



SPÓRT ÉIREANN
SPORT IRELAND

2024

Recognition Criteria

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How does the NGB apply for recognition?

- The applicant body will request a formal meeting with Sport Ireland to discuss its proposed application and the process prior to submitting a formal application for recognition as an NGB to Sport Ireland. No application form is available in advance of that meeting.
- Sport Ireland will only recognise a single Governing Body for all elements of the Sport. This includes male/female, schools/third level activity etc place within the sport. Sport Ireland has no obligation to consider an application from an applicant body in relation to a sport which is similar to a sport of an existing Sport Ireland recognised NGB.
- In the case that two or more applicant bodies are currently organising the development and regulation of a sport or sports which are similar (as determined by Sport Ireland), Sport Ireland will request those bodies to apply to Sport Ireland for recognition on the basis that they will co-operate with each other and/or merge/form an umbrella body for the governance of the sport or sports.
- In a case where there is an existing NGB recognised by Sport Ireland organising the development and regulation of a sport or sports which is similar to the sport or sports in relation to which the applicant seeks recognition, Sport Ireland will request the applicant body to seek affiliation or develop a formal relationship with the existing NGB.
- The completed application form, together with a covering letter and the required supporting documentation should be returned to Sport Ireland.

Written applications can be sent to:

Sport Ireland
The Courtyard
Sport Ireland Campus
Snugborough Road
Blanchardstown
Dublin 15
D15 PN0N

Electronic correspondence can be sent to:
recognition@sportireland.ie

2. What is the assessment process?

Full details on the assessment process can be found in Sport Ireland’s Recognition Criteria for National Governing Bodies of Sport 2024.

3. What assessment criteria does Sport Ireland use?

Full details on the assessment criteria used by Sport Ireland in considering applications for recognition can be found in Sport Ireland’s Recognition Criteria for National Governing Bodies of Sport 2024.

4. Is NGB recognition awarded for a limited time?

- Organisations that successfully complete the initial recognition process will be given probation status for two years prior to securing full recognition by Sport Ireland.
- During the probation period the organisation will be monitored by Sport Ireland to assess its ongoing capability and adherence to the recognition criteria.
- During the probation period the organisation will not be eligible to apply for Sport Ireland funding but will be required to provide reports as required by Sport Ireland.
- During the probation period the organisation will have access to Sport Ireland Coaching to help develop their coaching plans and pathways.
- During the probationary period an NGB may have access to other non-funding support structures of Sport Ireland (such as Sport Ireland OD&C, Safeguarding, Anti-doping etc.) to assist it in its path towards full recognition.
- Once the NGB receives full recognition by Sport Ireland, there is no time limit on this status, subject to section 5 below.

5. Can Sport Ireland withdraw recognition from an NGB?

- Sport Ireland reserves the right to suspend or withdraw recognition to an NGB in the following cases – (i) the NGB no longer demonstrates the ability to adhere to the Recognition Criteria (ii) the NGB is non-compliant with Sport Ireland’s Terms and Conditions of investment (iii) The NGB leaves the Sport Ireland Recognised Umbrella Body it is affiliated to (v) the NGB should fall into disrepute.

The phrase ‘disrepute’ for these purposes includes but is not confined to misconduct of a serious nature that is not covered by specific offences set out in the Sport Ireland Recognition Criteria. In each case Sport Ireland shall be the sole arbiter as to whether the NGB is in disrepute. The following are examples of what Sport Ireland may view as “falling into disrepute” (a) conduct that is unbecoming of a recognised

NGB; and/ or (b) criminal conduct or other misconduct; and/ or (c) conduct that is or could be harmful to the interests, values and reputation of the sport; and/ or (d) conduct that does bring or could bring Sport Ireland and the Sport Ireland Recognition Process for NGBs into disrepute; and/ or (e) any breach of Sport Ireland policies, and/ or (f) committing any act, or permitting or suffering to be done, anything which has a negative impact on the image or reputation of Sport Ireland and/ or the NGB or otherwise brings either of them into disrepute. The above examples at (a) – (f) do not represent an exhaustive list of examples but are merely provided to illustrate the types of circumstances in which Sport Ireland may find an NGB to be in disrepute.

- Sport Ireland reserve the right to subject any applicant, or a pre-existing Recognised or funded organisation to a fit for purpose audit.

6. How is funding decided?

- It must be noted that recognition by Sport Ireland of an NGB does not automatically confer the right to be allocated Sport Ireland funding.
- Sport Ireland funding will be used to support an NGB in line with Sport Ireland's strategic priorities and investment criteria. Sport Ireland may amend these priorities and criteria from time to time as it requires.
- An NGB which is of a smaller scale and resources, may receive Sport Ireland funding primarily to support leadership and/or operations. Such NGB is expected to demonstrate to the satisfaction of Sport Ireland that it is fit for purpose and complies with core governance, ethical, legal, operational, risk management and taxation/fiduciary policies to a standard acceptable to Sport Ireland.
- Sport Ireland may, at its discretion, provide additional investment (where it deems it appropriate and where it is available) to a certain NGB for projects and programmes which contribute to improving participation, performance, leadership and/or operations in that Sport.

7. What happens if two NGBs are seeking Sport Ireland recognition as the governing body for the same or similar sports?

- As outlined in Section 1 Sport Ireland will only recognise a single Governing Body for all elements of the Sport. This includes male/female, schools/third level activity etc taking place within the sport. Sport Ireland has no obligation to consider an application from an applicant body in relation to a sport which is similar to a sport of an existing Sport Ireland recognised NGB.
- In the case that two or more applicant bodies are currently organising the development and regulation of a sport or sports which are similar (as determined by Sport Ireland), Sport Ireland will request those bodies to apply to Sport Ireland for recognition on the

basis that they will co-operate with each other and/or merge/form an umbrella body for the governance of the sport or sports.

- In a case where there is an existing NGB recognised by Sport Ireland organising the development and regulation of a sport or sports which is similar to the sport or sports in relation to which the applicant seeks recognition, Sport Ireland will request the applicant body to seek affiliation or develop a formal relationship with the existing NGB. This includes existing or similar sports that are part of umbrella Governing Bodies.

8. How long will it take to receive a response to the application?

Each application for recognition is judged on its own merits, meaning that the level of complexity of each application may determine how long the assessment period is.

The Sport Ireland Grants & Eligibility Committee meets as required throughout the year.

9. When can an NGB apply for recognition?

An NGB can apply for recognition at any time throughout the year. The application will then be considered at the next available Committee meeting, bearing in mind that there may be a number of applications to process at any one time and it may not be possible to bring all applications to the next meeting.

10. If a potential NGB application for recognition is unsuccessful, can it re-apply?

The NGB can re-apply for recognition after 12 months. In the case of an unsuccessful appeal the period will be 12 months from the date of the appeal outcome.

11. Is there an Appeals procedure?

Yes, an NGB may appeal the decision not to offer them recognition status. Details of the appeals process followed by Sport Ireland can be found in Sport Ireland's Recognition Criteria for National Governing Bodies of Sport 2024.

12. Are NGBs subjected to audits from Sport Ireland?

Yes. Sport Ireland expects that the Boards/leaders of the NGB will establish and adhere to their own annual internal auditing and compliance policies to demonstrate to themselves and their members that their sport is being led, governed and managed appropriately.

Sport Ireland expects that an NGB will lead and respond to any weaknesses or issues identified in their internal audit and will initiate an implementation programme as necessary. Failure to do so could impact on future funding.

Sport Ireland reserve the right to subject any Recognised or funded organisation to a fit for purpose audit.

13. Is there a fee attached to recognition applications?

Sport Ireland does not charge a fee for recognition applications but all costs of making the application must be met by the organisation submitting the application.

14. What is the Governance Code for Sport (the Code) and how can your organisation satisfy Sport Ireland that it currently complies with the Code?

In accordance with Article 21, the applicant body must satisfy Sport Ireland that it currently complies with (and can provide independent evidence that it is compliant with) the Governance Code for Sport ("the Code").

- The Governance Code for Sport is a set of principles and best practices designed to ensure good governance within sports organisations. It focuses on five core principles of leadership, exercising control, being transparent and accountable, working effectively and behaving with integrity.
- Compliance with this Code demonstrates an organisation's commitment to high governance standards, which Sport Ireland views as essential for recognition as a National Governing Body (NGB). It is also a requirement within Government Policy, that all funded bodies adopt the Code. For further information about the Code and what compliance with the Code will entail please refer to [the Governance Code for Sport Guide](#) and the [Governance Code Resources](#) section of the Sport Ireland website.
- For an organisation to start aligning with the Code if it is not fully compliant, it would usually begin with a self-assessment against the Code's standards, using the [Compliance Record Form](#) and identifying areas for improvement. This process could include engaging a governance advisor, setting a compliance timeline, board training and development and establishing and committing to regular internal or external audits to assess progress towards full compliance.
- Organisations should be able to provide independent evidence of compliance. From Sport Ireland's perspective, this would include:
 - **Completed paperwork:** Public Statement of Compliance, Comply or Explain Form, Compliance Record Form and Annual Assurance Statements are all required to demonstrate compliance with the Code. These should be independently verified.
 - **External Audits or Reviews:** A report from an external governance expert or consultancy firm assessing compliance with all the recommended practices within the Code.
 - **Governance Health Checks:** Documentation of internal or third-party governance health checks (independently verified) that outline compliance across the Code's core areas.
 - **Meeting Minutes and Records:** Minutes from board meetings (independently verified) demonstrating discussions and decisions related to governance standards.

- **Annual Report and Financial Statements:** Publicly available documents showing transparency in financial management and strategic priorities.
- Compliance with the Code is important for Sport Ireland recognition as it signifies that an organisation operates with integrity, transparency, and accountability, which are critical for public trust, ethical standards, and effective management. Meeting these standards aligns the organisation with Sport Ireland's mission to promote fair, equitable, and safe sport for all participants in Ireland.