

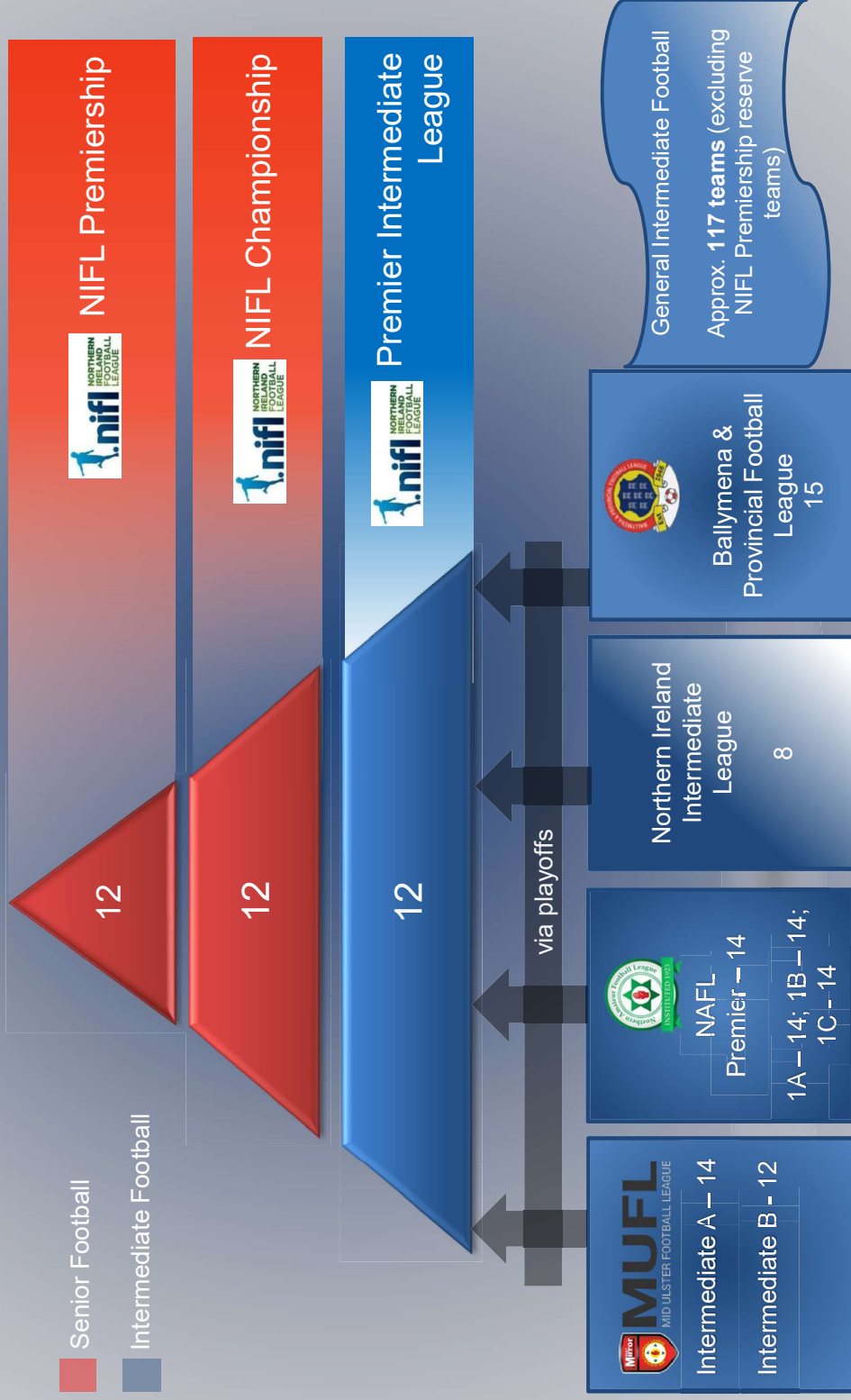


Intermediate Football Restructure

Background

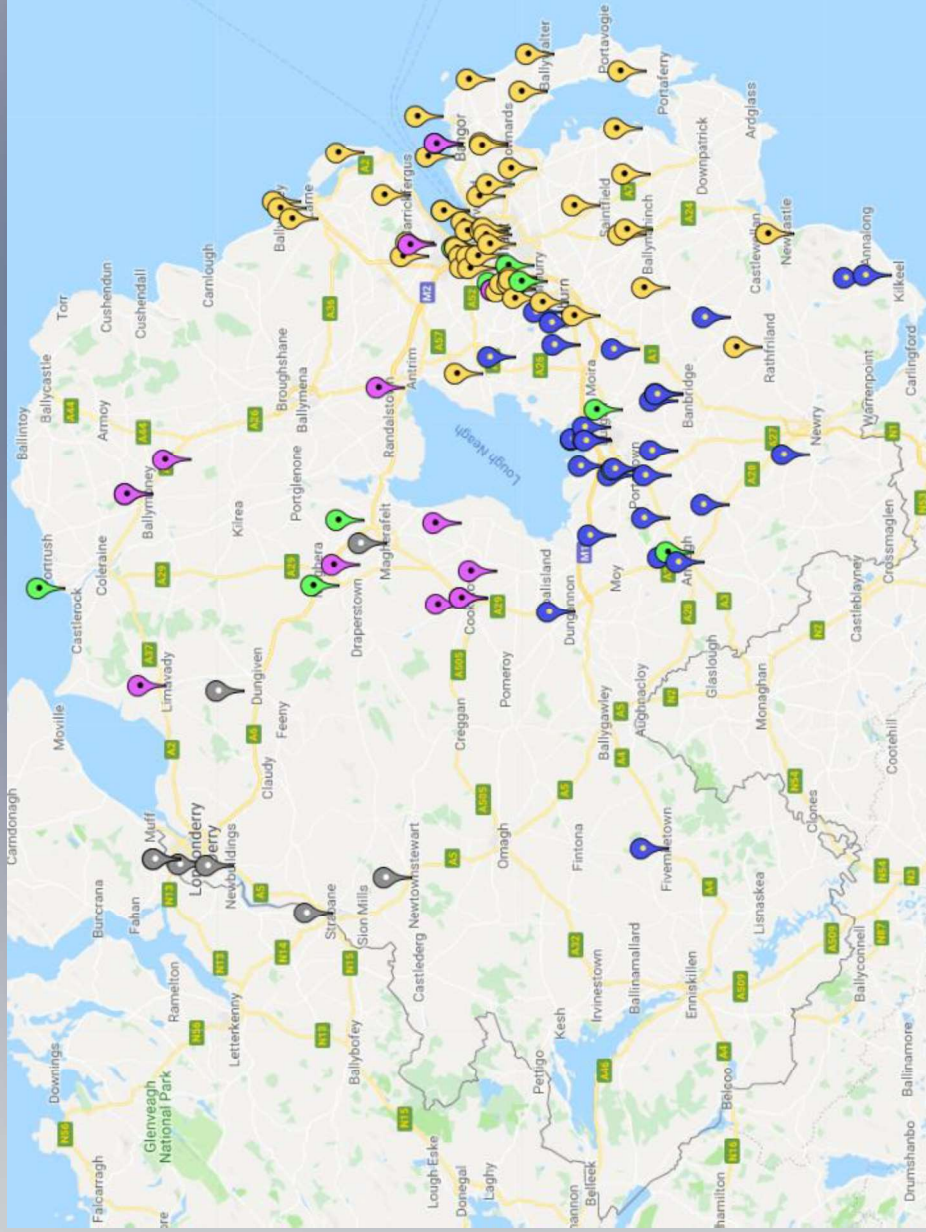
One of the long-term objectives within the Irish FA's 5-year strategy 2017-2022 is to reinvigorate the everyday game. Specifically, within this objective is a proposal for the restructure of Intermediate Football. The restructure aims to raise standards and continue the development of the game at Intermediate level by seeking to improve the standard of football on the pitch, introducing a more standardised league format and enhancing the quality of facilities/spectator experience.

Current Intermediate Football Structure



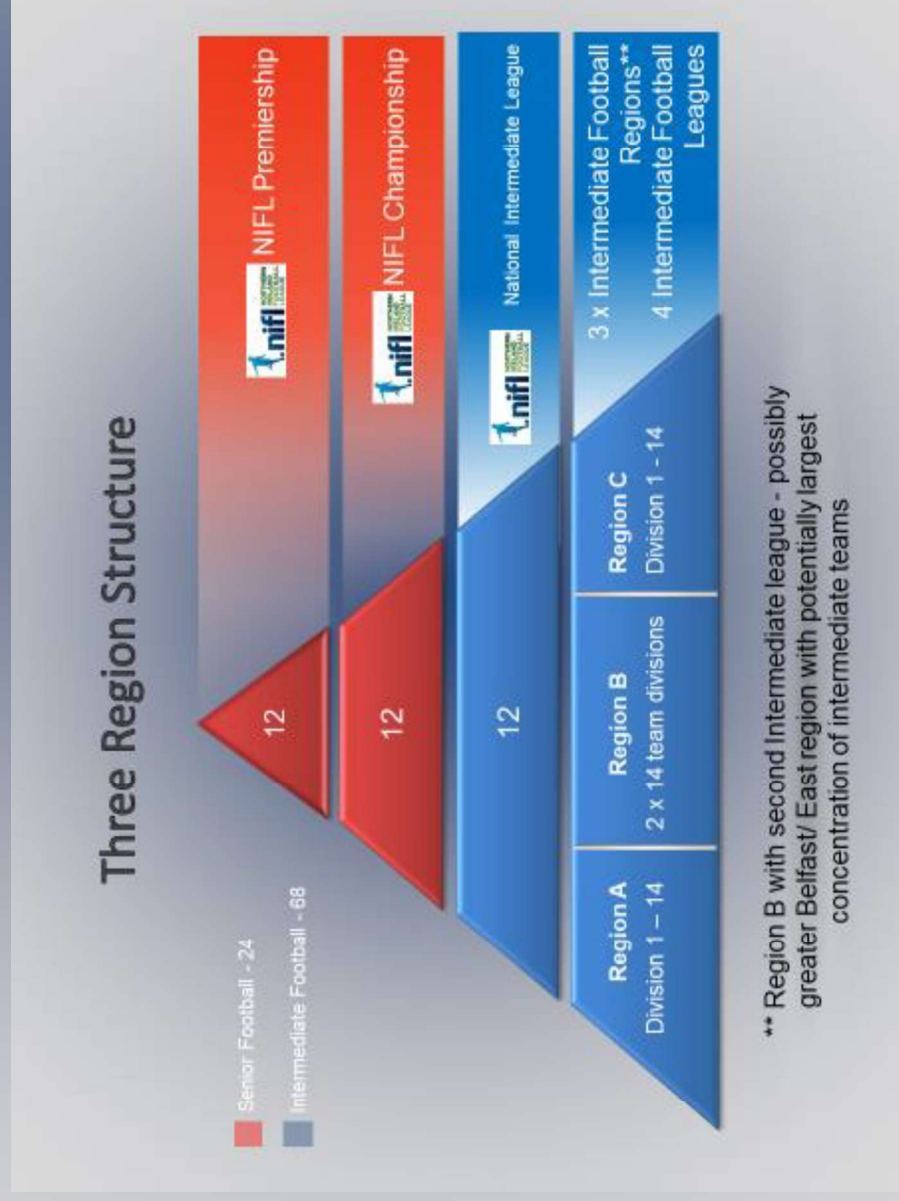
Mapping of current Intermediate Football Clubs in Northern Ireland

Mapping illustrates very heavy concentration of Intermediate clubs in Greater Belfast/ East of province, various colours represent current intermediate league they play in.



Preferred Future Structure

The preferred future structure provides for a better geographical split of clubs whilst limiting travel to regional opposition and standardising league formats. The future structure is assumed to sit on top of the existing Junior leagues structure.



Region A – North/ North West
Region B – Greater Belfast/ East
Region C – South/ South East

League Management

A tender process is to be carried out to confirm league operators for each of the 3 regions. It is assumed that NIFL will continue to operate the Premier Intermediate League (National Intermediate League). However, if this is not the case then the National Intermediate League will be included in the tender process.

Promotion/ Relegation

Promotion/ relegation will be to a 'pool' of clubs to be placed in the most geographically appropriate league for the following playing season rather than to a specific league or league that any club has historically been attached to.

Leagues Panel

As it may be necessary from time to time to move clubs laterally between leagues to accommodate the movement of clubs by normal promotion/ relegation, this will necessitate the establishment of an independent Leagues Panel to provide for seasonal promotion, relegation or lateral movement within the Intermediate structure or back into the Junior game. There will always be an element of lateral movement as wherever the league borders are drawn, there will be some clubs sitting on that 'line' which means they may migrate between different leagues from time to time.

Support for clubs

A Euro 500,000 fund for small grant scheme awards for the improvement of existing Intermediate facilities to meet the new Intermediate football ground criteria will be made available. It is anticipated that this will open in December 2019 and run for the 2020 calendar year to include application process incorporating writing of grant regulations and process manual, assessment, scoring, letter of offer, management & delivery of project, processing and vouching claims, administering payment to applicant clubs.

Ground inspections

All current Intermediate clubs submitting an expression of interest form will have an advisory ground inspection carried out by the end of 2019 against the enhanced ground criteria. A detailed report will be provided highlighting areas of non-compliance. Clubs will then have until January 2021 to carry out any further works required to meet the new ground criteria. Once completed (and again by not later than January 2021), a final ground inspection will be carried out to confirm compliance with the new ground criteria.

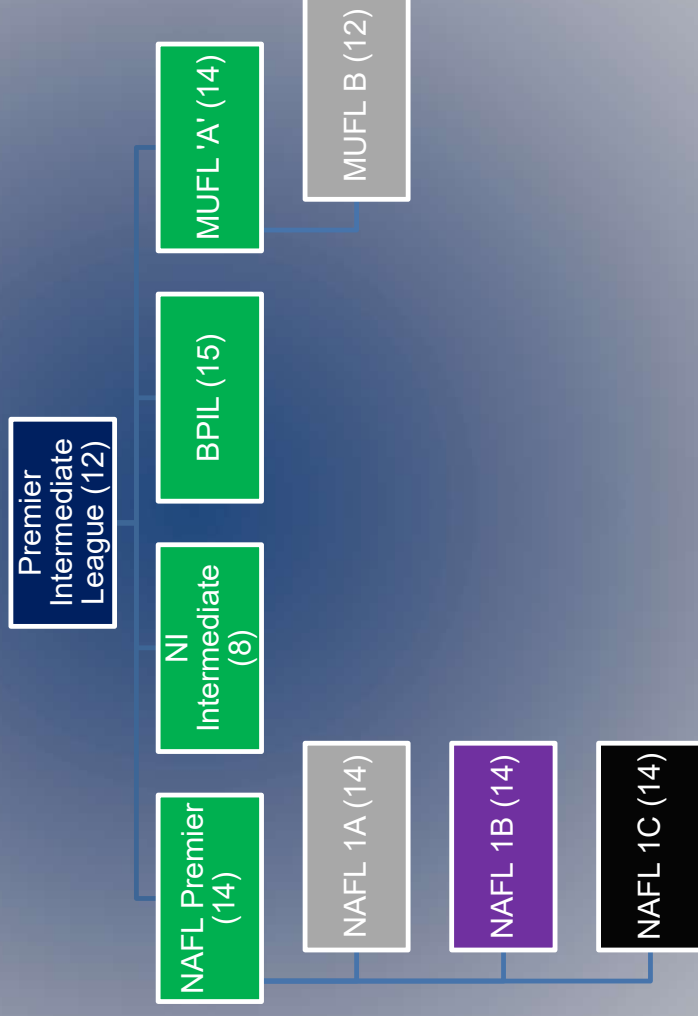
Ground Criteria

Enhancements in the following areas:

- Pitch/Playing Surface
- Football Ground boundaries/ Environs
- Changing Rooms
- Access to pitch for players and officials
- Spectator accommodation/ viewing
- Exception request
- Spot checks

Criteria for entry

Applicant clubs who meet the revised Intermediate football ground criteria and who sportingly qualify for the top 68 places in the new Intermediate structure based on the existing hierarchy within the current football pyramid at the end of the 2020-21 season.



Tentative Draft Timeline (subject to change)

