

Renewable Energy Fund

Pilot Programme -2023/24



Information & Guidance



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Communities

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1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Sport Northern Ireland's (Sport NI) Renewable Energy Fund (2023/24). If you are reading this information and guidance document, your organisation is possibly considering how to reduce your environmental impact, and you may be interested in exploring the wide range of benefits renewable energy interventions can have within your premises.

This Renewable Energy Fund Pilot Programme is a forerunner to future Renewable Energy Funds from Sport NI (subject to budget availability). The primary purpose of this pilot is to provide learning to Sport NI, so that we understand how organisations value environmental sustainability, and become more knowledgeable about the types of energy interventions that can have the greatest impact within sporting organisations.

By applying to this Renewable Energy Fund, you are committing to providing Sport NI with information, should your application be selected to proceed. Information will include: energy performance/usage data (i.e., utility bills or other, outlining your energy consumption) and financial data for comparable time periods pre and post installation of an energy intervention.

Please read this information and guidance document carefully before applying to this Programme. Sport NI would encourage you to firstly complete our Environmental Sustainability Survey. Any applicant who wishes to be considered for the Renewable Energy Fund MUST complete our survey for their application to be eligible.

The Renewable Energy Fund is financed by funds made available by Department for Communities.

2. WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF THE FUND?

The Renewable Energy Fund has one overarching objective:

"To reduce the environmental impact of sports clubs in Northern Ireland."

However, the pilot programme also has secondary objectives, which reflect commitments made in Sport NI's Corporate Plan – The Power of Sport (2021-2026), including:

- To reduce the environmental footprint of sports clubs.
- To reduce carbon emissions at sports clubs.
- To contribute to a more sustainable sports club network.
- To create a 'greener' sports club sector.
- To save on utility bills and reduce costs, enabling sports clubs to redirect resources back into their clubs/sport.

Sport NI has also committed to contributing to the delivery of recommendations made in the Environmental Strategy for NI, particularly Outcome 2 - Healthy & Accessible Environment & Landscapes everyone can connect with and enjoy.

3. ELIGIBILITY

The Renewable Energy Fund will ONLY accept applications from the following organisations who either own or operate their own sports facilities*:

- Sports clubs (affiliated to a Sport Northern Ireland recognised governing body of sport).

*Please note the following:

- a) Organisations who own their facilities must be able to evidence this upon request from Sport NI. Failure to evidence ownership upon request from Sport NI will result in immediate withdrawal from the application process.
 - b) Organisations who operate (but do not own their own facilities) must be able to evidence security of tenure, with a minimum of ten years remaining on the lease at the time of application to this fund. Failure to evidence tenure upon request from Sport NI will result in immediate withdrawal from the application process.
- Clubs who own/operate multiple sites can apply for the Renewable Energy Fund. However, this pilot program will only consider applications for a club's primary site.

Clubs who received Building Better Sports Facilities funding from Sport NI (in the previous two financial years - 2021/22 and 2022/23, or who are receiving Building Better Sports Facilities funding in 2023/24) are ineligible for the Renewable Energy Fund.

4. WHAT TYPE OF PROJECTS CAN BE FUNDED?

Sport NI research has indicated that the following types of energy projects are likely to have a positive impact on environmental sustainability within sports clubs, therefore this Pilot programme will focus on the following interventions:

- Solar Energy Systems (and ancillary equipment).
- Air Source Heating Systems (and ancillary equipment).
- Ground Source Heating Systems (and ancillary equipment).
- Sustainable Water Recycling Systems.
- Fixed Floodlight Upgrades.
(Specifically upgrades to LED Bulbs and Connection to Grid)

NOTE: Sport NI may consider alternative energy efficiency interventions if recommended in your club energy audit, and if the benefits of that intervention have been clearly articulated. Sport NI also reserve the right to not fund any of the above projects for several reasons, including: value exceeding funding threshold, procurement related issues, delivery related issues, and incompatibility with existing systems at the club site.

Please be aware that some elements of the above projects may require planning approval. However, due to the timelines associated with project delivery (i.e., projects should normally be completed by 31st March 2024), it may not be possible to take forward projects that have not gained prior planning approval. For projects that are considered by the applicant as permitted development, Sport NI will need to see evidence that contact has been made with the local planning authority to confirm the legality of proposed works under permitted development.

5. WHAT TYPE OF PROJECTS CANNOT BE FUNDED?

Sport NI will not consider energy interventions at the following:

- Buildings without wall and ceiling insulation.
- Buildings without double or triple glazed windows.
- Portacabins.
- Single sheet metal skinned buildings.
- Sheds or storage units.
- Temporary floodlights or floodlights which are not pre-existing.

NOTE: The list above is not exhaustive. Eligibility of project proposals will be determined by Sport NI.

6. SUBMISSION PROCESS

Sport NI will not fund any of the following ineligible costs:

- Design Team or Professional Fees.
- Fees Associated with Statutory Approvals.
- Significant Structural works.
- Retrospective works carried out prior to Letter of Offer.

Applicant clubs will be responsible for all ineligible costs. However, if design teams are required or statutory approvals, Sport NI will make a final determination on whether the project can be taken forward in line with timescales for project delivery (Normally completion should be around 31st March 2024). If it is determined that a project cannot be delivered within the timescale, it will result in immediate withdrawal from the application process.

7. MAXIMUM PROJECT VALUES

The Renewable Energy Fund is being delivered in two main stages: Project Development and Project Delivery.

- At the Project Development stage, clubs will be required to procure an energy consultant to undertake a 'building energy survey' which will identify potential energy projects (more information at Chapter 11). At the development stage the maximum project development value will be **£3,000.**
- At the Project Delivery stage, clubs will procure suppliers/contractors to undertake the installation works for the preferred energy project (more information at Chapter 11). At the delivery stage the maximum project value will be **£30,000*.**

**For clubs that are VAT Registered and who can fully reclaim VAT, the maximum project value will be £30,000 (excluding VAT). For clubs not registered for VAT, the maximum project value is £30,000 (including VAT).*

To ensure project delivery can be achieved around 31st March 2024, project values have been set to comply with Northern Ireland public procurement limits for a quote-based procurement exercise.

8. WHAT FUNDING CAN I EXPECT?

At the Development Award stage, Sport NI will fund:

- 50% of development costs including VAT for Clubs who are not registered for VAT up to the value of £3k.
- 50% of development costs excluding VAT for Clubs who are registered for VAT up to the value of £3k.

At the Project Delivery stage, Sport NI will fund:

- 80% of project delivery costs including VAT for Clubs who are not registered for VAT up to the value of £30k.
- 80% of project delivery costs excluding VAT for Clubs who are registered for VAT up to the value of £30k.

NOTE: Sport NI may consider enhanced funding levels if an applicant club is in a Super Output Area in the top 25% (ranked 1 to 222) of the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure. You can check your Super Output Area and rank by entering your postcode here: <https://deprivation.nisra.gov.uk/>.

Enhanced Funding:

If your club is eligible for enhanced funding, Sport NI will fund:

- 60% of development costs (VAT conditions above apply)
- 90% of project delivery costs (VAT conditions above apply)

Clubs must be able to demonstrate immediate availability of partnership funding. If partnership funding is not immediately available, the application will be immediately withdrawn from the process. Appendix 1 provides a table showing examples of partnership funding requirements.

9. HOW DO I APPLY?

Applications must be completed online through Sport NI's Internet Grants Applications Manager (IGAM) portal. Access to the IGAM portal can be accessed through Sport NI's website here: www.sportni.net

Applications will not be accepted in any other format.

Applicants seeking to be considered for the Renewable Energy Fund MUST firstly complete Sport NI's Environmental Sustainability Survey prior to applying. Sport NI will be cross referencing applications and survey submissions. Any applicant that hasn't completed a survey will be immediately withdrawn from the process.

10. HOW YOUR PROJECT WILL BE SELECTED

The Renewable Energy Fund is a Pilot Programme designed to improve our knowledge of certain energy interventions and their impact. Therefore, we have not introduced any scoring criteria or assessment. For 2023/24, clubs will be selected at random. The process will be simple and will ensure an even spread of projects across Northern Ireland. Here's how it will happen:

- a. Under the supervision of an independent adjudicator, the 11 Council areas will be drawn at random from a pot. This step will determine the sequence in which applicant clubs will be randomly drawn. This step will be complete when the 11 Council areas have been randomly drawn and ordered 1 to 11.
- b. All applications will then be divided into 11 pots, based on the Council area in which each sports club is located.
- c. The next step, also under the supervision of an independent adjudicator, will be to draw applicant clubs in sequence from each Council area, using the order in which Councils were drawn in step 'A'. For example, if Belfast City was drawn 1st, and Fermanagh & Omagh drawn 2nd, we will first draw one club from Belfast, then draw one club from Fermanagh & Omagh and so on until every council has one randomly drawn club. Once all Council areas have one applicant club drawn, we will

then draw a second applicant club from each Council area, and then a third applicant club. The outcome will be 44 randomly selected applicant clubs.

- d. For the purposes of this pilot programme, Sport NI would like to test renewable energy interventions in as many different sporting spaces and places as possible. Subsequently, we intend to apply a ratio to our random selection process, whereby the percentage of total applications per sport will determine the maximum number of clubs that can be drawn in the random selection. For example, if golf represents 10% of the total number of applications received, golf clubs can only equate to 10% (4) of the 44 clubs to be randomly selected. Using the selection process above, when 3 golf clubs have been randomly selected, no further golf clubs can be drawn, and any further golf clubs that are drawn will be discounted from the selection process. Note: Any club randomly drawn that represents a sport equating to 6% or less of the total applications received will equal a maximum of 1 club that can be drawn from the selection process.
- e. The sequence in which clubs are drawn (1 to 3) will determine the order in which they will be invited to progress an energy project in 2023/24. Sport NI has a programme budget of £300,000, which means we are likely to invite the 11 clubs drawn out 1st in each Council area to progress. Should further budget become available, we can then invite the club's drawn 2nd, using the order in which Councils were randomly drawn. For example, using our scenario above, we will invite the 2nd drawn club from Belfast City, then invite the 2nd drawn club from Fermanagh & Omagh, and so on, until the available programme budget has been expended.
- f. Sport NI make no commitment to funding all 44 randomly selected clubs. Any randomly selected club that has not been invited to progress a project by 29th February 2024, will be informed that the programme has concluded and the reserve list abolished. There will be no additional 'random selection' of clubs, and any club not randomly selected in the first instance will be advised by 3rd November 2023 that they have been unsuccessful.
- g. Sport NI will review all selected application forms against the programme requirements (i.e., security of tenure, partnership funding, financial need, VAT status, deprivation rank) and will also cross reference with survey returns. Any project which does not meet the requirements or who has not completed a survey will be immediately withdrawn.

NOTE:

Sport NI reserves the right to amend the selection process should the circumstances for random selection as outlined above not be achieved. Any subsequent layers of selection to achieve a spread of sports will be agreed with the independent adjudicator.

11. HOW WILL THE RENEWABLE ENERGY FUND BE DELIVERED?

Stage 1: Application

- Email any queries to ref@sportni.net
- Deadline for queries is Wednesday 25th October 2023.
- Queries will be answered and uploaded to an FAQ on Sport NI's website.
- Clubs MUST complete the Environmental Sustainability Survey. The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.
- Clubs MUST submit an online application form before 4pm on Monday 30th October 2023. Applications should take less than 5 minutes to complete.
- Random selection will take place within 1 week of the application closing and all applicant clubs will be notified of the outcome via email by Friday 3rd November 2023.

Stage 2: Project Development

- Clubs to immediately submit bank statements for financial need assessment.
- Clubs will be issued with a 'specification' for an Energy Consultant, drafted by Sport NI.
- Clubs invited to procure (minimum 2 quotations) an Energy Consultant to review club premises and draft an energy report.
- Quotations submitted to Sport NI during November 2023.
- Evidence of partnership funding requested. Letter of Offer Pack issued.
- Clubs appoint their preferred (lowest priced) consultant.
- Consultant undertakes audit and drafts report (using SNI template).
- Consultant to submit audit report to Sport NI within 3 weeks of issue date of Letter of Offer.

Stage 3: Project Procurement

- Sport NI to review energy reports and a preferred project will be agreed in consultation with clubs (in line with guidance above).
- Clubs invited to procure (minimum 2 quotations) a supplier/contractor to undertake energy project.
- Quotations submitted to Sport NI.
- Evidence of partnership funding requested. Letter of Offer Pack issued.
- Clubs appoint their preferred (lowest priced) supplier/contractor.

Stage 4: Project Delivery

- Clubs to commence works between December 2023 and March 2024.
- All Projects should normally be completed by 31st March 2024.

12. CLOSING DATE

Please ensure the completed application is submitted within the deadlines as detailed below:

Submission of:	Closing Time / Date:
Application Form + Environmental Sustainability Survey	MONDAY 30TH OCTOBER 2023 4PM

Sport NI reserves the right to amend, supplement and/or discontinue at its absolute discretion, for whatever reason, any or all the policies, criteria and application procedures set out in its publications.

Sport NI shall not be liable to any applicant or any other party in respect of loss, damage or costs of any nature arising directly or indirectly from:

- a) the application or the subject matter of the application or any part thereof.
- b) the rejection for any reason of any application or any matter arising there from; and/or
- c) the decisions as to the acceptance or rejection of applications are at Sport NI's sole discretion.

13. WHAT ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE TO APPLICANTS?

Infrastructure Team

If you require any clarification regarding the information provided in these Guidance Notes you can send an email to ref@sportni.net

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Sport NI will record all relevant clarifications sought by potential applicants using an FAQ log which can be found here – www.sportni.net. The FAQ log will be updated when clarifications are requested.

14. WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR APPLICATION IS UNSUCCESSFUL?

There is no entitlement to an award. Your application will be randomly selected, in a transparent process, overseen by an independent adjudicator. With the likelihood of more applications for awards than there are funds available, it is unfortunately inevitable that many projects will be unsuccessful.

If you are unsuccessful with your application, we will:

- Communicate with you in a timely manner via email to advise of the outcome of our random selection process.

15. 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.

a. Customer Service Standards

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

b. Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with the service, you have received from Sport Northern Ireland you may make a complaint.

The following is the two-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.

c. 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 Northern Ireland 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.

d. 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 Northern Ireland 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 Northern Ireland, its committees or officers which, in the view of Sport Northern Ireland 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.**

e. Freedom of Information

Any data gathered by Sport Northern Ireland 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.

16. SPORT NI: PRIVACY NOTICE

Sport Northern Ireland is committed to building trust and confidence in our ability to keep your information secure and our Privacy Notice explains how we do this. You can view Sport Northern Ireland's Privacy Notice on our website (About Us-Access to Information-Privacy Notice).

Data Controller Name: Sport Northern Ireland

Address: House of Sport, 2a Upper Malone Road, Belfast, BT9 5LA

Telephone: 028 9038 1222

Why are you processing my personal information?

The information is processed for the purposes of making grant funding decisions. This information will be used to make decisions, reduce risk of duplicate funding and fraud, have greater accountability, greater transparency and to provide a reporting and analysis tool.

What categories of personal data are you processing?

Categories of information processed include:

- Name;
- Address;
- Phone Number;
- Fax Number; and
- Email address.

We also process special category data classes of information that may include:

- Race;
- Ethnic origin;
- Politics;
- Religion;
- Trade union membership;
- Genetics;
- Biometrics (where used for ID purposes);
- Health;
- Sex life; or
- Sexual orientation.

Where do you get my personal data from?

The application forms submitted as part of this funding programme which is then stored electronically on Sport Northern Ireland's systems.

Do you share my personal data with anyone else?

Your personal data is shared with the internal site of the Government Funding Database for the purposes of conducting Financial System and Controls.

Your core information is also available on the public site of the Government Funding Database which is visible for all to see. The categories of data include: Name, Address, Phone Number, Fax Number, Email address. These details are normally pertaining to a representative of your organisation however they could also be personal details.

Retention of Records

We will ensure compliance with GDPR and DPA by ensuring that effective management of records, from when they are created, how they are stored and used, through to their disposal or archival is in place. Records are held in line with Sport Northern Ireland's Retention and Disposal policy which is from 8-21 years depending on the project.

How do I complain if I am not happy?

If you are unhappy with how any aspect of this privacy notice, or how your personal information is being processed, please contact Sport Northern Ireland.

If you are still not happy, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO):

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113

Email: casework@ico.org.uk

Changes to this Privacy Notice

We keep this privacy notice under regular review. Check this notice to make sure you are aware of what information we collect, how we use it and the circumstances we may share it with other organisations. This privacy notice was last updated in October 2018.

Consent

When submitting your application to the Building Better Sports Facilities, you will be asked to consent to Sport Northern Ireland sharing this information with other bodies.

APPENDIX 1

The table shows examples of partnership funding that will be required should your project cost the maximum project value (i.e., £33,000 = £3,000 Development + £30,000 Project). The examples provided below are for clubs registered for VAT (green columns) and clubs not registered for VAT (blue columns). The table also shows 'Normal Funding' and 'Enhanced Funding' examples. Enhanced funding is only for applicants who can evidence the project site is in an area within the top 25% (ranked 1 to 222) of the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure. You can check your Multiple Deprivation Rank by entering your postcode [here](#).

		CLUBS REGISTERED FOR VAT EXAMPLE			CLUBS NOT REGISTERED FOR VAT EXAMPLE		
	Sport NI Funding (%)	Project Costs	Sport NI Award	Partnership Funding Required	Project Costs	Sport NI Award	Partnership Funding Required
NORMAL FUNDING	DEVELOPMENT AWARD 50% funding up to a maximum project value of £3,000.	£3,000 (Excluding VAT)	£1,500	£1,500 + VAT @ £600 = <u>£2,100</u>	£3,000 (Including VAT)	£1,500	£1,500
	PROJECT AWARD 80% funding up to a maximum project value of £30,000.	£30,000 (Excluding VAT)	£24,000	£6,000 + VAT @ £6,000 = <u>£12,000</u>	£30,000 (Including VAT)	£24,000	£6,000
ENHANCED FUNDING	DEVELOPMENT AWARD 60% funding available for project in top 25% most deprived areas (SOA-MDM).	£3,000 (Excluding VAT)	£1,800	£1,200 + VAT @ £600 = <u>£1,800</u>	£3,000 (Including VAT)	£1,800	£1,200
	PROJECT AWARD 90% funding available for project in top 25% most deprived areas (SOA-MDM).	£30,000 (Excluding VAT)	£27,000	£3,000 + VAT @ £6,000 = <u>£9,000</u>	£30,000 (Including VAT)	£27,000	£3,000