
LARGE SCALE SPORT INFRASTRUCTURE FUND (LSSIF)

SIMILAR ACCESS REQUIREMENT

Background:

The National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027¹, adopted by the Government of Ireland, states that:

“Sport must be welcoming and inclusive, offering appropriate opportunities for participation and improvement to all.”

The Policy aims to promote inclusion, in order to deliver desired outcomes, with a focus on addressing social, disability, gender, ethnic and other gradients. In relation to access to facilities, the overall aim of the Policy is that facilities, especially those which have been developed using public funds, are fully accessible and available to the broadest range of users.

Overview of the Similar Access Requirement under LSSIF:

The establishment of the LSSIF was provided for under the National Sports Policy. The primary objective of the LSSIF is to increase active participation in sport. Participation in sport and physical activity has a positive impact on people’s physical health, mental health and wellbeing as LSSIF-funded facilities provide the opportunity for participation to be open to all.

This note outlines what LSSIF-funded facilities are required to undertake in respect of ensuring that access to such facilities is enjoyed by both women and men on similar terms. Under the LSSIF, the Similar Access Requirement means that recipients of LSSIF funding (Grantees and Sponsors) must accommodate the needs of women and men, on a similar basis, with respect to accessing the facilities that have been allocated public funding.

All grantees, under the LSSIF, are required to have a published Similar Access Policy in place which undertakes to provide access to grant-aided facilities to women and men on similar terms e.g. usage times, gym/training facilities, playing grounds. Facilities which do not provide access on similar terms to women and men will not be eligible for funding under the LSSIF.

Any organisation that is in receipt of LSSIF funding must have a similar access policy in place and must publish it. A grantee and/or sponsoring body (National Governing Body or Local Authority) which does not have a similar access policy in place will be considered ineligible for LSSIF funding. In addition, no capital funding will be provided unless the applicant confirms that it is in compliance with the provisions of the Equal Status Acts.

The Similar Access Policy must be formally adopted, not only by the grantee, but also by the sponsoring body (National Governing Body or Local Authority). The Department recognises that, in light of the individual characteristics and circumstances of each application, organisations and their proposed projects may differ but, in developing a Similar Access Policy, all LSSIF grantees must adopt the following criteria:

1. The policy must describe and provide sufficient evidence as to how the grantee will address and ensure that:

¹ National Sports Policy 2018-2027 - <https://assets.gov.ie/15979/04e0f52cee5f47ee9c01003cf559e98d.pdf>

- a. Women and men have similar access to facilities, including the 'best' training, game and optimal facility times, as well as similar access to communal and changing room facilities.
 - b. Women and men can fully participate in all aspects of the club or organisation, including as a player, active participant, coach, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator.
 - c. Women and men will have similar access to, and similar use of, the sport infrastructure.
 - d. Women and men will be represented in leadership and governance roles, including representation in line with government policy, at board level.²
 - e. All user groups within and outside of the organisation, who access and use the facility, are encouraged and supported to understand, adopt and implement similar access policies.
 - f. The parent National Governing Body of Sport (NGBs) is in compliance with the 40% gender balance target for its management board.
2. The Similar Access Policy must be managed appropriately and governed with integrity.
 3. The Similar Access Policy must demonstrate how the club/organisation will effectively drive similar access and use of community sports infrastructure to improve the outcomes for women and girls.
 4. The Similar Access Policy must demonstrate how the club/organisation will effectively promote similar access for men and women in the use of sports facilities.
 5. The grantee must measure progress, and publish in their annual report, the club/organisations actions and results pertaining to similar access goals or targets identified.³
 6. The Grantee must confirm compliance with the provisions of the Equal Status Acts

In addition, the Similar Access Policy must be published on the Grantee's website, or another suitable and publicly accessible forum, prior to any drawdown of LSSIF funds. Grantees must complete **Appendix 1** 'Template for Club Organisation', in order to fulfil the similar access requirement, and return the completed form to the Department, prior to drawing down funds.

² All sporting bodies in receipt of State funding must have a minimum of 40% representation of each gender in the membership of their boards at national level. Sports Action Plan 2021-2023.

³. **Appendix 2** provides detail on what the grantee must report on in relation to Similar Access.

Appendix 1

Template

Template for Organisation(s) to fulfil the Similar Access Requirement

[Insert name of your organisation and grantee]'s undertakes that it will provide similar access to women and men to those of its facilities which are the beneficiary of a grant under the Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund.

[Insert name of your organisation/grantee & sponsor] will undertake the necessary and proportionate steps towards implementation of a Similar Access Policy by ensuring that:

- a. Women and men will have similar access to facilities, including the 'best' training, game and optimal facility times, as well as similar access to social and changing room facilities.
- b. Women and men can fully participate in all aspects of the club or organisation, including as a player, active participant, coach, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator.
- c. Women and men will have similar access to and similar use of the sport infrastructure.
- d. Women and men, will be represented in leadership and governance roles, including representation in line with government policy at board level.⁴
- e. All user groups who access and use the facility are encouraged and supported to understand, implement and adopt our similar access policy.
- f. User groups which demonstrate an ongoing commitment to implementing similar access policies are prioritised and supported.
- g. We further undertake to publish our Similar Access Policy and to update it annually, on the Grantee's website (or on another suitable and publicly accessible forum.)
- h. We confirm compliance with the provisions of the Equal Status Acts.

Signed:

Witness:

⁴ All sporting bodies in receipt of State funding must have at least 40 per cent female at board level. '2019 - Publication of Sport Ireland Policy on Women in Sport & Appointment of Women in Sport Lead'

Appendix 2

Similar Access Paragraph in Organisations Annual Report ⁵

Currently the grantee has x members of which (x) are female and (y) are male.

It is expected that the organisation will realise similar access by the year (insert year). The organisation commits to increasing similar access by x percent on year until goal is achieved. (List the year on year increase]

In (insert year-(year the report is based on) x% of female are members of (insert name of grantee organisation), they had access to use of facilities at the 'best' training, game and optimal facility times, as well use of the communal and changing room facilities. Similarly, in (insert year –year of report), x% of male members of the organisation had access to use of facilities at the 'best' training, game and optimal facility times, as well use of the communal and changing room facilities. Table 1 provides a sample table.

Month	% of Female Usage	% of Male Usage	Best Training Time (input best training times)	Best Game Time (input best game times)	Usage of Optimal facility Times (optimal times)	Usage outside of best training, game and optimal facility times % of Female Usage	Usage outside of best training, game and optimal facility times % of Male Usage
Jan	X%	X%					
Feb							
Mar							
April							
May							
June							
July							
August							
Sept							
Oct							
Nov							
Dec							

Table 1

The organisation has x number of females on the board and is compliant with the '2019 - Publication of Sport Ireland Policy on Women in Sport & Appointment of Women in Sport Lead' that is '***All sporting bodies in receipt of State funding must have at least 40 per cent female at board level.***' ⁶

The Organisation must state who is implementing the similar access policy and provide a support contact if members wish to further discuss similar access.

Reference:

⁵ If Annual Report is not published, the paragraph can be included in social media posts and annual financial statement report.

⁶ If the organisation is not compliant with at least 40 per cent female at board level, they must make this known to the Department, each case will be dealt with on a case by case basis and require Ministerial/Department approval to release funds

National Sports Policy 2018-2027 -

<https://assets.gov.ie/15979/04e0f52cee5f47ee9c01003cf559e98d.pdf>

2019 - Publication of Sport Ireland Policy on Women in Sport & Appointment of Women in Sport

Lead https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/2019-11/wis_policy.pdf

2022 - Sport Ireland Policy on Diversity and Inclusion in Sport.pdf

[https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2022-](https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2022-05/Sport%20Ireland%20Policy%20on%20Diversity%20and%20Inclusion%20in%20Sport.pdf)

[05/Sport%20Ireland%20Policy%20on%20Diversity%20and%20Inclusion%20in%20Sport.pdf](https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2022-05/Sport%20Ireland%20Policy%20on%20Diversity%20and%20Inclusion%20in%20Sport.pdf)