**Media Information**

27th March 2018

**BMW becomes the driving force behind Triathlon Ireland.**

* BMW Ireland becomes Official Partner Sponsorship of Triathlon Ireland in the sports largest agreement.
* €1 million investment to help consolidate Triathlon as a mass participation sport.
* Ireland’s largest Triathlon competition, the National Series, to be renamed the BMW Triathlon National Series with a new Corporate Series announced.

BMW Group Ireland has announced a major new partnership agreement with Triathlon Ireland that sees the brand become the sport’s main sponsor, as well as title sponsor of the BMW Triathlon National Series and the BMW Duathlon National Series.

The deal includes a substantial investment (one million euro) over the duration of the sponsorship, which will support the Organisation to make the Triathlon and Duathlon more accessible to people of all abilities and backgrounds in every part of the country.

**Triathlon – One of Ireland’s Most Inspiring Sports**

For more than a decade, triathlon has had one of the highest growth rates of any sport in Ireland numbers have more than quadrupled in this time. Triathlon already has one of the highest female participation rates in the country, at 35 per cent. Despite its roots as daunting high-performance sport, triathlon has evolved in to an accessible, achievable challenge enjoyed by people of all abilities and ages.

Per (head of) capita, Ireland has the fifth highest participation rate in Triathlon of any country in the world, while this year alone, more than 70,000 people will participate or watch a triathlon event on the island of Ireland.

While Iron-distance events have captured the imagination of the public, much of the growth in participation rates for triathlon are down to youth and kids triathlon (which has witnessed a threefold increase in five years) and sprint or try-a-tri events, where participants get to complete a beginner-level triathlon in a safe and encouraging environment.

**10,000 to Compete in the 2018 BMW Triathlon National Series**

This summer, more than 10,000 people will compete in the BMW Triathlon National Series - a nationwide league of 17 races which take place around Ireland between May and September.

The vast majority of these people will be amateur participants: men, women and teenagers seeking to challenge themselves and achieve something extraordinary. Competitors need to compete in four races to qualify for a ranking in the BMW National Series with awards presented in five-year age groups. Within the National Series, women between the ages of 40 and 44 across the country are only competing against women of their same age. Last year the youngest competitor in the National Series was just 16 while the oldest raced in the men’s 70-74 years age group.

**BMW Corporate Series**

From 2019 BMW and Triathlon Ireland will launch an exciting and competitive Corporate Series to encourage companies help their employees towards greater health and fitness.

This is in-line with the Governments National Physical Activity plan (2016) to promote workplace wellbeing. The World Health Organisation considers workplace health programme’s as one of the ‘best buy’ options for prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and for mental health. The promotion of physical activity in workplaces can provide benefits include higher rates of employee retention, reduced absence due to ill health and increased productivity. Employees benefit through lower incidences of health problems, reduced stress and improved mental health. International studies show a three-fold return on the investment for businesses.

Commenting on the sponsorship announcement Paulo Alves, Managing Director BMW Ireland Group said: “The partnership with Triathlon Ireland is a hugely exciting development for BMW in Ireland. At the core of our brand is a notion to make every second count, whether in a professional, personal or sporting sense so we are very excited to come on board and further support the development of the sport here in Ireland”.

Triathlon Ireland Chief Executive, Chris Kitchen believes BMW are a perfect match: “We share common values and strive to provide perfection in our own fields. We will be working hard with BMW to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship develops and flourishes over the sponsorship's duration.”

Mr Kitchen continued: “Triathlon is one of the fastest growing sports in Ireland and has moved from a niche sport to a mainstream one with over 18,000 members and an ever increasing reach. The relationship with BMW will provide significant extra income to help us grow and accelerate the development of the sport further. Both organisations are ambitious and goal focussed and the injection of additional funds and the value in kind will help enable us to not only achieve but exceed the aspirations within our Strategic Plan.”

For more information about the BMW Triathlon and Duathlon National Series, please visit: [www.BMW.ie/Triathlon](http://www.BMW.ie/Triathlon) or Triathlon Ireland [HERE](http://www.triathlonireland.com/Events/Race-Series-Details/2018/BMW-National-Series.html).

**-ENDS-**

**Notes to Editors (Image Captions):**

1: Triathlon Ireland High Performance development athletes (L-R) Orla Walsh, Kiernan Jackson, Con Doherty and Niamh Corry.

2: (L-R) Kieran Jackson, Orla Walsh, Con Doherty, Triathlon Ireland CEO Chris Kitchen, BMW Ireland MD Paulo Alves, paratriathlete Donnacha McCarthy, paratriatlete guide Dave Tilley, Niamh Corry.

3: Triathlon Ireland High Performance development athletes (L-R) Orla Walsh, Kieran Jackson, Con Doherty, Niamh Corry

4: Triathlon Ireland High Performance development athletes  (L-R) Orla Walsh, Kieran Jackson, Con Doherty, Niamh Corry

5. The New BMW X3.

**The BMW Group**

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world’s leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 31 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2016, the BMW Group sold approximately 2.367 million cars and 145,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax was approximately € 9.67 billion on revenues amounting to € 94.16 billion. As of 31 December 2016, the BMW Group had a workforce of 124,729 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

**About Triathlon Ireland**

www.press.bmwgroup.ie

@ BMW Ireland Facebook

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@ [BMW Ireland LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/bmw-group-ireland)

@ [BMW Ireland YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjqFLXS3jZP6sz46uIYIGoA)

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