

# Strengthen SGBs - Growth and Innovation Fund

## Implementation Paper

Sport for life

**sportscotland**  
the national agency for sport

**spòrsalba**  
am prìomh bhuidheann  
nàiseanta airson spòrs

### 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 Outcome
- 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** investment into each SGB.

<b>Annual sportscotland Investment into SGB</b>	<b>Maximum Growth &amp; Innovation Funding</b>
<b>Up to £100,000</b>	Up to 40% of annual investment
<b>£100,000 and above</b>	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
01 August 2026	Deadline for investment submission – Round 1
24 August 2026	Confirmation of outcome of submission
01 September 2026	Allocation of investment to SGBs
30 November 2026	Deadline for investment submission – Round 2
08 January 2027	Confirmation of outcome of submission
11 January 2027	Allocation of investment to SGBs
01 February 2027	Deadline for investment submission consultation

## 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