



**CLUB
PLANNING
PROGRAMME**

CLUB PLANNING PROGRAMME

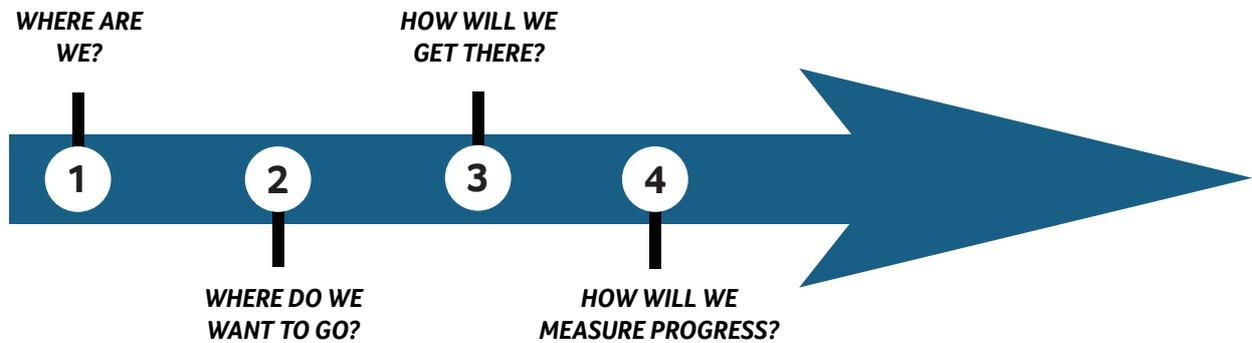
Leading your Club to the next level



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE PLANNING PROGRAMME

OVERVIEW

The Club Planning Programme aims to provide GAA, LGFA and Camogie Clubs with a step-by-step approach to developing a strategic plan. The programme features a Club Planning Guide, practical resources, and trained Club Planning Facilitators to guide Clubs through the process.



The planning process will result in the Club defining its position on these core building blocks of strategic plans:



Figure 1 The GAA's Club Planning Framework

Since its launch in 2008, the programme has helped approximately 1,000 Clubs to develop strategic plans and gain many benefits such as:

The identification of key priorities for growing Gaelic games in the County

A clear insight into the challenges and opportunities facing Gaelic games in the County

Clarity on the key initiatives to pursue when not in 'fire-fighting' mode

Increased motivation for volunteers and staff

New volunteers coming onboard, especially on sub-committees

A more efficient use of resources, including finance and people's time

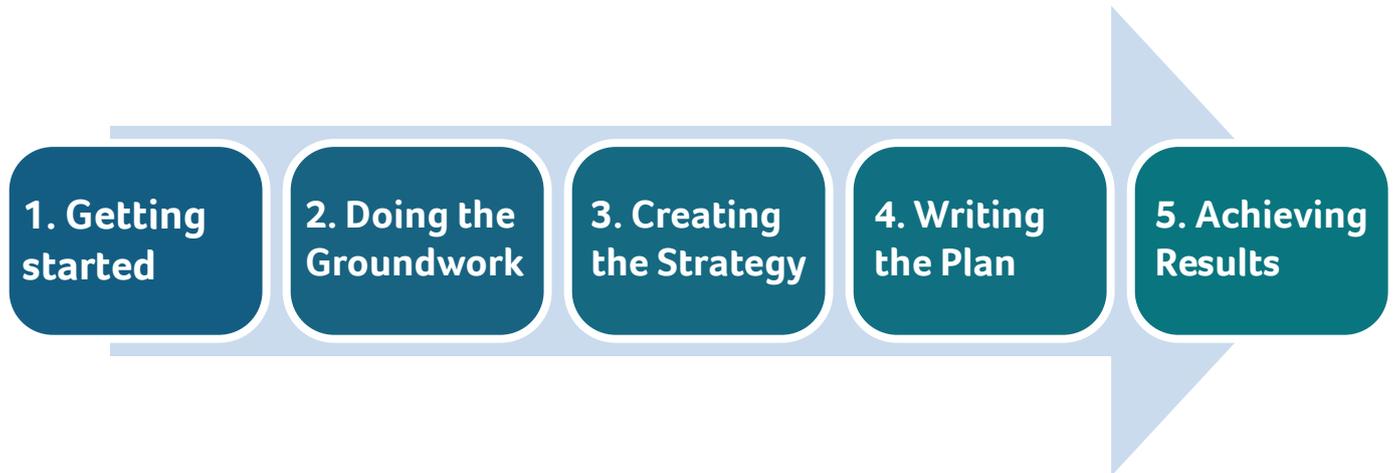
Staff and volunteers at the County, Provincial and Central levels of the Association work together to deliver the programme to Clubs. Table 1 illustrates the primary roles and responsibilities at the Club level.

Table 1 Primary Club planning roles and responsibilities

TASK	CLUB EXECUTIVE	STEERING GROUP	PLANNING FACILITATOR
Appointing the Steering Group	✓		
Advising the Steering Group			✓
Facilitating the Club Planning Workshop		✓	✓
Creating the Strategic Plan		✓	
Approving the final document	✓		
Launching the strategic plan	✓		
Establishing implementations procedures	✓		

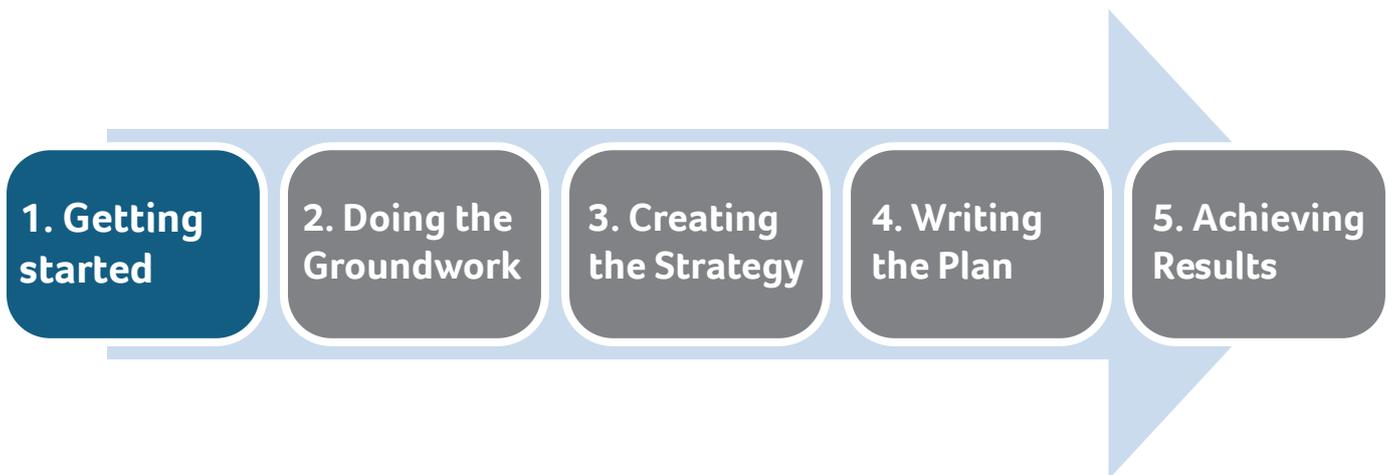
SECTION 2: THE PLANNING PROCESS

The recommended planning process for a Club is divided into five stages:



STAGE 1: GETTING STARTED

Each of these stages consists of several steps which are described in the following sections.



1.1 SUBMIT AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

After reviewing the Club Planning Guide, the Club's nominated Coordinator for the planning process should inform the relevant County Planning and Training Officer of its desire to get involved. This can be done by sending them a completed version of the expression of interest form.

The Planning and Training Officer will arrange a meeting or call to help ensure the Club is ready to develop a strategic plan and avoid potential roadblocks.

T1: Expression of Interest Form

T2: Readiness Assessment

1.2 APPOINT THE STEERING GROUP AND CLUB COORDINATOR

After reviewing the role descriptions, the Club Executive should appoint the Club Plan Steering Group and Club Coordinator.

The Steering Group should consist of the Club Coordinator and up to five other members

The Club Coordinator will act as the main link between the Club, the Club Planning Facilitator, and the County Planning and Training Officer. They will also coordinate all actions agreed by the Steering Group.

T3: Terms of Reference - Steering Group

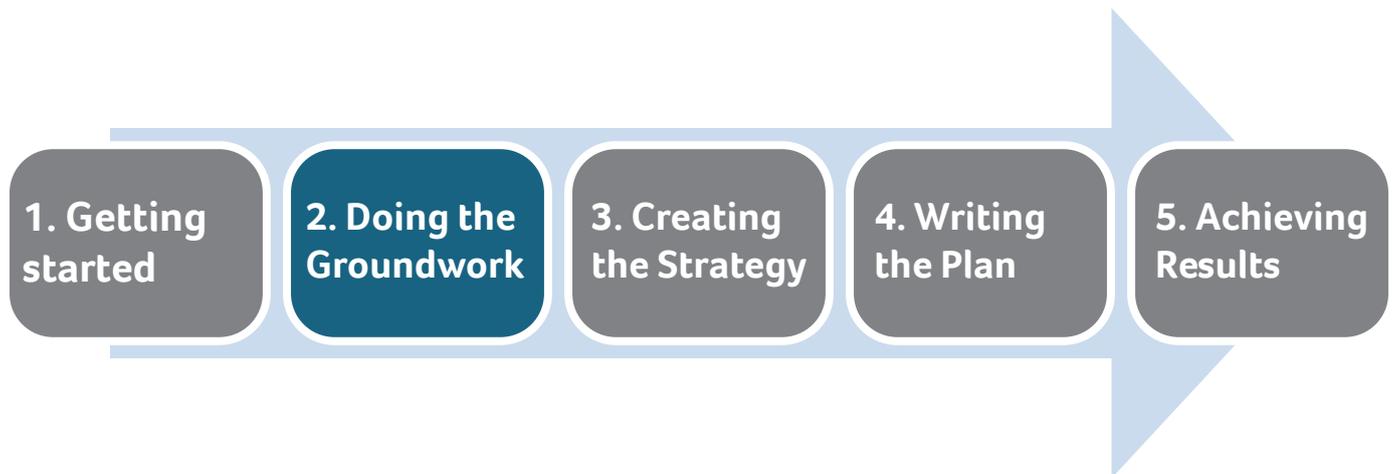
T4: Role Description - Club Coordinator

1.3 RECEIVE INITIAL CONTACT FROM THE CLUB PLANNING FACILITATOR

If the Club has been deemed ready for a strategic plan, a Club Planning Facilitator will be appointed by the GAA centrally after discussion with the County Planning and Training Officer. The Facilitator will contact the Club Coordinator to have an introductory discussion and clarify the initial steps.

CLUB ACTION SUMMARY

- Review the Club Planning Guide
- Submit the Expression of Interest Form
- Appoint the Club Coordinator and provide details to the County Planning and Training Officer
- Hold a conversation with the Facilitator



2.1 CREATE A BASIC PROJECT PLAN

The Steering Group should create a basic project plan to capture the main actions that need to be completed throughout the planning process. Each action should contain an estimated deadline and the person responsible for completing it. The focus at this stage should be to agree on milestones rather than all specific actions.

T5: Project Plan

2.2 ASSESS THE CLUB'S CURRENT PERFORMANCE AND PRIORITIES

The Steering Group should complete two exercises to get a better understanding of the Club's key challenges and opportunities:

- Exercise 1: Review key documents and data sources
- Exercise 2: Complete the Club Activity Checklist

EXERCISE 1. REVIEW KEY DOCUMENTS AND DATA SOURCES

The Steering Group should review key documents and data sources available to the Club to identify implications for the Club's plan. For example:

Documents	Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous strategic reviews and plans for the GAA, and the GAA at all levels, i.e., County, Provincial and Central • The Purpose, Vision and Values Statements of the Gaelic Games Associations • Annual Reports for the last 3 to 5 years for the Gaelic Games Associations at all levels • Reports on changes in society, e.g., employment growth, population trends, structural changes in society, policy • implications, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistics from Foireann, e.g., percent change in the number of Member and Player Registrations, percent change in the number of Teams, etc. • Census data • Local sports partnership data • Sport Ireland / Sport NI or equivalents for overseas units

Each Club needs to understand policies and strategies within their jurisdictions. For example, it would be important for Clubs in the Six Counties to recognise how they could potentially contribute to the Northern Ireland Executive’s Programme for Government, the Department for Communities Sport Matters Strategy, or the relevant Local Council’s Community Plan. All these bodies’ expertise and funding opportunities can be accessed if Clubs wish to create and develop links through an evidence-based strategic plan.

EXERCISE 2. COMPLETE THE CLUB ACTIVITY CHECKLIST

In addition, the Steering Group should complete the Club Activity Checklist to assess how the Club is performing against the best practice standards set out by the GAA.

T6: Club Activity Checklist

IDENTIFY KEY FOCUS AREAS

Having assessed the Club’s data sources and current performance, the Steering Group should decide on priority focus areas, known as Key Focus Areas (KFAs).

KFAs ground the Club’s core purpose in several areas which make it easier to set specific objectives and actions. Most Clubs come up with a list of between 4 to 8 KFAs after considering the following questions:

- What do we want to achieve?
- What is our core purpose?
- Who are we trying to serve in our community?
- What are the expectations of our members?
- What are our main strengths and opportunities that we want to exploit?
- What weaknesses and threats do we want to reduce?
- What focus areas are our County, Province, and the GAA centrally focussed on in their strategic plans?

Popular KFAs are listed in Figure 2 by way of an example.



Figure 2 Popular Focus Areas

Once potential KFAs have been identified, the Steering Group should cross-reference these with the strategic plans of the relevant County Committee, Provincial Council, and the GAA centrally. This exercise helps group together common themes and ensure alignment between objectives.

2.3 PREPARE FOR THE CLUB PLANNING WORKSHOP

This workshop aims to allow all members of the Club and the local community to have their say on the Club's future. It is also a proven way to recruit new volunteers.

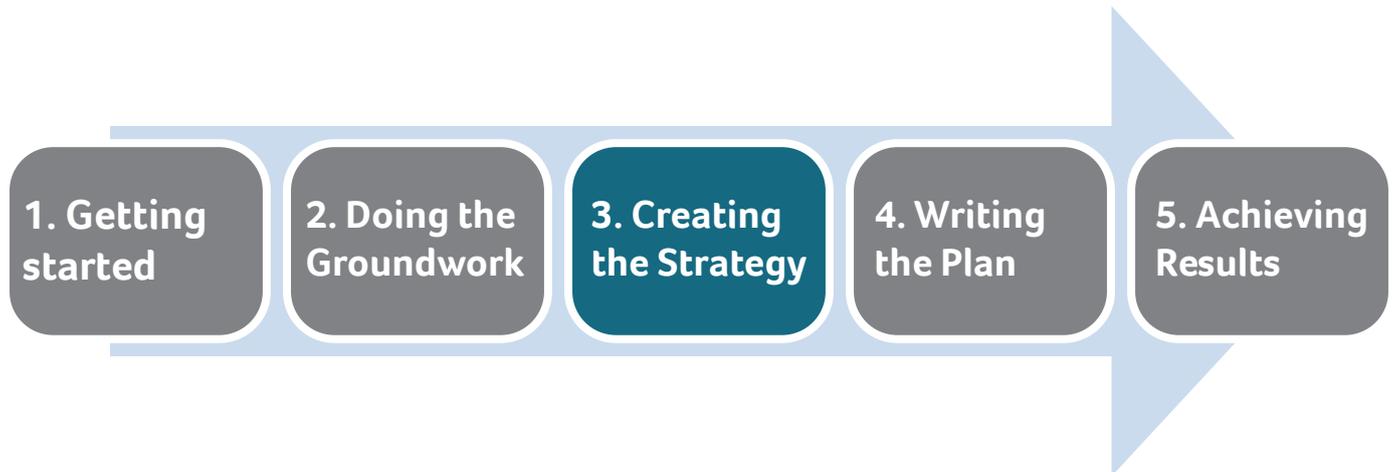
The Steering Group should consider its preferred date, time, and venue before meeting the Planning Facilitator.

2.4 MEET THE CLUB PLANNING FACILITATOR

This is where the Facilitator meets with the Club Plan Steering Group for the first time. The meeting aims to refine the project plan, agree on the Key Focus Areas, agree on arrangements for the workshop, and discuss any concerns or queries.

CLUB ACTION SUMMARY

- Appoint the Club Plan Steering Group
- Create a project plan
- Assess the Club's current performance and priorities
- Prepare for the Club Planning Workshop
- Hold the planning team meeting



3.1 HOLD THE CLUB PLANNING WORKSHOP

The Facilitator will lead the facilitation of the Club Planning Workshop. However, the Steering Group must ensure that it is set up correctly. This involves booking a suitable venue, ensuring people know about it, and selecting Focus Group Leaders in advance.

Focus Groups will be formed based on attendees at the workshop. They are responsible for building on the themes emerging from the workshop and finalising recommendations for the Steering Group to consider. Each Focus Group is encouraged to meet at least twice to define their recommendations; however, only the Leader is responsible for communicating the feedback.

3.2 CARRY OUT FURTHER RESEARCH

The Club Planning Workshop will give the Steering Group a good understanding of the Club's challenges and opportunities. However, the Steering Group may want to conduct further research.

Useful ways of doing so include:

- Researching what other Clubs and organisations do well
- Surveying members and the wider community
- Seeking bright ideas via e-mail
- Holding meetings with experts in specific areas

People to consider approaching include:

- The County Games Manager
- The County Planning and Training Officer
- Other County Officers
- Local business people with an interest in the Club

3.3 CONSIDER FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

The Feedforward Workshop gives the Focus Groups a meaningful opportunity to present their recommendations to the Steering Group. The attendance for this event should be restricted to the Focus Groups. The Facilitator can facilitate this event, if available.

CLUB ACTION SUMMARY

- Hold the Club Planning Workshop
 - Set-up the Club Planning Focus Groups
 - Carry out further research as required
 - Hold the Feedforward Workshop
 - Collate and consider the Focus Group recommendations
-

3.4 CREATING THE STRATEGY

Now that all the data has been gathered, the onus is on the Steering Group to prioritise the objectives to pursue and translate these into actions. This part of the planning process may take a few meetings.

Key questions to consider include:

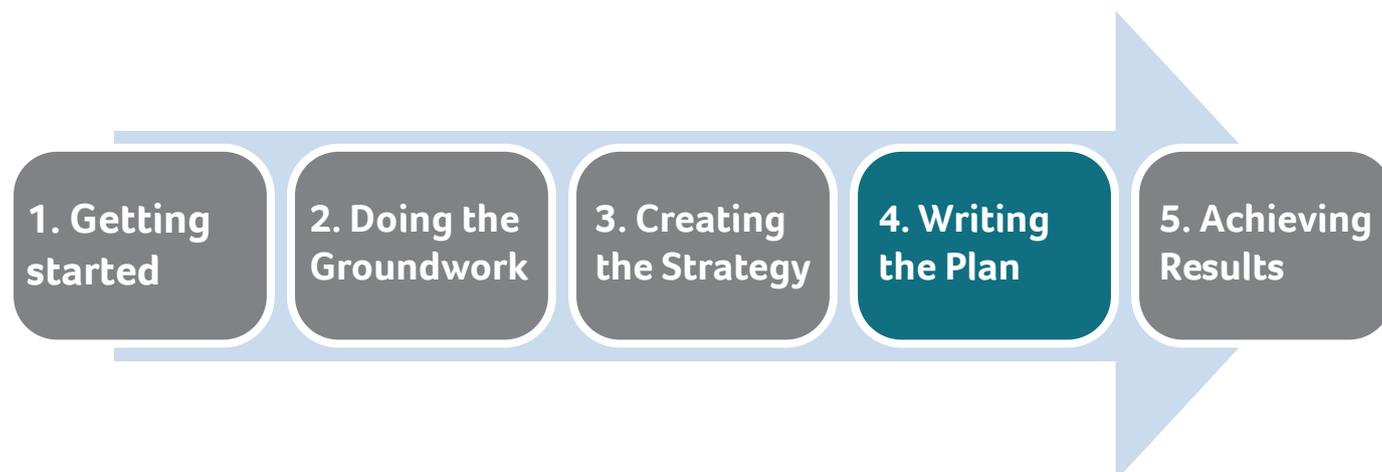
- What do we want to achieve in the next three to five years?
- What are our biggest opportunities and challenges according to our research?
- What changes are needed to realise our purpose, vision, and values?
- How ambitious can we be in each Focus Area?
- Can we afford to do everything we want to do?
- What things can be done straight away outside the strategic plan?

After considering these questions, the Steering Group should agree on:

- The title of each Focus Area
- A description of the Club's vision of success for this Focus Area
- A handful of actions – normally no more than 10 - to achieve this vision
- For each action, the outcome sought, timescale envisaged and person responsible.

It is useful to test each action against the popular SMART goal-setting guidelines. SMART means:

- **Specific:** identifies what will be accomplished
- **Measurable:** change can be tracked
- **Achievable:** is supported by the available resources
- **Relevant:** relates to the Club's priority needs and overall vision
- **Time-bound:** should be grounded by the plan's timeframe



4.1 WRITE THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Once the Focus Group recommendations have been considered; the Steering Group can start writing the strategic plan document. This document usually includes the following sections:

1. Chairperson's Address
2. A Brief History Of Our Club
3. The Planning Process
4. Purpose, Vision, And Values
5. Strategic Context
6. Strategy
 - a. Focus Area 1.
 - b. Focus Area 2.
 - c. Focus Area 3.
 - d. Focus Area 4.
 - e. Focus Area 5.
7. Implementation And Review
8. Acknowledgements

Once the first draft has been prepared, it should be reviewed by several people both within and outside the Club, e.g., the Facilitator and County Planning and Training Officer. The final draft of the plan should be reviewed and approved by the Club Executive.

T7: Club Plan Template

4.2 LAUNCH THE DOCUMENT

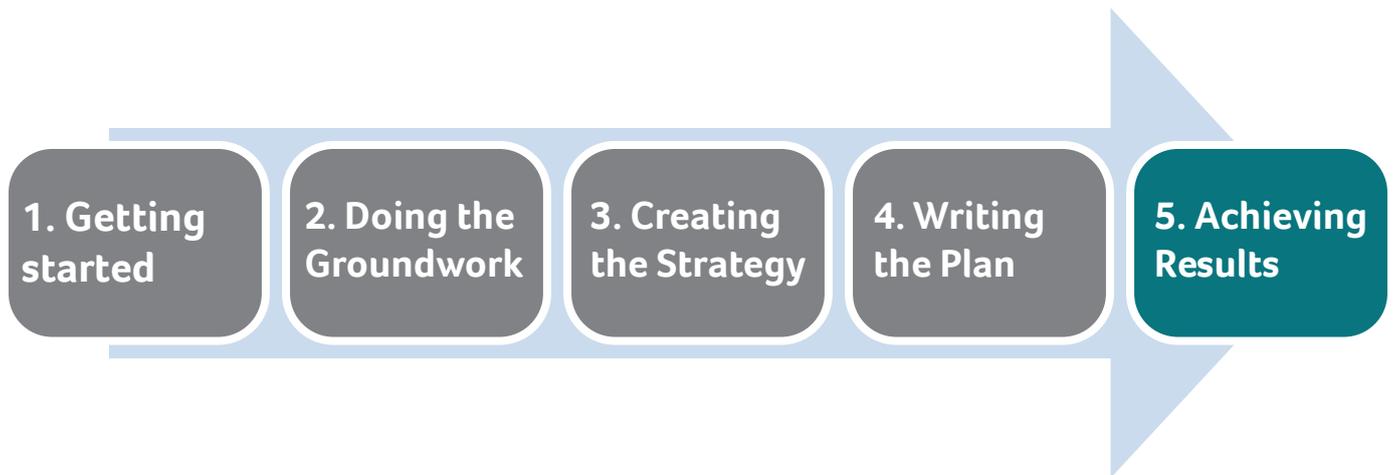
Most Clubs hold a launch event to communicate the strategic plan to the Club members and local community. It is a good opportunity to acknowledge everyone who contributed to the planning process and explain the Club's vision for success.

Hard copies of the document can be distributed, but the document should be available on the Club's website and e-mailed to every Club member at a minimum.

CLUB ACTION SUMMARY

- Write the first draft of the strategic plan
- Seek feedback on the document from selected people inside and outside the Club
- Ensure the Club Executive approves the final plan
- Formally launch the plan
- Distribute the strategic plan document to members and the local community





5.1 ESTABLISH IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

After the plan has been launched, the Steering Group's work is complete. It is then a matter for the Club Executive to establish an implementation plan. The Club Executive can decide to review progress every month or establish a Strategy Implementation Sub-Committee to lead the implementation of the plan on its behalf. Key responsibilities include:

- Deciding on priorities – immediate, near-term, and medium-term
- Delegating actions and projects to various individuals and groups
- Ensuring clarity on roles and responsibilities
- Reviewing progress every three months
- Communicating progress on implementation, e.g., regular reports to the Executive, annual update at the Club AGM, evaluation report once the plan expires, etc.

CLUB ACTION SUMMARY

- Assign responsibility to the Executive Committee or an Implementation Committee
- Decide on strategic priorities
- Delegate actions and projects
- Share a breakdown of responsibilities with everyone working on the plan's implementation
- Meet at least every three months to review progress
- Communicate regular progress updates

SECTION 3: THE PLANNING TOOLKIT

The following tools and templates are available as part of the Club Planning Toolkit which complements this Guide:

- T1: Expression of Interest Form
- T2: Readiness Assessment
- T3: Terms of Reference – Steering Group
- T4: Role Description - Club Coordinator
- T5: Project Plan
- T6: Club Activity Checklist
- T7: Club Plan Template

The latest version can be accessed online at **Club Planning Toolkit for Gaelic Games**

GETTING STARTED

Please complete the Expression of Interest Form and contact your County Planning and Training Officer to discuss. Contact details can be found at learning.gaa.ie/clubplanning

