

COVID 19 GRANT SCHEMES

Funding Guidelines & Application Process

INTRODUCTION

Sport Ireland has secured additional funding for 2021 to support Sporting Organisations with the impact of COVID 19.

This investment programme will be allocated through five targeted grant schemes:

- A Field Sport Fund to support the FAI, the GAA and the IRFU
- A Resilience Fund to support the National Governing Bodies of Sport and other Sport Ireland Funded Bodies
- A Sports Club Resilience Fund
- A Swimming Pool & Facilities Fund
- A Fund to support the Resumption of Sport & Physical Activity

CORE OBJECTIVES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The stated objective of the COVID 19 scheme is to protect the sports sector from permanent financial and strategic harm arising from the public health crisis.
- The primary purpose of the scheme is to prevent any viable sports organisation from becoming insolvent.
- The secondary purpose of the scheme is to ensure that the sports sector has the capacity to make a significant medium and long-term contribution to the public health of the nation.
- The distribution of funds will be consistent with the aims and values of the National Sports Policy 2018 - 2027.
- This investment is new and is in addition to funding provided previously to Sport Ireland in 2021.
- Funding allocations to NGBs, LSPs and clubs under the new scheme will be determined following a robust grant application and assessment process conducted by Sport Ireland.
- Sport Ireland will distribute primarily to and through recognised National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and the national network of Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs).
- Sport Ireland must be fully satisfied that the grant is absolutely required.
- The funding is targeted at issues arising from COVID 19.
- Non COVID related losses and pre-existing debts or deficits will not be covered.
- There must be evidence of a sports organisation working to a business recovery plan.
- Principles of fairness will apply.
- No upper or lower limits are in place. This can only be determined when the extent of the demand of the schemes is known.

FAIRNESS, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Sport Ireland recognises that certain sports organisations have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID 19 crisis. An essential feature of a public health crisis is that it is indiscriminate. In this instance a shut-down in operations had a bigger impact on organisations that had developed a diverse business model reliant on a variety of streams of income.

The various Schemes are to address identified needs. Until such time that applications are returned and assessed, Sport Ireland is not in a position to determine the quantity and/or validity of applications. Sport Ireland will endeavour to ensure that the investment is distributed fairly. Every effort will be made to ensure that the wider sports community benefits from the schemes. Limits on grant amounts may be put in place. That can only be done when the extent of the demand for the scheme is known. Sport Ireland recognises that people with a disability have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID 19 crisis. It will ring-fence a proportion of the investment so that it is targeted directly at the disability sector. There will be a dedicated fund to support the Local Sports Partnerships in operating local grant schemes to ensure the restart of community based schemes.

Funded bodies which are not recognised NGBs or LSPs should seek advice from Sport Ireland to ascertain if they are eligible for funding support under any of these schemes. National Sports Policy and Sport Ireland strategic objectives in terms of addressing inequality in sport in particular addressing social, disability, gender, ethnic and other gradients will be a consideration in allocating funding.

RECOVERY AND RENEWAL PLANS

The COVID 19 Grant Schemes are designed to ensure sports organisations maintain operations, avoid insolvency and prepare for a return to productive activity in good financial health. The total amount of money being made available is designed to protect the existing physical and operational infrastructure of Irish sport. This is in recognition that any reconstruction of Irish sport would ultimately cost more over the long run.

Any financial recovery of the sector or an individual organisation will comprise of a number of elements.

1. Return to operations
2. Use of reserves and other streams of finance to sustain liquidity
3. Ensuring ongoing income (e.g. membership subscriptions, affiliations, renegotiate commercial arrangements)
4. Access to horizontal State supports (e.g. Rate holidays, Salary subsidies)
5. Drawdown on business continuity insurance if applicable
- 6 Cost reductions
7. Securing certainty on future funding streams
8. Supplemental grants (i.e. COVID 19 Grant Schemes)

In applying for funding, sports organisations should submit details of their Business Recovery Plans. In particular, there should be detail on the drawdown of other State supports and the use of financial reserves.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

When assessing applications, Sport Ireland will review a number of areas including:

- A. Technical Merits of the Application (i.e. verifiable evidence of need)
- B. Quality of parallel interventions (i.e. business plan to support an application)
- C. Likelihood of meeting the primary objective of the scheme (i.e. avoiding insolvency and maintaining operations)
- D. Likelihood of meeting the secondary objective of the scheme (i.e. contributing to public health)
- E. Existing Governance and Funding Model
- F. Strategic significance of the sport and meeting other national strategic objectives (e.g. numbers, area, sport, facility sharing, diversity of activity & membership)
- G. Adherence to Sport Ireland Terms and Conditions

Overview of Grant Scheme:

Scheme Three: Club Resilience Fund

A Resilience Fund will be made available to ensure Sports Clubs can continue to deliver sporting opportunities at a local level. Funding will be distributed by Schemes established by the National

Governing Bodies of Sport.

The grant scheme is designed primarily to support sporting activity. These funds are not aimed to replace lost income from ancillary activities such as hospitality or other non-sporting commercial activity.

A copy of the Scheme Framework and a full breakdown of distributed Grants will need to be submitted to Sport Ireland in 2022 as part of the post allocation Reporting.

NGBs may elect to support Club costs centrally for example the cost of insurance and other restart costs. It is also recommended that a detailed written narrative along with supporting documentation be submitted to provide further context and evidence of need.

As part of any Scheme NGBs should have an understanding of the following in relation to their clubs and affiliates:

- Latest available financial report including a reasonable estimate of financial support required
- Details of reductions on income with supporting evidence
- Details of cost savings on expenditure; details of any income increases arising from increased membership
- Specific details on the staff and payroll implications of COVID 19
- Notes on access to horizontal supports such as the Government wages subsidy scheme, rate holidays
- Details on the levels of current reserves and their actual and potential use during COVID 19
- An estimation of how long core operations could continue under the current circumstances
- Any immediate short-term cash flow or financial commitments that clubs may be challenged to meet
- Information on any additional financing from any other source due to COVID 19 such as bank loans
- Declaration on any increase in bad debts arising
- Notes on any projects or programmes that will have to be deferred, postponed or cancelled
- Immediate standard restart costs/overheads (including insurance)
- Costs arising in facilities from the provision and installation of COVID 19 precautions
- Costs arising for adjustment of club facilities to cater for socially distanced sport programming
- Detail of income reduction arising from reduced numbers arising from restricted programmes operation

All support provided to Clubs is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Sport Ireland Funding and future audit. NGBs providing onward grants should ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the overall governance and management (including financial management) of the Club receiving the support.

The Board of the relevant NGB must approve any application submitted under this scheme.