

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

Frequently Asked Questions

Version: 1.3

Date 09/03/2026

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.

25. Do performance deliverables have to be ranked lower than participation deliverables?

We will assess both strands separately and while you will continue with the sequence we will take your first performance number as your highest priority.

26. Previously we submitted pathway and workforce data is this not in use anymore?

We will still request this post-LOO; this may be done through our potential M&E Partner or via data return directly to Project Leads.



27. Will existing SNI project lead be available for application support from now to the deadline for applications?

The SPI programme has a number of methods to support you through the application process, firstly we have arranged a number of clinics during the submission period during which you can raise queries alternatively we would ask you to submit queries via email to sportssystems@sportni.net and one of the team will be in touch with you ASAP to provide a response. Thirdly we have a Frequently Asked Questions document which records answers to queries during the submission period. This can be accessed on our website at the following link: [System Partners Investment – NGB Programme \(2026–27\) | Sport NI](#)

28. The questions about participants involved in NGB delivered programmes. Does this include NGB programmes that clubs deliver on our behalf, or just programmes that NGB's directly deliver themselves?

This question relates to the participants involved in programmes our funding helps deliver, so it can include both.

29. The ratio for coach/leader to participant is high for some of our deliverables, will this impact on a funding decision?

We are aware of the requirements in terms of ratios, include this within the description of your deliverables and it will be considered.

30. The question about the total number of performance hours delivered – if we have a 2-hour session for 10 people would the answer be 20 hours delivered, or 2?

It is the hours delivered rather than the number of people multiplied by the session length, so in this case the answer is 2 hours delivered.

31. What is the scope for cross-border participation? Is it okay for an event to primarily support NI residents but allow others in?

The eligibility criteria for this National Lottery funded programme identifies that organisations *must deliver programmes that benefit the people in Northern Ireland.*



32. Within Q20, the wording of question suggests identifying one primary participant grouping; do we choose one or multiple.

Choose as many apply to your organisation.

33. In Q26, do we assume LOO will be with us by 1st April so no expenditure will be incurred before the start date?

As long as there are no delays in submitting your application by Friday 13th March, LOOs will be issued by 1st April. This section relates to Sports who may have purchased equipment, flights or accommodation for the 2026/27 financial year prior to 1st April primarily.

34. In Q31, what constitutes relevant project and participant data - what is your expectation around this?

Our expectation is linked to what is in the Measures of Success across programmes.

35. How should we report the portion of our investment that will be allocated to core functions such as governance, administration, safeguarding, high-performance coordination, club development, and the training of coaches, leaders, and volunteers within the application pack?

Functions linked to Participation or Performance Outcomes should be apportioned accordingly and will be linked to Deliverables and linked to funding lines within the Supplementary Workbook.

36. What is the difference between the deliverable and the activity?

The Deliverable is **what** you are actually going to deliver with the investment, linked to a specific outcome, and the activity is **how** you are going to carry out the Deliverable. An example would be that the Deliverable is “Running a School’s Programme to target 100 children”, the Description of the Activity could be “We are running projects in 6 schools in 4 different Local Authorities, in partnership with 6 local clubs, with the target of reaching 100 Children and transitioning 50% as club members of these clubs.”

37. Can we group activities in the description of the Deliverable, rather than listing every activity?

Yes, this is the correct way to complete the description of the Deliverable, so you give us a concise description within the character count.



38. We want to run a school programme as part of a PE Programme in School time, is this okay?

No, our funding cannot be used to replace the PE provision during School time.

39. We are a new entrant and have not previously had SSI-GB or SSI-NGB funding, so we weren't allocated a Unique Deliverables Identifier. How do we get one?

Please email sportssystems@sportni.net to request a UDI.

40. Is the Cashflow Projection specific to our SPI funding, or is it organisational?

The objective of the request for presentation of a cashflow projection is for organisations to demonstrate their ability to continue as a going concern throughout the funding period. In most cases, this will be most effectively achieved through presentation of a whole organisation cashflow. However, where the SNI funded program represents a small component (say 25% or less) of the organisation's overall revenue / income, a projection for that project / activity only may be provided, subject to evidence being provided to the satisfaction of SNI that any projected funding shortfall can be covered by the parent / host organisation.

41. Within the Measure of Success, do we total the number of people taking part in our programmes and club membership?

We want to know the total number of people you are reaching through our funding itself so we can find out the impact of our funding.

42. Is the risk register relating to the Programme or is it Organisational-wide?

Programme only. We are interested in how you manage risk with the funding.

43. We want to run competitions through this funding as they are attractive to non-affiliated clubs and help to get them to become affiliated with us.

The delivery of competitions may be eligible as part of a Participation initiative designed to attract new people to your sport. It is important to demonstrate how this will attract NEW participants into your sport.

44. Is the deadline of Friday 13th March able to shift at all?



If we must move the deadline, it will impact on getting Letters of Offer issued to NGBs by 1st April 2026.

45. We do not have 2025-26 year-end accounts or signed minutes from our AGM yet as it has not happened.

That is okay, we want the most recent Documents to be submitted alongside the Application. So, in this case we will need the accounts for the last three years that you have at this stage as well as the most recent set of AGM minutes. If this has previously been submitted to Sport NI then you do not have to re-submit (see Q46 below).

46. We have already submitted Accounts in recent years to Sport NI. Do we have to resubmit them?

No, if we hold the most recently available accounts, note this in your submission email.

47. Within the Supplementary Workbook sheet “2. Funding & Costs Breakdown”, do I provide a full projection (Apr-26-Mar27) of Performance Costs?

Yes, provide a full 12-month projection of costs.

48. Is the 6-month indicative Performance Award figure 50% of our projected costs for the first 6-month period?

The Indicative Performance Award will be based on your total projection of costs for the first 6 months, as you need the funding for this period whilst we undertake a review.

49. Can you define what is meant by NI Talent Athletes vs Developmental Perf Athletes?

Each Pathway looks different, so it is up to you to define and are clear around what it means.

50. Do we complete the Competition schedule for all age ranges or only senior?

Yes, all ranges of competition, that is within your pathway and senior performance and should be aligned to the funding that you are requesting specifically.



51. We must submit a list of board members and AGM minutes, is this for the provincial body or national organisation?

The documents must be specific to the organisation that is applying whether provincial or national.

52. Can we group deliverables if they are directly supporting the delivery of activity/performance at a Performance Competition?

Yes, if there is an overarching competition, it can be one Deliverable.

53. Regarding the Value for Money calculation: - are you able to share across sports involved of what elements are being directly compared in case they have been aligned or distributed differently, in which case they may end up similar?

An example would be, if there were several different sports seeking to deliver extracurricular school programme we would look at the Programme and Post costs against the number of expected participants. This would give us a unit cost.

If there was a sport where the unit cost was considerably higher than the average, we may seek clarification.

54. Are you recording pathway results or successes within the Measures of Success?

The main objective we are looking for is the # in pathway and # that transition to national programme.

55. If we concentrate on only a limited number of objectives, could this have a negative impact on the level of funding awarded under the indicative letter of offer?

Not if delivery of outcomes are evidenced, a VFM calculation will be done to help the assessment.

56. We have tight ratios for delivery of activity; will this be taken into account when doing a Value for Money calculation?

Yes, note a rationale for this in your Description of Deliverables.

57. Is funding via allocation methodology or assessment?



Indicative Allocations have been provided to Sports in receipt of Sports Systems Investment. Assessment of specific questions within the Application Form and Supplementary Workbook will be against the criteria published in the Guidance Note and rated as per the definitions below.

1 – Does Not Meet Requirements

2 – Meets Requirements

3 – Exceeds

Scores will be peer reviewed and moderated.

Technical

1. 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.

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

There are a few solutions 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.

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



Resize columns or zoom out.

4. 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.

5. 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 are 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.

