

# Governing Body Guidance Notes

## Sports Sustainability Fund





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## 1. Strategic Context

### 1.1 COVID-19 Context

The COVID-19 pandemic represents one of the biggest challenges which the Northern Ireland Executive has ever had to respond to. Its full impact on all aspects of society has yet to be quantified but it is already clear that the sector has been hit hard. Central and Local Government alone cannot provide all the support required and the governing bodies of sport and sporting entities have played a leading role in keeping citizens engaged, active and competitive in various sporting disciplines throughout the health pandemic.

The Northern Ireland Executive has agreed to introduce a package of measures to mitigate against the worst effects of COVID-19 and to protect key sectors in our society. A Coronavirus Recovery Plan has been published which sets out the approach to decision making and is accessible through the following link <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/news/executive-publishes-coronavirusrecovery-strategy>.

The Sports Sustainability Fund is intended to complement other interventions designed to support the sports sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. These include:

1. Sports Hardship Fund – primarily aimed at sports clubs/community sport;
2. COVID Safe Sport packs – primarily benefitting sports clubs/community sport;
3. Sporting Clubs/Sporting Winners – primary beneficiaries are governing bodies; and
4. Build Back Better – currently under development (multiple strands targeting various elements within the sporting sector).

### 1.2 About Sport Northern Ireland

A new strategy for sport for Northern Ireland for beyond 2020 is currently being developed. However, the previous Sport Matters Strategy remains relevant:

#### ***Sport Matters: The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-19***

This strategic document sets out Government's commitment to the development of sport and physical recreation in Northern Ireland up to 2019-20. A strategy, it is anticipated, that will provide a lasting and sustainable legacy for future generations.

The Strategy's vision is 'A Culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport'.



## **Sport Northern Ireland: Corporate Plan 2015-20**

Sport NI's vision for 2015-20 is:

'Northern Ireland: renowned as a place where people enjoy, engage, and excel in sport.'

This vision is supported by the following mission statement and strategic objectives:

'To lead world class sports development at all levels producing more participants and more winners'

- Sporting Communities: To increase and support the number of people adopting and sustaining a sporting lifestyle;
- Sporting Clubs: To enable more people to develop and reach their sporting goals through a structured environment; and
- Sporting Winners: To help more Northern Ireland athletes win at the highest level.

The Sports Sustainability Fund will help to ensure that the infrastructure and capacity to continue to deliver against the key targets are in place post COVID19. It will help to ensure that sports clubs and organisations have funds that allow them to meet existing commitments so that they can be ready to recover and continue to support their communities as soon as it is safe to do so.

## **2. Purpose of the Investment**

Sport NI recognises the sports sector is operating within an incredibly challenging environment and appreciate the impact on our sporting partners has been immeasurable. As every part of our community adjusts to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we know sport and physical recreation organisations are facing unprecedented challenges in the short term.

The purpose of this COVID-19 relief funding is to deal with the economic consequences of the health pandemic, providing the intervention needed to prevent the sports sector being unduly impacted by the current disruption.

In partnership with the Department for Communities (DfC), the **Sports Sustainability Fund** aims to deliver funding to those Recognised<sup>1</sup> governing

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<sup>1</sup> Recognised by Sport NI - meaning that the governing body is named on the UK Recognition list, per the UK Recognition policy as implemented by the UK Sports Councils.

bodies of sports and their affiliated clubs and sporting organisations experiencing financial hardship.

Applications to the fund must provide evidence of financial 'need' due to COVID19 (the difference between the current period's surplus/deficit from 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020 and the average surplus/deficit from the previous years).

The objectives of this investment programme is to secure and distribute financial support to help stabilise and sustain sports' core governing bodies of sport, their affiliated clubs and sporting organisations, enabling them to withstand the worst impacts of COVID-19.

### **3. What organisations are eligible to apply?**

The Sports Sustainability Fund will only accept applications from a Recognised governing body of sport.

**Clubs should apply through their governing body. Sport NI will NOT accept applications directly from clubs.**

If you are not a Recognised governing body and have not submitted a preapplication for Recognition before the 4 December 2020, you will not be eligible to apply for this fund.<sup>2</sup>

Sport NI will only assess applications from organisations that demonstrate financial need as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **3.1 Governing Body Eligibility Criteria**

Sport NI will accept applications as per the following conditions:

- Governing bodies with jurisdiction only for Northern Ireland can apply for both themselves and their affiliated entities based in Northern Ireland;
- ✓ Governing bodies with jurisdiction for Northern Ireland (as well as Ireland or Great Britain) can apply on behalf of both themselves and their affiliated entities based in Northern Ireland.

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<sup>2</sup> Where a Recognition pre-application has been submitted to Sport NI, or any of the other Home Countries Sports Councils, for consideration before this programme commenced, only governing bodies that have completed the Recognition process successfully before it closes (i.e. become Recognised) will be considered as eligible to receive funding through this programme.



*Sport NI recognises that the income and expenditure of the governing body will include amounts related to the Northern Ireland clubs and affiliates, but this may not be separately identified in its accounts. In this instance, the governing body accounts information should be used. The governing body should provide membership figures for Northern Ireland and the governing body as a whole, which will then be used to apportion the 'need' identified.*

- Where a Northern Ireland club is affiliated to a Great Britain -based governing body, which does not have jurisdiction for Northern Ireland, the club should apply to that governing body to submit on its behalf. The governing body is not eligible to apply for its own costs and may only submit an application on behalf of those clubs based in Northern Ireland; and
- A club submitting an application to a governing body should only be submitting one application to one governing body. This is relevant where a national governing body and a branch are both Recognised, or where a federation is Recognised as well as its individual governing bodies. This is also likely to be relevant to some clubs who may consider themselves to be 'multisport' e.g. a club that 'hosts' both a rugby and cricket club.

**Deliberate multiple applications by one club through more than one governing body may constitute attempted fraud.**

### **3.2 Affiliated Clubs and Entities**

It is the responsibility of each Recognised governing body to collate and submit applications on behalf of their affiliated clubs and sporting organisations.

Please refer to the 'Affiliated Club and Entities Guidance Notes' for more information relating to what is required to be submitted by affiliated clubs and sporting organisations.

The 'Affiliated Club and Entities Guidance Notes' document can be located on Sport NI's website here - [www.sportni.net/funding/our-fundingprogrammes/SportsSustainabilityFund](http://www.sportni.net/funding/our-fundingprogrammes/SportsSustainabilityFund)

## 4. Roles and responsibilities of the governing body

Sport NI requires Recognised governing bodies to undertake the following responsibilities and duties, namely:

1. To submit all requested information and documents in the format provided by Sport NI only;
2. Commitment to implement and advance the Sports Sustainability Fund principles of transparency, inclusion, diversity and equality of opportunity;
3. Identify a designated point of contact for the Sports Sustainability Fund;
4. Support affiliated clubs and entities to complete the application process;
5. Coordinate and submit a 'whole sport' application to Sport NI;
6. Provide assurances in respect of the specific governing body application and 'sense check'/challenge applications received from affiliated clubs and entities;
7. Governing bodies should only submit fully completed applications (including requested attachments) for their affiliated clubs and entities;
8. Governing bodies must retain all associated documentation provided by their affiliated clubs and entities, submitting to Sport NI upon request;
9. Ensure that the authorised office bearers/post-holders of the organisation sign and submit applications before the deadline;
10. Sport NI will make any offers of award to the governing bodies, including a detailed breakdown of awards for each club and entity. These amounts must be paid on by the governing bodies to each club and entity in full and without undue delay; and
11. To ensure transparency of the programme, Sport NI expects each governing body to publicise details of awards offered. This includes a detailed breakdown per affiliated club or entity.



## 5. What is the application process?

Applications must be completed online through Sport NI’s Internet Grants Applications Manager (IGAM) portal.

Links to the IGAM portal can be accessed through Sport NI’s website here – [www.sportni.net/funding/our-funding-programmes/SportsSustainabilityFund](http://www.sportni.net/funding/our-funding-programmes/SportsSustainabilityFund)

Governing bodies must complete the excel spreadsheet providing all information regarding current and historic income and expenditure.

At each section of the excel spreadsheet there are further guidance notes that can be accessed by clicking on the cells marked with a red tag in the corner of each marked cell. The excel spreadsheet is available on the Sport NI website here [www.sportni.net/funding/our-funding-programmes/SportsSustainabilityFund](http://www.sportni.net/funding/our-funding-programmes/SportsSustainabilityFund)

Applications will not be accepted in any other format.

### 5.1 What information must be submitted?

Governing bodies must submit the following documentation online to complete the application process:

- Application Form (Microsoft Excel spreadsheet);
- Approved<sup>3</sup> annual accounts for the last 3 financial years e.g. 2017, 2018 and 2019;
- Approved<sup>3</sup> management accounts for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020;
- Approved<sup>3</sup> projected figures for 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021; and
- Copy of a bank statement dated within the last 3 months.
- *For all-Ireland/GB bodies without separately identifiable NI figures ONLY, the governing body should provide membership figures for Northern Ireland and the governing body as a whole, which will then be used to apportion the 'need' identified.*

### 5.2 Closing Date for the Submission of Applications

Applications must be submitted through Sport NI’s IGAM portal by the following deadline:

| Submission of:                          | Closing Date:                 |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Application and Requested Documentation | 3pm on Monday 11 January 2021 |





<sup>3</sup> 'Approved' meaning having gone through the 'normal' process of producing accounts for the organisation. For some larger organisations, this will involve audited or certified accounts being approved by committee and then accepted by the members at the AGM.

For smaller organisations, accounts may simply be prepared by the Treasurer and approved by the members. As long as each organisation's own way of approving accounts has been followed then this is acceptable.

For the management accounts, 'approval' would be expected to be at a management committee level (or equivalent) as a minimum.

## 6. What assistance is available to applicants?

### 6.1 Sports Sustainability Fund Team

If you require any clarification regarding the information provided in these Guidance Notes or advice/guidance concerning the questions within the Application you can contact on [sportssustainabilityfund@sportni.net](mailto:sportssustainabilityfund@sportni.net)

### 6.2 Governing Body Workshops

Sport NI will be hosting the following governing body workshops to answer any questions on the application process:

| Venue  | Date & Time                                       |
|--|---|
| Online Platform<br>Login details to be confirmed | Wednesday 9 December 2020<br>Time to be confirmed |
| Online Platform<br>Login details to be confirmed | Wednesday 6 January 2021<br>Time to be confirmed  |

### 6.3 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Sport NI will record all relevant clarifications sought by potential applicants using an FAQ webpage. The webpage can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

The FAQ webpage will be updated when clarifications are requested.



## 7. Assessment

Sport NI will consider the financial need identified in the eligible applications received, in line with the programme budget available. Applications submitted to the Sports Sustainability Fund will not be scored or prioritised by organisation or sport.

Sport NI reserves the right to prioritise the budget lines and/or financial periods outlined in the application form in order to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of public funds.

The analysis of income and expenditure requested on the application form will enable Sport NI to consider the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sport NI will endeavour to provide a proportion of the need identified to as many eligible organisations as possible.

Sport NI intends to provide transparency throughout the programme. Any amounts applied for by a governing body on behalf of both itself and its affiliated clubs and entities, as well as all amounts awarded, will be publicly available.



## 8. Other Useful Information

If you contact us for any reason you become one of our 'customers'. This Customer Charter is a guide to the level of service you can expect.

### 8.1 Customer Service Standards

Sport NI's customer services charter is currently under review by Sport NI's Board. The new customer service charter will be placed on our website when available and will apply to this programme.

### 8.2 Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with the service you have received from SNI you may make a complaint.

The following is the three step process if you wish to make a complaint;

**Step One:** Telephone/e-mail/write to the person concerned. All complaints will be acknowledged within five working days and a full explanation will be given within a further ten working days.

**Step Two:** If you are not satisfied with the response you can write to the Chief Executive. You will receive an acknowledgement within five working days and your complaint will be reviewed and a written response sent to you within a further 15 working days.

**Step Three:** Should you still be unhappy, you can follow the review procedure as listed in Section 10.3.

### 8.3 Further Redress

If you feel that we have not dealt your complaint in a satisfactory manner, you can contact the Commissioner for Complaints (Ombudsman). The Ombudsman is totally independent of Sport NI and can be contacted at the following address:

The Ombudsman  
Freepost Belfast  
BT1 6RR  
Tel: 0800 343 424 (freephone)  
028 9023 4912

The Ombudsman will normally expect you to have raised the complaint with us before referring to him.



## 8.4 The Standard We Expect of Applicants

- Sport NI requires applicants to provide whatever information may be necessary to safeguard public funds, and to carry out random validation checks. You should take care to ensure, therefore, that the details you provide are correct.
- Any misleading statements (whether deliberate or accidental) given at any stage may render the Application invalid, and you may be liable to return any money already paid out.
- The above information submitted will be held by Sport NI in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998. All government departments share information on projects to enable them to prevent fraudulent applications and to co-ordinate the processing of complementary applications. Information provided by the applicant may be made available to other departments or agencies for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime.
- Any direct or indirect approach by an applicant, its officers, servants, contractors, personal or professional representatives or advisors made to members of Sport NI, its Committees or officers which, in the view of Sport NI or their advisors constitutes an attempt in any way to influence the outcome of an Application will, at the absolute discretion of the Council, render the Application **ineligible for further consideration**.

## 8.5 Freedom of Information

Any data gathered by Sport NI in relation to this programme will be held in accordance with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Applicants should note that in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, information regarding both successful and unsuccessful applications may be made available to the public via the World Wide Web and a variety of publications and is disclosable under Freedom of Information (FOI) or Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests.



## Appendix A - Governing body spreadsheet

|   |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Governing Body Name:<br>Name Governing Body   |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>PART 1</b><br>This year - 9 months from 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020<br>£  |  | <b>PART 2</b><br>Previous 3 years (from accounts)<br>2017 * 2018 * 2019 * 3 month Average *<br>£ £ £ £   |  | <b>PART 3</b><br>Basic difference identified £<br>Other confirmed assistance £<br>Request for assistance - Current £ |  |
| <b>Income (Revenue, Turnover)</b><br>-match day income 10<br>-memberships 10<br>-competitions and events 5<br>-hospitality 0<br>-sponsorship 5<br>-Covid related grants 5<br>-normal revenue grants 5<br>-other income generating activities 5<br><b>45</b> |  | <b>Income (Revenue, Turnover)</b><br>-match day income 110 125 100 85.75<br>-memberships 50 50 50 50<br>-competitions and events 40 30 40 37.5<br>-hospitality 15 25 15 17.5<br>-sponsorship 5 20 5 10<br>-Covid related grants 0 0 0 0<br>-normal revenue grants 5 0 0 1.25<br>-other income generating activities 10 30 20 23.75<br><b>250 300 265 260</b>   |  |  |  |
| <b>Expenditure (Cost of Sales and Admin. Expenses)</b><br>-wages & salaries 10<br>-match day costs 5<br>-competitions and events costs 5<br>-hospitality costs 0<br>-grants 5<br>-all other operating costs 10<br><b>35</b>                                 |  | <b>Expenditure</b><br>-wages & salaries 80 80 60 65<br>-match day costs 80 30 80 62.5<br>-competitions and events costs 25 30 35 28.75<br>-hospitality costs 10 25 10 17.5<br>-grants 1 1 1 1<br>-all other operating costs 40 35 45 38.75<br><b>226 231 231 212</b>   |  |  |  |
| Trading or Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for period <b>12</b>   |  | Trading or Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for period <b>24 29 14 18</b>   |  |  |  |
| <b>PART 3 (Optional)</b><br>PROJECTIONS - 9 months from 1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021<br>£  |  | <b>PART 3 (Optional)</b><br>Projected difference identified £<br>Other confirmed assistance £<br>Request for assistance - Projected £  |  |  |  |
| <b>Income (Revenue, Turnover)</b><br>-match day income 3<br>-memberships 3<br>-competitions and events 0<br>-hospitality 0<br>-sponsorship 3<br>-Covid related grants 3<br>-normal revenue grants 3<br>-other income generating activities 3<br><b>17</b>   |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Expenditure (Cost of Sales and Admin. Expenses)</b><br>-wages & salaries 4<br>-match day costs 3<br>-competitions and events costs 3<br>-hospitality costs 0<br>-grants 0<br>-all other operating costs 0<br><b>9</b>                                    |  |  |  |  |  |
| Trading or Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for period <b>8</b>  |  |  |  |  |  |
|   |  | <b>PART 4</b><br>Attached:<br>9 months accounts for 31 December 2020 (used for Part 1) Yes<br>2017 accounts (used for Part 2) Yes<br>2018 accounts (used for Part 2) Yes<br>2019 accounts (used for Part 2) Yes<br>Optional (only required if Part 4 completed):<br>3 months projections to 31 March 2021 (used for Part 4) N/A<br>Form complete: COMPLETE   |  |  |  |
|   |  | <b>PART 7 - Approval</b><br>1. We certify that we have read and understood the guidelines and criteria applicable to application for funding and agree to comply in full.<br>2. We certify, on behalf of the applicant, that all the information provided in this application, and all information given in any documentation submitted in support of the application is truthful and accurate, having taken all reasonable steps to ensure this.<br>3. We hereby further certify that we have made full and complete disclosure of all the relevant facts relating to the application or its subject matter whether supportive of the application or otherwise. We undertake to inform Sport NI fully and immediately in writing of any material amendments or changes in the circumstances of the applicant or any part of the subject matter of the application which may in any way affect the application whensoever and howsoever arising.<br>4. We hereby undertake that from the date of any award, no-one will be denied access to the project in respect of which an award has been paid whether in full or in part, on the grounds of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation, gender, disability, and persons with dependents without just reasonable and proper cause.<br>Authorised officer (owner/joint holder 1): First name: [ ] Date: [ ]<br>Authorised officer (owner/joint holder 2): First name: [ ] Date: [ ] |  |  |  |

### Explanatory notes:

The spreadsheet has been created in order to compare the 9 month period from 1 April 2020 – 31 December 2020 (the period of COVID-19) with what a 'normal' 9 month period for your organisation looks like, and to identify financial need based on this. It is only considering 'Operating' or 'Trading' income and expenditure. The figures required for entry should come from the organisation's income and expenditure account (also referred to as a profit and loss account).

Each cell has a comment attached to it to provide further clarification on what is required to be entered. Scroll over the cells on the online version to see this.

Some cells have been set up to automatically calculate a figure, using the other figures that have been entered. These cells do not allow you to enter figures into them.



Governing body name should be entered in the appropriate cell at the top of the spreadsheet.

**PART 1** – This year’s figures. Specifically the 9 months from 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020. These should be taken from the organisation’s approved management accounts for the period.

**PART 2** – The previous three years’ figures. If last year’s accounts included any significant overlap into the period being asked for in Part 1 (1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020) then please use the last full set of accounts before this. This section is calculating what a ‘normal’ year looked like for an organisation so it is important that the significant effects of COVID-19 are not included here. The ‘9 month Average’ column in this section calculates the average figures, based on the historic accounts information entered. The figures in this column cannot be amended.

**PART 3** – This calculates the ‘need’ due to COVID-19 (the difference between the current period’s surplus/deficit from 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020 and the average surplus/deficit from the previous years. Any additional funding confirmed but not yet received should be entered in the ‘Other confirmed assistance’ cell. The ‘Request for assistance – Current’ cell is the amount of ‘need’. If this figure is negative then no ‘need’ has been demonstrated and no application should be submitted for this period.

**PART 4** – This financial year’s projected figures. Specifically the 3 months from 1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021. These should be taken from the organisation’s approved management accounts projections for the period. This section is optional, as some organisations may not be in a position to evidence this.

**PART 5** – This calculates the ‘need’ due to COVID-19 (the difference between the projected period’s surplus/deficit from 1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021 and the average surplus/deficit from the previous years. Any additional funding confirmed for this period should be entered in the ‘Other confirmed assistance’ cell. The ‘Request for assistance – Projected’ cell is the amount of ‘need’. If this figure is negative then no ‘need’ has been demonstrated and no application should be submitted for this period.

**PART 6** – Evidence of figures. Documentation to evidence the figures entered should be available and forwarded with your application. The boxes beside each piece of information should be selected as ‘Yes’/‘No’ as applicable. For the information requested at Part 1 and Part 2, if the boxes are not selected as ‘Yes’ then the application will show as ‘INCOMPLETE’ and should not be submitted until all required information is available. For the information requested at Part 4, if the box is not selected as ‘Yes’ or ‘N/a’ then the application will show as ‘INCOMPLETE’ and should not be submitted until all required information is available. Note that, should no information be submitted for Part 4, then ‘N/a’ should be selected here, enabling the application to be considered ‘COMPLETE’.



**PART 7** – Two authorised officer bearers/post holders should enter their names and date here, as a ‘signature’ that the application conforms with the conditions of the programme listed.

Compiling the information required from affiliated clubs and entities

Clubs and entities will also complete a similar spreadsheet and forward these to the governing body.

The governing body should review these spreadsheets for eligibility and completeness (including provision of requested additional information, e.g. accounts) and attach spreadsheets that it deems appropriate.

These club figures should be totalled into the ‘Total Clubs’ tab linking the cells from the individual spreadsheets.

The total ‘need’ figures from all the clubs and entities and that of the governing body (if eligible) should be totalled into the ‘Total Sport’ tab of the spreadsheet.

The four figures from this spreadsheet are what the governing body will use to enter on to the IGAM system.