



**IRISH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**

**FACILITIES' STRATEGY**

**August 2012**

## **CONTEXT**

1. Facilities are a critical component of the development of sport and physical recreation in particularly football. Appropriate facility provision allows for player development pathways to be created and sustained which in turn allow footballers to develop as players and individuals to benefit the higher levels of the game and create an environment of participation and well being at grassroots level.
2. This Strategy considers the existing facility provision within Northern Ireland and the overarching facility needs.
3. The scope of the term 'facilities' is very broad and for the purpose of this document its use, inter alia, refers to:
  - The development of integrated stadia
  - Spectator accommodations
  - Changing provision for players and officials
  - Football turf and natural grass playing surfaces
  - Floodlighting
  - Media and corporate facilities
  - Rehabilitation and conditioning facilities
  - Community and revenue generation facilities
4. Throughout Northern Ireland there has been an under investment at all levels of the facilities continuum in provision for both competition and training. Investment into the national stadium is welcomed by the IFA however the need to address the other shortfalls continues to exist.
5. This strategy needs to be developed and delivered in partnership with others. Government, local Councils, communities as well as private partners where appropriate will act as key stakeholders in the development and delivery of same. The IFA anticipates public advertisements being required in order to inform and select potential partners.
6. The IFA recognise the longer term aspects of facility development and the time scale of this strategy covers the period 2012 to 2019. The need for continual review is essential and it is anticipated that the Strategy would be reviewed periodically.

## **PRINCIPLES**

7. Facility requirements should be assessed as part of an overall sports development strategy and should be viewed in the context of:
  - Training and development needs
  - Competition and legislative needs
  - Community integration and revenue generation
8. Focus should be placed on the following key pillars:
  - Community involvement
  - Partners and match funding
  - Sustainability

9. Consortia and partnership projects will be treated as a priority in order to achieve the elements detailed above.
10. Strategy needs to be determined on the basis of an “as should be” approach and not with the aim of papering over existing cracks.
11. Vision should be bold, yet achievable and should be medium to longer term with clear milestones en route. Strategy also needs to be endorsed by all stakeholders who “buy in” to the vision.
12. The Strategy confirms our strategic priorities for the budgets likely to be available over the next two Comprehensive Spending Review periods from DCAL and Sport NI for our major venues and also identifies our wider thinking in terms of venues and facility development for all levels of the game.
13. All strands will be open to all eligible clubs/organisations and will be subject to application and assessment procedures in line with challenge fund principles. (This must be read in conjunction with point 26 below).
14. Such an assessment process will be independently and professionally managed and delivered in order to ensure stakeholder confidence

### **THE WAY FORWARD**

15. There is the need to develop objectives which will be a strategic fit with the needs of potential partners and which will require effective decision-making that should take on board:
  - a. Physical safety and safety management legislation
  - b. The demographics of the population and participation
  - c. Cultural change and the need to include all community groups, especially women
  - d. Regional requirements for training and development
  - e. Use of new technology
  - f. The importance of maximising use of planned facilities
  - g. Integration with sports development planning
  - h. The economic viability of new provision
  - i. Competition needs
  - j. Media and broadcast partners

Further detail on the points above is attached at Annexe I.

### **SYNERGY WITH LONG TERM OBJECTIVES**

16. In addition to addressing safety needs of sports stadia, a further reason for the investment in facilities are the benefits achieved through sport and physical recreation. Research suggests that participation in sport and physical recreation results in improvement in general health and well-being of participants.
17. Furthermore, the IFA has identified long term objectives for the period 2012-16 which establish the strategy of the organisation. The long term objectives include:
  - Qualify for a major tournament;
  - Deliver the new national stadium and improve other facilities;
  - Foster a balanced, flourishing senior domestic game;
  - Create a healthy domestic game at all other levels, i.e. intermediate, junior, women’s, boys, schools;
  - Build a culture of lifelong participation in football; and
  - Reach beyond the game – use the power of football for health, education and social development.

18. It is noted that the objectives of the IFA are primarily around the development of the football at international and domestic levels, however the higher level aims to increase lifelong participation and also to impact on health, education and social development are consistent with the aims of government.

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

19. The overarching strategic facility objectives of the IFA are:

#### **National Training Centre**

To create a flagship National Training Centre to support the cream of footballing ability in Northern Ireland;

#### **Strategic Intervention Projects**

To establish a number of high quality, moderate capacity venues with a range of community and revenue generating facilities meeting UEFA Category 3 standards and all applicable national legislative requirements;

#### **Designated Venues**

To support infrastructural safety and safety management improvement at designated venues;

#### **Football Development Facilities**

To target investment in facilities to increase participation, improve revenue generation and community interaction at all levels of football development with an emphasis on partnerships and innovation

Further detail on the proposed Facilities Programme is attached at Annexe II.

### **RESOURCES AND FUNDING**

20. This section of the Strategy gives an indication of the investment range required to meet the strategic objectives detailed above and how these may be funded. These amounts are indicative and will likely be developed and clarified during the various economic appraisals necessary to secure capital funding.

21. It is anticipated that the following would form the strands of investment:

<b>National Training Centre</b>	<b>10 to 15%</b>
<b>Strategic Intervention Projects</b>	<b>30 to 35%</b>
<b>Designated Venues</b>	<b>15 to 20%</b>
<b>Football Development Facilities</b>	<b>35 to 40%</b>

\*The above mentioned percentage distribution is indicative only and evidently no more than 100% of available funding could be allocated

22. Clubs and other partners will naturally have the ambition to maximise IFA contributions, however a robust economic appraisal of each proposed project will need to be undertaken to ensure best value is obtained for the contribution being made. The structure of each project may well be different based on what other partners are able to contribute (e.g. capital, land, existing infrastructure) but the principle should remain that there is no free ride for any IFA partners within this strategy and that (for example) partners with minimal up front contribution will need to give up part of future revenues as compensation.
23. The IFA has an expectation, based on the DCAL Ministerial announcement of 10 March 2011, that significant capital funding will be available to support the strands detailed above. The IFA also hopes to make available some funding from its own sources.
24. All partner sources of funding shall be explored and examined in order to maximise capital amounts available for facility development. In principle this shall include, but not be limited to, clubs, Government, Local Councils, education providers, FIFA, UEFA, clubs and other public/private sector partners.

#### **ADDITIONALITY**

25. The above mentioned facility stands reflect the entirety of the Domestic game in Northern Ireland and this being the case all member clubs and eligible organisations will have the opportunity to apply for funding from the strand it deems appropriate. Such an application should, ideally, build on developments to date.
26. It is anticipated that eligible clubs or organisations to will be permitted to apply to a maximum of two strands.
27. Applicants successful under the Strategic Intervention strand will not be considered for additional support under other strands.
28. It is anticipated that for all strands (with the exception of the National Training Centre) that the lead applicant will be an IFA member club.
29. It is expected that any application and scoring process in this respect will only be opened after the completion of both an OBC and FBC.

## Annex I

### a Physical Safety and Safety Management

With the introduction of the Safety at Sports Grounds (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 it is critical that the Irish Football Association fully understands the impact on venues falling under the scope of the legislation and the specific needs of such grounds. In this sense it is also prudent to implement the lessons to be learned from the legislation to venues which may not actually fall under the scope of the legislation in order that all leagues and clubs fully understand the principles of good practice within facility development and safety management.

### b Demographics and Participation

There are two major centres of population of which the principal one, Belfast has been the focal point for most sporting and cultural activity. Whilst Belfast will continue to be that focal point, planning for new provision must take account of population changes and migration issues. It would seem that there is a need for two other centres which would accommodate both competition and training needs and in doing so ensure that there is easy access for the body of the population in terms of participation numbers.

### c Cultural Understanding

Northern Ireland's population base is changing as new populations are attracted to living and working here. Whilst football is truly the major international sport in terms of its affiliation to FIFA and as the fastest growing women's sport, care must be made to integrate new populations into the game at all levels. It will also need to take account of cultural and religious differences of new populations particularly to ensure inclusiveness for girls to whom playing sport may not be a part of their cultures. Football will need therefore to develop new facilities that are modern, in-keeping with future demands and exciting for players, coaches, officials and spectators.

### d Training and Development

Regionally it is felt that there is a need for catchment areas outside the Belfast area as outlined in our objectives and these will be located across the province. This shall include an integration of grassroots, excellence and national football centres to support the ongoing football development programmes at these levels.

### e Use of new technology

It is appropriate from a sports development and sustainability standpoint that those coaching and training centres and those for minor competitions and for junior players maximise the use of third generation synthetic surfaces. These surfaces such as "Field Turf" / Football Turf have produced a new window of opportunity and real chance that the days of natural turf as the only option for training and competition may be numbered. The old "turning and burning" problems appear to have been accommodated, the bounce is true as is the speed of the surface, so any

future investments into new facilities for training, coaching and junior competition in particular must have a heavy bias towards third generation (and any future generation) surfaces.

f Maximising use of facilities

Planning for new build must be done strategically to make sure that suitable facilities are available in a geographically appropriate location which can link to both competition and training needs as part of an appropriate sports development plan.

g Integration with Sports Development Planning

Facility development must be inextricably linked to a well researched and achievable sports development plan. Clubs or other partners must have a clear vision for these plans to include elements such as an understanding of the current situation, target participants and groups, numbers of participants, links to other bodies, the club profile and structure, appropriately qualified personnel, income and expenditure planning, SMART objectives and an understanding of existing or potential development capacity within the club.

h Economic viability

It is critical that any investment made is economically sustainable for at least the economic lifespan of the investment. In this respect a detailed level of study and consideration must be given to all the aspects detailed in the sub headings above to ensure that facility provision is wholly appropriate based on actual need.

i Competition Needs

The requirements for international and domestic club competition have been significantly revised in recent times which has presented a significant challenge to those clubs in such competitions. Notwithstanding matters relating to the national stadium, work has already begun on a central database of grounds within Northern Ireland and this is essential when beginning and continuing a top-down facilities strategy.

Many elements of need against the international and domestic infrastructure requirements are not eligible costs under government funding programmes which are primarily focussed on safety and participation. In this regard it is of the utmost importance that funding can be found to support facility development in areas such as corporate hospitality, drug testing, player and referee changing provision, board room and player lounges.

Here again the introduction of the Safety at Sports Grounds (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 has had a significant impact on capacities at designated venues.

j Media and Broadcast Partners

It is clear that in order to sustain and build on the appeal of association football that partnerships and relationships with media and broadcast organisations is given a high priority. In this respect media facilities and working areas in parallel with camera positions and adequate floodlighting should be supported to the fullest to ensure the needs of our partners are met.



	<b>NATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE</b>	<b>STRATEGIC INTERVENTION PROJECTS</b>	<b>DESIGNATED VENUES</b>	<b>FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT FACILITIES</b>
Project Description	<p>The creation of a flagship National Training Centre to support the cream of Northern Irish footballing ability. Such a facility should be purpose built specific to the needs of players, coaches, medical and sports science personnel.</p> <p>The facility would ideally include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- one full-size indoor pitch</li> <li>- one other 3G pitch</li> <li>- two high quality natural grass pitches</li> <li>- one scaled pitch</li> <li>- rehabilitation area (hydrotherapy, cyrotherapy, therapeutic ultrasound etc)</li> <li>- conditioning suite (strength/muscle and cardiovascular equipment)</li> <li>- lecture facilities</li> <li>- changing facilities</li> <li>- parents area</li> </ul>	<p>The establishment of a small number of high quality, moderate capacity venues, with a range of community and revenue generation facilities meeting UEFA Category 3 standards and all national legislative requirements.</p>	<p>The infrastructural safety improvement at designated venues and targeted investment into facilities to increase participation, improve revenue generation and engender community engagement.</p>	<p>The targeted investment into facilities to increase participation, improve revenue generation and community interaction at all senior,, intermediate and junior venues with an emphasis on partnerships and innovation.</p>
Eligible Organisations	<p>IFA member clubs, local Councils and educational institutions (with some geographical considerations)</p>	<p>Clubs and owners/operators of venues designated under the Safety at Sports Grounds (Northern Ireland) Order 2006</p> <p>Lead club to hold at least a Domestic Club licence (or equivalent)</p>	<p>Clubs and owners/operators of venues designated under the Safety at Sports Grounds (Northern Ireland) Order 2006</p> <p>Lead club to hold at least a Domestic Club licence (or equivalent)</p>	<p>All IFA member clubs</p>
Scoring and Assessment	<p>Principles will include site availability, capital funding contribution, security of tenure, synergy with other strategic projects, availability of existing infrastructure, agreed usage and sports development plans (not limited to Association Football), project outcomes, sustainability and community involvement.</p>	<p>Principles will include capital funding contribution, security of tenure, strategic project outcomes, agreed usage and sports development plans, sustainability and community involvement.</p>	<p>Principles will include capital funding contribution, security of tenure, project partnerships and project outcomes to address 'Red Guide' issues.</p>	<p>Principles will include capital funding contribution, security of tenure, revenue generation/sustainability, creation of partnerships, community involvement, proximity to existing facilities and project outcomes to increase participation.</p>

	<b>NATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE</b>	<b>STRATEGIC INTERVENTION PROJECTS</b>	<b>DESIGNATED VENUES</b>	<b>FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT FACILITIES</b>
Eligible Costs	<p>Capital project elements including one full-size indoor pitch, one other 3G pitch, two high quality natural grass pitches, one scaled pitch, rehabilitation area and equipment , conditioning suite and equipment, lecture facilities, changing facilities, parents area</p> <p>Professional cost elements to include design team, QS, planning consultancy and project management.</p>	<p>Capital project elements including spectator accommodation, changing facilities, corporate facilities, media facilities, pitch, floodlighting and other directly associated works</p> <p>Professional cost elements to include design team, QS, planning consultancy and project management.</p>	<p>Capital project elements including, spectator accommodations, safety management works and other directly associated works.</p> <p>Professional cost elements to include design team, QS, planning consultancy and project management.</p>	<p>Capital project elements including synthetic and natural grass pitches, , floodlighting (for synthetic pitches only), limited changing facilities, limited spectator accommodations, revenue generation facilities including hospitality and other directly associated works. Off site consortia projects also eligible.</p> <p>Professional cost elements to include design team, QS, planning consultancy and project management.</p>
Priority	One (Jointly)	One (Jointly)	Two	Three