway for clubs looking to develop more double-handed sailing at local level for juniors.**

Increasing double-handed sailing at a local level amongst young sailors will help increase participation and improve the retention of trainees by clubs. The range of options available is being researched with the view to providing advice to clubs seeking guidance from the Association on a junior double-handed pathway boat for their club. It is planned to introduce the proposal to clubs over the coming months for a dinghy geared to local racing.

The **Competition (Racing and Classes) Policy Group** are looking at how this and the other junior double-handed classes can be best promoted as part of each Club's progression route for sailors outside the high performance classes.

### **Coaching**

The benefits of a structured investment in coaching at Youth and Olympic level by the High Performance team has been clearly demonstrated through the achievement of excellent International results. This effort is justifiably directed at the elite performers in the specific High Performance Pathway classes.

However, there is a requirement for the ISA to create a structured approach which makes coaching available at Club level and for those classes and class sailors outside the high performance programme. We need to develop strength in depth across a wider spectrum of disciplines. It is also acknowledged that improving the skill sets of grass roots sailing enthusiasts not only adds enormously to the enjoyment of participants but has a positive impact on retention rates of younger people in the sport. It is also recognised that if we want to encourage sailors to progress to the top end of the Small Boat Sailing Scheme, we will need to provide race coaching rather than additional training by Instructors whose skills are of a more general nature.

During 2015 the High Performance team will allocate some resources to coaching in Clubs and outside the High Performance Pathway classes; a new course will be introduced to encourage top sailors to train as Racing Instructors for clubs and classes and the existing Grant Scheme for class coaching will be expanded.

### **COMMUNICATIONS POLICY GROUP**

There is clearly a need for the ISA to engage in a major PR and promotional exercise to 'communicate' its worth to the Clubs in a believable and tangible way. It needs to become transparent as to the benefits derived from membership fees and this needs to be communicated through clubs in a way that is easily passed down the line to its members.

In looking to the future, the communications of the ISA will focus on three main areas of activity:

- Communications with Members and Stakeholders
- Communications to promote the sport in the general media
- Communications in support of the Access and Participation Policy Group to promote the sport.

A number of aspects are currently under review, which include:

#### **PR and Media Activities**

PR activities are, and always will be, essential to the ISA's efforts to spread the word and generate interest in the Sport. It is planned to use a combination of internal and external resources to promote Sailing.

#### **Social Media**

It has become increasingly evident in recent times that the influence of Social Media is growing dramatically. It represents outstanding opportunities for clubs, classes and the ISA to reach the widest possible audience. The ISA is already using these techniques but greater emphasis will be considered as a major element of the ISA's future communications strategy.

#### **Annual Conference**

It has been decided to change the format for the Annual Conference in 2015 and instead run a small number of topic specific conferences at different venues around the country, covering aspects like: Cruising, Race Management, Racing and Classes.

A separate Awards function is planned in the New Year to recognise achievements of Irish sailors in *A Celebration of Sailing*. It is proposed to hold the AGM at a separate time.

#### **Class Communications**

As communications and cooperation between Clubs, Classes and Training Centres will assist the development of sailing; it is proposed to use the ISA website to promote the classes and centres to those accessing the ISA site for information on '*how to go sailing*'.

## **Club Communication**

The change to a more service oriented structure with the emphasis on regional officers will improve communication between the ISA and its members and related organisations. It is also planned as part of the support package to Clubs, to develop a joint approach to local media by using the RDO's to develop a plan of action for the respective local press.

This will be reinforced by a commitment in the Strategic Plan for the Directors to hold annual business meetings with each Club and to continue the practice of holding its monthly board meetings in different Clubs around the country, to provide an opportunity for them to meet Flag Officers of clubs in the local area.

## **ISA website**

Much has been said about the ISA website and some of it has not been complimentary. Its appearance and difficulty in navigating the site means it is a poor ambassador for the sport, especially when a potential new convert is looking for information.

It is our intention to overhaul the site with the aim of it becoming the primary source of information for sailors, media and non-sailors alike.

## **COMPETITION (RACING & CLASSES) POLICY GROUP**

The work of the Competition and Classes Policy group is not all about International Race Officials and support for high profile international events. While maintaining our international reputation for good event organisation remains paramount, the main objective is to provide a competition structure that appeals to the full spectrum of sailors' interests, ability and intent.

There is a need to develop a competition strategy, in conjunction with Clubs and Classes, for the running of Class events that encourages turnouts and minimises conflicts between racing at club level and open events. Addressing the shortage of information on the types of boat popular in local areas is seen as key to developing a strategy to engage with those wishing to take up racing or planning to change Class. This is one of a number of opportunities being pursued which include:

### **Class Survey**

A Survey is underway to establish the regional strengths, levels of participation and priorities of the dinghy and one-design classes to be used as a basis for developing strategies to increase participation and improve communication.

### **Irish Cruiser Racing Association (ICRA)**

Priorities over the coming months are to ensure the continuity of handicap services provided to the members of ICRA following the reorganisation, and to assist with the ICRA Training and Participation Initiatives targeted at keelboat crews.

### **Event Organisers**

A new programme will be rolled out in early 2015 to help clubs build expertise amongst volunteers in the full range of functions required to host a successful event including Safety Officer and Safety Statements, Slip and Berthing, Race and Protest Offices as well as all the on-the-water functions.

## **ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION POLICY GROUP**

Increasing participation in sailing has long been the objective of the ISA. In the past, this activity was left mainly to Clubs and Classes, with the ISA providing support when required. This system worked well during the boom years, when the number of people joining the sport was increasing year on year. However, now that the situation has changed and the number of people actively participating in the various forms of sailing has dropped substantially, it is necessary to be more pro-active in making Sailing attractive to a range of people who would never have considered it as being a choice of sporting activity. In moving forward with this campaign, it will be necessary to tackle the impression of elitism that surrounds sailing and demonstrate that it is accessible by all and is a sport for life.

In addressing this challenge, the Access and Participation Policy Group will work closely with the Communications Policy Group to provide clear and simple information on ISA website for people nationwide on: *Where they can Learn to Sail and How to Access Training or Join a Club.*

### **Support and Guidance to Clubs with Funding Applications**

It is unfortunate that public funding streams are not generally made available to commercial Training Centres, however this has proved to be an area where the ISA, through its RDO's, has helped voluntary clubs secure funding through the Sports Capital and other Grant Schemes. This will continue to be a key service that will become more and more relevant to Clubs in the future as they seek to attract newcomers to the sport.

### **Nationwide Campaign on Water Safety**

Irish Water Safety have access to significant funding and will be promoting Water Safety Week in June 2015 through radio, television and social media. It is planned run Sail Spree 2015 in conjunction with Irish Water Safety Week and use the opportunity to channel media interest into promoting sailing.

### **Inclusivity**

The *Sailability Programme* is an international initiative that encourages people with disabilities to experience sailing and other watersports and then empowering them to follow their pathway in that chosen sport. This "sport for all" participation initiative that empowers people with physical, learning and sensory disabilities of all ages and backgrounds will be promoted by the ISA throughout the country in 2015. The programme is targeted at disadvantaged groups throughout society that find it difficult to engage in water sports activity.

### **CRUISING AND LEISURE POLICY GROUP**

A large segment of the constituency of the ISA is interested in the cruising or recreation aspect rather than racing. This Policy Group has been set up to harness these interests and promote the activities of those cruising and other groups active in this aspect of the sport. It is planned to organise a Cruising Symposium, Publish up to date information on Visitor Moorings and assist in promoting Cruise-in-Companies.

### **OLYMPIC STEERING GROUP**

The Olympic Steering Group continues to oversee the operation of the High Performance Area of the Association. The Board are fully supportive of these activities. The programmes in place are producing excellent results at senior and youth level in the international and Olympic arenas.

### **GOVERNMENT & REGULATION POLICY GROUP**

Our relationships and interaction with Government and State Bodies are becoming an increasingly vital part of the work of the ISA, in our efforts to pro-actively protect the interests of our members from the ever increasing pressures of legislation. This group already holds regular meetings with the various government departments and state agencies to ensure the membership are able to continue to enjoy the relatively unregulated marine leisure environment, without unnecessary restrictions and/or costs being imposed on them.

### **GOVERNANCE**

The SRG Report made extensive recommendations on changes to Governance processes, organisational structures and the nature of operational reports including financial information.

The Board implemented virtually all of these recommendations over the last 6 months which include:

- The establishment of an Executive Committee
- The creation of Policy Groups under the Chairmanship of individual Board members
- Revised Financial and Governance approval procedures
- The establishment of a Risk Management process
- Improved Financial and Budgetary Reporting and variance analysis
- The proposal to recommend changes to the Memorandum and Articles of Association at the next AGM which will require all Directors to offer themselves for re-election annually, place restrictions on tenure of office and make it easier for members to bring issues for discussion at General Meetings by reducing notice periods for submissions