

Strengthen SGBs - Growth and Innovation Fund

Implementation Paper

Sport for life



1. Introduction

The Scottish Government draft budget announced on 13 January 2026 includes a significant new investment of £40 million for the sport sector. This document provides the implementation framework for the Growth and Innovation Fund, designed to support invested Scottish Governing Bodies (SGBs) and designated national partners seeking to deliver measurable **participation growth, business growth or system-wide innovation**.

The Fund aims to support activities that move beyond business-as-usual delivery, enabling SGBs to pilot new formats, delivery models, workforce approaches, and digital or sustainability-focused solutions that improve accessibility, inclusion, and long-term sector resilience.

2. Purpose of Funding

The Fund aims to accelerate progress towards Sport for Life outcomes by supporting initiatives that:

- Increase sustained and diverse participation.
- Strengthen pathways that support lifelong engagement.
- Modernise delivery models to reflect changing needs.
- Enhance organisational capability and resilience.
- Support business growth and sustainability.
- Generate scalable learning for the wider system.
- Reduce the environmental impact of sporting activity.
- Use technology or data to improve operational or sporting outcomes.

3. Investment principles

This Growth and Innovation Fund will provide targeted, time-limited (up to 4 years) investment to invested SGBs including Scottish Disability Sport (SDS), Scottish Student Sport (SSS)

and Scottish ClubSport to stimulate measurable participation and or system growth to test innovative approaches that strengthen the sporting system in Scotland.

Partnership delivery is encouraged however, the SGB will remain the accountable body for the use of funds, achievement of outcomes and reporting.

The Growth and Innovation Fund will operate according to the following principles:

- **Strategic Alignment** – Investments must support long-term organisational and sector priorities, aligning with Sport for Life and SGB long term outcomes.
- **Additionality** – Funding will enable activity that would not otherwise occur.
- **Innovation and Experimentation** – Support for new, creative, or transformative ideas.
- **Value for Money** – Efficient and effective use of public funds with measurable outcomes.
- **Scalability and Sustainability** – Projects should demonstrate potential for scale, replication, future environmental, economic and social sustainability.
- **Inclusivity and Accessibility** – Funding should broaden participation.
- **Responsible and Ethical Investment** – Safeguarding, equality and regulatory compliance should be ensured across all funded activity.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning** – Projects must track performance, measure impact, and use insights to improve future investment decisions.

4. Investment Approach

The Fund is available to:

- Current **sportscotland**-invested SGBs; and Scottish Disability Sport (SDS), Scottish Student Sport (SSS), and Scottish ClubSport.

Eligibility is conditional upon partners being fully compliant with existing governance and investment terms and conditions. All projects must demonstrate clear impact within Scotland.

Appendix 1 provides a list of those partners eligible for investment.

5. Funding Strands and Options

The Fund operates through three strands, each with two funding options.

Strand 1: Growth Funding

Supports initiatives with clear participation and/or system development ambition, delivered through strong partnerships and potentially over multiple years.

Strand 2: Innovation Funding

Supports initiatives testing new ideas, formats, approaches, or technologies with an emphasis

on digital innovation, social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Option 3 – Open / Radical Innovation Projects

Designed for bold, experimental, or transformative proposals with strong system-wide potential, this option is open to projects of any scale where the innovation and impact are clearly articulated, and places a strong emphasis on learning and insight, recognising that higher uncertainty is inherent in radical innovation.

6. Funding Options

Option 1 – Pilot / Pump-Priming Projects

- Up to £20,000 for short-term projects (3–18 months).
- Intended to test concepts that may lead to larger-scale work.

Option 2 – Multi-Year Projects

- Funding for projects lasting 18 months to 4 years.
- Designed to support larger-scale development and delivery.

All projects must include:

- Clear outcomes linked to Sport for Life and SGB Long Term Outcomes
- A proportionate monitoring plan;
- A commitment to sharing learning with the wider sector.
- Proportionate risk assessment and mitigation, with clear governance and delivery plans.

7. Scale of Investment

Maximum per annum investment levels will be based on the annual value of **sportscotland's core** investment into each SGB in 26/27 yr.

Annual sportscotland core Investment into SGB	Maximum Growth & Innovation Funding
Up to £100,000	Up to 40% of annual investment
£100,000 and above	Up to 15% of annual investment

Collaborations

Where two or more eligible partners collaborate on a project, the upper limit of investment will be determined based on:

- The strength and merit of the proposal.

- The scale and clarity of intended impact; and
- Budget justification and value for money.

Funding Contribution

The Fund may support up to 100% of eligible project costs. Additional partnership funding is welcomed where appropriate, including in-kind contributions.

8. Timelines

Key dates	Key actions
01 June 2026	Launch of Growth and Innovation Investment Round 1 09.00am
03 August 2026	Deadline for investment submission – Round 1 09.00am
24 August 2026	Confirmation of outcome of Round 1 submission
31 August 2026	Launch of Growth and Innovation Investment – Round 2 09.00am
01 September 2026	Allocation of Round 1 investment to SGBs
30 November 2026	Deadline for investment submission – Round 2 09.00am
08 January 2027	Confirmation of outcome of Round 2 submission
11 January 2027	Allocation of Round 2 investment to SGBs

9. Governance, Accountability & Reporting

Funded organisations must:

- Comply with **sportscotland** governance standards and investment/ funding conditions.
- Demonstrate appropriate financial controls, procurement processes, and risk management.
- Adhere to safeguarding, equality, and sustainability requirements.
- Provide regular monitoring reports (frequency proportionate to project scale).
- Participate in evaluation activity and contribute to system learning outputs.
- **sportscotland** reserves the right to audit funded activity and request additional information where required.

10. Key Contact

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Appendix 1

Eligible Organisations

British Ice Skating

British Weightlifting

GB Taekwondo

SkateboardGB

Scottish Football Association

Scottish Club Sport

Scottish Disability Sport

Scottish Rugby Union

Scottish Student Sport

BADMINTONscotland

Basketball Scotland

Bowls Scotland

Boxing Scotland Ltd.

Cricket Scotland

Dancesport Scotland

HorseScotland

JudoScotland

Kabaddi Scotland

Mountaineering Scotland

Netball Scotland

Paddle Scotland

Pickleball Scotland

Royal Yachting Association Scotland

Scottish Archery Association

Scottish Auto Cycle Union

Scottish Croquet Association

Scottish Curling

Scottish Cycling

Scottish Fencing

Scottish Golf Limited

Scottish Gymnastics

Scottish Handball Association

Scottish Hang Gliding and Paragliding Federation

Scottish Hockey

Scottish Karate Governing Body

Scottish Orienteering Association

Scottish Pentathlon

Scottish Rowing

Scottish Squash Ltd

Scottish Sub Aqua Club

Scottish Surfing Federation

Scottish Swimming

Scottish Target Shooting

Scottish Volleyball Association

Scottish Wrestling Association

scottishathletics

Snowsport Scotland

Table Tennis Scotland

Tennis Scotland

The Camanachd Association

Triathlon Scotland

Waterski and Wakeboard Scotland