

**System Partners Investment Programme -
National Governing Bodies
(2026–2027)**

Frequently Asked Questions

Version: 1.1

Date 25/02/2026

For technical support, contact sportssystems@sportni.net to request a call back.



General

1. Do I need to read the Guidance Note before completing the forms?

Yes. The Guidance Note explains every section of both Excel documents and includes rules that often lead to common mistakes.

2. What is the Unique Deliverables Identifier, and how do I use it?

Each NGB has been assigned a three-letter code. This can be found on p.11 of the Guidance Note. Use this code to create priority codes (e.g., ATH1, ATH2). In the first sheet “1. Deliverables” you will indicate your rank order using this code and then you need to include this code in the second sheet “2. Funding & Costs Breakdown”. This will automatically populate the funding cost column in the first sheet to enable swift assessment.

3. Do deliverables need to be prioritised across both strands?

Strand Deliverables need to be prioritised separately for each strand; however, the Unique Deliverables Identifier (UDI) must be consecutive across both Strands. The UDI numbering for Participation should continue into Performance.

For example, if you have Participation Deliverables ranked UDI 1 - 5 and Performance Deliverables ranked UDI 6 - 8, the Performance Deliverables are still ranked in priority order 1st – 3rd for Performance, rather than 6th - 8th overall and will be assessed as such.

4. Can I move funding from one strand to the other?

Only moving from Performance to Participation is allowed. You can do this within the “2. Funding & Costs Breakdown” sheet by allocating more money (budget lines) into Participation than your Indicative Award Letter originally allocated to your organisation. The summary cells at (top left corner) of this sheet will automatically show the amount of funding you have moved from Performance to Participation; we ask that you ensure the Indicative Award Amounts for both strands are completed in this section too.

5. Do I need to provide match funding?

Not necessarily, but it is encouraged as it will show that your proposed activity is sustainable and attractive to outside partners. Match funding includes external partners or funders as well as the internal monies you are committing to each item.

If you are requesting funding for staff costs, you should also detail the Match funding for the delivery of projects and activities aligned to the SPI Programme.

6. What constitutes a deliverable?

A specific output or activity planned for 2026–27.

7. What level of detail is expected for deliverables?



Concise, specific descriptions within character limits.

8. For Measures of Success, do I need to fill in every row?

No, only those measures are relevant to your application. You do not need to complete every measure.

9. What if my sport doesn't collect baseline data for a specific Measure?

Indicate "No" in the dropdown; you may still set a target for 2026-27. There is no penalty for not having the baseline. Sport NI will provide support to set the baseline.

10. What counts as a competition for the Performance Schedule?

Any confirmed or likely competition aligned to the athletes' pathway.

11. What level of detail is expected for risks?

Clear risk, impact, likelihood, controls, and the risk owner. Level of detail should be **proportionate** to the seriousness of the risk and the size of your overall investment.

12. What are the most common errors?

From initial feedback, we have identified the following: Mismatched codes, exceeding character limits, leftover examples, and unlinked costs.

If you need technical assistance, use the Sports Systems email account to request a call back.

13. What file formats should I use when submitting?

Excel. Any additional documents must be submitted as pdf (accounts, etc.).

14. Who should sign the declaration?

CEO/Executive Manager & Chair/Board member.

15. Who can we contact for help?

sportssystems@sportni.net

16. There is a question about rurality which has not been asked before, why is it needed now?

Sport NI must complete a Rural Needs Assessment, and we need your help to do so. This question helps us gather information and is not assessed.

"Rural" generally refers to areas with populations under 5,000 and the open countryside outside designated settlements.



17. There is a question about Net Zero which has not been asked before, why is it needed now?

This question helps us gather information and is not assessed.

18. The application form and supplementary workbook are detailed and lengthy. Do I need to complete every section?

You need to complete all sections of the application form but within the supplementary workbook you only need to complete the sections relevant to your proposal, if you are requesting only Participation funding, you may leave the sections relating to Performance blank. Please also note that **proportionate effort** should relate to your requested level of investment.

19. How is my application being assessed?

As per p.7 of the Guidance Note, submissions will be assessed on:

- strategic alignment to SPI outcomes and objectives,
- deliverability,
- proportionality,
- value for money,
- additionality, and
- adequacy of risk management arrangements.

20. Can we add workplans/strategy documents to provide context when submitting the Application?

Yes, if the documents are not available on your website. Additional documents can be saved as PDF and submitted; however, these will not be assessed.

21. Do posts need to be split across budget lines if they deliver against different objectives?

Yes. Posts should be split across the relevant deliverables that they contribute to. For example, if staff member 'A' contributes to 4 deliverables, then 25% of staff time should be applied to each of these deliverables/funding lines in sheet "2. Funding & Costs Breakdown" (if staff member is allocated equal time across each deliverable).

22. Are coaches considered 3rd party delivery partners if they are not directly employed by our Organisation?

Coaches employed and deployed by the organisation are not classed as 3rd party. Community and Voluntary sector organisations that you engage to support delivery, for example, would be classed as 3rd party.

23. In the Funding & Costs Breakdown sheet, which month should I put costs into?



Enter costs in the month they will **actually be** spent. It is when the costs are incurred by your organisation i.e., when delivery takes place.

If you require technical assistance, email the Sports Systems account to request a call back.

24. The Cashflow Projection already has example numbers. Do I need to delete them?

Yes — replace all example data. As above there is an issue with this sheet, the cells where you name the income and expenditure types are incorrectly locked, instructions at the bottom of this document explain how to unlock them for editing.



Technical

25. The Application Form mentions a 1250-character limit. Does this mean words?

No — it means characters, not words. Input cells in the application form are limited to 1250 characters (approx. 350 words), and input cells within the supplementary workbook are limited to 300-700 characters (approx. 75-190 words) depending on the expected response. Any answers exceeding the set word limit will only be considered up to the word limit.

26. What should I do if my text looks cut off or does not display fully in the cell?

There are a few fixes to this issue:

- Use Alt + Enter to insert line breaks within the cell.
- You can resize the cell height or choose to wrap text within these cells using the instructions at the end of this document,
- You can view the contents of the cell by selecting the down arrow here:



Upon assessment, the cell contents will be extracted into an assessment template, so all contents will be visible to SNI Assessors.

27. I can't see all the dropdown options — what should I do?

Resize columns or zoom out.

28. What to do if Excel formulas aren't updating?

Revert changes or re-download a clean file. If still not working (and for any other issue with the excel formulas), contact sportssystems@sportni.net.

29. Some cells within the 2. Funding & Breakdown sheet (J13-M34) are dropdown options so I can't input figures here.

Refer to the instructions at the end of this document to resolve this issue.



Common issues with excel and follow-up Instructions:

If you require technical assistance, contact the sports systems account to request a call back.

1. Deliverables Sheet (and other text-based cells) | Instructions for ensuring longform text is visible to the applicant and the assessor

1. Select Review Tab,
2. Select unprotect sheet,
3. Enter password 'paddyspi', and hit okay
4. Select the cels with longform text that you cannot see,
5. Go to the Home tab,
6. Select Wrap Text,
7. Go back to the Review Tab,
8. Select protect sheet,
9. Enter password 'paddyspi' twice and hit okay.

2. Funding & Costs Breakdown Sheet | Instructions for removing dropdown cells in Participation Table Columns Aug 26 – Oct 26 and allowing numerical input:

1. Go to Funding & Costs Breakdown Sheet,
2. Select Review Tab,
3. Select unprotect sheet,
4. Enter password 'paddyspi', and hit okay,
5. Select cells J13 – L34,
6. Go to Data Tab,
7. Then Data Validation,
8. Select Clear All button within popup box.
9. Select Review Tab,
10. Select Protect Sheet,
11. Enter password 'paddyspi' twice and hit okay.



3 Cashflow Projections Sheet | Instructions for adding text to Other Income and Other Operating Costs rows within 2a Cashflow Projection

1. Go to 2a Cashflow Projection,
2. Select Review Tab,
3. Select unprotect sheet,
4. Enter password 'paddyspi', and hit okay,
5. Select cells A8-22,
6. Right click these cells and within popup, go to protection tab and untick Locked and hit okay.
7. Select Review Tab,
8. Select Protect Sheet,
9. Enter password 'paddyspi' twice and hit okay.

