



# One Governing Body



## Why are we doing this?

Ireland is one of the top three countries in Europe with the highest participation rates for Golf. Iceland leads in terms of participation, at an impressive 5%, followed closely by Sweden and Ireland place themselves in third position, at approx. 4% participation. The decline in membership numbers in Ireland and elsewhere is a concern and there is a possibility that with the current downwards trends, Ireland could fall down to less than 1% participation, in line with the European norm.

In general, Golf in Europe is growing due to the modern and family friendly structures that are being put in place. Ireland need to undertake a similar philosophy; to place more emphasis on junior boys/girls and female participation, create innovative ways of playing the game, and implement structures that suit modern families, who cannot commit to the time it takes to play a round of golf.

Golf supply and demand in Ireland, alongside Scotland decreased in 2016, in comparison to Portugal, Italy, Austria and Germany who all experienced growth.

Since 2004 in Ireland, Golf Club membership has declined on average by over 70,000 and approx. 30 clubs have closed. In 2014, 60% of Clubs reported decreasing membership trends, with the trend being evenly distributed across the regions.

Over the last decade, both male and female membership has significantly decreased, with Ireland experiencing a 26% decline in male adult membership, 25% in female adult membership, 16% in junior boys and 22% in junior girls.

## Benefits of Golf Ireland

### Club Membership Growth

Attracting new golfers and new members will be easier if there is one clear and consistent message; golf can be challenging, it can be fun, but above all it is enjoyable whether you are a man, a woman, a boy or a girl, an elite player, a social player, an average player or a beginner. Golf is a health promoting hobby and is unique in that it is a game that can be enjoyed by all. Golf Ireland will promote golf as an integrated family-oriented sport with wide appeal, and one that can compete successfully to be one of the most popular leisure activities.

### Improved Support for Clubs

Club Support is not a core function of the GUI or ILGU. It is something that was introduced by the Unions in 2013, via the CGI, but with limited capacity to support the needs of all clubs. Golf Ireland is committed to making Club Support a core function. The new body will have a department responsible for supporting clubs in the areas of governance, business planning, membership growth and retention, communications, marketing etc.



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## A True Governing Body

No entity has ever been truly responsible for the game of golf in Ireland. GUI and ILGU were established in the late 1890s for the purpose of organising championships and international matches. Society has changed hugely in the past 125 years and it is important for golf to have a modern governing body that can respond to all needs of member clubs today, including club support and growing the game.

## Empowering Clubs

The business of Annual Meetings of the GUI and ILGU is restricted to matters relevant to those bodies, such as championships and inter-club events. Clubs have no input into matters of broader importance to golf, such as golf development, promotion and club support. This will change under Golf Ireland as clubs will have their voices heard as members of THE governing body for golf in Ireland.

## Improved Club Structure

Having one governing body will remove the requirement for a men's club and a ladies club. The GUI and ILGU, by virtue of being separate, require separate clubs or sections within each golf facility. Golf Ireland will work with Golf Clubs to develop a range of efficient management structures to ensure the future success of the game at club level.

## More Funding for Golf

Whilst the ILGU and GUI have enjoyed good relationships with funding agencies and international golfing bodies, golf in Ireland has never been represented by a single voice, resulting in poorer than deserved support for golf clubs in sports capital funding. Golf Ireland will be positioned to speak on behalf of golf in Ireland and is committed to lobbying on behalf of golf to improve these levels of support.

## Greater Attraction to Commercial Partners

Golf Ireland will be more attractive to governmental agencies, commercial partners and sponsors. One simple structure is easier to understand and fits much better with the aims and values of companies today.

## Promoting an Equal Environment

Countries with one governing body of golf tend to have a much healthier ratio of female to male members, reflecting the equal environment promoted by the governing body. If golf in Ireland is to thrive, it is imperative that this ratio is brought closer to European norms.

## Improved Media Coverage

Achieving media coverage for amateur golf is difficult, particularly nationally, and too often it focuses on the negative gender difference aspects of the game. Golf Ireland would have the potential to improve that media perception by proactively promoting the positive aspects of the game and tackling the negative stereotypes.

Visit [www.onegoverningbody.com](http://www.onegoverningbody.com) for further information.