



## Staff Consultation – One Governing Body – Summary Report

### Introduction

The purpose of this consultation session was to get the input of staff to the ‘dreaming’ of the new One Governing Body. As the people closest to the operation of the three organisations, the staff are a valuable source of aspiration and, later, how to make it happen. It was not designed as a session to address questions or clarifications about the possible one governing body.

Detailed notes were taken and, together with recollection, form the basis of this draft report. Where possible, the words of staff are used in this summary. Direct quotes are in italic. This report has captured the significant points raised but, because of the numbers participating, not all the points have been reported on. The notes taken by the rapporteur are on file and can be used by Sia, if requested, to draw further on the insights provided by staff on their views of the ambition for One Governing Body.

The process aimed to hear the diversity of views without attempting to develop a consensus. The size of the group (30+) is likely to have contained some of the contributions and later consultation will draw out further contributions. However, the aspirations of staff were articulated well and a strong sense of the ambition for the One Governing Body did emerge. Staff who wish to add further suggestions on the ambition or the dream for OGB are welcome to send them to their manager or to [jane.williams@siapartners.ie](mailto:jane.williams@siapartners.ie).

### Participation

The staff met in GUI’s meeting room with 35 present. The CEOs of the ILGU and the GUI, together with the Director of Golf Development of CGI participated for the first hour or so and then left to allow staff to talk freely. The atmosphere in the room was good, with the normal characteristics of a large group of 35+ people (Some people were quiet, a few spoke more than others, etc.). The staff engaged well with the topics.

### The dream

- The Union is important to for the future of the sport. The ambition and the dream and how that happens is the responsibility of the OGB. Golf must be central to the organisation. The OGB must be club centred too (like the existing Unions are). It must find out the needs of clubs to provide for these. It should be connected to clubs. The OGB’s responsibility to work on behalf



of clubs and golfers should be felt by all. *"It should be an organisation where we couldn't say 'well that's not my problem'." "Clubs want transparency and accountability."*

- The OGB should take into account non-club members and be an all-inclusive governing body. *"This goes to marketing. Everyone is a potential golfer, be inclusive."* This also gives the OGB authority to speak for all and is a broader reach than the current unions have. All golfers should be included, whether amateur or professional, not men or ladies, just all golfers.
- The OGB must be sustainable and different ideas of best practice exist. It must also be accountable for the money used and what you do with it. Need to be clear about the difference between golf and the golf industry.
- Standards of practice are most important. The OGB must stand for something consistently and have a coherent approach to what is best practice. There should be a lot of trust in the organisation. Management practices need to reflect a modern business, particularly regarding employing people. The right people in the right roles. Appoint a CEO and empower them to act as a CEO. Communication is key. It's a barrier at the moment. Handicapping is part of it. Getting the right volunteers for the right job is important. Getting the right people for the right job. There should be a clear HR structure with consistency in practice. *"We all have ad hoc arrangements"*. An ethos of progression for staff and volunteers would be good. Safeguarding practices should be enforced and inspected. There should be an expectation that you give back. Lobbying and 'voice' should be the other side. Use elite players better. Modernise the marketing practice. Be a progressive, modern organisation that moves with the times, and brings golf into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *"It has done a lot and the keys are equality and no exclusivity."* "Germans saying 'They have the best web site' is my dream!" Have behaviours that are more akin to a professional organisation.
- The gender issue is seen as critical. *"We want everyone to be golfers, not men and women."* *"This is a huge issue at the moment."* *"Remarks about social exclusivity that were allowed to stand because there wasn't anyone working on that"* cause problems. This is a new role for the new organisation. OGB must back that up and require that of members. One committee running the clubs and the OGB. Playing the sport together. *"Why would we let clubs that are not equal into the organisation?"* *"No lady captains or men's captains, just one"* Course rating and handicapping are suggested as the easiest thing to put together. There is already a lot of cooperation and good working relationships.
- Continued success on the world stage. A golfing body that has real value for the country. Turning out good golfers sustainably. A pathway for every golfer. It should be all right to be an OK golfer. Increase in participation by



20%. Clubs making money and profitable. Giving back, being environmentally friendly. Attracting spectators in bigger numbers, especially at amateur level. “Community involvement is important – maybe playing golf in a field.” “Banish the blazer (not the person in it) – the sports people are not in the front line and should be.” GAA community involvement cited together with the picture of people driving past the golf club, afraid to go in.

- Volunteers should be recognised. Handicapping should be cleaned up. The special gear is an issue compared with other sports like GAA. We need to implement through volunteers. We must give them support and credit. Volunteers are saddled with huge jobs. They need more training and support. People disappearing when put under pressure. Volunteers need a mind-set change in relation to attitudes to staff.
- Coaching. Consistent and effective coaching will be developed and supported by the OGB. It’s a leisure activity as well as a sport.
- Pace of change. Some emphasised the need to modernise and to develop the capacity to change. Others pointed to the challenges in implementing change and the impact that has on the organisation. The OGB will lead by example and inspire clubs to change from the top down.
- Regional structure is important and needed. Clubs don’t relate to the HQ but to the regional structure.

## Process

- Learn from what was done in Scotland and Wales. Finance should be the least influential element of the change. However, financial security and stability is vital for the OGB and member clubs and this will be key in developing the implementation of OGB.
- Overwhelming feedback of ‘Get on with it’.

## Questions

Are we all safe in our jobs? What will the name be? How will the decision be made to establish OGB?

Jane Williams  
26<sup>th</sup> August 2016