

# STRATEGY FOR GROWTH

2020-2023



**WORLD  
ATHLETICS™**



**WORLD  
ATHLETICS™**

— OUR VISION

TO USE  
THE POWER &  
ACCESSIBILITY  
OF ATHLETICS  
AND OUR  
ATHLETES  
TO CREATE  
A HEALTHIER  
AND FITTER  
WORLD

— CONTENTS

4	INTRODUCTION
6	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
8	OUR VISION & MISSION
10	OUR STAKEHOLDERS
12	OUR STRATEGIC GOALS & KPIs
14	COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS & ADVANTAGE
16	OUR APPROACH
30	METRICS, RESEARCH, MONITORING & REPORTING
32	OUR VALUES
34	OUR TIMETABLE
38	FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS
39	CONCLUSION





ON  
YOUR  
MARKS.

## — INTRODUCTION

World Athletics faces an unprecedented opportunity for growth. Four years of bedding down a strong governance foundation and creating a more transparent and accessible sport, willing to create dialogue and tackle tough decisions has gone a very long way in establishing World Athletics' credibility and trust. The recent decision by the IOC to postpone the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games and stage them in 2021, and the subsequent decision to reschedule our own World Athletics Championships Oregon 2021 to 2022, provides the sport with five consecutive (2021-2025) years of world class athletics anchoring every northern hemisphere summer. Whilst Athletics is already a hugely popular sport globally, we believe that everything we do now should capitalise on this extraordinary opportunity to grow the sport to the next level of popularity and involvement.

World Athletics is often thought of largely in terms of elite track and field. However, we are the global governing body for the whole sport, across all its forms and across the entire planet – from competitive and

leisure activities for all ages and abilities. This strategic plan recognises that responsibility and embraces the broadest possible definition of our sport:

- Track and field
- Road running
- Cross country
- Race walking
- Mountain and trail running

**This plan will guide our activities and the focus of the World Athletics Headquarters for the next four years (January 2020 – December 2023).**

We are, however, aware that it is being launched at a time when the world is gripped with the Covid-19 pandemic which is challenging every part of normal life. We do not underestimate the pressures the fight to beat the virus is bringing on all our stakeholders – our Member Federations and their athletes, coaches and officials, our Area Associations, elected officers, our Partners, the cities, governments and venues we work with, the media, our fans and all those who help deliver athletics every day.



## — EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our overarching vision and the purpose of this strategic plan is to grow the whole of our sport. We know that in the short term this will initially be restricted by the social distancing guidelines the world is under but on the other hand, the vital importance of daily exercise in maintaining fitness and health during this time has resulted in many people taking up walking and running and playing simple games involving running, jumping and throwing with their families. In many ways, there has never been a better time for us to recognise and build on what our sport can offer, in its purest form.

# GROW

We have unique and enviable global attributes as a sport – talented and driven athletes on every continent; an operational presence in 214 countries (although it should be recognised that our Member Federations span a wide scale of

operational capacity, skill and resource); knowledge, experience and connections across cultures and social groups and a product with history and tradition whose stars have become household names. We are the number one Olympic sport but also the most universally participated in sport, with equal numbers of men and women of all ages using our sport to maintain fitness and vitality. We need to capitalise on this by realising our assets and realigning our Member Federations to where their skills and expertise can deliver real benefits to them and to our sport.

We have partnerships with some of the world's leading and most respected organisations, commercial corporations and broadcasters. Developing these partnerships through greater activation and investing in new partnerships which offer real value to the sport is a key

element of our strategic plan to achieve greater reach and the growth we are aiming for.

We have established a new set of values by which we will operate. These recognise the extraordinary work and achievements of the past 4 years in the governance of our sport but also provide us with an opportunity to accelerate our thinking and the way we deliver and operate to achieve our growth objectives over the next 4 years.

This Strategic Plan will be the metronome of the daily activities of the WA HQ staff, and its implementation across the globe, with and through our Stakeholders, will be encapsulated in the 10-year World Plan (due to be signed off at the 2021 Congress) to ensure the whole sport is aligned to a common goal.

# THE WHOLE OF OUR SPORT

— OUR VISION

**TO USE THE  
POWER AND  
ACCESSIBILITY  
OF ATHLETICS  
AND OUR  
ATHLETES  
TO CREATE  
A HEALTHIER  
AND FITTER  
WORLD**

— OUR MISSION



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## **GROW**

Grow the sport of athletics and make it relevant in people's lives and in the lives of their communities.

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## **INSPIRE**

Create globally appealing and accessible competitions, events, and activities so our talented athletes can entertain and inspire the world.

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## **LEAD**

Be the best example of a well-governed sports federation taking brave leadership decisions and valuing partnerships that deliver athletics around the world.

# IN CREATING THIS STRATEGIC PLAN WE HAVE IDENTIFIED SIX PRIORITY STAKEHOLDERS.

## MEMBER FEDERATIONS

there may be significant diversity across our MFs but every one of them has the ability to deliver growth in our sport, either at elite level or community level, so we need to make them the best they can be at whichever focus they are best suited to.

## PARTNERS

without whom we would not be able to realise our vision so we must find ways to help them align with our vision, support our strategy and activate accordingly whether they provide funds, supply us with services, broadcast our sport, organise events at any level or partner with us in campaigns.

## MEDIA

who amplify our events, our athletes, our campaigns and the way we run our sport. Critical friends at worst and avid champions of the sport at best, they need to have access to all of us, in good times and bad, to help tell our stories as well as we can.

## ATHLETES

who are our number one asset and, as such, need to be supported, promoted, protected by clear rules and behaviour, inspired to compete, rewarded and supported with the platforms and tools to engage directly with partners and fans. Creating more competition and earning opportunities for our athletes is a priority in our desire to make a career in athletics an attractive professional choice.

## FANS

who participate in our sport, who watch our sport, who follow our athletes and who motivate their families, their communities and their governments to support healthy

and fitter lifestyles. We need to mobilise this group, inspire them to participate, motivate them to watch and bring them together on platforms and in forums where they feel they belong and choose to connect to our sport.

## OUR PEOPLE

whether in Area Associations, Member Federations, our HQ or the millions of people who enable our sport to take place day in, day out. We need to celebrate them, support them, develop them and inspire more people into our sport through more accessible and clear pathways, processes and equality practices.



## MORE PARTICIPATION

We will invest in our athletes and the development of our competitions by delivering more events where athletes can earn income and create more opportunities for people to **participate** in athletics across all levels, in as many countries as we can and in all age groups.

- We will create a critical mass of world class athletics competitions and events in all our continents with clear levels of prize money by investing in Area and National championships, the Continental Tour and continue to drive improvements in the Diamond League.
- We will reform our event hosting protocols and requirements to align with city agendas so we can attract more bidders and leave lasting legacies wherever our events are held.
- We will focus on mass engagement opportunities, especially in running, by delivering a series of campaigns every year that our Member Federations want to be part of and our partners and broadcasters will want to support.
- We will ensure that school-age children around the world have the opportunity to try our sport by delivering a best in class kids' athletics programme.
- We will create at least two campaigns a year in partnership with cities, governments and Member Federations to drive health and fitness agendas.

## MORE PEOPLE (to deliver our sport)

We will celebrate, support and develop the **people** who deliver our sport throughout the world, at every level, providing clear access and pathways for all.

- We will double the number of new recruits who support the delivery of our sport, whether as coaches and officials or in Member Federation, event or club roles.
- We will develop best in class teaching materials and courses, promoted through education institutions around the world and a new WA e-learning platform.
- We will develop programmes to deliver key skills to Member Federations, through Area Associations and other channels, so they can attract and deliver the growth we are looking for (eg: Coaches and technical official forums, Leadership seminars, Communication workshops, Commercial workshops,).
- As well as moving forward with our governance reforms, we will also drive our gender leadership programmes to ensure that we meet our 50% gender targets by 2027 through proactive initiatives that build the pipeline of talented and empowered female administrators, coaches and officials.

## MORE FANS

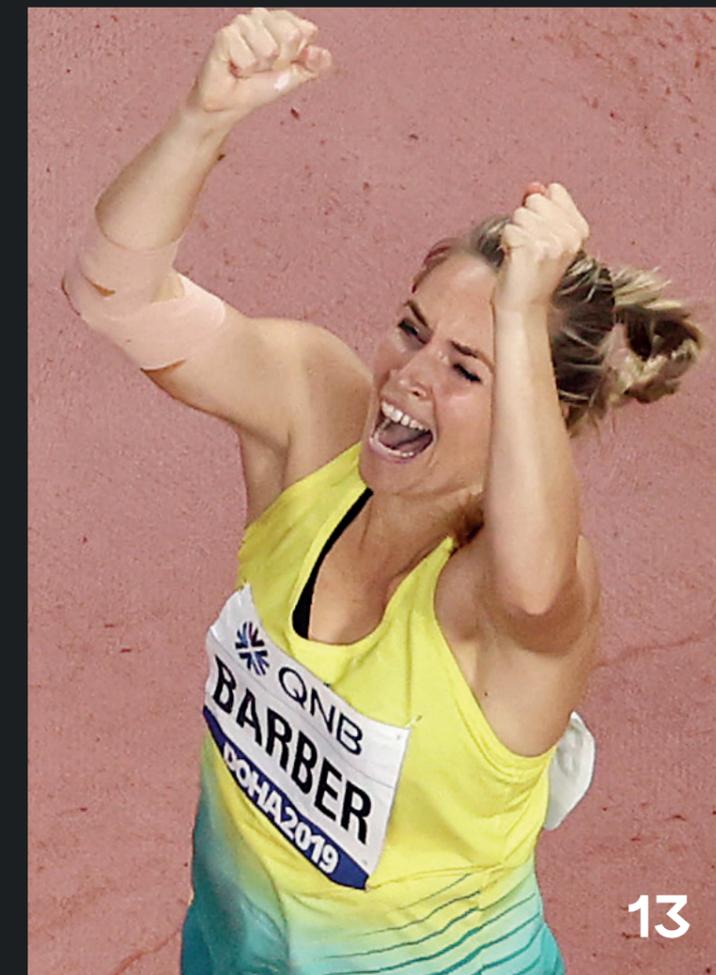
We will attract more **fans** to attend and watch our athletes compete at national, regional and global competitions and develop platforms and initiatives that are flexible and reflect the world we live in today to engage with and inspire our fans.

- We will grow our broadcast reach and engagement by at least 10% through closer collaboration on how our sport is delivered and presented, including greater investment in innovation and technology that will bring our athletes closer to our fans.
- We aim to deliver full stadiums at our outdoor World Championships by working more closely with our LOCs, our broadcasters and our athletes.
- We will double our digital following over the next four years by focusing on creative content that engages as well as attracts; developing strong partnerships with social media platforms so we can work together to drive growth; loosen, where we can, access to broadcast content and effectively controlling specific platforms (eg: YouTube) to drive traffic.
- We will create a database of one million known fans of our sport who actively choose to connect and engage with us, our athletes and our sport.

## MORE PARTNERSHIPS

We will create more **partnerships** with commercial and non-commercial organisations that generate financial and activation value and opportunities to our sport, our athletes, our MF's and communities around the world.

- We will double our current number of commercial partners.
- We will double our non-commercial partners and meaningful NGOs relationships, particularly in the areas of health and wellbeing and environmental sustainability.
- We will add value to our existing partnerships (sponsors, event organisers, LOCs) so we in turn can reap greater value.



In putting together this strategic plan, a number of workshops were held where the leadership group and the HQ explored three key areas of sport: our organisation, our products and our markets so we could collectively understand where our strengths lie in all three areas so we can build on them.

The following six statements from the strategic planning process guided our thinking:



**We are the No.1 Olympic sport so we can and should lead.**

**Our athletes, have the independent voice and charisma to connect to real people** in every community. Our sport is simple to understand, attracts huge audiences when presented well, is exciting and is scalable so can be held in parks and playgrounds as well as on packed streets and sell out stadiums.

**The current pandemic has focused the world on health and fitness** of both individuals and the planet. As athletics is the basis of all sports, World Athletics is well placed to leverage both of these trends.

**We are one of two genuinely global and accessible sports** with Member Federations in over 200 countries and half a billion people stating they participate in athletics or running (Nielsen research).

**We have cleaned house and built trust** across all our stakeholder groups so we are ready and set up to confidently grow our sport and make brave decisions.

**The market that World Athletics operates in, and cares about, should be as wide as possible** (ie from gold medallists through to occasional recreational runners and from children to masters).



— OUR APPROACH

We will grow athletics, by doing the things we do already even better through an ongoing programme of continuous improvement and by delivering new innovative initiatives and programmes.

By committing to a culture of continuous development and improvement in everything we do, our resources go further, our behaviours are consistent, collaborative, and trusted and our outcomes will deliver greater returns to all stakeholders.

We will innovate at every level of our organisation through regular reviews of our programmes and activities that include robust cross departmental interrogation and feedback. Driving industry leadership initiatives by applying our skills and knowledge to the ongoing development

of programmes such as how to prevent the spread of infectious diseases at mass endurance events, engaging with our retired athletes to recognise the community support they provide, making our historical information more easily accessible, showcasing all our work through our own channels and protecting the planet through delivering our 10-year sustainability plan.

We will develop communication and, where required, a marketing plan to support all our activities.

## THE FOLLOWING OUTLINES THE SIX MAJOR INITIATIVES AND THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS WE SET OUT TO DELIVER GROWTH:

1. Competition innovation to deliver scale and excitement
2. Giving every child in the world access to our sport
3. Building Human Capital in our Sport
4. Knowing and engaging our fans
5. Becoming a Campaigning Organisation
6. Profitable Partnering for Growth





— OUR APPROACH

## 1. COMPETITION INNOVATION TO DELIVER SCALE & EXCITEMENT

Our World Athletics Series is our premium asset, driving profile and income for our sport worldwide. Ensuring they are relevant, entertaining and profitable is a priority so we are specifically exploring the repositioning of the WAS non-stadium events in order to increase their impact and appeal and provide a stimulus to deliver a local community legacy long after the event has left town:

### A WEEKEND CELEBRATION OF RUNNING:

A weekend celebration of running: combining world class elite events and athletes with mass participation competitors. **World Athletics Road Championships** will bring together the World Half Marathon Championships, a significant mass participation component and other potential elements such as the World Race Walking Team Championships, an Ekiden relay or a World 5k championship. There is also the possibility of hosting a **World Athletics Off-Road Championship** in the intervening years which could combine the World Cross Country Championships with other off-road disciplines (trail, mountain running, etc.).

### INVEST IN THE BEST & CREATE SPACE FOR THE REST:

Encouraging top-flight competition in every continent in the world, every year, through the three tier Continental Tour. Bringing new investment into the sport enabling our athletes to prepare for major championships and increase earning opportunities.

Establish a **Pro-Running Board** to review, reform and govern our Road Running label programme by evolving more tailor-made solutions to recognise area and regional related needs, targeting recreational runners and focusing on societal issues – health, social and environmental responsibility.

Extend the reach of the Olympic Games by working with IOC and other stakeholders to include cross country within the athletics programme.

# PARTICIPATION

## 2. GIVING EVERY CHILD IN THE WORLD ACCESS TO OUR SPORT

Every child in the world should be given the chance to access and experience our sport but we know that one size does not fit all. To be open to as many children as possible, including those with a disability, our programmes must be without restrictions of facilities, equipment or cost.

Our Kids' Athletics programme will have the flexibility to cater for all school-age groups and geographic/cultural differences, will inspire and incentivise young people to take up the sport and will examine and address the barriers to participating and why young people leave our sport. This programme will be the heartbeat of every Member Federation and we will use our World Athletics Series championship events and our athletes as the catalyst and inspiration to children and campaigning voice to governments.



### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:

1. Designing and driving a global calendar that is attractive to our fans, encourages delivery partnerships and provides Member Federations, Areas and athletes with event earning and performance opportunities and drives national and regional fans.
2. Robustly reviewing our competitions and reforming our event hosting protocols and requirements seeking objective and exhaustive feedback which in turn drives our event guidelines and our new bidding process.
3. Rigorously evaluating our rules and how they are applied and, wherever necessary, changing them and communicating them to our stakeholders.
4. Designing and implementing a strong impact assessment across all our events to ensure they drive real legacy in every city and every country where we host events.

### 3. BUILDING HUMAN CAPITAL IN OUR SPORT

We will establish a People Plan which identifies the Training Pathways in all areas of sport for all people: providing clear pathways for education and training, from school to university and beyond:

#### COACH AND OFFICIAL EDUCATION

to review and reform the programme, develop clearer pathways with reward and recognition and make getting involved simpler;

#### CAMPAIGN – RECRUIT, REWARD, RECOGNISE, RETAIN

global but locally targeted to recruit more people into the sport, with a focus on the right mindset, specialist and relevant training and recognising people for their time and expertise.

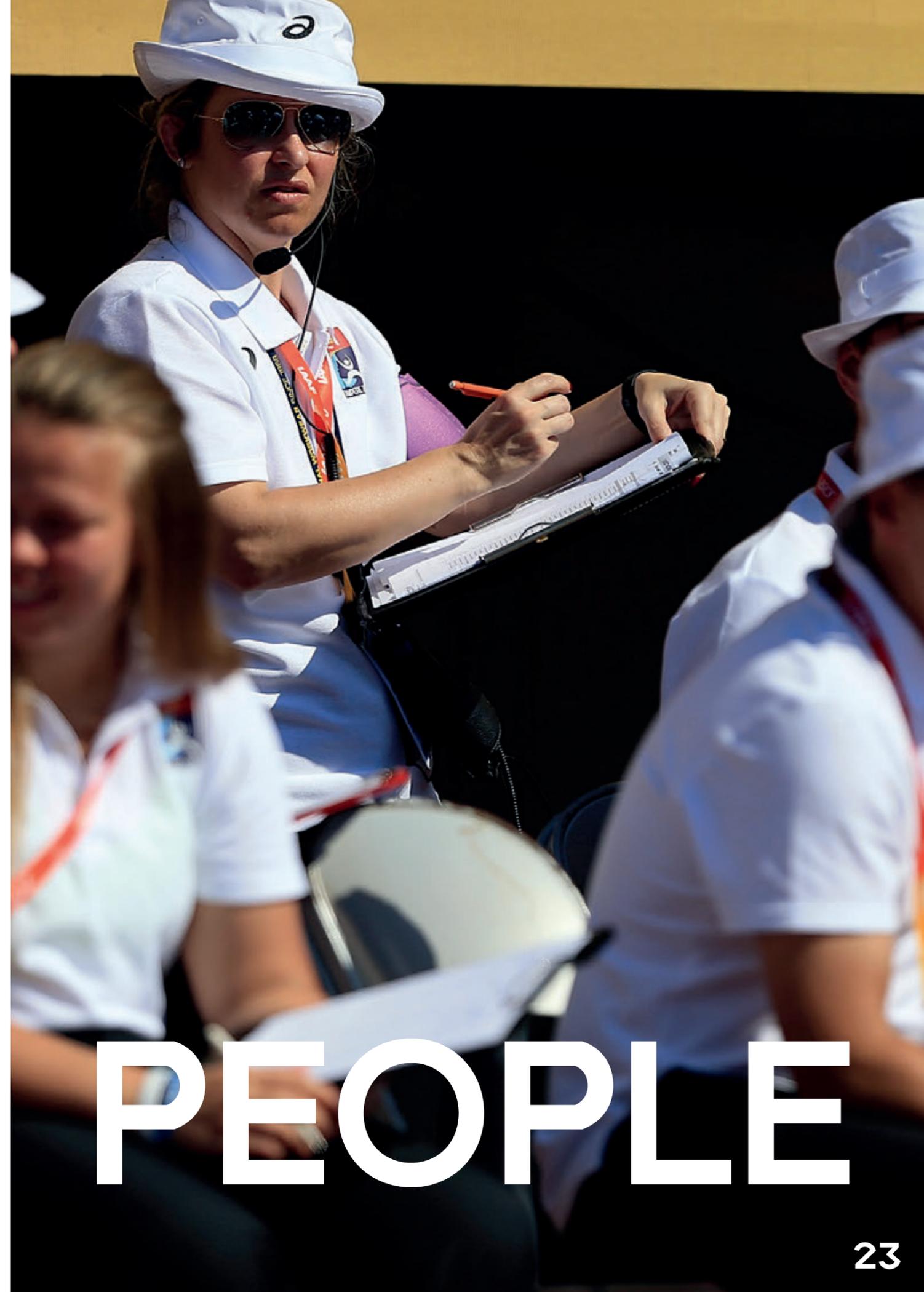
**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:** Sharing knowledge and skills with and between our Member Federations through comprehensive induction in our operations, creating workshops and forums through Area Associations and other channels. We will focus on tailoring our approach to suit the strengths of different MF's sustainability in all we do and creating greater efficiency and cost effectiveness in our working practices.

#### YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

built from the upper age group of Kids' Athletics, to ensure young people continue in the sport across a range of opportunities.

#### 'WAS' WORKFORCE LEGACY

developing world class workforce experience into all WAS events with world-class training and upskilling reward and recognition programmes that help deliver growth in host countries and cities.



# PEOPLE

## 4. KNOWING AND ENGAGING OUR FANS

People love athletics, from the FANatics – who know every athlete, every stat and the best angle of release for the javelin throwers – to the ‘ARMCHAIR Advocates’ for whom watching sport on TV is a means to unwind. Our vision is to have one million fans signed up by 2024. We will take a laser-like approach to reach, understand and engage with our fans by providing content they want, when they want it.

# FANS



### PLATFORMS TO POWER ENGAGEMENT:

Constructing best in class engagement and activation platform will enable us to transform the fan experience around our content and services so we can grow event viewing, participation, sponsor and host city connections.

### COMPELLING CONTENT ALWAYS:

is our overriding promise to our fans across four key areas:

- a. **Athletics Explained:** We will create content from the fun, bite size introduction to the sport to the highly technical analysis of world-class competition.
- b. **Be Active Acceleration:** The new section of our website, Be Active, has come into its own during Covid-19. We will build on this, offering premium lifestyle content to our signed-up fans from our athletes, our partners and our events.
- c. **Competition Info:** We will continue to provide comprehensive competition information (including ways to watch, reports, results, athlete profiles, highlights and premium behind-the-scene footage).
- d. **Exclusive Offers and opportunities:** Competitions to win tickets, partner discounts, exclusive content, personalised messages from their favourite athletes will all help drive fans to sign up for tailored exclusive content.

### ATHLETE TRACKING:

Using existing technology to analyse athlete performance, Athlete Tracking augments the experience of fans by offering greater insight into how and why our elite performers are successful.

### INSIDE TRACK INSIGHTS:

We already invest in CIS information and insights for broadcasters and media. We will explore how we can evolve this information into usable graphics which tell a story for the media and create access to inside track insights for our signed-up fans.

# PARTNERSHIPS

## 5. BECOMING A CAMPAIGNING ORGANISATION

Athletics is truly global and is participated in by more people than any other sport. We will harness the power of our sport to bring positive change through an influential campaigning programme connecting to global organisations, governments, communities and partners.

**Every breath we take...** we want to bring pressure to city authorities, through our athletes and recreational runners all over the world to increase air quality as a way to deliver healthier communities.

**Powering our 'park run' Partnership** by committing every future World Athletic Championship host city to sign up to tangible programmes that get more people active through athletics as part of the bidding requirements.

**Everyone has the right...** together with our athletes and our fans we will campaign to change the United Nations Human Rights Charter to include sport for all children as a fundamental right.

**Capitalising on 'celebratory' calendar days** to create campaigns that encourage more people to choose athletics, working in partnership with our Member Federations, building on their relationships we already have UNEP and WHO and other NGO's who share our vision and mission.





— OUR APPROACH

## 6. PROFITABLE PARTNERING FOR GROWTH

A key part of World Athletics' activity is the provision of grant monies, support and services to assist the growth of athletics across our 214 member federations and six areas.

### FUNDING FEDERATIONS FOR FUTURE SUCCESS:

The 'one size fits all' approach to grant funding will be reviewed to enable some Member Federations to pursue elite athlete development and other Member Federations to focus on growing athletics in schools or in the community. In addition, support for MFs needs to extend beyond financial and into support services and upskilling programmes.

### MEANINGFUL MEASUREMENT METRICS:

Ensure our existing grants across the key areas of development and competition work harder in achieving outstanding results for Member Federations and World Athletics and are aligned strongly to our growth agenda around the world.

### PARTNERING PATHWAYS:

Evolve our grant funding and endorsement so it is a catalyst for Member Federations to develop new partnerships with local external providers (both private and public), which will in turn facilitate increased activity and impact.

### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:

Reviewing and evaluating our development, administration and project grants to ensure our Member Federations are delivering relevant campaigns in their markets that drive the growth of our sport at community and elite levels.

**Increase Athlete earning potential by** working with athletes and their managers to review, shape and increase earning opportunities for athletes at all levels of the sport.

# PARTNERSHIPS



— METRICS, RESEARCH, MONITORING, REPORTING

**We are a data rich sport, driven by statistics. But we acknowledge that we need more information to benchmark the growth metrics we have identified.**

Research conducted in 2018/19 will provide us with a starting point in some areas, but we have already identified that critical analysis of our existing data is needed to provide an accurate start point. We will work with recognised research organisations as well as universities, Member Federations, broadcasters, athletes and governments to collate data so that we can underpin our targets and goals with defensible statistics.

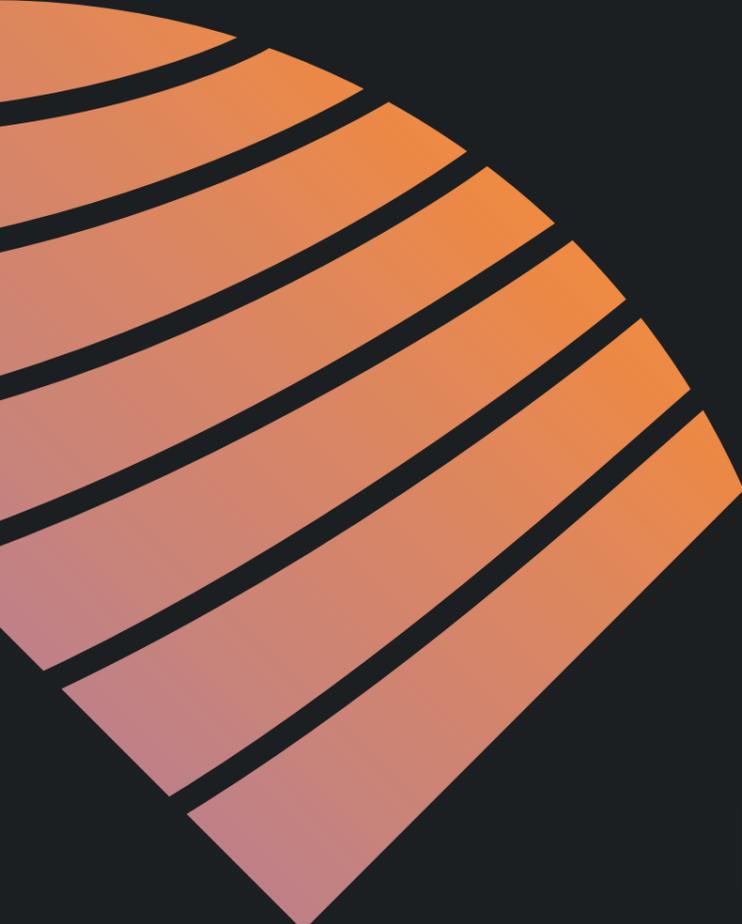
We will also gather information from all our activities and events, where possible before and after they have taken place, so we can measure change and impacts. We consider it important to create a Transfer of Knowledge hub at World Athletics' HQ so information can be built upon and shared with others, reducing the need to "reinvent the wheel" and instead

enabling adaptations to be made for local requirements.

We will also explore how the data we have can be used in an informative way to enhance the interest and understanding of our sport from the widest audience.

Finally, World Athletics is committed to research which demonstrates the known physical, mental and societal benefits of running, which will support one of our campaigning aims of getting the world moving more.

On an ongoing basis our data gathering and research will not only record our achievements and the impact of our strategic plan, but will help us identify what we can, and should do better.



**RESPECT**

**INTEGRITY**

**LEADERSHIP**

**COMMITMENT**

**INNOVATION**

**EXCELLENCE**

— OUR VALUES

To do all of this we will enlist and reward the right values within our organisation and our Member Federations which deliver the behaviours we need across our sport to drive our growth vision. The new values are:

The way we treat people, from fellow competitors, to colleagues, partners and all those involved in our sport. Ensuring we are always open, honest, considerate and maintain the governing principles of our sport.

Our actions speak louder than our words in our consistent and uncompromising adherence to moral and ethical principles and practices in everything we do.

Our role is not to own or dominate our sport but to provide strong, clear, consistent leadership wherever we operate and at every level.

We are focused, passionate and dedicated to achieving our goals and helping others do the same so we all contribute and achieve.

Inspiring opportunity to create, explore, test out and develop new ideas to capture interest, attention and achieve new positive outcomes.

To always be the best that we can be in our thinking and our execution at all times.



— OUR TIMETABLE

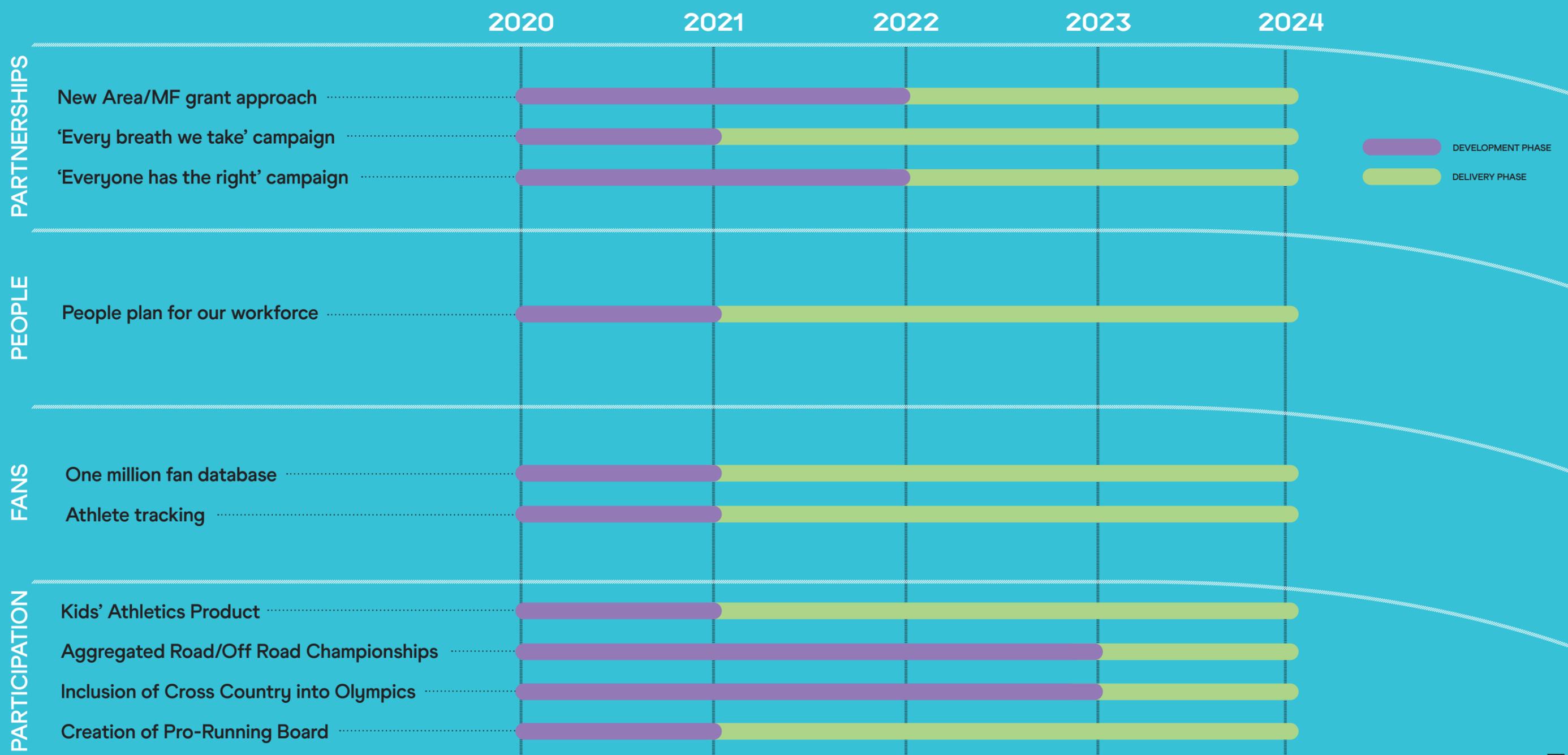
Our vision of growth needs to be set out in an achievable format. Our plan is to use each of our World Athletics Series competitions as a point of focus together with the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, now in 2021, to take full advantage of the unprecedented period that follows.

The World Championships Oregon22 is

especially important as the USA is one of the key geographic areas where we wish to concentrate our growth efforts and Eugene is a site of great history and tradition for our sport. This can launch a long-term growth programme, helping our sport to be front of mind when the 2028 Olympic Games are staged in Los Angeles.

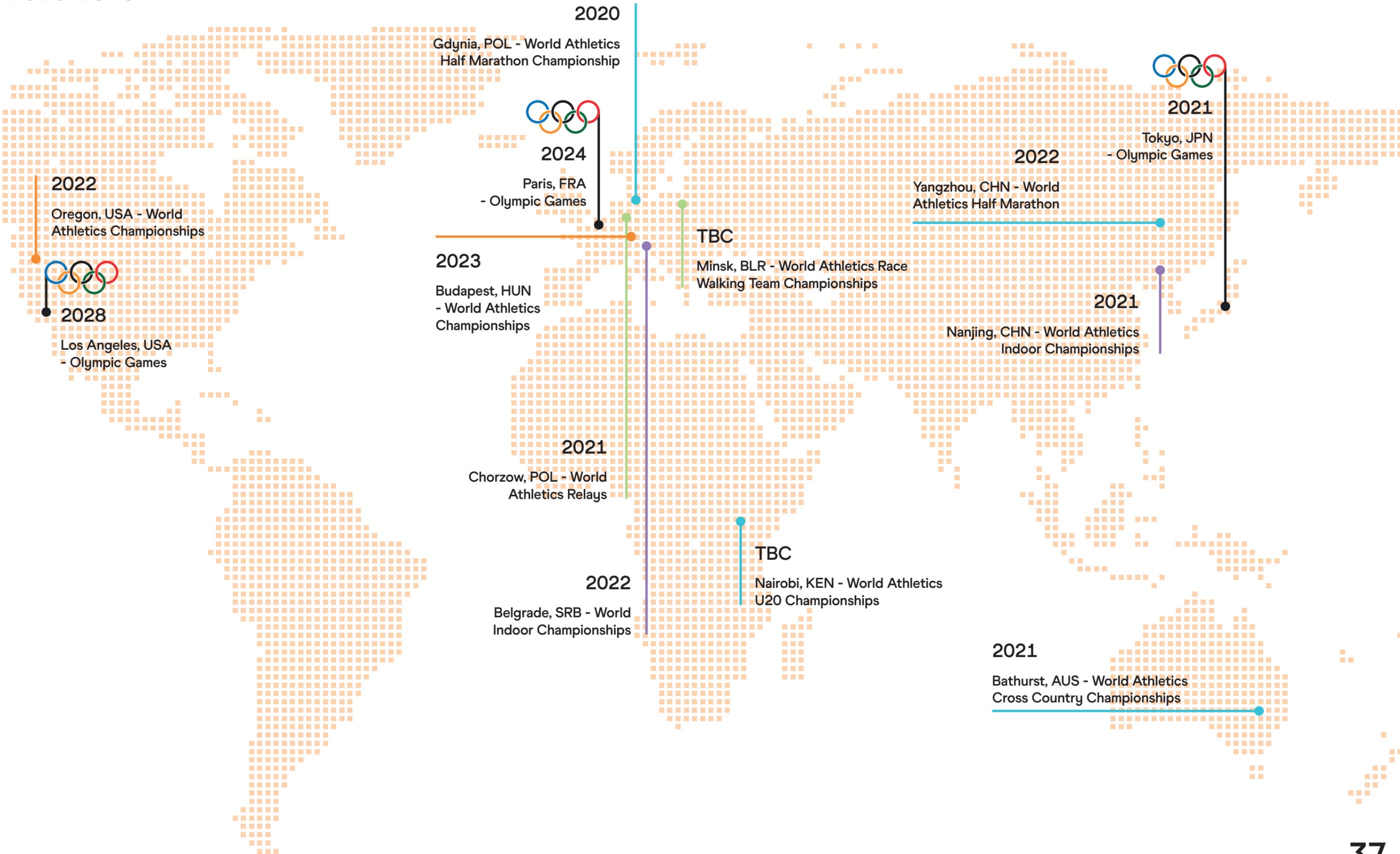
Our strategic plan has been embedded within the priorities of our four Commissions – Athletes, Competition, Development and Governance – and will be formally reviewed by the Executive Board annually in autumn, with an update

in spring each year. Following the annual review, information will be provided to the Member Federations, whilst ongoing details will be available through the WA website, celebrating milestones as they are reached.



# OUR EVENTS

2020-2028



## — FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

World Athletics' normalised annual income is circa \$50- \$55 million per year, derived from three main sources:

- Our marketing partner, Dentsu
- Partners and broadcasters
- IOC

This income, however, is not generated consistently across each four-year cycle but instead comes in peaks and troughs (for example, the IOC Olympic dividend is paid every four years). Despite this, we look to even out our expenditure to match our annual income.

80% of WA's expenditure is directed towards athlete focused spend (through our events, Member Federations and AIU activity), with the remainder supporting the running of the Monaco-based HQ.

We are fortunate to have the financial security of long-term partnerships with our marketing partner Dentsu, the many

other commercial and broadcast partners and our Diamond League partner, Wanda.

We continue to proactively seek new commercial relationships and revenue streams in order to increase our income base. By achieving this, it will allow us over the next four years to do even more to grow the sport, both directly and also through our Member Federations.

Whilst the work goes on to generate increased income for the future, the current Strategic plan has been budgeted assuming only our existing income levels going forward. As a result, if, and when, additional resources become available, this strategic plan can flex accordingly. Matching resources with activity levels will be a key part of the annual review that World Athletics' Executive Board will lead at the end of each year.

### World Athletics Partners



### World Athletics Media Partner



### World Athletics Media Distribution Partners



### World Athletics Supplier



## — CONCLUSION

We should be under no illusion that the ambitious task we have set ourselves to grow our sport is a challenging one.

We need to be forward-looking, creative and proactive, demonstrating excellent leadership and committing to creating an exciting new era in the history of our sport. Growth is not only about numbers, it is also about impact, share of voice and credibility. We must innovate, upskill and inspire.

Successfully delivering this Strategic Plan for growth relies on each one of us within the athletics family taking up the challenge and it can only be achieved in collaboration with all of our participants, people, fans and partners.

Thank you and let's make this happen!

**Sebastian Coe**  
World Athletics President

**Jon Ridgeon**  
World Athletics CEO