



SECTION 9 CAMPUS OF SPORTING EXCELLENCE

9.1

In this section we outline the *Campus of Sporting Excellence* concept. The section is presented under the following headings:

- i. Background to "Campus" concept
- ii. National Coaching and Training Centre, Limerick
- iii. Examples of international models
- iv. Possible facilities to be provided on the *Campus of Sporting Excellence*
- v. Conclusion

(i) Background to "Campus" concept

9.2

As mentioned in Section 5, the *Campus of Sporting Excellence* concept emerged from our consultation with the non-stadium based sporting organisations. The telephone survey indicated a real interest among sporting organisations for the National Stadium concept to go beyond the provision of a large seat capacity stadium, and become a focus for development and achievement in Irish sport. Further consultations indicated that this broader campus concept could incorporate the National Stadium and a number of additional ancillary facilities.

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This wider vision suggests a campus style facility, catering for as many types of sports as possible and including, for example, sports for people with disabilities. The *Campus of Sporting Excellence* concept would essentially be a national facility for our emerging and established athletes, with the appropriate infrastructure and sports-related services to cater for as many sports as possible and would include a National Stadium as an inspirational focal point.

(ii) National Coaching and Training Centre

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The NCTC was established in 1991. It is located on the campus of the University of Limerick and works closely with over 60 NGBs in Ireland. The aim of the NCTC is to assist in raising the standards of coaching and training of coaches and to provide specialised training for elite sports persons by providing a structured coaching system, a comprehensive sports science programme and optimal training facilities.

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The main tasks of the centre involve working with coaches and athletes with a view to improving standards of coaching and performance. The centre also provides an Information Service which ensures that access to the most up-to-date research practice is available to all.

Research is also undertaken at the Centre, focusing on aspects of coaching and performance.

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It is important that the proposed *Campus of Sporting Excellence* would not duplicate the very important work done in the NCTC. Further research and consultation with the NCTC should be undertaken to ensure the Campus will complement and supplement those services currently provided in Limerick.

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The NCTC provides certain residential training facilities to elite high performance athletes. However, based on our consultation with the NCTC and preliminary research in the Campus concept, it is apparent that there is a need for a 'high volume training facility' to be provided in Ireland. It is expected that the *Campus of Sporting Excellence* could fulfil this equally important role.

(iii) Examples of international models

9.8

Research indicates that other countries have adopted various forms of this *Campus of Sporting Excellence* model, whereby many different sports are accommodated in one area. Below we profile three such international models.

- a. Australian Institute of Sport
- b. Olympic Park, Munich
- c. Estadio Jose Alevade

(a) Australian Institute of Sport

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The Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) was opened in Canberra on 26th January 1981, and its objectives are to:

- enhance the sporting performances of Australia's elite and potential elite athletes and teams;
- enhance the personal, educational and vocational development opportunities for elite athletes; and
- improve the efficiency and effectiveness of national level sporting agencies.

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The AIS provides facilities and assistance for elite athletes, including access to high performance coaches, strength and conditioning programmes, nutritional advice, and career and education guidance. The AIS complex in Canberra is a unique complex of international sporting facilities with a world class sport science and sports medicine facility and accommodation for over 350 resident and visiting athletes.

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The complex, located on a 65 hectare site, includes purpose-built training facilities for the following sports:

- athletics basketball
- gymnastics
- road cycling
- volleyball
- soccer
- swimming
- tennis

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The above sports are catered for by the following facilities:

- Bruce Outdoor Stadium (seating capacity of 25,000)
- Athletics Field (international standard with spectator accommodation)
- Indoor Swimming Centre - consists of a 50m pool of Olympic standard which can be divided for water polo, training and a 25m short course venue. There is also a separate 25m training pool and spectator accommodation.
- AIS Arena - includes a timber parquetry cushioned playing floor of 54m x 35m with an unencumbered height of 12.5m, providing for either three basketball or netball courts, nine badminton courts or an indoor soccer or hockey pitch. The centre is used for a variety of national and international sporting events and is also a popular entertainment venue with seating for up to 5,200.
- Gymnastics Hall - world class facility for both men's and women's gymnastics.
- All-weather outdoor pitches - used for soccer and hockey
- Tennis complex
- Sports Training Facility - provides training courts for basketball and netball, general training and conditioning room, and a 361 seat theatre which is used for weightlifting competition and a conference facility.

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Other facilities provided in the AIS campus include:

- Sports Science & Medicine Facility - houses the sciences of psychology, biochemistry, biomechanics and physiology as well as a physiotherapy department and a medical treatment area.
- Sports Information Centre
- Residences - provides 250 study bedrooms for athletes, short-stay accommodation for up to 50 athletes and 19 flats for married athletes and visitors to AIS. The residential area includes study, recreational and laundry facilities as well as a fully catered dining room for athletes and visitors.

(b) Olympic Park, Munich

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The Olympic Park in Munich, specifically built for the 1972 Olympic Games, is capable of accommodating over 70 different kinds of sport. Several thousand sporting, cultural and commercial events have been staged, from international, European and German championships to pop concerts and shows, from classical concerts, opera performances and folk festivals to exhibitions and conventions.

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The administration of this facility was assigned by the City of Munich to the Olympiapark Munchen GmbH, a subsidiary corporation of the city. It is the corporation's responsibility to run the public Olympic Park as an event, leisure and recreation centre, as well as to maintain the grounds, including the paths, streets and bridges.

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The facilities provided in the Olympic Park include the following:

- **Olympic Stadium**
Capacity: 69,250, of which 11,800 is standing
Measurements: 260m lengthways, 250m diagonally
Interior: Playing field 105m x 68m
400m 8-lane athletics track
- **Olympic Hall:**
Capable of accommodating events such as tennis competitions, European Basketball Championships, World Ice Hockey Championships, concerts and family shows.
Capacity: 11,850 seated; up to 13,500 unseated
Enclosed area: 427,300 cubic metres
- **Small Olympic Hall:**
Multi-purpose hall used as an independent facility, and also as a connected auxiliary arena when major events are taking place in the Olympic Hall. The hall can be divided into three separate areas which increases its flexibility.
Capacity: 1,000 seated; 1,500 unseated
- **Olympic Swimming Hall:**
This swimming hall, with its five pools, is capable of accommodating both international competitions and leisure-oriented users.
Maximum height: 50m
Competition pool: 21 x 50m
Diving pool: 21 x 20m
Training pool: 12.5 x 50m
Instruction pool: 17 x 8m
Warm-up pool: 48 sq. metres (semicircular)

- **Olympic Ice Sport Centre:**

	Ice Stadium	Ice skating pavilion	Training Hall
Capacity	6,054	-	600
Length	94.52m	87m	78.5m
Width	60m	64m	35m
Height	12m	15m	13m
Ice surface	30 x 60m	45 x 60m	30 x 60m

- **Werner Von Linde Hall**
Houses an indoor track and is used for training purposes by top athletes, as well as students and amateur athletes.
Capacity: 1,850
Measurements: 90 x 50m

Clearance height:5.5m
Enclosed area:34,800
Facilities:200m long racing circuit with banked curves
6 x 60m sprinting tracks

(c) *Estadio Jose Alevade*

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The Estadio Jose Alevade, situated on the outskirts of central Lisbon is the home of Sporting Lisbon. When constructing the Stadium in 1956, the club wished to provide a showpiece sporting venue for the city. The Stadium was designed to accommodate 75,000 people all seated and provision was made underneath the stands for a range of other sports facilities, including, roller hockey, boxing, judo and gymnastics.

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Sporting Lisbon has approximately 70,000 sports and athletic club members. Membership is drawn from the city of Lisbon and surrounding regions and is divided into either members of specific sports clubs or ordinary members permitted to use a number of club facilities. The main objective of the sports programmes which are offered by the club is to facilitate the development of teams and individuals capable of competing in sports at a national and international level.

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The facilities offered by Sporting Lisbon to club members include the following:

- Stadium pitch;
- athletics track;
- eleven gymnasias;
- table tennis room (8 tables);
- basketball/handball courts;
- roller skating rink;
- shooting area.
- club room;
- food and beverage units;
- massage room;
- beauty salon;
- retail units;
- residential dormitory;

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The Estadio Jose Alevade illustrates the range and scope of facilities that can be included in a Stadium development through utilisation of available space beneath stands and sub division of floors to create different sizes and shapes of rooms.

(iv) *Possible facilities to be provided on the Campus of Sporting Excellence*

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Facilities such as the international models described above do not currently exist in Ireland. While the NCTC in Limerick works with athletes, coaches and sports organisations to improve standards in coaching and performance within Irish sport, we understand that it does not actually provide the various training facilities which can be used by the NGBs on an on-going regular basis.

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The following infrastructural requirements of the *Campus of Sporting Excellence* were highlighted by the NGBs in their submissions to the consultants. None of these facilities are currently provided in the NCTC, except where indicated. Therefore, the facilities in the Campus of Sporting Excellence would complement and enhance those services currently provided by the NCTC.

- a. **Office / Administration Facilities:** *While a number of the NGBs are adequately provided for in the House of Sport, Longmile Road, many NGBs indicated their support for the provision of office facilities on the site of the Campus of Sporting Excellence. Cross fertilisation of ideas and economies of scale were cited as advantages of such central administrative headquarters. A central administrative/head office location such as this would be consistent with the strategies recommended in the Department of Education document, "Sport in Ireland 1997 – 2006 and Beyond".*
- b. **Multi-purpose Halls:** These would primarily be used by the national governing bodies for training purposes, catering for the maximum possible number of sports. The facilities could also be opened to the public during certain periods to maximise utilisation and encourage community access to the campus.

There is a need for the NGBs to utilise world class training facilities more often than the three times a year that they would use the NCTC. A high volume training facility is required as opposed to the low volume, but high performance training facilities provided in Limerick.

- c. **Indoor Tennis Facility:** The facility would comprise four indoor courts offering a range of playing surfaces and would be used for training purposes by Tennis Ireland.

Again, there is a need for high volume tennis training facilities in Ireland, whereby national squads can have access to international standard training. This facility would be wholly compatible and complementary to the low volume, high performance tennis training centre which is proposed for the NCTC.

- d. **Medical and Sports Science Facilities:** These facilities should complement and supplement the existing facilities provided in the National Coaching & Training Centre, Limerick. It was proposed that these facilities could house the sciences of psychology, biochemistry, biomechanics and physiology as well as a physiotherapy department and a medical treatment area.

It should be noted, however, that medical and sports science facilities are currently provided in Dublin at Trinity College which form part of the national network of sports medical facilities co-ordinated by the NCTC. It is therefore recommended that more research be undertaken to understand the exact requirements of the NGBs in this regard.

- e. **Multi Sport Dome:** The multi sport dome should be capable of accommodating between 10,000 and 15,000 spectators, depending on the configuration of the dome of various sporting requirements. Based on our discussions with the NGBs, it is envisaged that this facility would be used primarily for competitive purposes. In contrast to the other Campus facilities mentioned above, the multi sport dome would have the potential, we believe, to be operated on a commercial basis. Events such as

European Basketball and Ice Hockey Leagues; small to medium scale concerts; and family shows such as "Disney on Ice" could be proactively attracted to the facility.

In addition to the commercially driven events which could be held in the Dome, it is envisaged that the facility would also be used by many of the Irish sporting organisations for competitive purposes. Some examples of utilisation highlighted by the NGBs are discussed below.

Irish Basketball indicated in their submission that they have a number of current and potential competitions which would be enhanced by such a facility:

- The National Basketball Cup is currently too large an event for the National Basketball Arena and will require a higher capacity arena within the next few years.
- Plans are currently being developed to form a "European Super League" which would have a franchise in all major European capital cities. Minimum seating capacity for entrance to the league is 8,000 to 10,000.
- Irish Basketball has been approached in relation to putting a team in the current Northern European Basketball League, which is fully professional. Minimum seating capacity to enter a team in this league is 6,000.

Based on our discussions with BLÉ, it is considered appropriate that the Multi Sport Dome should be able to accommodate an athletics track. This removable track could potentially be used for indoor athletics events in the same way as the National Indoor Arena (NIA) in Birmingham caters for athletics events with the provision of a six-lane 200 metre athletics track, which is dismantled and stored away when not in use. BLÉ indicated that it would consider using such a facility for those major Irish events that take place during January and February, i.e. National Adult Championships, National Junior Championships, National Veteran Championships and the Irish School Championships.

Other NGBs which highlighted their organisation's need for an indoor event centre for competition purposes include:

- Tennis Ireland
- Badminton Union of Ireland
- Equestrian Federation of Ireland
- Republic of Ireland Netball Association
- Volleyball Association of Ireland
- Irish Amateur Wrestling Association

While it is expected that the multi-purpose dome would be utilised by the NGBs, we believe that the main source of revenue will be earned from entertainment events such as concerts and family shows.

- f. Training and Lecture Facilities
- g. Velodrome
- h. Rifle and Pistol Shooting Facility
- i. Ice Hockey Arena

j. Aquatic Centre (Note 1)

Note 1: The location of an aquatic centre should be reviewed in the light of the Government announcement that the 50 metre swimming pool would be located in Limerick.

(v) Conclusion

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In summary, therefore, the proposals emerging from the sporting community strongly support the concept that the *Campus of Sporting Excellence* should have the appropriate infrastructure to cater for as many sports as possible and should include a National Stadium as an inspirational focal point. Due to capital funding constraints in providing this infrastructure, it may not be possible to cater for all sports immediately, but rather, a phased approach may be considered more appropriate. The first phase might include the Stadium itself, the medical and sports science facilities, office/administration facilities for the NGBs, training facilities and certain infrastructural items which are capable of being housed within the Stadium (i.e. beneath the stands). However, it is recommended that a separate market study be completed for the multi sport dome in order to determine the exact requirements of both the Irish sporting requirements and those of international sporting event and concert promoters.

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Initial estimates indicate that capital investment of IR£51 million is required for the construction of the indoor event centre/ multi-sport dome; the multi-purpose halls; indoor tennis facility, and sport science and medical centre.

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In Section 1, a site plan setting out, by way of illustration only, the location of the campus and the Stadium is provided.

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The operational aspects of running the campus are not included in the financial estimates in Section 6.

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The concept of a *Campus of Sporting Excellence* only emerged during the process of examining the feasibility of the National Stadium itself and, therefore, additional research and examination of the concept is recommended. We believe that such a campus should be focused on quality training facilities for high volume usage. This would complement the specialist positioning of the NCTC in the provision of sports infrastructure and related coaching and medical services to coaches and elite sports people.

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It would also be important that more consultation between the main stakeholders takes place – the Government, the National Sports Council, NCTC and the many NGBs – in order to scope out in more detail the infrastructural requirements and demand / usage patterns.