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Irish FA/ DCMS Grassroots Facilities Investment Fund Frequently Asked Questions

The Irish FA will update this page as questions are received and answered about the programme. If you have a question, please email dcms.funding@irishfa.com.

1. What is the closing date for applications?

The closing date for applications is 12.00pm on Thursday 4 May 2023.

2. Do I have to complete all sections of the application?

All mandatory/ required questions must be completed and if these questions are skipped or incomplete, the application is deemed ineligible for funding. If you think a question is not relevant to your proposal, please enter the wording “Not applicable.”

3. Can one applicant submit multiple application forms for the same project?

No. Only one application per applicant is permitted for the same project.

4. Can one applicant submit multiple application forms for different projects?

Yes, applicants can submit applications for different pitch projects. To submit separate applications, will need to register their email again to create another personalised link and application number (ID). Applicants submitting multiple applications must ensure that they upload the appropriate documents to the corresponding application ID.

5. Does this grant only apply to clubs who own or permanently lease their own facility? I am on the committee of an Intermediate club who doesn't own their own premises.

Section 6, page 13 of the funding Information & Guidance Notes provides detail on eligibility requirements relating to Security of Tenure. Applicants must provide evidence that they either own (Title Deeds) or lease the project site and **at the time of application** have a minimum of 10 years validity on the lease.

6. If the club owns its ground, do we need to upload copy Title Deeds or will a Solicitor's letter confirming ownership suffice?

A Solicitor's letter confirming ownership will suffice, however a map demarcating the portion of ground that the applicant club owns must accompany and match up with the

content of the letter.

7. The criteria states that a football club must own their own ground or have a 10-year lease minimum. The closing date for the application is 4 May 2023. We are currently putting in place a 10-year lease for our football ground but it probably won't be signed/ finished by the 4 May 2023. We assume that, providing the 10-year lease is in place at the time of any potential letter of offer, that would be sufficient?

See answer to Q5 above.

8. Can I view the application form questions in full in advance of submitting the application form?

The application form questions can be viewed via the Irish FA/ DCMS funding page on the Irish FA website:

<https://www.irishfa.com/irish-football-association/irish-fa-dcms-grassroots-facilities-investment-fund>

9. We are a NIFL club. Are we eligible for funding?

Yes, pitch proposals can be delivered via a NIFL club or professional club. However, the applicant must clearly demonstrate how it will support affordable and accessible community sporting activities i.e., open to external grassroots/ community groups at key play times such as evenings and weekends. Professional club grassroots football activities are eligible. Examples include club youth academy teams (male and female), club disability team activities, club mini-soccer activities etc.

10. Can sports equipment such as footballs and training kit be funded under the DCMS funding?

Sports equipment is not eligible for funding. Refer to section 4, page 8 of the Information & Guidance notes for eligible items that can be funded.

11. Do I need to have planning permission in place for my project at the time of application?

Section 6, page 13 of the funding Information & Guidance Notes provides detail on eligibility requirements relating to planning permission/ statutory approvals. Given the challenging timescales associated with funding distribution and the subsequent completion of the resultant project, at the time of application either full planning permission must have been granted or, as a minimum, outline planning permission is in place. Planning consent must then be granted by the time the assessment panel convenes to make their decisions in respect to the allocation of all Programme funding for 2023-25, otherwise the application will be deemed ineligible.

13. We received funding from the Irish FA/ DCMS Grassroots Facilities Investment Fund in 21/22 and/or 22/23. Does this make us ineligible to apply for 23-25 funding?

No, applicants who previously received funding under earlier rounds of the Irish FA/DCMS Grassroots Facilities Investment Fund will be eligible to apply again in this tranche of funding.

14. What proportion of match funding would be acceptable?

As advised in section 7, page 15, There is a minimum match funding expectation of 40% for Local Authorities and Schools/ Colleges/ Universities based in NI. For all other applicants there is a minimum 10% match funding expectation¹.

The application process will be competitive and priority scoring will be given to higher levels of match funding whilst lower percentages, including below the minimum expectation, will be considered in the context of the strength of the overall application.

15. We don't have a lease with the landowner or own the pitches we operate from. However, we have exclusive use of these facilities, and have been using them for a number of years. Are we eligible to apply for funding?

If the applicant does not own its facility, they must demonstrate Security of Tenure i.e. hold a lease with a minimum term of 10 years. Applicants who are unable to fulfil either of these requirements are ineligible for funding.

19. If we apply for funding for goalposts can we move them to another site?

No, any goalposts or portable items funded under the programme must remain at the location of the project as listed in the application form. Goalposts must not be taken off site.

20. Do I need to obtain quotations prior to submitting an application?

To develop more accurate project budgets, obtaining quotations prior to application is strongly recommended. Obtaining quotations also assists in ascertaining the availability of contractors or supply of goods within the defined programme timeframe.

However, the procurement of any goods or services cannot take place until a Letter of Offer has been issued and agreed. The project procurement process must be verified, agreed with and signed off by Co-operation Ireland before contractors are appointed to commence capital works. This includes the review of all tender and any relevant procurement documentation.

21. Are local authorities eligible to apply?

Yes, under section 3 of the Information and Guidance Notes it states that 'a local authority based in Northern Ireland is eligible to apply for the Irish FA/ DCMS Grassroots Facilities Investment Fund 23-25.'

22. The application form will only allow me to submit my project start and finish dates in American format. Is this normal?

Yes, unfortunately, the Microsoft form tool only allows applicants to submit dates in American format.

23. For a 3G pitch at submission of application are quotations to derive project budgets sufficient, or is their requirement for full procurement and tender process via detailed design working drawings to have been completed.

At time of application, quotations are sufficient to help more accurately establish an initial estimation of costs for a project which will also help inform match funding requirements for the applicant. Only if an application is successful and a Letter of Offer issued and agreed would procurement/ tendering be initiated.

24. I was just wondering if we were to apply for a Muga and fund the floodlights ourselves will that be eligible?

As per the guidance notes:

*¹ Artificial grass pitches (AGPs) and small-sided Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) will only be funded where either an existing, fully functioning floodlighting system is already in place and can be retained, **or where a new LED floodlighting system will be installed, as part of the overall project proposal.***

Therefore, DCMS funding could be used for the installation of a MUGA with yourselves funding the floodlights as part of the one project proposal.

25. Our overall project will cost more than what we can apply for. When answering questions around the project, do we only need to give costings and a description of the project for what we will be applying for or do you need a description of the entire project?

The application description should detail all the elements within the overall project development. However, within that narrative the applicant should also make clear which specific element(s) of that overall project development will their application to this fund be made for. This gives a clearer picture of the wider scale and potential impact of the overall project and how the DCMS funded element(s) will be part of a more significant project, the goals of which align with the objectives of the DCMS programme.

In terms of the costings, we will need more specific detail on the elements being applied for. However, we will settle for a more generalised sense of the overall investment proposed. Please indicate the sources of partner funding for both the DCMS funded element (s) and the overall project.

26. If planning permission has been submitted can we apply for the funding for the round next year please? We have a strong case for the need for a new pitch but don't think planning will be ready for a few more months.

Please be aware that this funding call is the only one planned at this time, and another funding call will only be issued if further funding becomes available.

As per Page 13 of the Guidance Notes, full planning permission must be obtained at the appraisal stage in order to be eligible to apply for the 23/25 funding. Please note that this is a requirement for all applications and failure to obtain planning permission at this stage will render the application ineligible for funding.

'Given the challenging timescales associated with funding distribution and the subsequent completion of the resultant project, at the time of application either full planning permission must have been granted or, as a minimum, outline planning permission is in place. Planning consent must be granted by the time the assessment panel convenes to make their decisions in respect to the allocation of all programme funding for 2023-25, otherwise the application will be deemed ineligible.'

'It will be a condition of the Letter of Offer that all applicable statutory approvals are granted for the project. Applicants must confirm with their local authority whether the proposed works require approval in terms of planning control, building control or other statutory obligations.'

We understand that obtaining planning permission can take time. However, please be aware that if planning consent is not granted by the time of the assessment panel, your application will not be eligible for funding.

27. We know from discussions with architects that no planning permission or building control is required with our project. Do we need evidence of this or is this only for new pitches/projects?

As per Page 13 of the Guidance Notes: 'Applicants must confirm with their local authority whether the proposed works require approval in terms of planning control, building control or other statutory obligations.'

28. I am trying to access the application form for funding, I've added email and received link but no documents listed in the share point. Can you advise on this?

To proceed with your application, you will receive two separate emails from DCMS Funding. One will contain a link to the application form, while the other will include an electronic link to a folder where you can submit any required supporting documentation for your application. Please note that this folder will be empty at the time of receipt. The application registration email and log in details must be saved to be able to access the application form.

If you haven't received both emails, please check your Junk/Spam folder first. If you still can't locate them, please let us know, and we'll investigate the issue and confirm whether your registration has been processed successfully.

To help you through the application process, we have also created a video tutorial on our website, which provides a step-by-step walk-through. You can find the link to the tutorial on the following webpage: <https://www.irishfa.com/irish-football-association/irish-fa-dcms-grassroots-facilities-investment-fund-2023-25>

29. With reference to the on line application does it automatically save when you go in and add additional information or do you have to select save somewhere?

Yes, the application should automatically save as you go along. When you exit your web browser and return to your application through the email link, your answers should have automatically been saved.

30. Is it possible to delete a document? For example, if an incorrect document is uploaded, can it be deleted by the applicant?

Yes. To do this an applicant should select the file they wish to delete and then select the 'delete' function at top of page. Alternatively, applicants can click the three dots beside the file name and select the delete option in the drop-down menu.

31. Based on my review of the criteria, it seems that the scheme is primarily intended for pitches and MUGA's. However, our club is interested in constructing new changing facilities to complement your existing pitch. Would we be eligible for funding?

As per Page 8 of the Information and Guidance Notes: 'The Irish FA/ DCMS Grassroots Facilities Investment Fund 2023-25 will be directed towards large capital projects primarily focusing on the installation of a quality natural grass pitches, certified artificial grass pitches (AGPs) or Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs).' While Associated pitch infrastructure, including changing room facilities, is eligible for funding, all projects must have the development of a pitch at the core.