Introduction

Since the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, England has played host to more than 70 major sporting events – world-class events such as the 2017 IAAF Athletics World Championships, the 2019 ICC World Cup and the UCI Track Cycling World Championships.

More than £35 million of combined support from UK Sport and The National Lottery has been invested in winning these bids and organising the events, each of which present fantastic opportunities to excite and engage people in sport, as a participant, spectator or volunteer.

Our strategy Towards an Active Nation commits us to maximising the wider impact of events brought to England through the Major Events Engagement Fund.

Since 2016, the Major Events Engagement Fund has invested £750,000 into national governing bodies and other major event hosts to support those who are inactive into activity, or to help event hosts to become more financially sustainable.

For the remaining £600,000 investment available, the objective of this fund has been updated to support the volunteering legacy of major events, so that those who give their time to support major events can continue volunteering and gain the benefits we know it can provide.

This shift comes after Goodform’s volunteering research, commissioned by us, identified an opportunity to build on the legacy of major events to further support community sport. The research revealed that despite positive experiences as a major event volunteer, and with 35% of major event volunteers interested in doing more volunteering after the event, the reality is that only a small proportion go on to give their time at a local community level. However, the research also identified barriers people face when considering going on to volunteer further, many of which could be tackled if the right support was in place.

The final phase of the Major Event Engagement Fund up to January 2021 will be to pilot ways to overcome these barriers, and as such will now be known as the Major Event Volunteer Fund. This investment represents a significant opportunity to harness the enthusiasm of volunteers and to support them to continue their volunteering journey within sport, while also providing much needed support to grassroots organisations – 70% of whom reported needing more volunteers.

This guidance document provides details on:
  • what we know about current major event volunteers
  • our investment objectives
  • our assessment criteria
  • how to apply for investment
**What do we know?**

Research conducted in 2019 by Goodform, on behalf of Sport England, revealed a number of key insights about current major event volunteers:

- Volunteering is positively linked with higher personal development, mental wellbeing and community development outcomes, as well as supporting others to engage in physical activity
- 35% of major event volunteers considered doing more volunteering after the event, however the current transition rate into community-level volunteering opportunities is low, at 9%
- Only 11% of major event volunteers report being only interested in major event volunteering
- Major event volunteers over-index amongst higher socio-economic audiences – 65% are aged 55+ and 89% are white
- Barriers preventing volunteers giving their time to support grassroots sport include perceptions that it is time-consuming, inflexible and requiring a long-term commitment
- There is a general lack of awareness from major event volunteers about local volunteering opportunities and the need for more volunteers
- The types of further opportunities, how and when they are communicated to event volunteers plays an important role in increasing the chances of engagement.

To read the full report into Major Event Volunteers and a new guide produced to help major event hosts maximise the volunteering legacy of the event, [click here](#).

"Volunteering is positively linked with higher personal development, mental wellbeing"
Our investment objective

The objective of this final phase of the Major Events Volunteer Fund is to improve the volunteer legacy of major events by supporting positive pathways for major event volunteers into grassroots volunteering opportunities.

What are we looking to fund?

We know that despite positive experiences and strong appetites to do more volunteering after a major event, the number of people who go on to volunteer at grassroots sport is low. There are a number of barriers preventing people from making that transition, including the perceived time commitment and lack of awareness of need, or opportunities. We would like to work with national governing bodies, event hosts and other organisations who share our objectives, to tackle some of these barriers, making it easier and more attractive for volunteers to give some of their time to grassroots sport.

We are looking for projects that:

• Test the ability to use major sports events as a catalyst to engage and then support volunteers from all backgrounds to continue their volunteering pathway within sport
• Will specifically seek to engage volunteers who are not already volunteering within grassroots sport – funding will only be available to projects which aim to support the transition of new (or lapsed) volunteers into grassroots volunteering
• Provide high quality, meaningful volunteering experiences
• Can provide appropriate levels of support to volunteers post-event to identify further opportunities for them, which are appropriate to their skills, interests and availability
• Explain how this investment could contribute towards our outcomes in Towards an Active Nation. In particular:
  • Mental wellbeing
  • Individual development
  • Social and community development

What will we not fund?

There are some items and activities that are ineligible for this fund. This includes, but is not limited to:

• Activity or costs associated with bidding for, hosting or staging the event itself – this includes the recruitment, training and support of volunteers during the event (unless it can be shown to be relevant and linked to the aim of supporting the volunteers into other opportunities post-event)
• Activity that has already started (unless it is in very early stages – please contact Sport England to discuss your project.)
• The creation of a fund to which individuals or organisations can then apply to
• General running costs or overheads, e.g. on-going staff costs – while we recognise that some staff infrastructure will be required to deliver the project, this fund can only support posts, or proportions of posts, directly related to the project and only for the duration of the award
• Long-term project costs – this fund is specifically designed to maximise the impact of major events on a specific, targeted number of individuals. It is not to build local infrastructure or to support long-term project costs.

Please note this list is not exhaustive. If you are unsure and would like to discuss whether items within your project are eligible, please contact our funding helpline on 0345 8508 508.
Our investment criteria

Who can apply?

Applicant eligibility: Applicants are likely to be the national governing body or organisation hosting the major event, or a local organisation which shares our ambitions of supporting more major event volunteers to continue their pathway within grassroots sport. Applicants other than the event host should provide written confirmation from the host in support of the application. This must come from an appropriate senior executive. Please note, we will only accept one application for each major event – we would therefore encourage collaboration with local stakeholders where appropriate.

Event eligibility: The major event must be of sufficient size to enable meaningful learnings to be drawn from the project. Therefore, to be eligible for this fund, the major event must have a requirement for at least 100 volunteers to support the delivery of the event, of whom a sizable proportion of the volunteers are new to volunteering or do not currently volunteer at community level.

It is likely that successful bids will therefore be a significant event in the sports calendar, such as world or European championships, or premium world circuit events for Olympic, Paralympic and/or Commonwealth Games sports.

Sport England may choose, entirely at its own discretion, to consider events that are outside of the above criteria if you can demonstrate reasonable evidence that:

1. Your event is a high-profile national sports event
2. Your event involves more than 100 volunteers
3. There is interest among your volunteers to support community activities
4. Your project will enable the transition of major event volunteers into grassroots sports volunteering.

In all instances the sport and national governing body for the event in question must be recognised by Sport England. A list of recognised sports and respective bodies can be found here.

How long should my project be and how much funding can I apply for?

We know that getting the right information and support in place to enable major event volunteers to continue their volunteering journey takes time. From recruiting the volunteers, through to building an understanding of their motivations and engaging the right partners who can support the volunteers to continue their volunteering, careful planning is needed from the early stages of the event.

We’re interested in working with projects that can demonstrate that they’ve a clear plan to support their major event volunteers and have identified appropriate steps which will maximise the transition rate of the volunteers into community sport volunteering opportunities. Projects will also need to build in enough time for understanding and measuring the impact and key learnings.

It’s anticipated that projects will be between 12 and 24 months long, but we will consider projects of different lengths if a strong case can be made.

We would expect to make investments of between £10,000 and £100,000 to successful applicants.

How to apply for investment

If you feel you meet the criteria for the fund and would like to apply, please contact our investment advisors on 0345 850 8508 or by emailing funding@sportengland.org, with Major Event Volunteer Fund in the subject line, and one of our advisors will be happy to talk to you about your project and the process of applying.

This fund will be open to new applicants until January 2021. However, please note that the fund will close once the funding has all been committed, which may be sooner than January 2021.

We anticipate being able to assess applications and advise of our decision within six weeks of submission. Where appropriate, applications for this fund can be made during the live bidding process to host the event. If the prospective organisation is successful in their bid to this fund, ahead of the decision from the national/international federation, a conditional award will be made. Any costs incurred ahead of the bid being successfully won are entirely at the applicant’s liability.

We’re interested in working with projects that can demonstrate that they’ve a clear plan to support their major event volunteers.
Assessment criteria

Your application will be assessed against the following criteria:

**Section 1**

Project Summary and Market Understanding

In this section we will be looking for you to clearly demonstrate that you understand the needs of your target volunteer audience(s) (as well as the wider market) and articulate why and how your submission will fulfil these needs. Any verifiable evidence, insight or research that you can provide to support this will add value to this section.

**What will we look for?**

- Evidence of understanding of your target volunteer audience, including their barriers, motivations and needs and why/how this project will fulfil these needs, and ensure volunteers on your programme will benefit from the outcomes
- An understanding of why this project is needed, including recent and relevant evidence to support the need for the plan and to demonstrate that there is a gap in the market
- An understanding of what the volunteering opportunities (community level and major event) you’re proposing to offer will consist of and why they’re appropriate for your target audience.

**Section 2**

Delivery and Strategic Alignment

This section should clearly state how this proposal aligns to your organisation’s, and any partners’, strategic direction. It should be used to demonstrate that you have a good understanding of how and where the project will be delivered. This could include reference to key management tools such as organisational charts, project plans and risk registers, which you may choose to include as supporting documentation.

**What will we look for?**

- A clear strategic alignment between your own organisation’s strategic priorities and Sport England’s volunteering priorities and an understanding of how your plan will contribute to achieving them
- A clear plan which demonstrates how and where you will deliver your project, including an understanding of how you intend to reach, engage and retain your audience. Details of the partners involved and their role(s) should be provided
- Details of the pathway opportunities the project will provide for the volunteers – this should include information on how you will facilitate the introduction of the volunteers with opportunities in sport that will be appropriate to them and how you will ensure the quality of the opportunities, including the support they’ll continue to receive
- Relevant experience of those delivering and managing the project of working with the target audience, volunteering, sport and physical activity
- A good understanding of what makes a quality experience for your target audience(s), including the training and on-going support that will be provided
- Alignment between the delivery plan and the proposed budget
- An appropriate organisational structure to effectively support the delivery of the plan, including the role of partners – an organogram which illustrates how the work is being embedded across different roles should be included
- An appropriate risk identification and mitigation exercise has been conducted. You’ll be required to include a risk register.
As a ‘test and learn’ investment, a comprehensive approach to measurement and evaluation is a critical part of any project, helping us to understand what works and why. However, we appreciate that it’s not always easy. At this stage, you should use this section to demonstrate what you believe will be the key areas of learning from your project, as well as the overall impact of your approach on those engaged, the community and ultimately Sport England’s outcomes.

You should also look to demonstrate how you will collect data. An Evaluation Framework has been developed by the Sport England insight team which you may find helpful to refer to.

Organisations who receive funding through this fund will be asked to share an appropriate evaluation and measurement framework which will assess the impact of the investment. That evaluation will need to be thorough and robust so that we can really learn about the project’s effectiveness and share clear insights.

What will we look for?

- That you have clearly set out the outcomes you’re seeking to achieve from your project, and details of how they’ll add value to both individuals and the wider community
- An understanding of how the learning from this project will be beneficial to Sport England and the wider sports sector, and will have a positive impact on Sport England’s outcomes where appropriate – community development, mental wellbeing, individual development, physical wellbeing and economic development
- An expectation that a sufficient number of people are expected to engage to validate the learning – as part of your application, you should set out the target number of individuals your project hopes to engage (by demographic – gender, age, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic status). Should your application be successful, the figures provided here will be used to help set your Key Performance Indicators as part of your contract. It’s important they are therefore realistic but challenging.

- Your proposed approach to, and resourcing of measurement and evaluation – to fulfil the measurement and evaluation expectations, it’s important that appropriate systems and resource is in place as part of your project plan to capture the data required. This is a legitimate and important part of your budget and should be reflected within your project costs in the finance section and financial template.
We’re looking for you to demonstrate that you’ve a fully costed and realistic budget for the project, which provides best value for your organisation and Sport England. You should also take some time to think about how you might be able to sustain the project or build on the learnings from this investment (or elements of it) and consider whether there may be opportunities for replication or scaling up beyond this funding period.

What will we look for?

- A completed Finance Template which provides details on the proposed expenditure – please note for the purpose of consistency, the template provided by Sport England must be used
- Costings are eligible, appropriate and relevant to the project and covers the full length of the project – it’s important that there’s alignment between the delivery plan and the budget, with clarity on which elements Sport England would be funding
- That there’s a clear need for public investment into this project and consideration’s been given to how the project can deliver maximum value for money
- Details of any partnership funding – this is an important way applicants can demonstrate commitment to the project. We encourage applicants to explore opportunities for partnership funding, some of which may be in kind. We would like to see a level of partnership funding which is appropriate to your organisation and any partners who may be supporting the project
- Your commitment to sustaining the work, or building on the learnings beyond Sport England’s investment
- How the volunteers engaged in the programme will be continued to be supported in their volunteering beyond the end of the funding.

...take some time to think about how you might be able to sustain the project or build on the learnings from this investment
Further information

A Code for Sports Governance sets out the levels of transparency, accountability and financial integrity that will be required from those who ask for Government and National Lottery funding.

All partners we invest in will need to meet the appropriate tier of the Code for Sports Governance by the time an award is made. Good governance is vital to ensure public funds are being used effectively and appropriately. Support can be given to organisations that we wish to fund who don’t meet these at the time of application. The necessary changes required by Sport England will need to be made by partners within agreed timescales.

Need help?

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss your project, please email funding@sportengland.org with Major Event Volunteer Fund in the subject header, or call our funding helpline on 0345 8508 508.