



Macra na Feirme

Macra na Feirme

**Independent
External Review
Report**

April 2016





Macra na Feirme

Macra na Feirme

Independent External
Review Report

April 2016

Jack Keyes
Senior Advisor
April 2016

CONTENTS

- 1. Executive Summary**
- 2. Introduction**
- 3. Context**
- 4. Consultation**
- 5. Recommendations**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Macra na Feirme wishes to carry out an examination of aspects of its organisation and operations. In February 2016 Macra appointed Jack Keyes, Senior Advisor, to carry out an independent assessment. This report was completed in April 2016.

The focus of the review is an examination of the current priorities of Macra na Feirme and the resources expended on them. In particular, it examines the priorities of members and how the existing program of activities matches these priorities. It looks at how these activities are resourced. It also examines communication and national publications, image as seen internally, aspects of governance and policy generation and lobbying for agriculture and rural youth.

The report sets out the details of the brief and the methodology used. It describes the context in which Macra na Feirme operates. The outside environment is characterised by rapid change, a degree of uncertainty and new opportunities. It examines the characteristics of organisations that thrive in that environment. These include being outward looking, flexible, networked, aligned, innovative and stakeholder driven. In Ireland there are fewer resources than a decade ago. The country has a relatively large community and voluntary sector and a culture of volunteerism. It has become necessary not just to complete actions but to prove they have effective outcomes through careful planning, monitoring and reporting. The improving economy offers hope to Macra na Feirme in relation to future funding.

Macra na Feirme is a member led organisation. A comprehensive survey of member opinions was carried out. This included in excess of 25 face to face meetings with individuals and groups working at National Council level. Staff were also consulted in a similar manner. The approach used was a semi-structured interview where viewpoints were elicited under a number of headings and opportunity given for other input. In parallel an electronic survey was used to gather the viewpoints of members locally at county, club and individual levels. Almost 350 responses were received and analysed.

The feedback was generally positive and showed the great commitment of members to and their belief in the work Macra na Feirme carries out. It illustrated the wide range of activities carried out and how they met the different objectives of Macra. It also identified areas which are currently presenting challenges to the organisation. Priorities were identified and resourcing discussed. Input was also received on communication, policy making, lobbying, governance, performance and planning.

The results of the face to face consultation identified the development of people, competitions, catering for young farmers, finance, planning, the development of skills in members and staff, performance management, avoiding burn out and communication as major priorities. A large number of other priorities were also identified indicating the broad range of areas Macra na Feirme is involved in. Those participating in the electronic survey placed more emphasis on community involvement, club activities, travel, etc. but also identified development of people skills, the focus on young farmers and communication as important. Lobbying and advocacy was seen as a strength while knowledge of internal policies needed to be improved.

The process has yielded a large body of information about the views of members in relation to priorities and resources, communication, policy, lobbying and other aspects of the organisation. It can be used by the National Council and others as background information to guide future decision making. Four overarching priorities were identified:

1. Planning and monitoring – a focus on outcomes
2. Performance and Development
3. Finance
4. Strategic Planning

A series of recommendations in relation to each of these overarching priorities and to the areas of focus covered in the review have been drawn up for consideration in the future (67 in total). Prioritisation and implementation will be required.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 General

Macra na Feirme is a member led National Organisation operating out of a Constitution. Its stated aim is to

“promote and foster agriculture and rural development in all its branches by doing such things as are or may be incidental and conducive to the attainment of that object and, in particular by:

- a) Assisting the personal development of rural youth;
- b) Promoting social and cultural education among rural youth of both sexes;
- c) Providing opportunity for learning the skills and theory of farming;
- d) Widening the interests of rural youth by increasing their store of general knowledge; and
- e) Encouraging leadership in preparation for responsible roles in farming and community associations”

Macra na Feirme (referred to as Macra hereunder) sought formal expressions of interest to carry out an independent external review of aspects of its organisation and its operational activities in February 2016.

2.2 Terms of Reference of the Review

The context for the review includes:

- Increased activity levels within the organisation over the last number of years;
- Significant cuts to government funding to Macra since 2008;
- Reduced staff numbers;
- Increased membership numbers; and
- Challenges and opportunities in a changing society

A terms of reference and guidelines document was provided which set out a brief description of the organisation, its key areas of activities, a summary of its objectives as stated in its constitution, its alignment with the new National Youth Strategy, some context, terms of reference, groupings to be consulted, a list of documents, expected timelines and tendering details. The document is reproduced in Appendix 1.

The terms of reference are as follows:

- 1 The review takes as a given the mission statement and objectives of Macra as set out and looks at the organisation from an operational and organisational point of view
- 2 Review and identify what are the priorities of members locally and nationally
- 3 Review the existing programme of activities in the context of identified priorities
- 4 Review delivery – matching of resources to priorities
- 5 Review the effectiveness of existing governance structures
- 6 Review national publications and communication between members as supported by staff
- 7 Review the effectiveness of policy generation and lobbying for agriculture and rural youth
- 8 Based on the foregoing provide a set of recommendations that will guide Macra in the delivery of its objectives in line with priorities identified and resources available.
- 9 Review the image and standing of Macra as seen internally.

The National Youth Strategy 2015- 2020 sets out the Governments agenda and priorities in relation to all children and young people under the age of 25. It provides for the development and implementation of policies and services in relation to the following areas which are interconnected and mutually reinforcing:

- Active and healthy, physical and mental wellbeing
- Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development
- Safe and protected from harm
- Economic security and opportunity
- Connected, respected and contributing to the world

The recommendations in this report also take cognisance of the requirements and ambitions of this strategy.

2.3 Basis for recommendations

The following informed the recommendations:

1. Views of the members and County Executives;
2. Views of the members of the National Council;
3. Views of the President and 3 Vice-Presidents;
4. Views of CEO and staff;
5. Input from NQSF;
6. The authors professional experience; and
7. Other information.

2.4 Tendering Process

The terms of reference and budget document was approved by the National Council on 23rd January 2016 following a presentation by the CEO and President. A proposal to carry out the work in accordance with the above was submitted by Jack Keyes, Senior Advisor. An interview with the President, Sean Finan and CEO, Edmond Connolly took place which included detailed discussion on the proposal and clarification around certain aspects of the work. Their recommendation that the author be appointed to carry out the work was approved by the National Executive on 3rd February 2016.

2.5 Jack Keyes Bibliography

Jack Keyes is an experienced manager and leader. He served as County Manager in Cavan County Council for 10 years (2004-2014). Previously he worked in both the public and private sectors in diverse areas ranging from civil engineering, project management, leading change, organisational development to community building. Currently he advises individuals and organisations that work for the betterment of society and strive for excellence. He is chairman of a number of bodies including the National Rural Water Services Committee, Castlesaunderson Scouting Steering Committee, National Library Readers Advisory Committee and Age Friendly Ireland Network of Chairs. He holds qualifications in civil engineering, accountancy, personnel management, facilitation and leadership and management. He also works as an Associate Lecturer in Management and Leadership in the Institute of Public Administration.

2.6 Response to the brief – proposed methodology

The brief set out that the work was to be carried out under the existing framework of objectives in Macra. Issues such as strategic planning and implementation, change management processes, HR and PR strategies and environmental analysis did not fall within the terms of reference. Nonetheless they all have relevance to analysing priorities and resource allocation. They also are need to be considered when discussing advocacy, governance, communication and policy generation.

The time scale and budget limitations for the review also dictated how much in-depth consideration could be given to any or all topics. At an early stage it was signalled that a comprehensive review of governance was outside the scope of the brief but that the focus should be on structural and practical analysis. A comprehensive study of lobbying effectiveness would have involved consultations with Government Departments and other funders but that was outside the contract scope. A separate analysis of PR is being carried out internally within Macra in parallel with this work.

A key element of the approach taken was to facilitate communication with the members including officers in as comprehensive a way as was practical. Macra is a member led organisation that focusses on the development of its members and on national objectives that are relevant to the future of agriculture. A key focus for Macra lies in empowering its members. Hence it was deemed a priority to develop a consultation process that could listen comprehensively to voices within the organisation. Details of the process can be found in Chapter 3.

The approach in reaching conclusions and recommendations was largely shaped by the consultation responses. It also involved taking cognisance of some current best practices in organisational design from an academic and practical perspective.

3. CONTEXT

3.1 General

It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones most responsive to change.
Charles Darwin

In assessing the priorities of any organisation one must look carefully to the world in which it operates. Organisations survive or thrive depending on how they apply their vision, values and purpose to the opportunities and challenges surrounding them. They make themselves relevant by continuing to question actions that were successful in the past and auditing their suitability for the future.

3.2 Context – Global

“Turbulence is here to stay” Don Sull

The environment in which Macra na Feirme operates is characterised by rapid pace of change, increasing levels of uncertainty and turbulence, greater competition, and changes in world power dynamics. (Day,2010). It is also an environment of increased opportunity for populations that are well educated and highly skilled, committed to ongoing learning, flexible and agile in their responses and capable of using diversity as an asset. Annual consumption will increase from a value of 12 trillion dollars in 2010 to 30 trillion dollars in 2030, (Altsmon,2012). The implications for Ireland with its open economy and for the agriculture industry are far reaching. Success factors for countries and organisations will include ongoing innovation, organising for tomorrows society, an ability to respond speedily and management of risk.

The modern organisation must also be outward looking as threats and opportunities come and go at a great pace in the changing world described above. Creating the space for networking and “scanning the periphery” remains a challenge to bodies that have traditionally focussed almost exclusively on internal activities. Having the time to make mental connections across seemingly unrelated disciplines triggers innovation and creativity which are deemed essential for the future. The challenge of finding time to focus on networking and creative thinking has been made more challenging because of the cut-backs in resources since 2008. During the past decade many organisations focussed on “keeping the ship afloat” and are now refocussing. The role of key stakeholders, be they customers or voluntary members, can be crucial for success. The traditional approach had been for the organisation to provide services to customers or citizens based on a system of research/ satisfaction measurement. Instead of a traditional “push” approach the emphasis now is on empowering stakeholders and giving them authority to respond to things as they happen (Cusumano,2014). Optimising the input of volunteers to achieve organisational objectives has become a norm.

3.3 Context – Ireland

Ireland is recovering from a serious economic downturn that effected the lives of its people. Organisations in the public, private and not for profit sectors almost universally saw cuts to their budgets, decreased market opportunities and decrease in staff numbers. We are now in a “new normal” environment. During the recession many organisations gained efficiencies, eliminated some activities and learned to “make do with less”. They also learned how to adapt more quickly to changing circumstances and to become more agile and focussed. A “discovery driven planning approach” was often adopted (McGrath, 1995). They increasingly used small scale experimentation which systematically converts assumptions into knowledge as a strategic venture unfolds. This is exemplified by services initiated by Macra such as the Land Mobility Service which started on a small scale, learned lessons and is now expanded. Its future development will be informed by ongoing learning.

There are a number of characteristics that are particular to Ireland that have relevance to how Macra does its business. There exists a large non-profit and community/voluntary sector in contrast with European norms where the equivalent work is often the responsibility of the state. The positive aspect of this from an organisational perspective is that there exists a rich reservoir of experience in areas such as youth work and mental illness. There are many opportunities to link in and partner with like-minded organisations. Networks such as the Public Participation Networks at county and city level promote cooperation and are a source of information about local funding availability. A potential downside is the existence of what are in fact competitor organisations who are seeking scarce state and sponsorship funding from the same pots.

Ireland also has high levels of volunteerism. Very often most work in rural areas is carried out by unpaid and motivated community minded people – without them the quality and quantity of activities and local improvements in areas ranging from Tidy Towns to sport, local development to drama, health and wellbeing to older person’s services would be greatly diminished. This has the added value of bringing local knowledge into a central decision making position about the future of areas and communities. In some ways the above captures the essence of Macra. It is member led, active at local level and greatly enhances the lives, skills and wellbeing of its members and its local communities. The community work it does and the high esteem the organisation is held in locally also provides opportunities to capture local business sponsorship monies which can be the life-blood of local clubs.

Increased levels of reporting and form filling have been characteristics of publicly funded organisations since the onset of the recession and following an increased emphasis on good governance. Files are expected to be up to date and complete with all

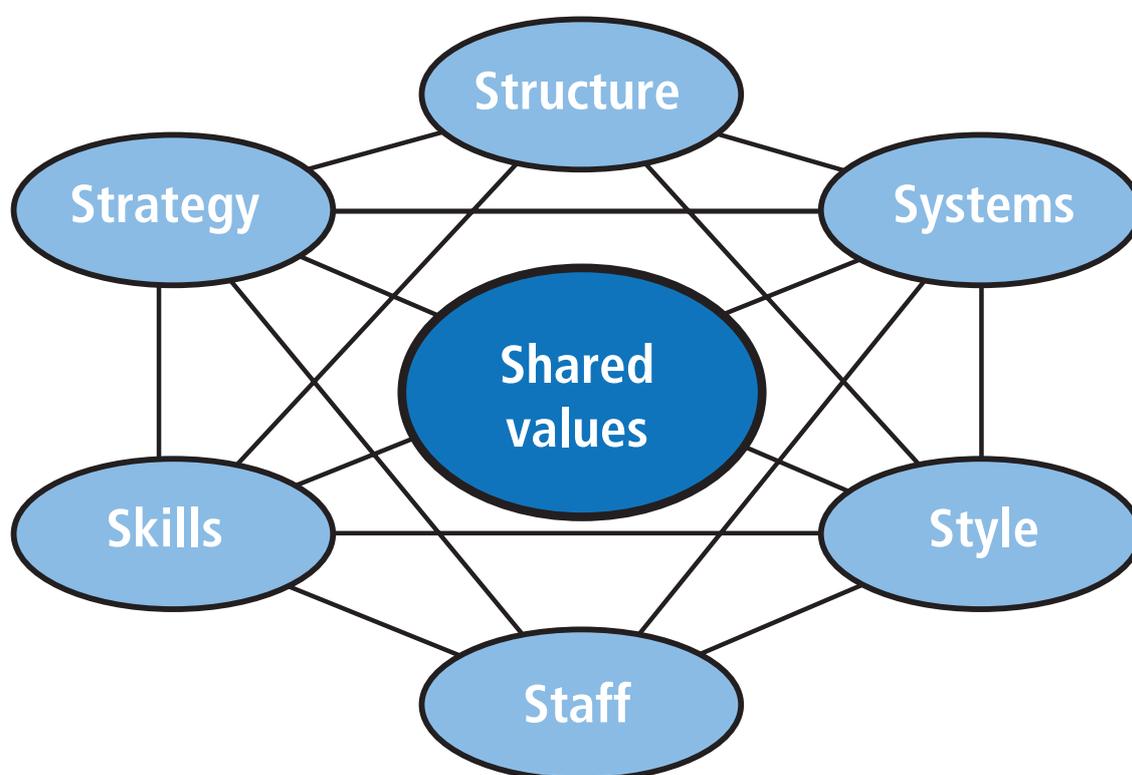
necessary details to comply with an ever increasing level of audit. It is no longer enough to complete activities. They must be monitored, recorded and appropriate returns completed. This “red tape” approach will remain and it is likely to be a priority of all organisations into the future. It also offers an organisation concrete data to prove to future funders that its activities yield results.

Finally, with a recovering economy there will be an opportunity to tap into existing and new funding streams. The organisations with the skills, networks, recorded outcomes and strategically developed projects are most likely to thrive.

3.4 Organisational characteristics

The type of organisation that will thrive in the environment described above will have a number of characteristics. Firstly, it must have excellent internal systems, structure, staff, skills, strategy, shared values and style. All of these must be interlinked and compliment and be aligned with each other. (Fig 1: The 7- S Analysis).

Figure 1 – The 7-S analysis



- Structure:** *division of tasks, people and authority*
- Strategy:** *how to create unique value and thrive in a competitive environment*
- Systems:** *formal processes and procedures to manage effectively*
- Staffing:** *the people: recruitment, development etc.*
- Style:** *the norms and operating style of the organisation and leadership style of top management*
- Skills:** *distinctive competencies of people, management practices, technologies etc.*
- Shared Values:** *guiding principles of what is important, “the way we do things here”*

Secondly it must have a quality planning, implementation and monitoring system. This must permeate the organisation from strategic planning down to individual staff and local voluntary team level. Yearly, team and individual planning is required. Opportunities that arise during the period of the plan can also be accommodated. New initiatives are assessed against the overall strategy of the organisation and aligned with its fundamental purpose(s).

Closely related to this is a need to focus on outcomes. Not for profit organisations focus on social, environmental, cultural and/or economic outcomes. How outcomes are defined and measured can vary but this focus is required for organisations to thrive.

Thirdly it must have high performance at all levels. A culture of ongoing learning manifesting itself in ongoing staff and member development is required. This must be aligned with the comprehensive planning framework referred to above.

Finally, the material presented in section 2.1 names networking, advocacy, innovation, looking outwards, stakeholder involvement and ongoing change management as important in the modern world.

There is much research available on the types of organisational characteristics that lead to success. Working from a clear vision, strong consistent leadership is often deemed to be the most important one. Loyalty to and from staff and volunteer stakeholders, innovation, staying ahead of the competition, embracing diversity, focusing on quality and maintaining a steady ship ("not management by surprise") are frequently listed as essential for success. Work by the Boston Consulting Group on 20 vital organisational capabilities that characterise the successful organisation of the future listed the following in order of importance (Roghe,2012):

- Leadership performance
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Motivation
- Organisational efficiency
- Process optimisation

Among the other ranked capabilities are project management, recruitment expertise, employee performance management, role clarity and organisational structure. The above work was focussed on existing successful organisations with carefully designed internal processes and reward systems. In such cases the top 3 characteristics are behavioural. For organisations at a less advanced stage of development it is important to focus on the behavioural and "hard "characteristics such as structural design and performance management. This research does however illustrate the importance of motivation, ownership and willingness to go "the extra mile". Moving beyond compliance to commitment by all involved is seen as paramount to success as is the existence of clear targets and goals.

Clear and effective leadership is required to make this happen. Good leaders need to exist at all levels of an organisation. The imperative of having good leaders at senior officer levels is particularly important to focus on the strategic elements, networking, change management and organisational development.

Figure 2: The challenges of change leadership.



3.5 Relevance to Macra na Feirme - General

Macra na Feirme is focussed on the personal development of youth, promoting social and cultural education among rural youth, providing opportunities for ongoing learning the skills and theory of farming, increasing the general knowledge of rural youth and encouraging leadership in preparation for responsible roles in farming and the community. Its relevance in 2016 is significant. Meeting the challenges and availing of the opportunities outlined above requires a young population that is confident, highly skilled, committed to life-long learning and with leaders developed at all levels in society. The fit between Macras areas of focus and the requirements of Ireland in the future is remarkably close.

3.6 Macra – some facts

It was not deemed necessary to include a full profile of Macra in this report. The MIAMI data system was interrogated and produced the below tables. Comparable figures from 1994 are included for comparison where available.

1. Current Macra Membership by County/Region. This does not include Patrons.

Avondhu	301
Carbery	326
Carlow	116
Cavan	222
Clare	76
Donegal	209
Dublin	118
Galway	151
Imokilly	97
Kerry	148
Kildare	131
Kilkenny	198
Laois	295
Leitrim	172
Limerick	260
Longford	142
Louth	183
Mayo	188
Meath	251
Monaghan	91
Muskerry	202
North Tipp	149
Offaly	174
Roscommon	109
Seandun	258
Sligo	195
South Tipp	199
Waterford	163
Westmeath	96
Wexford	121
Wicklow	103
Other	181
Total	5625

2. Historical year on year comparison

Year	1994	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Members	7112	4233	4668	5016	5233	5057	5615	5119	5520	5625

3. Patron Memberships

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Members		3139	3140	2951	2634	2492	2536	2489	2454	2360

4. Current Membership by Gender:

Male –	71% (62% in 1994)
Female –	29% (38% in 1994)

5. Membership by Occupation: Note second and third level may now have an occupation but may not have been updated.

Occupation	Amount	Percentage
2nd Level Student	261	4.6%
3rd Level Agriculture	389	6.8%
3rd Level Student	881	15.6%
Admin/Clerical Private	93	1.6%
Admin/Clerical Public	17	0.3%
Agri Services	200	3.5%
Computer/ICT	49	0.87%
Construction/Trades	334	5.9%
Financial/Banking	39	0.7%
Full time farmer	761	13.5%
Homemaker	10	0.17%
Not for profit	4	0.07%
Private – technical/specialised	91	1.61%
Professional – medical/legal/accounting	266	4.7%
Public- technical/specialised	26	0.46%
Retail/Hospitality	68	1.20%
Sales/Marketing/Media/PR	79	1.40%
Seeking Employment	64	1.13%
Teacher	231	4.10%
Unknown	212	3.76%
General Operative	79	1.40%
Field empty	1471	26.10%
Total	5625	

6. Age profile of current members

Age	Male	Female	Total
17-20	858	272	1130 (20% v 21% 1994)
21-25	1047	588	1635 (29% v 45% 1994)
26-30	821	519	1340 (24% v 23% 1994)
>30	1061	459	1520 (27% v 11% 1994)
Total	3787	1838	5625

6. Age profile of current members

2016 New	2016 Renewal	2015 New	2015 Renewal	1993 New	1993 Renewal
1701	3612	2216	3112		
32%	68%	41%	59%	44%	56%

3.7 Previous review of Macra

A comprehensive external review of Macra took place in 1994 and was completed by the Centre for Adult and Community Education, St Patricks College, Maynooth (hereafter referred to as the 1994 review). This included the construction of a comprehensive profile of the organisation, articulation of a shared vision of the members for the long-term development of the organisation and the identification of the most appropriate structures, resources and work plan to realise that vision. It placed an emphasis on an inclusive consultation process that in itself would empower members to participate as effective agents of change in rural Ireland.

The key findings of the 1994 review that may be relevant to this analysis include:

- Improving the quality of branch management to reduce high membership turnover (In 1993 alone 6000 members did not review their membership)
- Addressing the perception of the organisation as a rural youth organisation or a young farmer's organisation
- The need for a club development strategy with a focus on leadership training
- Ensuring that competitions do not limit potential participants to those with a high level of achievement and excellence
- Developing formal and informal communication channels between National Council members and the local organisation
- The consultation process should continue after the completion of the report to facilitate ongoing feedback to Macras planning mechanisms

The report referred to "the inherent and inevitable tension in a voluntary organisation between paid Staff and voluntary members". There is a degree of commonality between some of the issues raised in 1994 and those raised in this consultation process.

3.8 Current strategies and plans

Since 1994 Macra has been guided by various plans. In 2009 an internal review took place briefly covering strengths and weaknesses across the range of its activities and processes. Operational plans were produced for 2010 to 2012.

The Macra na Feirme Strategic Plan Summary 2012-2014 briefly details the vision, mission, values and strategic objectives. It is relevant to this analysis as it provides a recent example of planning in the organisation. It lists the following 5 strategic objectives:

1. To deliver a high quality of service across Macras 6 key areas of activity
2. To facilitate and recognise the personal development of members through formal and non-formal learning
3. To advocate on behalf of young farmers and rural youth on issues considered relevant by them
4. To increase the level of activity and participation of members in the organisation
5. To provide essential support services and resources to meet these objectives

The plan then focusses on the action plan for 2011/2012 listing in tabular form the main activities, a small no of timeframes, financial implications and the staff member responsible for each activity.

Planning in the organisation appears to be very influenced by the calendar and by assessment of individual initiatives that are proposed. The calendar is extremely demanding and a great level of accurate detail needs to be included. However, it should constitute a sub-section of a yearly plan. A recent initiative by the President with the help and support of the Vice-Presidents to implement structured planning at a county / regional level was quite successful. However, the failure of a significant number of parties to complete plans (approx. 20 complete) gives a further indication of the lack of a planning culture in Macra, even allowing for alleged misgivings about the design of the framework.

There is little focus on outcomes. Instead measurement focusses largely on activities. This issue has also been highlighted in the NQSF review in November 2015.

The budgetary process is a major planning tool used yearly. Drafts are drawn up and presented by the Finance committee to the National Executive and the National Council. During that process priorities for the coming year are agreed. This is a useful starting point for a comprehensive planning framework. The 2016 budget indicates that a deficit will have to be addressed by generating additional income. This has an inevitable effect on priorities and focus during the year with much time and attention, including at National Council, being given to different fundraising initiatives. This includes sometimes detailed discussions at the 2 monthly finance committee meetings.

It is also clear that much credibility is given to membership numbers. While this is some crucial indicator others such as membership turnover, levels of activity and consistency of participation need to be measured and targets set for same.

It is also clear that an amount of planning is required during the year for issues and opportunities that have suddenly arisen. An example is the expanded display at the 2015 ploughing championship that received an amount of positive reaction. To cater for such opportunities an amount of time needs to be allocated in the yearly plan under the heading of miscellaneous. However, it is alleged that too many ad-hoc and quick planning decisions happen during the year. In that regard it is vitally important that National Council and National Executive be fully engaged in formulating and owning the yearly plan and budget and that the tendency to bring forward proposals requiring resources or micro managing expenditure details during the year be minimised.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Process of consultation

Both the terms of reference and the methodology used placed great emphasis on consultation. Getting the focussed opinions of key stakeholders at all levels of the organisation was deemed fundamental to the outcomes strength and credibility. Macras main focus is on the development of its members whose energy and values are the key to successful outcomes. The following groups were consulted through face to face meetings:

- National Council members
- Field staff
- Office staff
- President/CEO

A large number of individual face to face meetings took place (over 30 in total). These focussed on all the individual members of the above groups including the National President, National Chairman, the 3 Vice-Presidents and the committee chairs (Ag Affairs, Rural Youth and Competitions). In some cases, there was an opportunity to input as part of a group and individually. In some cases, where face to face meetings could not take place the consultation with individuals was conducted by phone (5 number). It was not possible to meet with all National Council members but the viewpoints captured are representative. All conversations were confidential and no viewpoint can be attributed to any one individual. They were conducted under a set of ground rules that emphasised confidentiality, openness and focus on the brief.

In parallel with the above an indirect consultation process took place with County Executives, Clubs and members through a custom designed survey. The closing date for receipt of completed surveys was extended to afford every opportunity for participation. A total of 350 responses were obtained which is representative of views at local level.

Finally, a direct consultation took place with Ms Louise Fitzpatrick, External Assessor for the National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF).

The face to face and group discussions focussed on:

- Priorities for Macra
- What is great about Macra
- What is not great about Macra
- Non-essential activities that could be dropped
- Planning and measurement
- Performance and outcomes
- Policy
- Advocacy
- Communication
- Structures/ governance

The consultations yielded a broad range of largely positive comments about Macra. One common feature of the process was the commitment and belief of all in Macra and what it stands for. Priorities varied somewhat depending on the individual and the role the interviewee held in the organisation. The full results are presented below. Some are outside of or peripheral to the terms of reference of this study. However, they are included in the interests of completeness but also as a prompt to future action in the organisation.

4.2 What is great about Macra?

	Number of times chosen	Selective Comments
Competitions	13	Great variety and range of competitions and events
Development of people	9	It is great to see shy people coming in their first meetings and to watch them gain confidence over time
Combats Isolation	5	A good few young people would have nowhere else to go especially with emigration of friends
Inclusive	5	Everyone is welcome
Caters for young farmer's needs	5	Young farmers group is strong in my county
CEO strengths	5	The CEO is approachable and listens
Training and Development Officers (some mentioned)	4	A new Training and Development Officer is full of ideas
E magazine	4	Keeps up to date weekly
Unique organisation	3	There is no other that does similar work
National organisation	3	There's something for everyone
Has been responsible for spin-off organisations that have made a National impact	3	Examples include Irish Farmers Journal, IFA, ICMSA, Macra na Tuaithe, IFAC, National Co-op Farm Relief Services Ltd
Networks	2	

The following items were also referred to:

Capers, volunteerism, friendships, yearbook, travel, press releases being shared, high energy levels, hard-working staff, rural youth, voluntary and professional work well together, land mobility service, long established/ experienced, great commitment, team spirit, Skillnets, improved PR, relationship with government, clubs, openness to change, image, variety of work for staff.

4.3 What is challenging about Macra?

	Number of times chosen	Selective Comments
Need to link work with member expectations	12	This includes culture, staff remaining too long in any one role, certain roles needing redefinition, expectation of performance by staff, members not being empowered and wanting too much done by staff and addressing criticisms directly to staff
Geographical divide between certain regions	9	At various times in Macras past due to its democratic nature there is not an equal spread of officer posts across regions
Taking on too many things at one time in light of existing resources	8	"trying to be all things to all people"
Meetings of National Executive, National Council and committees need to be shorter. Briefer reports needed	8	Needs tighter chairing and understanding of roles by committee members. National Council meetings sometimes focussing on non-strategic details
Improve link to Teagasc and other colleges	7	Obvious source of members who could stay
Need for strong management systems at the top in future years	4	
New focus on Skillnets, needs to be balanced with development of young farmer groups	3	Need to re-examine business case for Skillnets including assessing/ resourcing of young farmer's activities
Transience of voluntary leadership	3	Need to balance continuity with developing skills
Non-enforcement of rules	3	Competitions
Burn out of members	3	Input of National Council Representatives is uneven
Membership turnover	3	Decrease turnover
Increase effectiveness of previous reforms	3	Reforms need to focus on areas of weakness and be implemented with determination
All county plans to be completed	3	Culture of planning needed at all levels
Gender	2	Suggestion that women's roles are slightly stereotyped within Macra in spite of huge improvement in past decades
National Council age profile to be addressed	2	Need good young people
Reduce no of competitions/ run some biannually/ some outdated	2	Assess participation and cost of all
Clarity of roles at senior organisational level	2	Enhance role of Vice-Presidents/ differentiation between President and CEO needs to be specified more clearly
National Office: office layout reassessment, need to filter/ manage calls, develop more procedure manuals	2	

The following items were also mentioned: need for Skillnets curriculum, varying standard of Young Farmer Development Groups, National Executive/National Council power balance, some staff and volunteers overworked, decision making sometimes slow, poor remuneration, co-options onto sub-committees, events/competitions too concentrated, members unwillingness to pay for things, lack of positivity by some members, previous feedback not listened to, payment on-line system needed, remuneration, better performance/ reporting by National Council Representatives at monthly county meetings, too few staff, rural youth area needs a boost, constitution review required, travel for younger members to be continued.

4.4 Priorities for Macra?

	Number of times chosen	Selective Comments
Sponsorship	12	Need more/look after existing better / involve more people/key role for CEO and President / potential to increase
Financial	9	Getting harder/good awareness at National Office/venue costs high / measure cost of competitions / members slow to help
Young farmers	9	There is no other body doing this work
Combat being "too many things to all people"	6	We need to do fewer things well with current finances
Patrons	6	Strategy needed / huge potential
Communication / PR	3	New job specification needed/ new strategy needed. Steps taken in 2016
Members	3	

The following items were also mentioned: enhance pride and fight complacency, charities legislation, annual conference, insurance, safety, travel but publicise more, coping with uncertainty, personal development for members, competitions, building vibrant clubs and recruitment were also listed.

A large number of contributors referred to the need to plan and measure. A number of others referred to training and development of both staff, volunteer officers and members. This is presented as a separate category below.

4.5 Performance management, people development and outcomes

	Number of times chosen	Selective Comments
Need for a system to be implemented that covers performance management, planning, measurement, oversight and a parallel redesign of training and development	24	A culture change is needed to build on recent progress. Support for people development an essential component
Leadership development	15	Relevant at all levels of organisation. Empowered leaders being developed.
Need for 5-year strategy	6	Overall direction needs clarification
Training and Development assessment including Value For Money and new training plans needed	6	Plans to include staff, volunteer officers, county executives, club executives and members
Need to focus on outcomes	4	
Succession planning	3	
Introduce short term contracts in some cases	3	
Targets for all staffs	3	
More support for staff to enhance performance	3	
6-monthly reviews of staff/ CEO/ end of year reviews	2	
Need to develop role descriptions	2	
Focus on innovation	2	
Regular staff meetings – President to attend portion of same	2	
Training needed in the area of mental health		

Other issues raised: team building for National Council, compulsory attendance at training required, focus on innovation, Continued Professional Development for staff and young farmers, learning for young farmers, timekeeping, monthly planning, having consequences for uneven performance, rural youth targets, ongoing surveys, post meeting surveys, AGM to monitor years 4/5 major ambitions, conflict resolution training for Training and Development Officers, create space for planning in individual yearly plans, increase pay, use former members as coaches, make an award for planning in clubs, cost benefit review of all competitions, review Young Farmer of the year, plan to include targets for competitions/club of year/ ag colleges activities/know your neighbour etc., start planning in July.

4.6 Things that could be dropped?

	Number of times chosen	Selective Comments
Some competitions. Biannual possible. Could be carried on in region (s).	10	Combine some. Use mixed teams. Core competitions to be maintained
GAA competition	6	
Prize-winners trip	6	
Some events	3	
M magazine	2	
Skillnets	2	
Travel	2	Must be shown to advance a strategic purpose /outcome
2nd phase training	2	
2nd phase training	2	Unless attendance and content improves
Some overnight stays	2	
Rural Youth Europe	2	
Some expensive venues	2	Venues cost more than competitions

4.7 Policy

	Number of times chosen	Selective Comments
Develop member capacity to feed into and be knowledgeable about policy	10	
Need to prioritise awareness of policies relating to governance/ with legal implications	6	
Policy and guidance needed on Macras approach to/ role in promoting mental health including achievements	5	
Improve existing policies	4	
Focus on anti-bullying and child protection policies	2	
Good approach to agriculture policy/ expertise exists there	4	Needs to be publicised
Involve more in policy formulation	2	
Needs to be top down and bottom up	2	
Availability on J-Drive (for staff) and website (for members)	2	
Policy making capacity has improved	1	
HR/recruitment policies to be improved	1	National Council approved updated policy in 2016
Data protection audit needed	1	
Implementation crucial	1	

4.8 Advocacy

	Number of times chosen	Selective Comments
Agriculture advocacy excellent	15	Continuous improvement needed
Successful on trailer licences	3	
Need to develop structured role including advocacy in the rural youth area	3	
Green cert advocacy happening and necessary	2	
Mental health to be considered	2	
Difficult to focus on this area when focus on funding is required	1	
Need to use existing skills in all areas	1	

4.9 Governance

	Number of times chosen	Selective Comments
Review needed	6	Too many meetings when at national level
Develop structures to minimise volunteer burn-out	5	Review volume of work
Public Liability Insurance to be checked including Young Farmers and sport	3	
Health and Safety focus	3	
Ensure lobbying register is completed	3	
No co-options during year	3	
Governance code to be reassessed	3	
Procurement to be reviewed	3	Savings possible

4.10 Communication

	Number of times chosen	Selective Comments
Social media needs to be used better (e.g. to publicise achievement at local level)	8	Instant communication is now how the world works
Use national Facebook page more	4	Augment with skilful Twitter
Communication to members needs to improve	3	Recent improvements acknowledged
Improve communication with Teagasc	3	Potential is significant
Young Farmer Development Groups and County Executives (YDFG) communication needs to improve	3	
Publicise travel and achievements	3	Macra does a lot
Communicate with and provide PR for associates and sponsors	2	Associate fee could rise if value is better seen
Use finals as a showcase	2	
PR strategy needed	2	PR plan for 2016 in place
Expand use of texts to communicate with members	2	Savings possible
Use MIAMI data to illustrate reach to sponsors	2	
Members are the key communicators for Macra	2	
Use skillnets as a marketing tool	2	

4.11 General

	Number of times chosen	Selective Comments
Need to cater for change and particularly in some areas	4	
President to serve 3 years/ to be part of succession planning	3	
Increase trust in organisation	3	
Office staff to get out on the ground occasionally/ office staff roles to be communicated	3	
Need increase in no and / or fee from members / 12% of Macra income from this source too low (2015)	3	
Bring second person from each county/region to meeting at years' end	3	
More focus on Teagasc	3	
Better define relationship between County Executives and Young Farmer Development Groups	3	
Publicise achievements at local level	2	
Use Land Mobility Service/Skillnets as an advertisement for Macra	2	
Expand the Presidential term to 3 years	2	
Expand use of MIAMI (for sponsors?)	2	
PR for associates/ use finals as a showcase	2	

4.12 Member Survey Results

Survey Results

A total of 350 responses were received to the electronic survey which was distributed to all members on the Macra database. This compares well with other surveys organised in the voluntary sector over the past few years and shows commitment by all sectors of the organisation. Respondents ranged from former national executive members, current national executive members, county and club officials, active and non-active members. The survey was anonymous with respondents assured of confidentiality. Responses came direct to the senior advisor as opposed to the Macra National Office.

Responses to the survey mirror the feedback received in the face to face consultations with some divergence in emphasis in some areas. In general, there is a difference in focus in the priorities of members compared to those of staff and officers. As expected the key understanding of what Macra is about relates to development of life and leadership skills as opposed to policy making (Question 1) with 72% of respondents stating that their understanding of Macra was as an organisation that develops people's life and leadership skills through participation. There was also a distinct preference towards the contribution Macra engagement makes in networking for its members by 26% of respondents. This underscores the significant role Macra makes in this area.

Question 2 states that the key objective of the constitution of Macra na Feirme is to promote and foster agriculture and rural development in all its branches and asks respondents to rank other options as secondary supporting objectives. The members gave reasonably equal ranking to the 5 constitutional objectives of Macra with "assisting the personal development of youth" the most favoured. This supports the continued focus on the role the organisation has to play in engaging young people and contributing to their personal development with over 40% selecting this as a secondary objective. The focus on promoting social and cultural education among rural youth of both sexes was scored very highly by all respondents with nearly 50% of respondents ranking it either as their 2nd or 3rd preference. The focus on development of skills and interests was the least preference objective.

When asked to rank the 6 key programme areas the most important was community involvement followed by agriculture (Question 3). Performing Arts was ranked as the least important of the activities.

There was a view amongst members that none of Macra's activities contributed to completely achieving the national goals set out in the Government's National Youth Strategy (Question 4). There was very equal rating given to the achieved or somewhat achieved categories which emphasises the importance members place in the contribution the organisation has to make at a national level. Close to half of respondents (48%) believe that Macra activities made a significant contribution towards the national goal in the Government's National Youth Strategy of protecting people from harm. Over 40% of respondents believed that Macra na Feirme activities made somewhat of a contribution towards achieving the economic security and opportunity goals set out in the National Youth Strategy. The contribution made by Macra towards the goals of mental health and well-being and learning was also ranked highly.

Answers to Question 5 revealed that clubs were very active (more than once a month) within their own community in terms of sports activities with public speaking, performing arts and travel activities occurring every 2 to 3 months. Overall, travel, the performing arts and public speaking were the highest ranked category from a level of activity perspective. A follow up mini survey showed the Travel category to include mainly local and national travel.

Events, competitions and training were highly ranked in Question 6 as important in achieving the objectives of Macra. Travel and Policy making and advocacy was seen as the least important activities in achieving the objectives of Macra. PR/ branding/ communications was also ranked lower than would have been expected. This may indicate that members see the role of PR/ branding/ communications as an activity to increase awareness internally and amongst potential members.

In terms of the views of members on the allocation of resources in a range of areas at national level (Question 7) all options were considered to be appropriately resourced, which is in direct contrast to other findings in the survey which state that additional resources are required in certain activities. This may indicate that respondents believe the allocation and management of resources are not a key issue.

Even though members were focussed on their activities there was also recognition the image, communications and lobbying are important priorities. When one considers the results in Question 15 where 55% of members indicated that Macra has a poor image or that "no one has an idea what we do" there is an implied wish for an improvement in this area. Members relied mostly on other members for information from the national organisation with only 20% relying on Facebook and Twitter combined (Question 17). This is a source of concern in an organisation given its age profile and the national statistics for use of social media usage in this category is very high. (http://ipsosmrb.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/SM_Jan16.pdf)

Question 16 found that 7 different methods of communicating the Macra message were ranked reasonably closely with national radio selected as the most effective. This balanced understanding also applied when asked to comment on resource allocation – the members vindicated the current balance of spend across competitions, events, policy making/ advocacy, training, PR/ branding/ communication and fundraising/ sponsorship (Question 7).

When asked how frequently the M magazine should be published the majority favoured quarterly. In speaking with some members post survey this may reflect a desire to communicate with the members and patrons who still like hard copies. There was little knowledge and consequently consideration of the high costs involved in producing a hard copy of the magazine in contrast to the production of a e-magazine.

Question 9 related to the members views on planning at national level and most rated this as good followed by fair. It is noteworthy 11% rated planning as poor and less than 10% rated it as excellent. This supports the recommendation that a more strategic goal orientated approach is required.

Less than 10% of respondents had a lot of knowledge of Macra's internal policy documents with 40% having no knowledge at all (Question 10) while only 11% thought policies helped a lot in helping Macra achieve its objectives (Question 11). Most (63%) thought internal policies make some or a lot of difference to Macra achieving its objectives. This could suggest that while members had little knowledge most had confidence in the suitability of policies.

In relation to lobbying and advocacy at national level almost 90% of members thought Macra was somewhat effective, effective or very effective. While this was not as unanimous as the viewpoints in the face to face consultation it does signify member satisfaction with this aspect of the work of Macra.

Over 80% of respondents indicated that current structures were effective or somewhat effective. The clear view of members appears to be the focus needs to be on the work plan of the organisation. The same view is adopted with regards to the effectiveness of Macra at lobbying and advocacy at national level.

It is in the responses to the open-ended questions 14 and 18 which allowed respondents to contribute more detailed responses that we can gather a clearer picture of some of the views of members on areas of concerns.

Question 14 asked for respondent's recommendations which would improve the performance of Macra na Feirme. The majority of responses focused on the need for improved communications with members and potential members which is reinforced by comments focusing on the need for better use of social media. Acknowledgement was made of the contribution of Skillsnets to training with emphasis on the need to present Macra as an organisation for all young people.

One comment sums up the views of all respondents. *"Macra needs to modernise, be youthful, use modern forms of technology ... allow new initiatives and ways of thinking/ doing business to develop and promote local activities nationally."*

The focus on modernising the organisation is expressed by another respondent who believes that *"the organisation absolutely has to update its image, with all the social media outlets we now have at our disposal, the Macra na Feirme image is still the same as it was 20 years ago."* This is echoed with the comment that *there appears to be an exclusive idea that non-farmers can't be a part of Macra. The mixture of non-farmers and farmers is and will be very healthy for Macra na Feirme."*

When asked if they had any additional comments on the organisational structure of Macra (Question 18) respondents returned to the key theme of communications. *"Communication is key between staff, national council and its members."*

The focus on growing the member base is also commented upon. *"Macra nationally needs to focus on promoting rural youth as much as agriculture, as so many of its members are now not farmers"*. Another respondent return to the same theme; *"a lot of people think you have to be from a farming background to be a member with Macra and are not sure what it's all about"*.

Reference is also made by one respondent to the corporate governance requirements placed on the organisation with reference made to the necessity of ensuring compliance with obligations under Data Protection, the requirements of the Charity Regulator and the necessity for an Audit Committee.

One respondent stated that there is a *"clear job description for all staff employed or volunteering in Macra HQ and their role on how they interact with the president, national executive, national council, county/regional officers and club members. In recent years the role and involvement of staff versus the organisation elected officers at various levels and club members has blurred."*

The same issues are referred to by another respondent. *"There are issues with activity levels, training and development, finance, representation, and staff management. From a member perspective there is a 'them and us' mentality in relation to head office, from a national council and executive point of view there is an even bigger divide and a definite level of mistrust between members of executive and their fellow representatives as well as an officemember divide."*

There were mixed views on planning in the organisation. This could suggest reasonable satisfaction with planning of events and competitions whereas planning was seen as an area for significant improvement by the face to face consultees.

The above results reinforce some of the findings of the face to face consultation including:

- The organisation is perceived to be good at lobbying and advocacy.
- Agriculture is an important aspect of its activities.
- All aspects of communications (internal and external) need improvement with an eagerness expressed that technology and social media be used to a greater degree.

The survey results and the face to face consultations provide a rich source of information not just to this report but to inform debate on future issues as they arise.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Format of recommendations

The recommendations have been divided into 2 categories:

- Major overarching recommendations (4 number)
- Important recommendations (67 number)

In each category a number of detailed recommendations have been presented for consideration at the end of each category.

5.2 Major overarching issues to be addressed

There are 4 major priorities that need to be addressed:

- Planning and monitoring – a focus on Outcomes
- Performance and Development
- Finance
- Strategic Planning

All of these issues already form part of Macras priorities and absorb resources. However, this study recommends they receive increased focus and need to become fundamental building blocks to ensure the organisation continues to thrive.

5.3 Planning and Monitoring – a focus on Outcomes

The study found that planning of events and competitions is done very well. However possibly because of the increased number of priorities taken on by the organisation, the reduction in staff resources and the culture of the organisation it was found that time has not always been adequately put aside to carefully assess the viability of existing and new initiatives and to monitor their ongoing sustainability. In an effort to retain activities that very obviously contribute towards the overall objects of Macra there has sometimes been a lack of clear initial or ongoing analysis. This is a not uncommon phenomenon in organisations across all sectors.

A detailed cost/benefit analysis needs to be undertaken on existing and new initiatives and targeted outcomes defined. This can be problematic in the non-profit sector as benefits may be difficult to quantify and may involve qualitative assessment. However, a clear assessment of costs over the next five-year period should be completed for all initiatives so that the decision makers are clear about the implications of any decisions taken. An example would be when assessing competitions. The cost could be estimated from historic records. The benefit could be measured in terms of numbers served or other criteria decided by management.

Likewise, there is a need for an immediate recorded review after completion of each event/ project including feedback from participants to feed into creating a better event/ project in the following years.

Equally important is the need to carry out structured yearly planning. This should take place in a concentrated period, possibly towards the end of the calendar year. The first step involves reviewing past achievements and outcomes. Time needs to be spent assessing the organisations strategic priorities to ensure they are fit for purpose in a changing environment. The plan for the next year is then formulated, costed and agreed in conjunction with the yearly budget. Many of these steps are already being carried out and now need to be tied into a framework that receives absolute priority.

The model can be summarised as follows (the dates will need to be customised to meet diary constraints within Macra):

Figure 3. The planning cascade

AGM and Calendar of events	May
Review of progress over past 2 years	June/July
Review of strategic priorities	June/July
Draft yearly organisational plan	August/ September
Budget agreed with Finance Committee	December/ January
Agree yearly organisational plan	January
Mid-year review including outcome audit	January
<i>Team and individual end of year review</i>	January
<i>Team and individual Plans agreed</i>	February
<i>Team and individual mid-year review</i>	June

Macra now needs to make the above cycle the norm for all its activities. From a governance as well as an effectiveness perspective careful planning, monitoring and recording are necessary. Such records need to be comprehensive and readily accessible (e.g. recent audit by POBAL where some of the issues raised related to information, which existed within the organisation, not being easily available for inspection).

It is also a requirement of NQSF that clear outcomes be measured. 4 questions need to be asked:

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- How will we get there?
- How do we know if we got there?

In the NQSF(external) assessment of Macras activities dated November/December 2015 attention was drawn to Macras tendency to focus on activities rather than outcomes. Even in areas that are well planned (e.g. events and activities) the focus of the planning is on the detail of running successful activities. There needs to be greater emphasis on outcome planning (this is mentioned on 5 different occasions in Chapter 4 of the NQSF assessment). The outcomes can be short, medium and/or long term. This will also have the added benefit of helping to prioritise actions in the context of finite resources. By starting with a definition of the difference Macra is trying to make it allows for comparison of activities and the possible dropping of some. It allows for a focus on quality and reduces "burn out" in an era of scarce resources. There is also a need to "look at how a needs assessment using demographic, statistical and member input (market research) can direct the work of the organisation over the next few years" (Chapter 4 – External assessment by Standards Officer). The competencies needed to focus on these areas need to be incorporated into the job descriptions of relevant staff. Leadership is required to systemise outcome planning and monitoring. A culture change is required to recognise the importance of planning and reviewing outcomes. These very clear messages need to be given due prioritisation immediately.

Overarching Recommendation, no 1: Macra to prioritise a move to become an outcome based organisation with a culture of systemic planning and monitoring a characteristic of its work

Important recommendations related to Overarching Recommendation No 1:

1. Carry out a cost/benefit and outcome analysis of all costly existing and proposed activities during 2017.
2. The concept of developing a learning organisation needs to be developed by a staff/volunteer team. Autumn 2017.
3. Explore the potential role of MIAMI in relation to planning, monitoring etc. Spring 2017.
4. Emphasise to all stakeholders that "Macra is an outcome based organisation".

5.4 Performance and Development Management System (PMDS)

The achievement of planned goals and outcomes is largely dependent on people, both staff and members operating inside the organisation. Following on from the development of a systematic planning process described above the challenge is to ensure that the efforts of all staff are focussed on organisational objectives and aligned to policy and strategy. The organisation must focus on becoming a learning organisation with its people constantly expanding their skills, knowledge and competencies. To achieve the above 2 parallel approaches are required:

- A strong focus on staff development
- A structured performance measurement system

An amount of progress has already been made on this within Macra. Role descriptions have been reassessed and approved by the National Executive with each new recruitment. An induction process exists for new staff but needs to be reassessed. For example, a new TDO will spend 3 to 4 days in the National Office becoming familiar with staff and organisational characteristics. Support is provided by an experienced colleague including shadowing. The CEO, who is currently the line manager, plays a key role through formal meetings and informal contacts with a new staff member. Currently a series of meetings are taking place between the President, relevant Vice-President, CEO, and each TDO focussing on club activity levels in each county. This is an example of good practice. This progress needs to be accelerated as part of a planned organisation wide system.

Likewise, some element of formal post induction training has been provided to staff in the past. Budgetary constraints during recent years have reduced training budgets in most sectors including in Macra. However, there is now a renewed focus on this area and on ensuring any training provided is answering a specific personal or organisational competency or skill need. It has also been found that sending people to courses is not always the best use of resources. By tapping in to the skills of fellow workers or by adopting a structured learning by doing approach it has been found that learning can happen at a relatively low cost. The fundamental point is that investing in staff development is highly cost effective delivering better outcomes, improving morale and allowing staff take on more complex roles in the future.

A model needs to be developed to include targets and outcomes for individual staff members and teams. This will be overseen by the CEO. Working from the yearly plan/budget a yearly planning conversation between CEO/line manager and staff member setting out individual goals and targets needs to be completed. This includes work and development aspects and needs to be agreed between the CEO/line manager and staff member and recorded. A separate end of year review should take place assessing progress during the year and checking if targets have been achieved. A shorter mid-year review is also recommended. Some progress has been made in implementation but on some occasions the pressure of other work may have interfered with completion. A more formalised system would be applied to CEO appraisal which should be carried out by the President, National Treasurer and National Chairman advised as appropriate by outside expertise. The issue of remuneration should continue to be dealt with by the Finance Committee but operating as part of the system being proposed. Consideration should be given to the use of short-term contracts in some instances to achieve a balance between experience and youth.

Section 3.3.9. of the NQSF review calls for a performance management and appraisal system based on role descriptions and operational plans and this study fully endorses that recommendation and its detailed recommended actions.

5.5 Development of members

The role and development of members is a most important priority. The stand out achievement of Macra, in the views of many members, officers and staff as articulated in the consultation process, is the personal development of members. Young members join Macra, develop skills and confidence and advance to shine in their careers and in officer roles in the organisation. This is facilitated by the friendships developed, activities undertaken, competitions participated in, officer posts held, representational roles and travel fulfilled and can be classified as informal. This can be further nurtured by ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of these various elements. For example, using an outcomes based approach it is useful to analyse what is being achieved by the various competitions in terms of quantity and quality. A culture of continuous improvement can be developed thus minimising the tendency to repeat activities on the basis that they have always been done and people seem to enjoy them (important as these are).

A new informal education framework is being developed at National level by Government. This will allow recognition to be given for informal education achievements and could have positive implications for Macra members.

The development of members is also advanced by the formal training provided at club, county and national level. This training focusses on skills, knowledge of policies, etc. An understanding of the role involved by all volunteers is essential as much time seems to be spent during over-long meetings focussing on detail which should be the preserve of others. It will be timely after this review to reassess the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the formal training provided to members to address different demands including governance, child protection, mental illness, advocacy, financial probity, etc.

Much progress has been made in addressing the educational and development needs of farmers. Initiatives ranging from Origin Green Certificate training to Skillnets have been delivered. In relation to Skillnets there were different opinions voiced during the consultation. There was almost universal acceptance of the need for further formal education or Continued Professional Development of farmers. Reservations centred around the need to firstly establish strong young farmer groups in each county,

the difficulty in being a training organisation and the resources needed to manage and expand the scheme. An immediate assessment is required including analysis of resource requirements and benefits / outcomes in view of the deadline of September 2016 for submitting future plans.

A particular focus needs to be paid to leadership development in Macra. Development of leadership at all levels is crucial. This minimises the tendency for members and branches to become over dependant on staff support in the long term. A key task of staff is to enable members to take the initiative and lead.

All of the above recommendations need to be brought together in a training and development plan for the organisation to include the needs of staff (as articulated through the PMDS) and members.

Overarching Recommendation, no 2: Macra na Feirme to introduce a formal and comprehensive performance management and development system.

Important recommendations relating to Overarching Recommendation No 2:

1. A comprehensive review of training and development including a skills audit needs to be carried out. Critically examine the training being provided to staff and volunteers as part of this process with a particular focus on high quality leadership training. Formulate a 3-year plan to be reviewed annually. Include current policies, conflict resolution, team working and mutual respect, meetings management, understanding of roles, disciplinary procedures, etc. in plan. Late 2016
2. Consider leadership training at all levels in the organisation and formulate a plan in parallel or separate to 1 above. Autumn 2016.
3. Complete a post training assessment form for club, county and NCR training to be overseen by CEO and a senior volunteer leader. Immediate
4. Introduce a post meeting assessment form at all levels on a pilot basis in October 2016 (should take 2 minutes to complete). Autumn 2016
5. Enforce attendance at training. Ongoing
6. Utilise more fully the skills of former members/ patrons who have advanced their careers and are willing to contribute on a pro bono basis
7. Design a new performance and management development system based on external good practice as described above. CEO to oversee implementation of same. Autumn 2016
8. Re-examine the role or parts of roles currently carried out by staff and reassign responsibilities if appropriate. Late 2016.
9. Regular staff meetings (minimum 8 per year) need to be held to include the CEO and on a quarterly basis the President for relevant sections of same
10. Introduce a formal mentoring/CPD program for interested staff and volunteers on a pilot basis. 2018.
11. Carry out a needs analysis of young farmers to identify what young farmers want Macra to do for them (e.g. provides lobbying and representation, training including at a cost, young farmers activities and events, etc.). This analysis could feed into a young farmer training and development plan and feed into a recommended assessment of Skillnets. Immediate.
12. Macra to consider taking a lead national role in the development of a National Informal Qualifications Framework. Late 2016.

5.6 Finance

The most fundamental element of any organisation is its ability to generate financial resources to allow it achieve its goals and objectives. The availability of adequate finance allows for investment in ICT, financial management, HR, information, technology and people which in turn facilitate efficiency and progress. It also allows an organisation to deliver a wide range of services and activities such as competitions and events to members. It allows for a focus on the development of young farmers and rural youth. The development of future leaders in our communities likewise needs some measure of financial outlay.

A detailed analysis of the financial health and governance of Macra is beyond the scope of this review. However, a number of important conclusions have been reached:

- Raising adequate finance to maintain operations takes up a lot of energy of staff, officers and members
- Macras expanded range of activities need additional financing into the future
- Initiatives to cater for rural youth and the development of young farmers could potentially absorb significant additional resources
- The face to face consultation processes choose finance as the organisations number 1 priority
- Macra is an organisation with enormous undefined potential for the future but needs adequate finances to develop innovative and novel projects
- The financial contribution of sponsors, patrons, members, community organisations, the state sector, government etc. will help determine if this potential can be reached

An analysis of activities and initiatives presented by the CEO to National Council in December 2015 shows that not alone has Macra managed to maintain its range of activities during the past 8 years but it has expanded them in a not insignificant way.

For example, Macra became involved in/with Teagasc leadership training, ICOS dairy directors training, skillnets, land mobility service, NQSF, new website development, new database (MIAMI) development, residential club officer training, CEJA/ European young farmer policy arena, increased competitions and events etc. Many of these initiatives contain a significant volunteer input but all require financial/ time resources.

The organisational review carried out by Maynooth University was referred to in Chapter 2. The following statistics are worthy of careful consideration:

New	1994	2015
Budget Income	£1.1 Million	€1.48 Million
Membership	7112	5520
Staff Numbers	26	15

The key statistic from a financial perspective is that the budget is only marginally larger than in 1994. The numbers of members, while lower, is somewhat comparable. A decrease in staff numbers since 1994 is to be expected to some extent given advances in systems, technology, communication etc. but is still noteworthy in the context of a more diverse range of areas of focus.

It is clear that generating more finance/ cutting costs is a determinant of future success. Savings could be generated by increased efficiencies resulting from the implementation of recommendations 1 and 2. Likewise the organisation has worked “smarter” in recent years and has improved systems and technology. The use of email and social media in particular short circuits some travel. In the consultation around what could be dropped a number of suggestions were made and these could be considered. A proposal that was well supported is to drop some areas particularly where participation is low and cost is relatively high. This could be further informed by the assessment of the outcomes of competitions and other value for money studies. There needs to be a greater realisation by members that the financing of the national organisation is also part of their responsibility and valuable contacts could be used to gain sponsorship. The implementation of the recommendations listed in this report should also improve the situation but will cost time and consequently money in the short term. However, the reality is that Macra needs more income.

Overarching Recommendation, no 3: Macra to increase income by 15% by 2019

Important recommendations relating to Overarching Recommendation no 3:

1. Reprioritise the focus on obtaining increased numbers and levels of sponsorship, associate contributions, patron contributions, membership turnover/numbers/fees including increased focus by CEO and President and Vice-Presidents and interested/influential members and including clarifying benefits to all contributors. Immediate with an initiative in 2017 to target patron members.
2. Focus on other potential and non-traditional funders (e.g. Department of Education and Skills, Corporate Social Responsibility driven contributions etc.) or partners. Late 2016
3. Expand the activities of TDOs and volunteers in third level and agriculture colleges to increase membership
4. Continue to develop major fundraising initiatives including working with partners
5. Consider the results of the consultation process to choose activities to be dropped with a target saving of 2% in 2017 followed by a reassessment. Assessment Dec 2017
6. Carry out an analysis of member retention and set a target of 20% decrease in member loss by 2018.

5.7 Strategic Planning

The brief given for this review focusses on resources and activities as well as a number of specific areas discussed below. However, organisations need to reassess their strategic direction, priorities and indeed mission on an increasingly regular basis. The outlook and lifestyle of the average member in 2015 is very different to 1994 when the last major strategic review took place. Issues such as the constitution, values and vision need to be examined in the future. The analysis in this review followed by the implementation of some/many of its recommendations will prepare the organisation for an effective review process. In the interim period a 3-year development plan should be prepared in late 2016 to guide the organisation following the appointment of a new CEO.

Overarching Recommendation, no 4: Complete a 3-year development plan (2016) and carry out a strategic review of Macra (late 2019)

5.8 Policy

There are a large number of internal policy documents within Macra dealing with operating procedures. These range from election rules to anti-bullying guidelines and procedures to volunteer policy to Facebook guidelines. A number of others are being compiled. It is beyond the scope of this study to comment in detail on the content or quantum of these policies. The challenge of creating an interest in policy among members is almost universal but it is a challenge that needs to be addressed in Macra from a governance as well as an efficiency perspective.

Following consultation and an examination of a number of policies the following important recommendations are made;

1. Develop member capacity to feed into policy. Ongoing
2. The current suite of policies should be reviewed annually. Ongoing.
3. A plan should be agreed by National Council to significantly increase the knowledge of members in relation to policies. December 2016
4. The issue of appropriate training in relation to certain policies (e.g. child protection, anti-bullying) that relate to governance and legal issues (e.g. data protection) should be prioritised in the review of training referred to earlier to address the marked lack of knowledge and interest evident in the consultation process. Late 2016
5. The interest shown in the area of mental health should be further developed in the internal policy arena. 2017.
6. The creation of a suite of successful policies in the young farmer's/ lobbying area should be continued and the expertise tapped in to in the review recommended in 2 above. Ongoing
7. Policy documents should be accessible by members on the website.2017.
8. Policy making should be undertaken by those with skills in the area. This could include members with appropriate experience. It would also have the advantage of bringing the members voice into the process at an early stage. Ongoing.

5.9 Governance

The area of governance management has grown in recent years and accelerated since the recession. It was agreed at tender stage that this analysis would focus on structure and that other areas of governance would be outside its scope. Some general recommendations are made below as they arose during the consultation. These can be used as an input to a full governance review in the future. It is also worth emphasising that confidence by members in the governance structures builds trust and minimises negativity and suspicion.

One of the major challenges for Macra is the lack of understanding of some individuals of roles within the organisation. An example can be found in meetings of the National Executive and National Council some of which last for more than 5 hours. This is inefficient and unnecessary. Detailed discussions on small issues are not uncommon. Training plays a key role in addressing this but the item has been included under governance.

A positive relationship between the President and the CEO is necessary to maximise the effectiveness of Macra. The CEO concentrates on management, leadership and planning during the year following adoption of budget and the yearly plan. The current large number of people reporting directly to the CEO needs to be examined. The fact that a President is available to the organisation on a full-time basis or near full time basis is a huge advantage. The major work needed in accessing financing, networking, lobbying, chairing the National Council, working with the Vice-Presidents and other officers, being the main spokesperson and public face of Macra etc. needs dedicated and focussed attention. It is important that boundaries are defined and that areas of joint working agreed following the accession of a new person into either post.

The role of the vice-presidents needs to be expanded if capacity exists. Each of the 3 vice-presidents oversees affairs in his/her region at a high level. They can gauge how major initiatives and activities are progressing and support the National Council Representatives performance. Their relationship with the Training and Development Officers covering their region is important. The recent county by county planning process for club activity in each county is an example of an effective Vice-President input.

Recommendations:

1. Carry out a review of governance in the organisation. Immediate.
2. The roles of all parties in the organisation need to be re-examined as part of the 2017 yearly planning process recommended above. January 2017.
3. A panel of senior personnel from outside the organisation should be established to provide one selection panel member for each senior staff recruitment process. Ongoing.
4. Committee and Council meetings should be shorter in duration. Adequate preparation by members is a key and should be undertaken prior to the meeting facilitated by early availability of meeting material. An induction program should be redesigned and delivered to members at the start of their term (with input from the President as chair of National Council).
5. Sub-committees should continue to play a crucial role in assisting the work of the main committees/council. They should be established with written terms of reference and with a strict time limit.
6. The holding of 6 meetings per year of Executive and Council is adequate but with an option of an additional meeting

- during the busy period in autumn. The joint attendance of an NCR and county chairs from his/her county/region should be mandated once per year at a review meeting in December/January which should focus on a mid-year review and help promote succession planning. Begin December/January 2016/2017.
7. Review the workload of volunteers at national level. Strive for consistency of input by National Council Representatives. Summer/Autumn 2016
 8. County action plans need to be completed each year. Yearly.
 9. Define and expand the role of the Vice-Presidents.
 10. Draw up procedures manuals. Ongoing.
 11. Develop a structured succession planning procedure focussing on posts likely to become vacant within 12 months
 12. Carry out an audit to ensure the organisation is compliant from a data protection perspective, that insurance cover is adequate and that health and safety procedures are fit for purpose.
 13. Develop a risk register. Immediate.
 14. Consider the inclusiveness of Macra from a diversity perspective to cater for our multi-cultural population and to include excluded groups. Examine the representation and role of women in Macra. 2017.
 15. Review the implementation of the Pobal recommendations to be carried out by a small group including President and a Vice-President and reported on to Council. Immediate.
 16. Develop and agree a policy for compliance with Charities Act. Autumn 2016.
 17. Consider a new role in the organisation to assist the CEO to optimise efficiencies (e.g. a Director of Organisation Post whose duties can be defined following CEO recruitment). Autumn 2016.

5.10 Communication and National Publications

Communication is a major issue in modern organisations. There is a viewpoint as expressed in the consultation that the outside world does not know the range and depth of Macras work. Internal communication, even in bodies that have focussed on this area, is an inevitable concern. More particularly the way people communicate is now very different. Social media has grown – it is estimated that over 90% of Macra members use Facebook. There was a sense in many that websites are an outdated mode of communication. There is a lot of “noise” in the world and it requires increasingly skilful communicators to reach a wide audience.

The results of the consultation identified communication as a major issue.

- Communication has improved over the recent year
- Reporting back national to county the responsibility of the NCRs (recent initiative by the President to report back welcome but responsibility lies with NCR)
- The quality of publications (e.g. yearbook) is much higher than a few years ago
- Facebook page usage is identified as a major weakness
- Social media management demands attention at all times and is not a 9 to 5 job
- Members must take responsibility for communication to make it effective
- Clear guidelines and enhanced training are called for
- Face to face communication is valued highly

A separate study in the area of PR and communications has taken place in parallel with this review the results of which will further inform the below recommendations.

In relation to National publications there is a general satisfaction with range and improving quality. There is a divide between many officers who think the expensive M magazine should be produced once a year and the members survey which suggests it be produced quarterly. In a follow up with some members it became obvious that many do not know the cost of production (or indeed the cost of the various services they use) and approached answering the question from a member and patron service perspective. The publication of the emagazine on a weekly basis offers endless communication potential and could be further developed.

Recommendations:

1. A communication and PR strategy (including a social media strategy) covering internal and external objectives should be produced and distributed for consultation and adoption. This should include social media/ media training for volunteers and approved by National Council. Autumn 2016
2. Members and staff to be empowered and trained to take ownership of communication. National PRO to lead this. Each of the 3 National committees to have an active PRO. Increase the use of photographs and video content including You-Tube, Instagram etc. Ongoing
3. Immediate communication of results and events is necessary with trained local PROs enabled to use national and local Facebook pages and other tools but within strict guidelines. Consider a competition for photo and short video. TDOs role in communication is providing local support is vital. Autumn 2016
4. Increase communication including face to face with sponsors, associates and other external stakeholders including generation of positive publicity for same. Ongoing
5. Direct communication between all staff and members/various activities/Council and subcommittees needs to be planned and enhanced to improve knowledge of all operations, improve teamwork, develop more mutual respect and improve members understanding of the role of staff. Ongoing
6. Examine the branding and external image of Macra. Include a detailed survey of external stakeholder’s views. Establish a budget line in this area. 2017-2018.

7. Re-examine macra.ie and knowyourneighbour.ie with a view to a non-expensive redesign using members with skills in that area. Allow clubs to share good practice and include all policies/meeting papers on a selective access basis on website. Early 2017.
8. Continue to produce 2 M magazines each year for a trial period with an emphasis on patron publicity and recruitment. Place most focus on a Christmas edition with a smaller version available during the summer. Patrons, sponsors, etc. to receive a hard copy. Distribute electronically to all others including inactive and past members to cut down on the very high postage costs. Hard copies to be available if requested by same. 2017
9. Continue to focus on media relations as a major priority. Review value for money/ follow up on findings in media monitoring. Ongoing
10. Review the effectiveness of the Macra Farmers Journal Page including layout and content. Autumn 2016
11. Set up a facility using a dedicated email address (e.g. feedback@macra.ie) to allow members return feedback for input into the 3 subcommittees of Ag Affairs, Rural Youth and Competitions with a summary for National Executive National Council. Pilot Jan- June 2017
12. Use the MIAMI database (with support of TDOs) as a strategic tool including for communication. 2017
13. Examine the updating and use of archives to further the aims and reach of the organisation

5.11 Policy Making, Advocacy and Lobbying for Agriculture and Rural youth

Macra is acknowledged as having a very good track record in lobbying and advocating in the agriculture/ young farmer area. The consultees almost universally acknowledged this as a success story and they had an amount of pride in this achievement. Among the examples given were the Top Up and National Reserve payment this year to almost 9000 farmers, mandatory young farmer measures under CAP, trailer driving licences and other issues. A consultation with some of the recipients of the lobbying activity is outside the scope of this review. However, the future success of initiatives such as the Land Mobility Service could depend on acquiring support based on lobbying. Likewise, the quickly changing world agricultural environment will need close attention by Macra and other organisations.

A small minority expressed a view that lobbying effectiveness had decreased slightly in recent years. They pointed to the need to become involved in the promotion of rural youth and in being to the forefront in shaping national policy in and financial support for that area. Extensive networks exist with other organisations focussed on youth issues and these can be exploited further.

Recommendations:

1. Lobbying and advocacy to remain a key activity of the organisation at national and local level
2. Lobbying at local level is also important and it is important to link national and local
3. Influencing decision making at EU level is crucially important and it is important for Macra to continue to develop its contacts including playing an important role in CEJA
4. Careful monitoring of inputs to the lobbying register is required (lobbying@macra.ie)

5.12 Rural Youth, Ag Affairs and Competitions

These 3 areas are major priorities for Macra and are managed by 3 committees at National level. They operate well and oversee progress in their respective areas. It is recommended that they continue as priority areas and that each draws up a 3-year development plan to coincide with planning at organisational level. Many of the recommendations listed above are relevant to the 3 areas. It is not the purpose of this review to specify specific recommendations but the following issues are among those that arose during the consultation:

- The need to further develop young farmer's groups at county level
- The establishment of enhanced links with Teagasc
- Ongoing focus on Continued Professional Development of young farmers
- Establish local fora for young farmers to allow for input into policy generation
- Potential exists to expand rural youth role and of communicating the good work already being done including at National level
- The rural youth committee should focus on a small number of challenges over the next 3 years
- Rural youth officers at county level should be considered
- Additional enforcement of child protection policy including vetting of new leaders
- Consider how to enhance the performance of weaker clubs including the development of a minimum standard and engagement by clubs in the standards for club and groups
- The number of competitions and events should be kept under review and the planning and measurement of outcomes proposals implemented
- The number of competitions should be reduced slightly on a pilot basis following assessment of cost, participation and outcomes
- A balance needs to be struck between high quality events and the need to develop the skills of weaker members through competitions.

5.13 Implementation

Don't try to catch falling elephants, but help elephants to rise

The challenge of implementing some or all of the above recommendations needs careful consideration. Some of the recommendations should be prioritised ahead of others in terms of available resources. Suggested timeframes have been included to assist with the prioritisation of recommendations. In the case of Macra with its very busy calendar and diverse pulls on staff, officers and members implementation is particularly challenging. However, the following suggestions are made:

1. Engage with staff and officers and communicate findings of the review
2. Present and agree an implementation strategy
3. Articulate a strong reason why the agreed changes are necessary using the following steps
 - Establish a sense of urgency – convince at least 75% of stakeholders that the status quo is more dangerous than the proposed change in approach. 50% of change efforts fail here
 - Form a guiding coalition – bring together and carefully develop a team to manage the change
 - Create a vision – and develop implementation strategy
 - Communicate the vision – use every tool available to you
 - Empower others – remove blockages (think the 7-S model)
 - Plan and create short-term wins – engineer this by choosing initial goals and advertising success
 - Consolidate improvements and implement further change – don't declare victory too soon
 - Institutionalise the new approach – embed it deeply in the organization and make people proud of it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography relates to both the subject matter and possible future organisational considerations that may be carried out by Macra

- Bartlett CA, Hall BJ and Bennet NS (June 2008): GE's Imagination Breakthroughs: The Evo Project, *Harvard Business School*, 1-24
- Bhalla V, Caye J, Dyer A, Dymond L, Marieux Y and Orlander P (Sept. 2011): High-Performance Organisations – The Secrets of Their Success, *Boston Consulting Group*, 1-14
- Bradley C. Hirt Mand Smit S (Jan 2011): Have you Tested your Strategy Lately, *McKinsey Quarterly*, 1-13
- Cameron KS and Quinn RE (2006): The Competing Values Culture Assessment, *University of Michigan Journal*
- Covey RC (1992): *Principal – Centred Leadership*, London: Simon & Schuster
- Daft RL (1998): *Organisation Theory & Design*, Cincinnati: South Western College Publishing
- Dalton M, Swigert S, Van Velsor E, Bunker K and Wachholz J (1999); The Learning Tactics Inventory, *Jossy-Bass/Pfeiffer*, 1-10
- Day G, Shloemaker P and Synder S (2010): The Vigilant Organisation Minding and Mining the Periphery; *Rottman Magazine*, 35-49
- Dewit B and Meyer R (2010): *Strategy, Process, Content, Context – An International Perspective*, Hampshire: Cengage Learning
- Drucker PF: *Management*, Buckinghamshire: Hazell: Easton & Viney Ltd
- Dyer J, Gregersen H and Christensen CM (2006): *Harvard Business Review Press*, 1-24
- Garvin GA and Knoop C (Jan 2011): Growing Pains at Stroz Friedberg, *Harvard Business School*, 1-20
- Hambrick DC and Fredrickson JW (2005): Are you sure you have a Strategy, *Academy of Management Executive*, 19(4), 51-62
- Handy C (1996): *Beyond Certainty*, Victoria: Random House
- Lafley, AG Martin RL Rivkin JW and Siggelkown (Sept 2012): Bringing Science to the Art of Strategy, *Harvard Business Review*, 57-66
- Mabey C (Jan 2005): Management Development Works: The Evidence Achieving Management Excellence Research Series 1996-2000 *Chartered Management Institute*, 1-7
- McGrath RG and MacMillan IC (July-Aug 1995): Discovery Driven Planning, *Harvard Business Review*, 44-54
- Peters T and Waterman RH (1995): *In Search of Excellence*, London: Harper Collins
- Porter ME (Jan 2008): The Five Competitive Forces That Shape Strategy *Harvard Business Review*, 78-93
- Prohl M (1997): *International Strategies & Techniques for Future Local Government: Cities of Tomorrow*, Gutersloh: Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers
- Roberto MA (August 2001): Strategic Planning at Sun Life, *Harvard Business School*, 1-21
- Roghe F, Tom A, Kilmann J, Dicke R and Strack R (Jan 2012): Organisational Capabilities Matter, *Boston Consulting Group*, 1-19
- Rumelt RP (June 2011): The Perils of Bad Strategy, *McKinsey Quarterly*, 1- 10
- Schloemaker PJH, Krupp S and Howland S: Strategic Leadership: The Essential Skills, *Harvard Business Review*, 131-134
- Simons R (Nov 2010): Stress-Test Your Strategy – The 7 Questions to Ask, *Harvard Business Review*, 93-100
- Simons R and Kindred N (April 2012): Henkel; Building a Winning Culture, *Harvard Business School*, 1-19
- Stewart J (1995): *Understanding the Management of Local Government*, London: Pitman Publishing
- Watkins MD (June 2012): How Managers Become Leaders, *Harvard Business Review*, 65-72
- Weston, H.A. (Dec. 2012): Automation Consulting Services, *Harvard Business Review*, 1-9

- Altsmon Y, Child P, Dobbs R and Narasimhan L (2012): Winning the \$30 Trillion Decathlon: Going for Gold in Emerging Markets, *McKinsey Global Institute, Strategy Practice*
- Bartlett CA, Hall BJ and Bennet NS (June 2008): GE's Imagination Breakthroughs: The Evo Project, *Harvard Business School*, 1-24
- Bell DE & McLoughlin DP (Dec 2012), Exima Agro-Industrial Holdings, *Harvard Business School*, 1-34
- Bell DE and Shelman M. (Oct 2012); Nestle, *Harvard Business School* 1-37
- Bell DE, McLoughlin DP & Shelman M (May 2012), K & N's: Health & Happiness for Pakistan, *Harvard Business School*, 1-31
- Beth C, (May 2013) Figure It Out, *Harvard Business Review*, 22-26
- Cauz J, The 244-Year-Old Product, *Harvard Business Review March* 2013, 39-42
- Coyne KP and Horn J (April 2009); Predicting Your Competitors Reaction, *Harvard Business Review* 90-87
- Cusumano MA (2010), Staying Power, Clarendon Lectures in Management Studies (*Kindle Edition*)
- Day GS, Shloemakeep JH (Nov 2005): Scanning the Periphery, *Harvard Business Review* 135-147
- Dossabhay N (Dec 1988), Cleveland Twist Drill, *Harvard Business School*, 11-21
- Downes L and Nures PF (March 2013); Big Bang Disruption, *Harvard Business Review*, 44-56
- Fagan PL Yoshimo MY and Bartlett CA (Nov 2006), Silvio Napoli at Schindler India, *Harvard Business School*, 1-19
- Garvin DA & Levesque LC (June 2006), Strategic Planning at United Parcel Service, *Harvard Business School*, 1-24
- Godin Seth (2001), "Unleashing the Idea Virus" *U Tube Videos*
- Gouillart F and Billings D, (Jan-Feb 2013) Community Powered Problem Solving, *Harvard Business Review*, 41-44
- Hambrick DC and Fredrickson JW (2005): Are you sure you have a Strategy, *Academy of Management Executive*, 19(4), 51-62
- Kelly T & Kelly D (Dec 2012) IBM Quotes, *Harvard Business Review*, 5-30
- Kotter J. (2013), Implementing Change Powerfully & Successfully, *Mind Tools Online Site*
- Lyons P (2013), Various Titles, *U Tube Video*
- McGrath R, (2013), The End to Competitive Advantage: How to keep Your Strategy Moving as Fast as Your Business, *On Line Preview Amazon*
- McRuth RG & MacMillan I C (July/Aug 2005), Discovery Driven Planning, *Harvard Business Review*, 44-54
- Moon Y (Oct 2005), Inside Intel Inside, *Harvard Business School*, 1-23
- Neeley T & DeLong TH (Nov 2009), Managing a Global Team; Greg James at Sun Microsystems, Inc., *Harvard Business School*, 1-15
- Porter ME (Jan 2008): The Five Competitive Forces That Shape Strategy *Harvard Business Review* ,78-93
- Raynor ME and Ahmed M (April 2013); Three Rules for Making a Company Truly Great, *Harvard Business Review* 108-117
- Simons R and Kindred N (April 2012); Henkel; Building a Winning Culture, *Harvard Business School* 1-19
- Sull D (2013), The Big Speak, *U Tube Video*
- Taleb NN, Goldstein DG and Spitzangle MW (October 2009); The Six Mistakes Executives Make in Risk Management, *Harvard Business Review* 78-81

Macra na Feirme - Independent External Review

Appendices

Appendix 1 - TERMS OF REFERENCE

What is Macra na Feirme?

Macra na Feirme is a voluntary organisation for young people between the ages of 17 and 35. The organisation consists of a nationwide network of clubs with six key areas of activity: agriculture, sport, travel, public speaking, performing arts, and community involvement. Macra na Feirme is committed to the personal development of members and puts emphasis on social interaction and participation'.

Our constitution says....

The objects of the organisation shall be to promote and foster agriculture and rural development in all its branches by doing all such things as are or may be incidental and conducive to the attainment of that object and, in particular, by:

- a) Assisting the personal development of youth.
- b) Promoting social and cultural education among rural youth of both sexes.
- c) Providing opportunity for learning the skills and theory of farming.
- d) Widening the interest of rural youth by increasing their store of general knowledge.
- e) Encouraging leadership in preparation for responsible roles in farming and community associations.

Are we aligned with the Government's new National Youth Strategy?

The National Youth Strategy 2015 – 2020 sets out the Government's agenda and priorities in relation to all children and young people under the age of 25 and provides for the development and implementation of policies and services in relation to the following interconnected and mutually reinforcing outcome area.

- 1) Active and healthy, physical and mental wellbeing.
- 2) Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development.
- 3) Safe and protected from harm.
- 4) Economic security and opportunity.
- 5) Connected, respected and contributing to the world.

Overview:

Over the last number of years, activity levels have increased significantly within our organisation while staff numbers have reduced. We have received huge cuts to our government funding whilst maintain services. The focus of this review is to look at all aspects of our national organisation, focusing on the terms of reference below. This review will focus on the operational and organisational aspects of the organisation.

Terms of Reference for the review:

- 1) That this review takes as a given our mission statement and objects as set out above and looks at the organisation from an operation and organisational point of view only.
- 2) Review and identify what are the priorities of members locally and nationally.
- 3) Review existing programme of activities in the context of identified priorities.
- 4) Review delivery – matching of resources to priorities.
- 5) Review the effectiveness of existing governance structures.
- 6) Review national publications and communication between members & with staff, as supported by staff.
- 7) Review the effectiveness of policy generation and lobbying for agriculture and rural youth.
- 8) Based on the foregoing provide a set of recommendations that will guide Macra in the delivery of its objectives in line with priorities identified and resources available.
- 9) Review the image and standing of Macra na Feirme as seen internally.

Consultation:

It is envisaged that the person appointed to work with us to achieve the above will facilitate the various meetings/workshops required, write and review any questionnaire or email related feedback, and conduct all necessary interviews. The review will involve a consultation period with:

- 1) National Council and National Executive – Direct consultation
- 2) Presidential team – Direct consultation
- 3) Office staff – Direct consultation
- 4) Field staff – Direct consultation
- 5) County Executives – Indirect consultation through a feedback and review process submitted directly to the reviewer.
- 6) Club Members – Indirect consultation through a facility for direct submission from individual club members.
- 7) External - Louise Fitzpatrick National Quality Standards Framework (NQS) – Direct consultation.

Documentation provided to the reviewer:

The person completing the independent review will have access to all available documentation requested in addition to the following:

- 1) The Macra na Feirme Constitution.
- 2) The latest yearbook and diary.
- 3) Macra na Feirme audited accounts for the last 3 years.
- 4) Macra na Feirme policy documents.
- 5) Outline of Macra na Feirme organisational structure.
- 6) Macra na Feirme strategic and operational NQSF plan 2012 - 2014.
- 7) Macra na Feirme operational plans for P.R and Agriculture.
- 8) Completed County Action Plan Documents.
- 9) Macra na Feirme review of the year documents as presented at the AGM for the last 3 years.

Timelines:

23rd January 2016 National Council - review, discuss, agree and approve terms of reference and budget.

29th January 2016 – President and CEO report back to National Executive with recommendation for approval & appoint the individual who is going to complete the review.

1st February 2016 – 8th April 2016 – Consultation and review period.

8th April 2016 – Report completed and issued to National Executive members for their review. The reviewer will make a presentation to National Executive.

13th April 2016 – National Executive meeting prior to AGM.

16th April 2015 – Additional National Council Meeting to be attended by NCR's and county chairs. Presentation will be made by reviewer and report findings will be discussed.

Appointment of the Reviewer:

Interested parties will be asked to provide:

Descriptions of their experience in previous similar projects or contracts.

An initial overview of the process, timelines and methodologies to be used.

The cost including vat for the delivery of the outputs in the sought-after timeline. *(Interested parties should note that Macra na Feirme is a registered charity and can therefore not claim vat refunds. Therefore the only cost figure of relevance to Macra na Feirme will be the cost including vat.)*

List of previous organisations for whom similar work has been delivered.

Brief biography of the person completing the work.

The CEO and President will present to National Executive with a recommendation for the individual who will complete this review. The person appointed will be independent of Macra na Feirme but ideally would have a background that understands how voluntary or youth organisations operate.

Appendix 2 - CONTEXTUAL MATERIAL

Context – Global and Ireland

The environment in which Macra na Feirme operates is characterised by rapid pace of change, increasing levels of uncertainty and turbulence, greater competition in international markets, likelihood of future major world economic crises or “Black Swan” events (viz significant events of a totally unimagined nature, Day,2010) and changes in world power dynamics. It is also an environment of increased opportunity for populations that are well educated and highly skilled, committed to ongoing learning, flexible and agile in their responses and capable of using diversity as an asset. Annual consumption will increase from a value of 12 trillion dollars in 2010 to a staggering 30 trillion dollars in 2030. Consumer numbers with significant spending power will rise from 2.4 billion (2012) to 4.2 billion (2025). Emerging markets with young consumers will dominate product design, distribution supply chains and manufacturing practices (Altsmon, 2012). The implications for Ireland with its open economy and for the agriculture industry are far reaching. Success factors for countries and organisations will include ongoing innovation across the service spectrum, building brands that resonate, organising for tomorrows society, an ability to respond speedily and management of risk.

The modern organisation must also be outward looking as threats and opportunities come and go at great pace in the changing world described above. In the words of Don Sull “turbulence is here to stay”. Creating the space for networking and “scanning the periphery” (Day,2010) remains a challenge to bodies that have traditionally focussed almost exclusively on internal activities. Having the time to make mental connections across seemingly unrelated disciplines triggers innovation and creativity which are deemed essential for the future. Personal and organisational respect and reputation is very important. The challenge of finding time to focus on networking and creative thinking has been made more challenging because of the cut-backs in resources since 2008. Many organisations focussed on “keeping the ship afloat”. This environment does not always allow sufficient time for strategic planning and thinking

Another international trend that has become more prevalent relates to the role of the key stakeholders, be they customers or voluntary members. The traditional approach had been for the organisation to provide services to customers or citizens which through a system of research/ profit measurement was found to meet their needs. Instead of a traditional “push” approach the emphasis is on empowering members and giving them authority to respond to things as they happen (Cusumano,2014). The supposition that a group of senior managers can manage all issues that arise and respond on all occasions on behalf of members is seen as sub-optimal. Closely allied to that is optimising the input of volunteers to achieve organisational objectives-consider the role of unpaid smartphone app designers (Gouillart, 2013).

Ireland is recovering from a huge economic downturn that affected the lives of all its people. Organisations in the public, private and not for profit sectors almost universally saw cuts to their budgets, decreased market opportunities and decrease in staff numbers. We are now in a “new normal” environment. During the recession many organisations gained efficiencies, eliminated some activities and learned to “make do with less”. They also learned how to adapt more quickly to changing circumstances and to become more agile and focussed. A “discovery driven planning approach” was often adopted (McGrath, 1995). They increasingly used small scale experimentation which systematically converts assumptions into knowledge as a strategic venture unfolds. This is exemplified by services initiated by Macra such as the Land Mobility Service which started on a small scale, learned lessons and is now expanded. Its ongoing success will be informed by ongoing learning.

There are a number of characteristics that are particular to Ireland that have relevance to how Macra does its business. There exists a large non-profit and community/voluntary sector in contrast with European norms where the equivalent work is often the responsibility of the state. The positive aspect of this from an organisational perspective is that there exists a rich reservoir of experience in areas such as youth work and mental illness. There are many opportunities to link in and partner with like-minded organisations. Networks such as the Public Participation Networks at county and city level promote cooperation and are a source of information about local funding availability. The potential downside is the existence of what are in fact competitor organisations who are seeking scarce state and sponsorship funding from the same pots.

Ireland also has high levels of volunteerism. Very often most work in rural areas is carried out by unpaid and motivated community minded people – without them the quality and quantity of activities and local improvements in areas ranging from Tidy Towns to sport, local development to drama, health and wellbeing would be greatly diminished. This has the added value of bringing local knowledge into a central decision making position about the future of their areas and communities. In some ways the above captures the essence of Macra. It is member led, active at local level and greatly enhances the lives, skills and wellbeing of its members and its local communities. The community work it does and the high esteem the organisation is held in locally also provides opportunities to capture local business sponsorship monies which can be the life-blood of local branches.

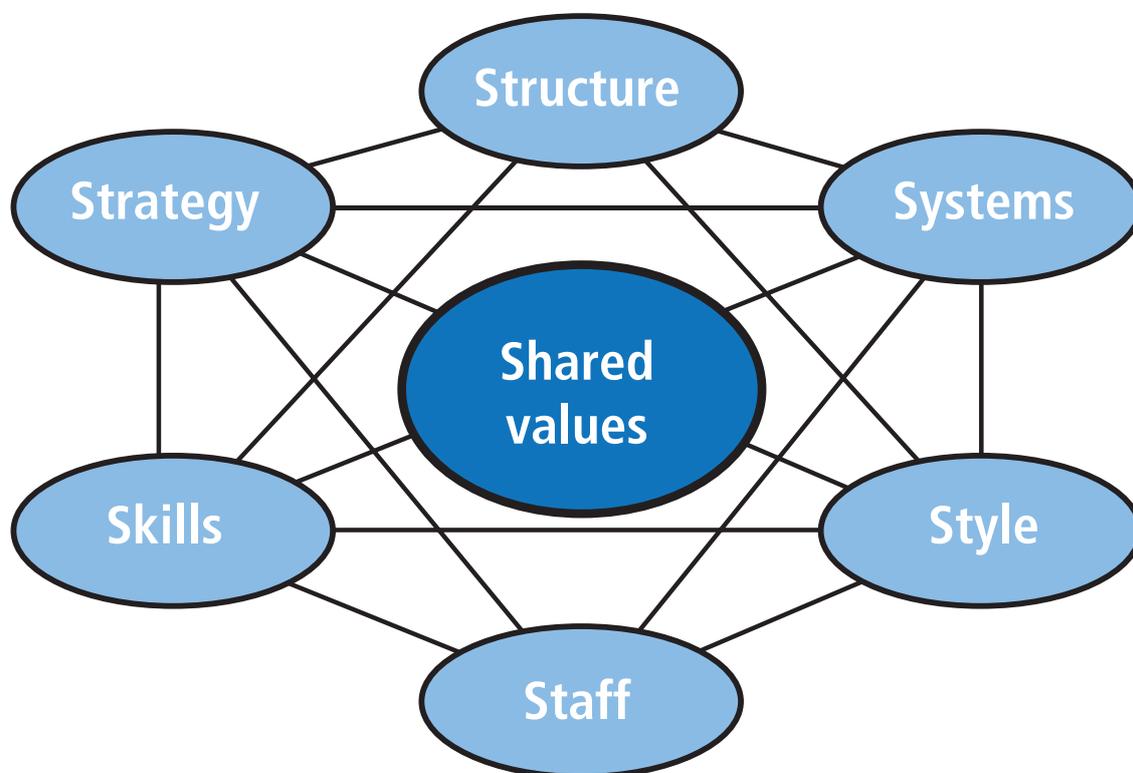
Increased levels of reporting and form filling have been characteristics of publicly funded organisations since the onset of the recession and following an increased emphasis on good governance. Files are expected to be up to date and complete with all necessary details to comply with an ever increasing level of audit. While one may quibble about the effectiveness of this “red tape” approach the fact remains it is likely to be a priority of all organisations into the future.

Finally, with a recovering economy there will be an opportunity to tap into existing and new funding streams. The organisations with the skills, networks and strategically developed projects are most likely to thrive.

Organisational attributes

The type of organisation that will thrive in the environment described above will have a number of characteristics. First and foremost, it must have excellent internal systems, structure, staff, skills, strategy, shared values and style (Fig 1: the 7- S Analysis). All of these must be interlinked and compliment and be aligned with each other. While the analysis of all of these elements is beyond the scope of this report it is important the part they jointly play in improving an organisation (“culture eats strategy for breakfast”).

Figure 1 – The 7-S analysis



- Structure:** *division of tasks, people and authority*
- Strategy:** *how to create unique value and thrive in a competitive environment*
- Systems:** *formal processes and procedures to manage effectively*
- Staffing:** *the people: recruitment, development etc.*
- Style:** *the norms and operating style of the organisation and leadership style of top management*
- Skills:** *distinctive competencies of people, management practices, technologies etc.*
- Shared Values:** *guiding principles of what is important, "the way we do things here"*

Secondly it must have a quality planning, implementation and monitoring system. This must permeate the organisation from strategic planning down to individual staff and local voluntary team level.

The importance of the adhering to yearly, team and individual plans is a fundamental requirement. However, opportunities may arise during the period of the plan that need to be considered. There must be flexibility built into the above plans to allow for this. However, it is important to guard against "initiativitis" where many new initiatives are adapted without careful cost-benefit analysis even on a pilot basis as described earlier. Likewise, they must be assessed against the overall strategy of the organisation and aligned with its fundamental purpose(s). An over-stretched management regime can lead to failure to allow time to consider important day to day developments and result in burn-out.

Closely related to this is a need to focus on outcomes. All organisations strive for a purpose or purposes. The bottom line for private sector organisations may indeed be shareholder profit although many are increasingly aware of their social and environmental responsibilities. Public sector organisations strive after the common good but are focussed on divergent objectives. Not for profit organisations tend to focus on social, environmental, cultural and/or economic ambitions. All share a need to measure outcomes. How outcomes are defined and measured can vary but a passionate commitment to them is a fundamental requirement for success. Without this system even the most well-meaning, hard-working and flexible organisation will not thrive.

Successful organisations pay focussed attention to ongoing organisational development. A key task of management and of the supervisory board/council is to ensure that a culture of continuous improvement prevails. Innovation and creativity are characteristics that need to be continually encouraged.

Among the other ranked capabilities are project management, recruitment expertise, employee performance management, role clarity and organisational structure. The above work was focussed on existing successful organisations with carefully designed internal processes and reward systems. In such cases the top 3 characteristics are behavioural. For organisations at a less advanced stage of development it is important to focus on the behavioural and “hard” characteristics such as structural design and performance management. This research does however illustrate the importance of people’s motivation, ownership and willingness to go “the extra mile”. Moving beyond compliance to commitment by all involved is seen as paramount to success as is the existence of clear targets and goals

There is much research available on the types of organisational characteristics that lead to success. Working from a clear vision, strong consistent leadership is often deemed to be the most important one. Loyalty to and from staff and volunteer stakeholders, innovation, staying ahead of the competition, embracing diversity, focusing on quality and maintaining a steady ship (“not management by surprise”) are frequently listed as essential for success. Work by the Boston Consulting Group on 20 vital organisational capabilities that characterise the successful organisation of the future listed the following in order of importance (Roghe,2012):

- Leadership performance
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Motivation
- Organisational efficiency
- Process optimisation

The importance of leadership in a time of change cannot be overemphasised. Figure 2 below summarises the competencies that need to be developed at all levels but particularly at the top.

Figure 2: The challenges of change leadership



Appendix 3 - 1994 REVIEW SUMMARY

A comprehensive external review of Macra took place in 1994 and was completed by the Centre for Adult and Community Education, St Patricks College, Maynooth (hereafter referred to as the 1994 review). This included the construction of a comprehensive profile of the organisation, articulation of a shared vision of the members for the long- term development of the organisation and the identification of the most appropriate structures, resources and work plan to realise that vision. It placed an emphasis on an inclusive consultation process that in itself would empower members to participate as effective agents of change in rural Ireland. The work took 6 months to complete and involved consultation meetings with 228 branches in addition to officers and staff at all levels.

The findings of the 1994 review that may be relevant to this analysis include:

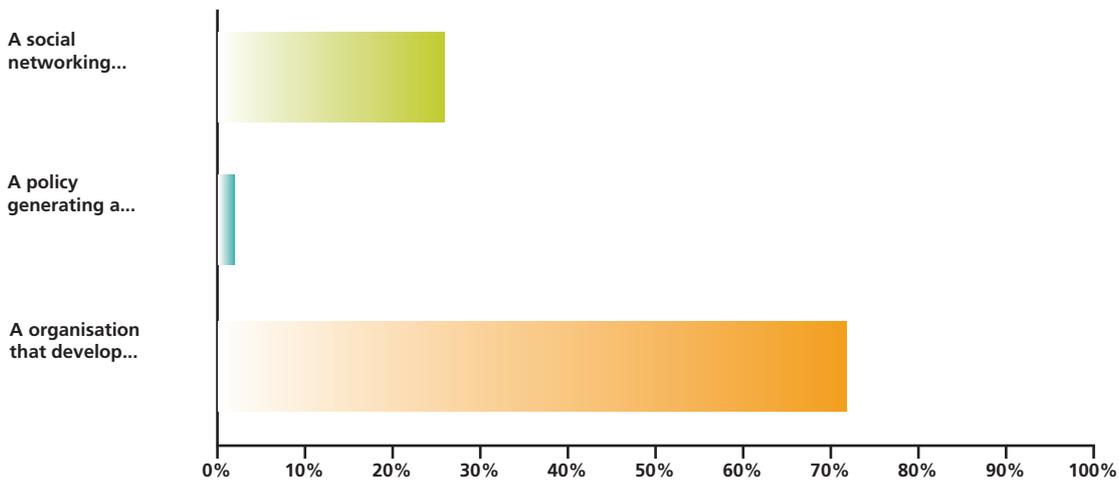
- Improving the quality of branch management to reduce high membership turnover (In 1993 alone 6000 members did not renew their membership)
- Addressing the tension within the perception of the organisation as a rural youth organisation or a young farmer's organisation by articulating a vision that placed a much greater emphasis on the young rural people component of the membership with a young farmer's agenda remaining an identifiable but not dominant component
- The need for a club development strategy with a focus on leadership training and general support, programme development and planning at branch level, new branch start-ups and monitoring of membership retention
- Identification and training of a team of volunteer branch development facilitators to drive the club development strategy
- The establishment of a new development service within Macra to focus on member development, organisational development and programme development
- Ensuring that competitions do not limit potential participants to those with a high level of achievement and excellence
- Review of achievement awards to include the development of a member's journal by each member on a voluntary basis
- The focus of county structures would be mainly on administration and progressing the development service while National Council membership needed to contain more non farmers and women
- Developing formal and informal communication channels between National Council members and the local organisation
- Possible use of ICT to reduce the administration burden and adaptation of the principle of customer service.
- The consultation process should continue after the completion of the report to facilitate ongoing feedback to Macras planning mechanisms

The report referred to "the inherent and inevitable tension in a voluntary organisation between paid staff and voluntary members". There is reasonable commonality between some of the issues raised in 1994 and those raised in this year's consultation process.

Appendix 4 – RESULTS OF ONLINE SURVEY

Q1 **Select the option which best describes your understanding of Macra na Feirme.**

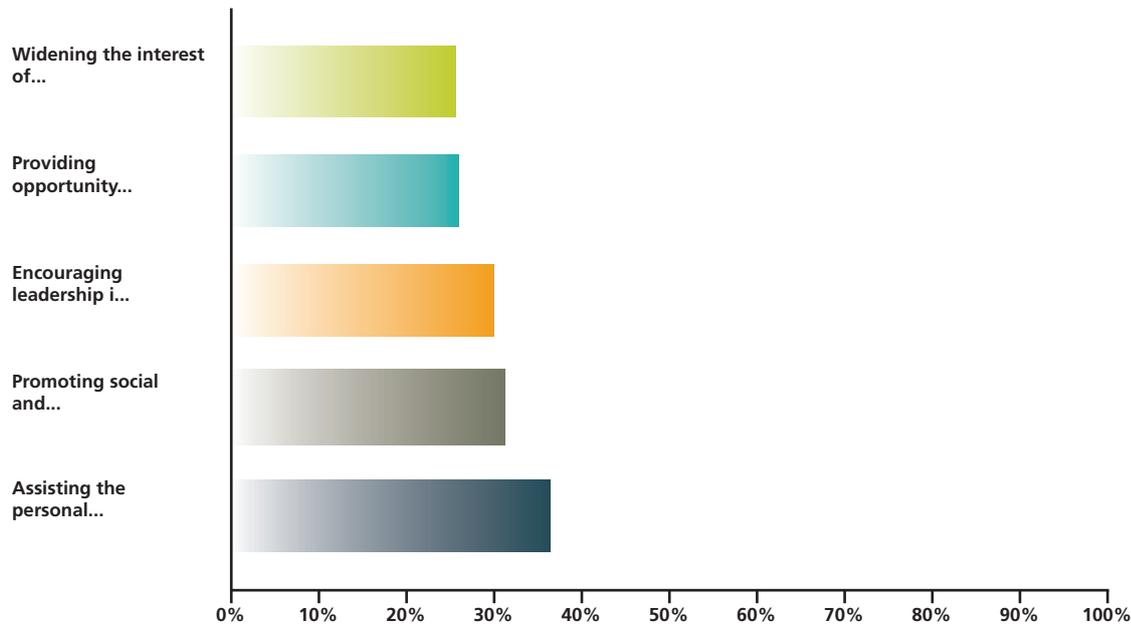
Answered: 350 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
A social networking organisation	26.00% 91
A social networking organisation	2.00% 7
A social networking organisation	72.00% 252
Total	350

Q2 The key objective of the constitution of Macra na Feirme is to promote and foster agriculture and rural development in all its branches. Please rank the following additional objectives of Macra in order of importance, starting with the most important

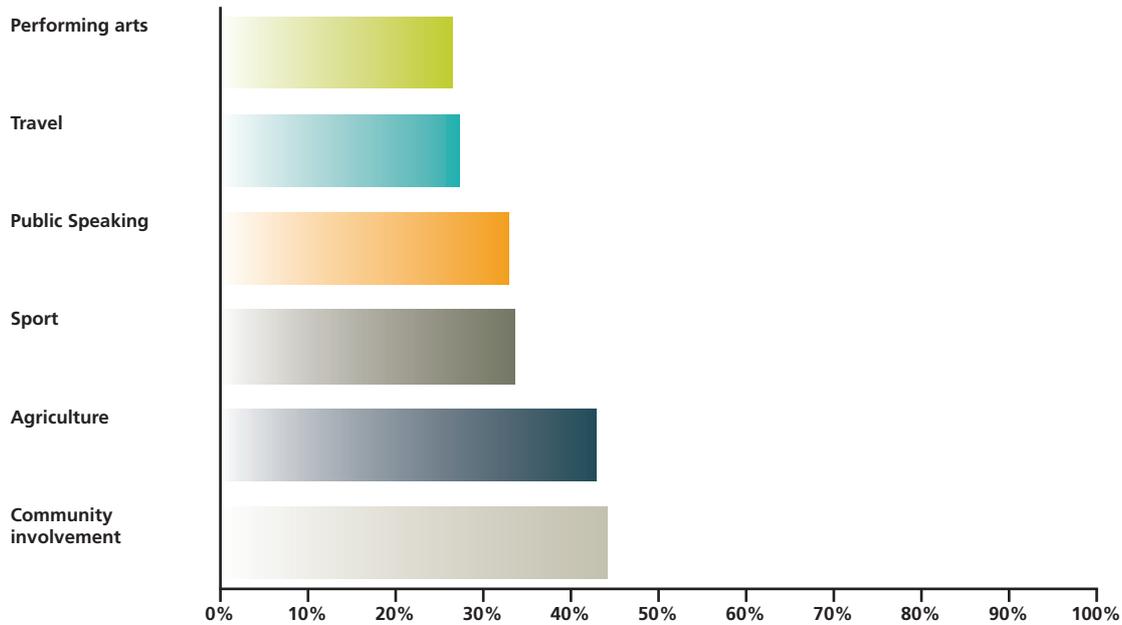
Answered: 351 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Score
Widening the interest of rural youth by increasing their store of general knowledge	8.26% 29	14.53% 51	20.80% 73	26.21% 92	26.00% 91	351	2.44
Providing opportunity for learning the skills and theory and practice of farming	9.12% 32	19.37% 68	22.22% 78	26.78% 94	22.51% 79	351	2.66
Encouraging leadership in preparation for responsible roles in farming and community	21.37% 75	20.23% 71	20.80% 73	16.81% 59	72.00% 252	351	3.05
Promoting social and cultural education among rural youth of both sexes	18.52% 65	26.21% 92	23.65% 83	18.23% 64	20.80% 73	351	3.18
Assisting the personal development of Youth	42.74% 150	19.66% 69	12.54% 44	11.97% 42	13.11% 46	351	3.67

Q3 Please rank the following 6 key programme areas in order of effectiveness in achieving the objectives of Macra na Feirme, starting with the most important.

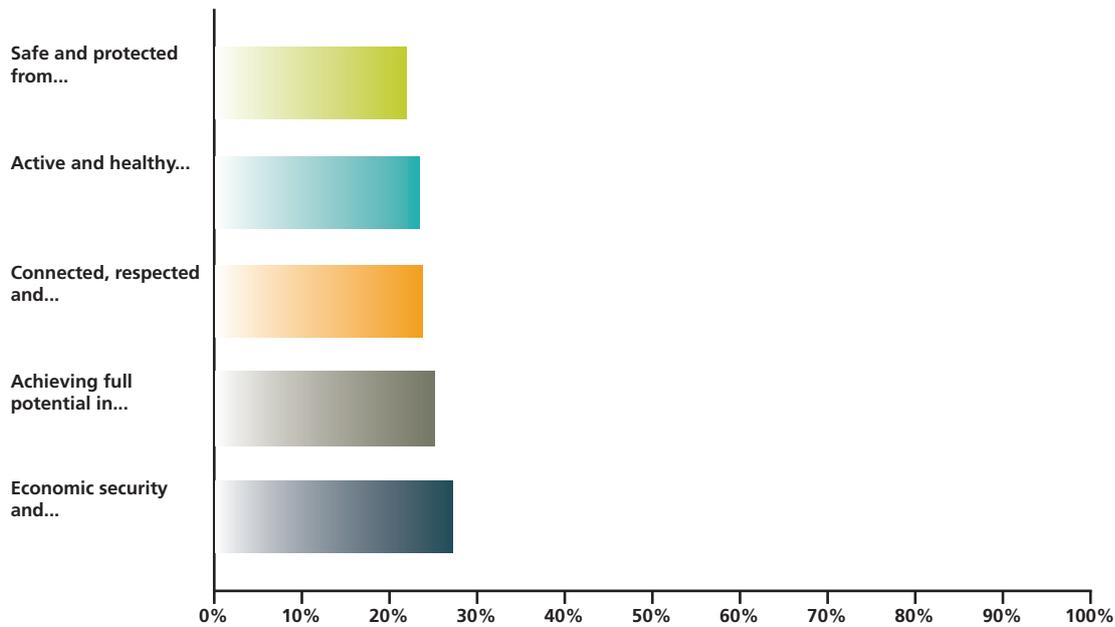
Answered: 350 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Score
Performing arts	8.29% 29	10.57% 37	12.29% 43	14.29% 50	19.71% 69	34.86% 122	35	2.69
Travel	6.00% 21	8.57% 30	17.14% 60	21.71% 76	20.57% 72	26.00% 91	35	2.80
Public Speaking	8.00% 28	17.43% 61	17.14% 60	23.71% 83	22.57% 79	11.14% 39	35	3.31
Sport	10.00% 35	15.71% 55	22.29% 78	21.14% 74	18.00% 63	12.86% 45	35	3.40
Agriculture	34.00% 119	24.29% 85	13.43% 47	8.29% 29	8.86% 31	11.14% 39	35	4.33
Community involvement	33.71% 118	23.43% 82	17.71% 62	10.86% 38	10.29% 36	4.00% 14	35	4.47

Q4 Please indicate your understanding of the contribution Macra na Feirme activities make towards achieving the following national goals as set out in the Government’s National Youth Strategy.

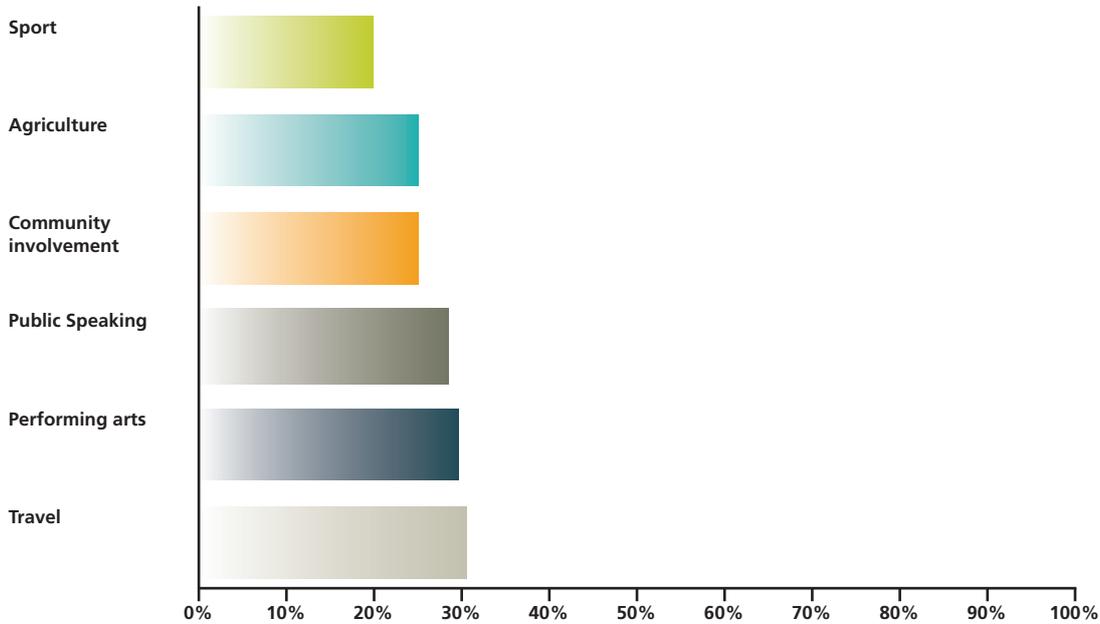
Answered: 350 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Completely achieved	Achieved	Somewhat achieved	Not achieved	Total	Weighted Average
Safe and protected from harm	18.39% 64	48.28% 168	31.23% 109	5.17% 18	348	2.20
Active and healthy, physical and mental well being	14.61% 51	42.41% 148	37.25% 130	5.73% 20	349	2.34
Connected, respected and contributing to the world	16.91% 59	40.97% 143	32.38% 113	9.74% 34	349	2.35
Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development	8.33% 29	37.64% 131	47.70% 166	6.32% 22	348	2.52
Economic security and opportunity	6.88% 24	31.23% 109	42.41% 148	19.48% 68	349	2.74

Q5 Please rank the following in terms of the level of activity (meetings/events/functions) of your county organisation.

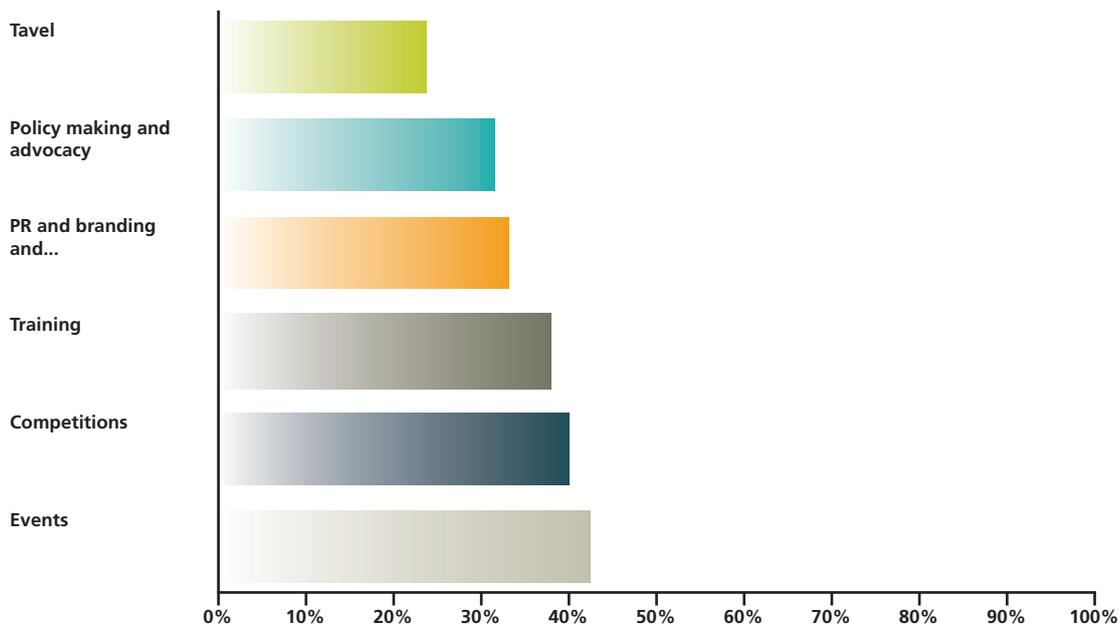
Answered: 350 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Very active (more than once a month)	Active (at least once a month)	3 Somewhat active (at least once every 2-3 months)	Rarely active (once a year)	Inactive	Total	Weighted Average
Sport	39.77% 138	29.39% 102	24.21% 84	5.76% 20	0.86% 3	347	1.99
Agriculture	16.00% 56	31.71% 111	40.29% 141	10.57% 37	1.43% 5	350	2.50
Community involvement	18.62% 65	30.09% 105	36.10% 126	12.61% 44	2.58% 9	349	2.50
Public Speaking	11.49% 40	22.70% 79	42.24% 147	18.10% 63	5.46% 19	349	2.83
Performing arts	10.60% 37	23.50% 82	31.52% 110	26.07% 91	8.31% 29	348	2.98
Travel	10.17% 35	17.44% 60	36.34% 125	29.94% 103	6.10% 21	344	3.04

Q6 Please rank the following in order of importance in achieving the objectives of Macra na Feirme.

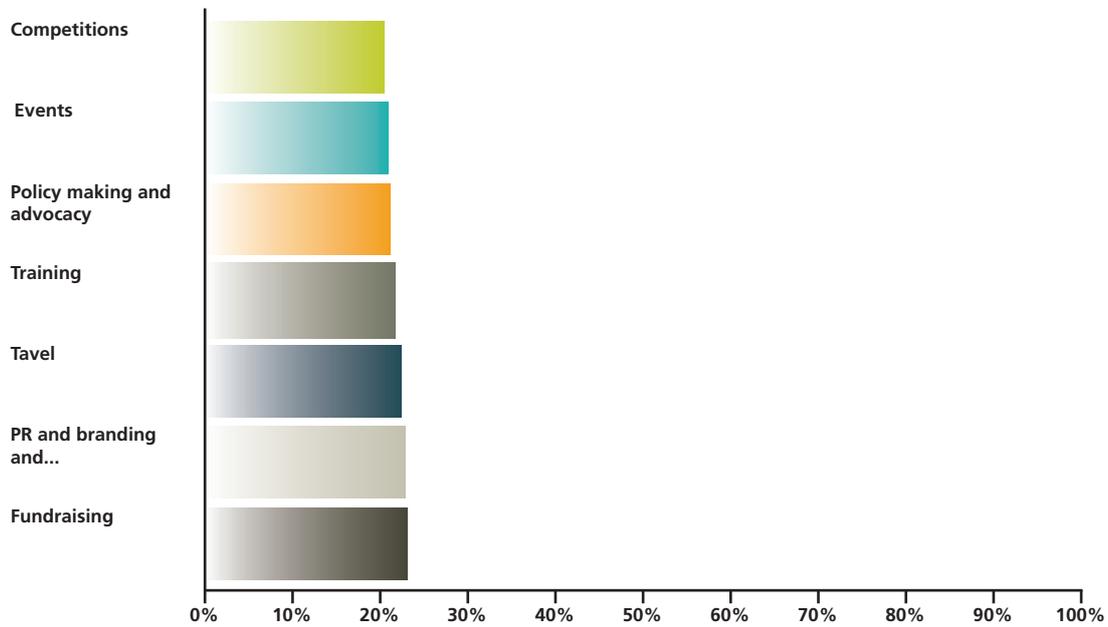
Answered: 350 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Score
Travel	3.43% 12	5.71% 20	13.43% 47	19.43% 68	21.43% 75	36.57%	350	2.41
Policy making and advocacy	19.14% 67	10.57% 37	10.29% 36	16.29% 57	18.86% 66	24.86% 87	350	3.20
PR and branding and communications	16.86% 59	11.43% 40	14.29% 50	19.14% 67	20.00% 70	18.29% 64	350	3.31
Training	18.29% 64	22.57% 79	20.00% 70	10.86% 38	18.57% 65	9.71% 34	350	3.82
Competitions	17.14% 60	24.00% 84	24.00% 84	18.86% 66	9.71% 34	6.29% 22	350	4.01
Events	25.14% 88	25.71% 90	18.00% 63	15.43% 54	11.43% 40	4.29% 15	350	4.25

Q7 Comment on the amount of resources currently allocated at a national level to the following areas.

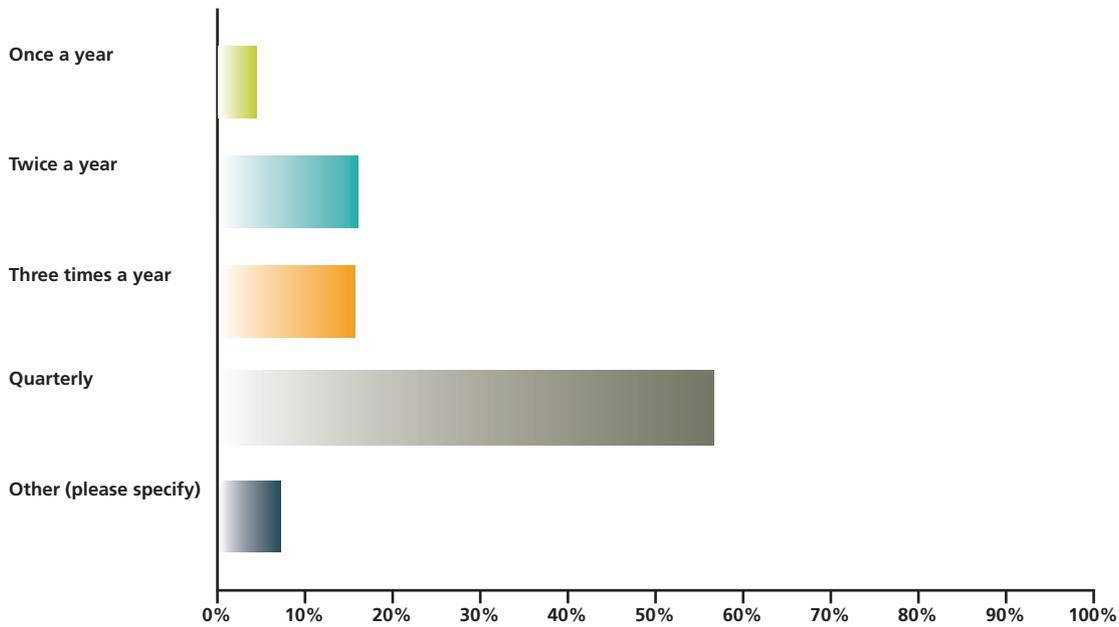
Answered: 350 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Too high	Appropriate amount	Not sufficient	Total	Weighted Average
Competitions	10.92% 38	71.55% 249	17.53% 61	348	2.07
Events	6.73% 23	75.15% 257	18.13% 62	342	2.11
Policy making and Advocacy	10.43% 36	65.80% 227	23.77% 82	345	2.13
Training	4.64% 16	70.72% 244	24.64% 85	345	2.20
Travel	6.71% 23	59.18% 203	34.11% 117	343	2.27
PR and branding and communications	9.94% 34	48.54% 166	41.52% 142	342	3.32
Fundraising and sponsorship	8.12% 28	51.30% 177	40.58% 140	345	2.32

Q8 How often do you think that the Macra M magazine should be published?

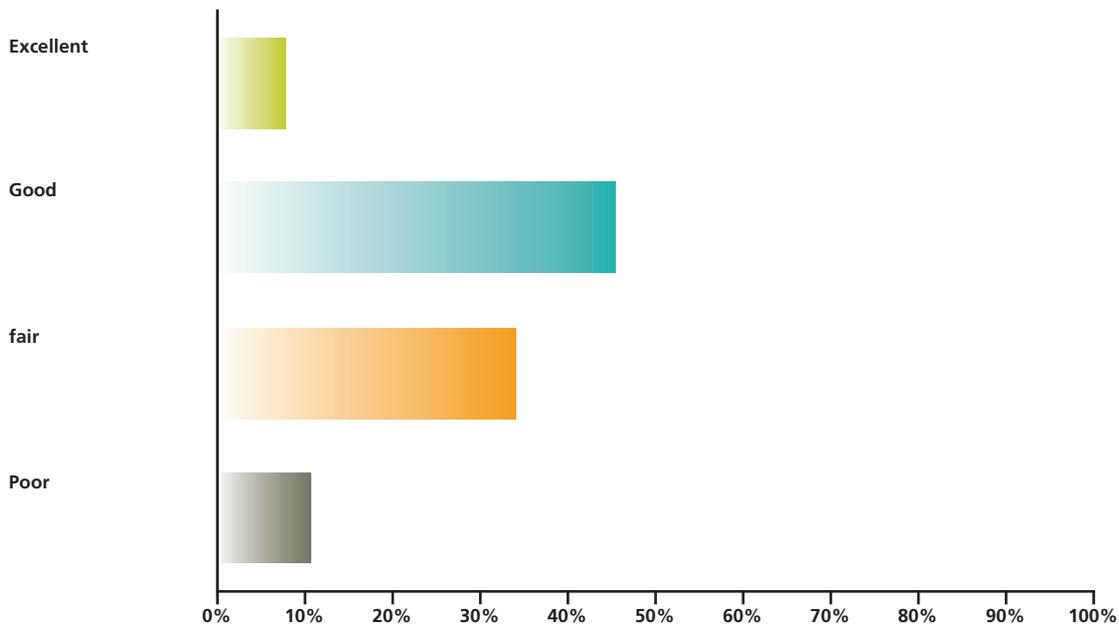
Answered: 350 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Once a year	4.29% 15
Twice a year	16.00% 56
Three times a year	15.71% 55
Quarterly	56.86% 199
Other (please specify)	7.14% 25
Total	350

Q9 **What is your opinion of the overall planning at national level?**

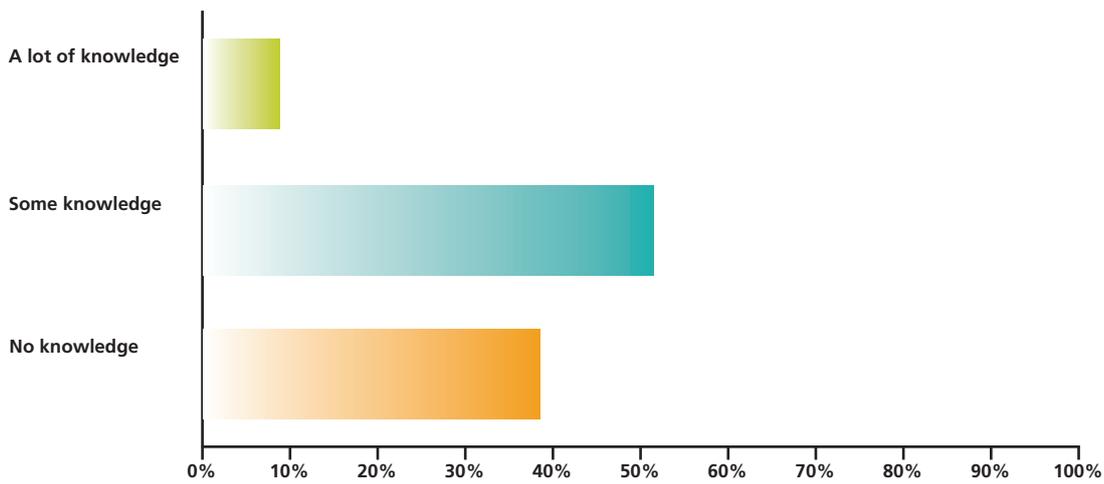
Answered: 350 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Excellent	8.29% 29
Good	46.00% 161
Fair	34.57% 121
Poor	11.14% 39
Total	350

Q10 How much knowledge do you have of the internal policy documents of Macra na Feirme?

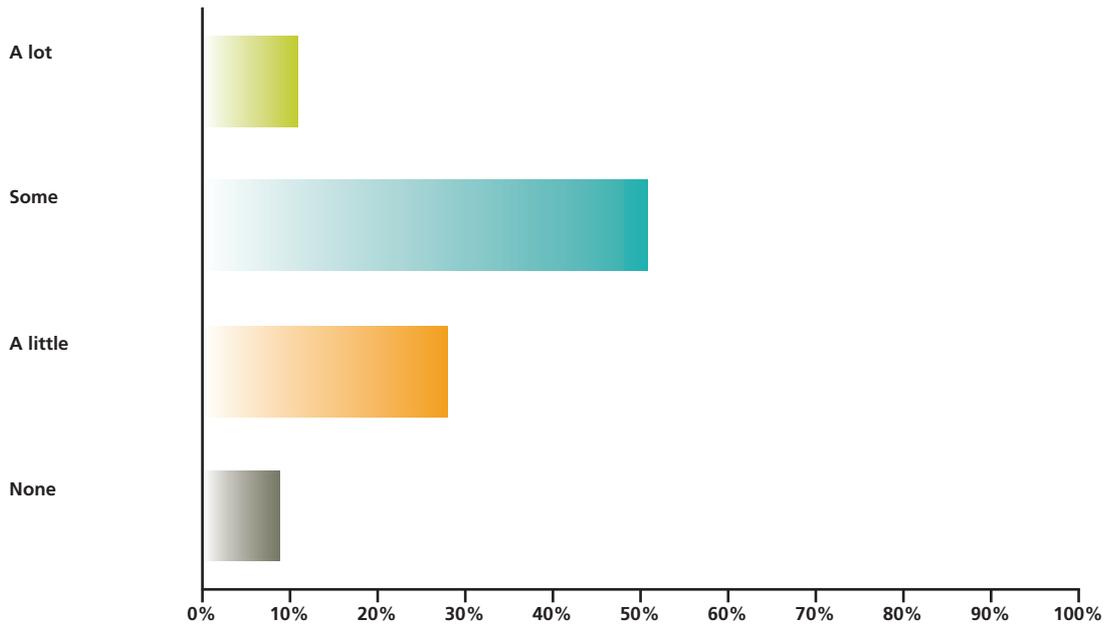
Answered: 350 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
A lot of knowledge	9.14% 32
Some knowledge	51.71% 181
No knowledge	39.14% 137
Total	350

Q11 How much of a contribution do the internal policies make in helping Macra na Feirme achieve its objectives?

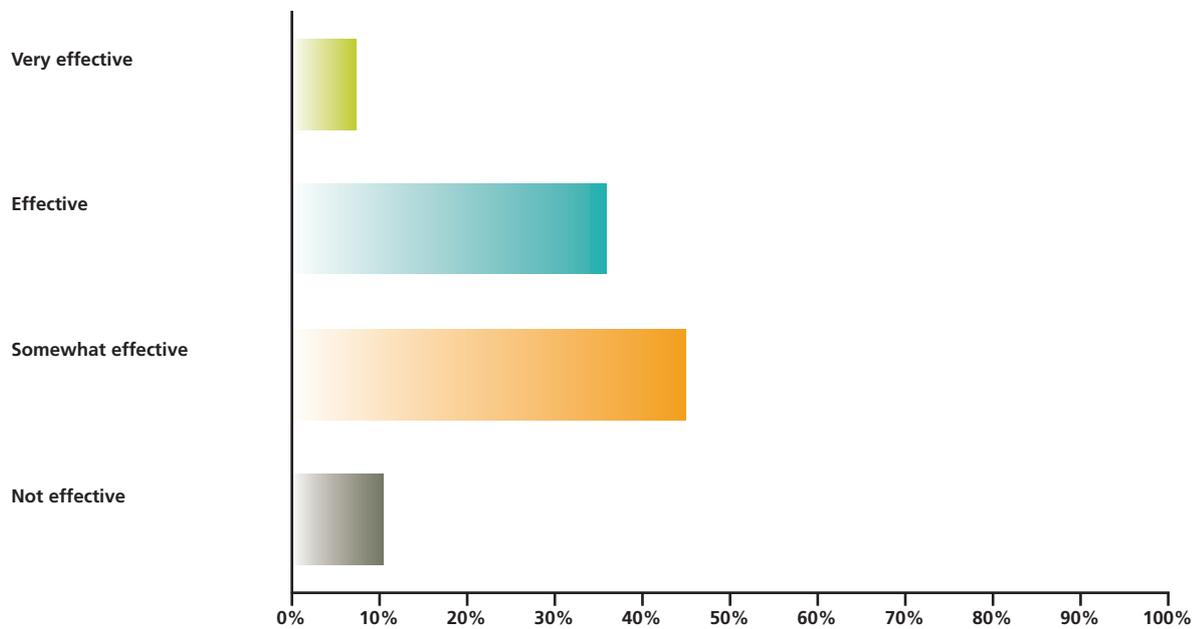
Answered: 349 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses
A lot	11.46% 40
Some	51.29% 179
A little	28.08% 98
None	9.17% 32
Total	350

Q12 How would you rate the current structures of Macra na Feirme?

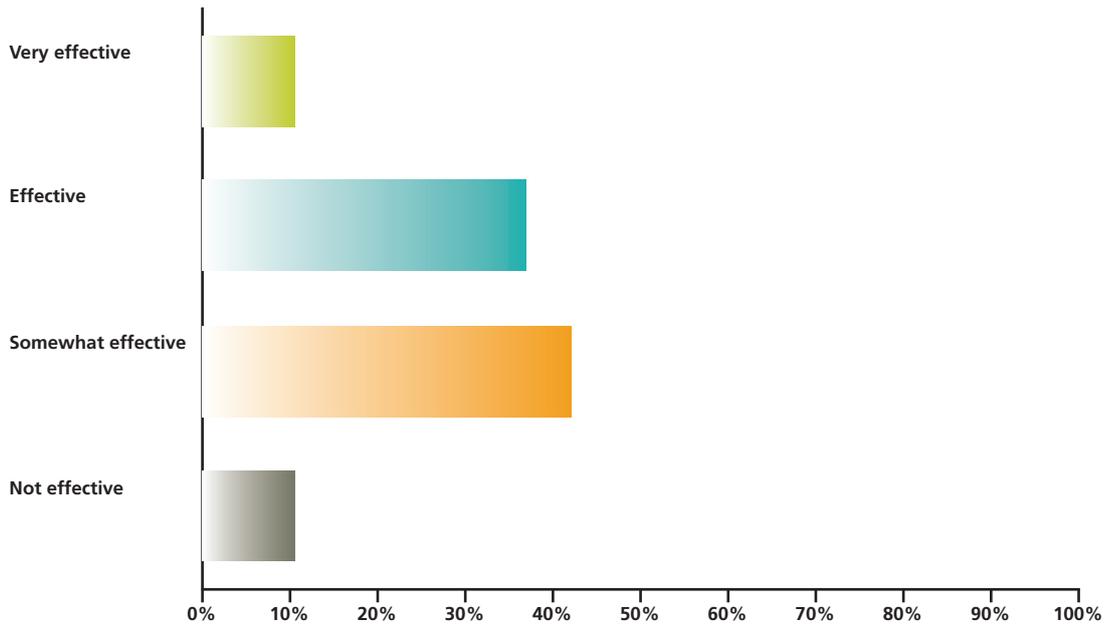
Answered: 350 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Very effective	7.71% 27
Effective	36.57% 128
Somewhat effective	45.14% 158
Not effective	10.57% 37
Total	350

Q13 How effective is Macra na Feirme at lobbying and advocacy at national?

Answered: 350 Skipped: 1



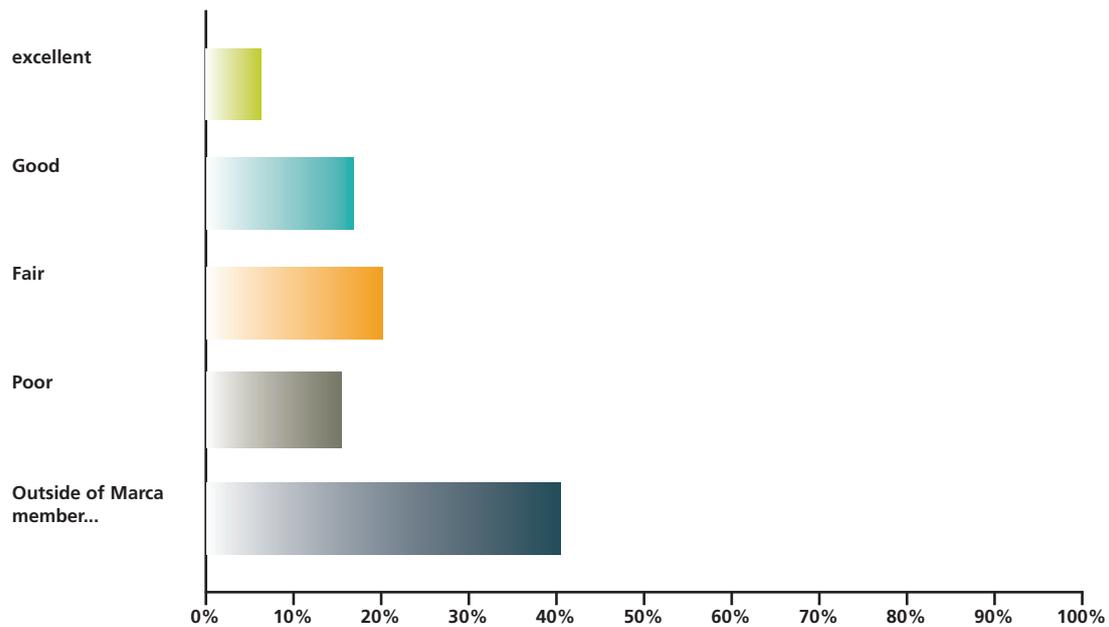
Answer Choices	Responses
Very effective	10.00% 35
Effective	37.14% 130
Somewhat effective	42.29% 148
Not effective	10.57% 37
Total	350

Q14 What recommendations would you make to improve the performance of Macra na Feirme?

Answered: 339 Skipped: 12

Q15 What do you think the national image of Macra na Feirme is amongst non-Macra members?

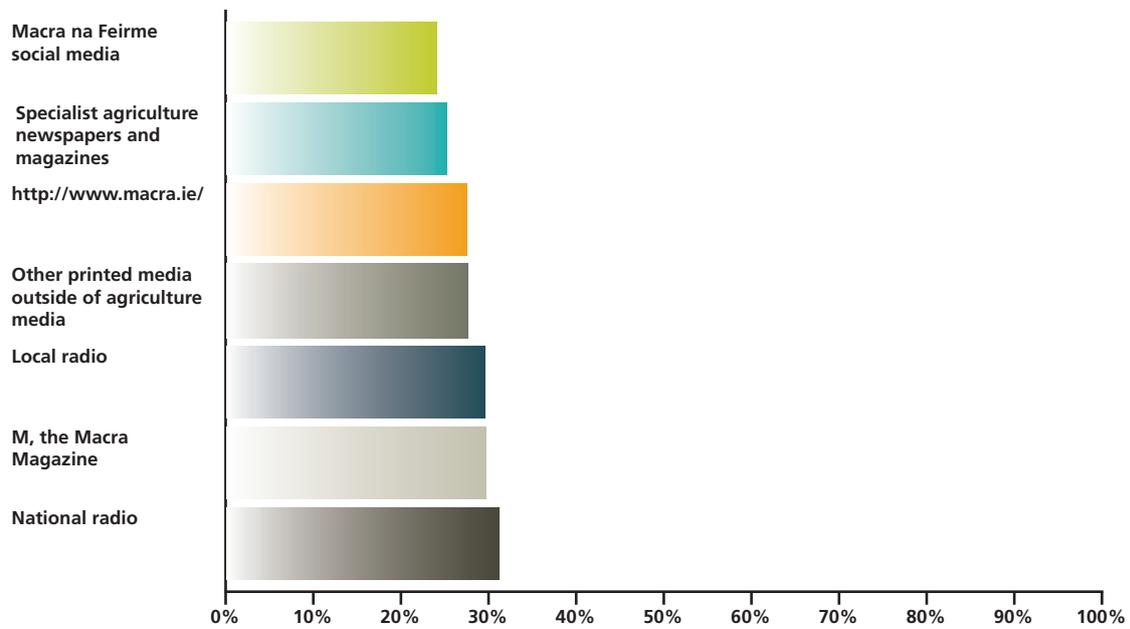
Answered: 350 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Excellent	6.57% 23
Good	17.43% 61
Fair	20.29% 71
Poor	15.14% 53
Outside of Macra members no-one has any idea want we do	40.57% 142
Total	350

Q16 How effective are the following methods currently used in communicating the Macra message to an externally audience?

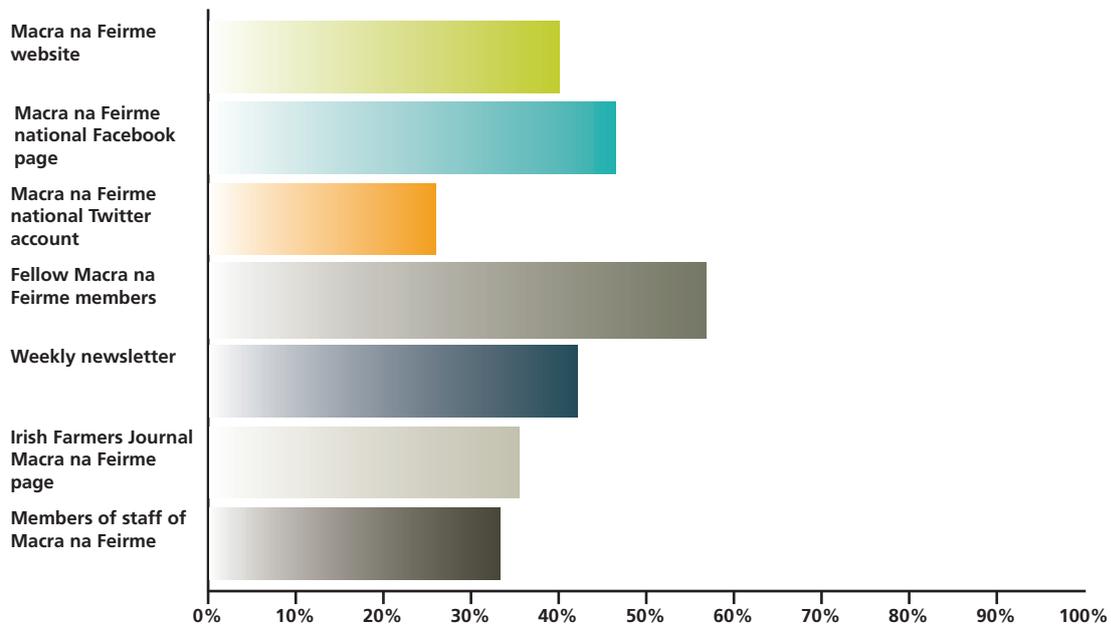
Answered: 350 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Very effective	Effective	Somewhat effective	Not effective	Total	Weighted Average
Macra na Feirme social media	18.29% 64	37.14% 130	31.14% 109	13.43% 47	350	2.40
Specialist agriculture newspapers and magazines	10.03% 35	38.68% 135	38.97% 136	12.32% 43	349	2.54
http://www.macra.ie/	8.43% 29	28.20% 97	37.50% 129	25.87% 89	344	2.81
Other printed media outside of agriculture media	5.19% 18	29.39% 102	41.50% 144	23.92% 83	347	2.84
Local radio	6.90% 24	23.85% 83	36.49% 127	32.76% 114	348	2.95
M, the Macra Magazine	5.59% 19	25.88% 88	32.94% 112	35.59% 121	340	2.99
National radio	5.78% 20	18.21% 63	29.48% 102	46.53% 161	346	3.17

Q17 Rank the options below, in order, on which you rely on, for information from the national organisation, starting with the option that you use most frequently.

Answered: 350 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total	Score
Macra na Feirme website	9.46% 33	12.89% 45	16.91% 59	19.20% 67	19.20% 67	13.47% 47	8.88% 31	349	3.98
Macra na Feirme national Facebook page	18.62% 65	20.06% 70	18.91% 66	13.75% 48	12.89% 45	12.32% 43	3.44% 12	349	4.67
Macra na Feirme national Twitter account	2.58% 9	4.01% 14	9.46% 33	11.75% 41	15.76% 55	16.05% 56	40.40% 141	349	2.56
Fellow Macra na Feirme members	44.86% 157	24.29% 85	10.57% 37	8.57% 30	5.71% 20	2.29% 8	3.71% 13	350	5.72
Weekly newsletter	10.29% 36	13.71% 48	22.00% 77	20.86% 73	13.14% 46	14.00% 49	6.00% 21	350	4.21
Irish Farmers Journal Macra na Feirme page	5.14% 18	11.14% 39	13.43% 47	17.43% 61	20.29% 71	21.71% 76	10.86% 38	350	3.55
Members of staff of Macra na Feirme	9.14% 32	14.00% 49	8.86% 31	8.57% 30	12.86% 45	20.00% 70	26.57% 93	350	3.32

Q18 **18 Have you any additional comments that relate to the organisational structure of Macra na Feirme that you think are relevant to this review.**

Answered: 338 Skipped: 13

Q19 **Which category describes your role in Macra na Feirme? Please select the highest ranking position that applies to you. Your answer to this question will assist us in ensuring that we survey as many members at different levels within Macra na Feirme. Only select other if none of the other categories apply to you.**

Answered: 350 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses
County official	27.71% 97
Club official	30.00% 105
Member	34.29% 120
Other (please specify)	8.00% 28
Total	350



