

# *Funding for Sport and Leisure in the Countryside*

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## **Introduction to Sport England's Lottery Fund**

The Sport England Lottery Fund was created as a result of the original National Lottery Act that was passed in October 1993. The first awards were made in March 1995, and in May 2000 the billionth pound of Capital Lottery Funding was awarded.

About two-thirds of the money received (Sport England's share is nearly four pence of every pound) goes to the Community Projects fund. Applicants can apply to this fund for up to 65% of the cost of capital projects, although 50% is seen as a more realistic figure. There are, however, two other initiatives incorporated into this fund that allow for an increased level of funding. The Priority Areas Initiative (PAI), for projects from deprived areas, allows applicants to apply for funding of up to 90% of the project cost. The School-Community Sports Initiative (SCSI) encourages schools to submit applications for new and upgraded facilities that will be made available to the community and up to 80% of the cost can be funded.

Sport England is also part of the 'Awards for All' programme, run by the National Lottery Charities Board, which caters for applications of under £5,000.

In 1998, the National Lottery Act was revised. Following this, Sport England released its ten-year strategy "Investing in our Sporting Future" in May 1999. Specifically for the countryside, there is a commitment to fund five hundred Community Revenue projects in rural areas.

## **Overview**

In five years, there have been 7,369 applications to the Sport England Lottery Fund. A total of £3.95 billion has been requested towards total project costs of £6 billion. From these applications, 3,164 awards have been made with a total value of £1.11 billion, contributing to a total project cost of £2.07 billion.

The average award has been for has been for £350,000. This figure is, however, distorted by a small number of very large awards e.g. £120 million was awarded to the new Wembley Stadium project. The median award is for about £46,000.

## **Sport England Lottery Strategy**

In May 1999, the Sport England Lottery Strategy "Investing in our Sporting Future" was published and it maps out the next ten years of lottery funding to sport.

Firstly, the application process was changed. Prior to publishing the new strategy, Sport England consulted previous applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, about their views on the application process. It was seen by many to be too slow, too bureaucratic and too centralized. Consequently, a new, two-stage application process was developed. As part of the new process, Sport England has pledged to speed up the assessment time to no more than sixteen weeks.

Besides the new application process, the strategy sets out a number of pledges and targets for capital funding. The 1998 Lottery Act allowed Sport England to solicit applications for the first time and targets have been set which aim to make sure that lottery funding, both Community Capital and Awards for All, goes to those areas and people most in need. Indeed, fifty percent of the investment in community projects will go to the areas of greatest need. Furthermore, specific targets are set out in terms of the number of projects aimed at our target groups, i.e. young people, disabled people, ethnic minorities and women and girls. There is a commitment to rural areas with 500 awards to be made to village or community halls over the next ten years.

Sport England also aims to introduce a new clubhouses initiative that will provide a standardized approach to the construction of small clubhouses, so reducing the preparatory costs of submitting that type application. This will be of particular benefit to voluntary organizations. Finally, Sport England will work to ensure that everyone has reasonable access to artificial turf pitches, indoor sports halls and indoor swimming pools.

Alongside these targets for capital funding, there are new Community Revenue programmes aimed at tackling social exclusion. The creation of Sport Action Zones (SAZs) and the targeting of resources within them will help England's most recreationally deprived areas. The first twelve zones were announced in January 2000 and were in Birmingham, Bradford, Cornwall, Southwark and Lambeth, Liverpool, Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire coalfields, East Manchester, Leicester, Luton, South Yorkshire coalfields, Wear Valley and West Cumbria. Zone managers will be in place by autumn 2000 and a further eighteen zones will be established in 2002 to 2003.

In addition, School Sport Co-ordinators will be based in at least a quarter of secondary schools and associated primary schools. They will work to improve after-school activities and forge links with local voluntary sports clubs. The first hundred of these co-ordinators will be in post in 2000 to 2001 and eventually there will be six hundred across the country.

#### **Funding for Countryside Activities**

Countryside activities are those sporting or recreation activities that take place primarily in or on natural resources in the countryside or in urban areas. They offer people a chance to enjoy their leisure time and are a positive and legitimate use of the countryside. They include land, air and water sports, such as angling, caving, cycling, equestrian pastimes, motor sports, rambling, sailing and gliding, and can be competitive or non-competitive.

#### **Existing Policy**

Sport England has responsibility for working with

those National Governing Bodies that are responsible for countryside sports or physical recreation. Other organisations with responsibility for countryside recreation include the Countryside Agency, the Environment Agency and British Waterways.

Sport England supports the view that everyone, regardless of ability, should have access to a range of natural resource activities. However, the countryside is under increasing pressure and this has an impact on how we use it for recreation. Therefore, Sport England also supports natural resources activities that take place in towns or cities, for example, on old railway routes, canals or disused docklands.

Despite the pressures on the countryside, Sport England believes there is scope for increasing the number of people taking part in activities there, while remaining in harmony with other users. The activities must be carried out with respect for the natural environment and consequently, Sport England will encourage applicants to embrace sustainable promotion and to develop codes of good practice. Demand needs to be identified and then met through appropriate land use planning and effective management of the natural resources.

#### **Priority**

In its Lottery Strategy, Sport England identified a number of priorities for funding, e.g. young people, those with exceptional talent and those from deprived areas. Lottery applications from projects that meet Sport England's priorities have a greater chance of success. As a consequence of the latest Lottery Act (1998) Sport England is now able to solicit, encourage and support such applications.

#### **Framework for assessment of projects.**

##### ***Sports development/marketing plan***

All applications must demonstrate how their project will increase, or safeguard, the number of people taking part in sport and recreation. Applicants must submit a management plan that contains sports development and/or marketing proposals. It must cater for all standards of performance and show how participants can improve their standards. It must

also demonstrate how the project will cover all sections of the community particularly those with historically low levels of participation, such as people with disabilities, women and people from ethnic minorities. The applicant must also carefully weigh up the effect of an increase in participation on the environment.

Sport England recognizes that sports development and marketing plans will vary between projects and, therefore, advises applicants to discuss the compilation of their plans with the relevant local authority and Sport England regional office.

#### ***Strategic need***

A proposed project can have strategic benefit for a variety of organisations, such as the local authority, the National Governing Body or the applicant. The project should relate to a relevant strategy (local, county or national), be it for a local authority, a Community Forest or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

For example, if a project is for the construction of a multi-use route (for cycling, horse riding and walking) then it must be strategically relevant to the local authorities within which the route falls. An application requesting funding for the provision of a facility such as a dedicated cycle route would be given a higher priority than one for a route that consists of roads linked together by signs and maps. Multi-use routes are also preferred.

Routes that link to the Sustrans National Cycle Network (part-funded by the Millennium Commission) and the creation of 'Greenways' are also eligible for funding. The Greenways Challenge is an initiative set up by the Countryside Agency which encourages local authorities to set up a network of largely off-road routes so that people can walk or cycle to work or school.

#### ***Value for money***

Like all Lottery projects, natural resource-based applications must demonstrate that the amount of funding requested reflects its proposed sporting benefits.

#### ***Financial need***

Lottery money is used to fund the shortfall costs of a

project and any application must demonstrate that it has exhausted all other sources of funding, that is, that Lottery money is essential for the project to be completed.

#### ***Low priority project types***

Taking the above information and details into account, the examples below show projects that would be considered as low priority:

- a 100 metre footpath through a forest;
- a short footpath linking a housing estate to the local shops;
- a short riverside cycle track; or
- stand-alone support facilities or projects concerned solely with social provision.

However, an application can include a low priority element as long as it forms a minor part of the overall project.

#### ***Eligible sports***

There are over 100 sports that are recognised by Sport England, of which 25% rely on access to natural resources.

For projects involving countryside and water sports where safety is of paramount importance, applicants must be affiliated to the relevant National Governing Body, e.g. the British Mountaineering Council, Royal Yachting Association or British Canoe Union. It is also advisable for applicants for projects involving other sports to contact their relevant governing body, even if they are not affiliated.

Health and safety policies must also be robust and it is strongly recommended that all instructors and coaches have governing body-recognised qualifications. "The Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations" may be relevant for the principal sport, particularly if the project is for people under the age of 18. The regulations do not cover sailing in boats, which comes under the "Merchant Shipping Act." Applicants are also advised to contact their local authority environmental health department for applications involving equestrian activities.

### Partnership funding

Applicants must contribute a certain amount of partnership funding towards the total cost of a project. Unless they qualify under the Priority Areas Initiative (see below), they realistically need to provide about half of the total cost. Contributions from statutory bodies with a responsibility for the countryside or from local authorities are encouraged because Sport England is keen to promote a partnership approach.

'In kind' support through, for example, land donations from a genuine third party, is not accepted as partnership funding, but it is considered to add additional value to a project. Similarly, contributions from those whose job it is to co-ordinate the project cannot be counted. Sport England can, however, consider funding project management costs where the managerial posts are established purely for the co-ordination of that project. These costs also must be for the capital development phase, not the long-term running of the project. Applicants can include feasibility studies and professional costs in the total project cost, but these will only be funded if the applicant is successful.

Partnership funding for the sports element of the project cannot be sought from other Lottery distributors. However, some elements of a countryside project may be eligible for consideration by other Lottery distributors. If this be the case, an application can be made to another distributor for that separate element. An example would be the restructuring and improvement of an ancient stone wall (Heritage Lottery Fund) along a bridleway that needs upgrading (Sport England Lottery Fund). Further details on eligibility can be obtained from the relevant distributors.

### Examples of eligible projects

Natural resource projects that Sport England has funded to date include cycle networks, footpaths, bridleways, climbing centres, water sports facilities, outdoor activity centres, support facilities (such as slipways, mooring points and storage provision), purchase of fishing rights, golf courses and major items of non-personal equipment.

When making an application for a natural resource-based project, an organisation must take into account the following issues:

- **Upgrading versus maintenance** - Sport England will consider applications for genuine upgrading, for example, improving the surface of a footpath for wheelchair users or providing additional changing rooms for water sports. Sport England will not fund a project resulting from previous poor maintenance, for example, restoring a footpath to its natural condition or replacing old signs on a bridleway.
- **Achieving consensus** - An applicant must make provisions for all sports and users of the land upon which the project is based. For example, if the application is for the upgrading of a canal towpath to create a new cycle and walking route, the applicant must take into account the effects on local anglers who use the canal. Sport England will not support a project in which improvements to one sport are made at the expense of another, unless everyone involved has reached an agreement.
- **Environmental impact** - The effect of a project on the surrounding environment must be taken into account during the planning of the project. Applications for larger projects (£250,000 and above) are required to consult the relevant local bodies (for example, the Countryside Agency, the Environment Agency and the local authority planning department). The Countryside Agency's Working Paper on appraising countryside recreation projects, "Guidelines for Countryside Recreation Project Appraisal", is also useful. The response of those consulted should be sent directly to Sport England using the standard consultation form available in the application pack. It is the applicant's responsibility to send the consultation forms to the relevant bodies.

In some cases, the applicant will need to consider the sports proposals as part of a larger package of developments, for example, conservation issues. Sport England welcomes such a 'whole site'

management approach, but will not usually be able to support the costs of any conservation works. The only exception may be where the works are required as a condition of planning permission. Here, the cost of the mitigation work will be considered within the value for money assessment of the project, in a similar way to landscaping works.

Certain developments are legally required to be subject to Environmental Impact Assessments before planning permission is granted. Sport England will consider the costs of such studies as an element of a project's professional costs.

- **Phasing and the length of the project** - Sport England will accept applications for phased projects as long as the project and its phases have identifiable beginnings and ends. Thus, each phase must not depend on the previous phase in order to be operational. Funding requests for each phase must be made in separate Sport England Lottery Fund applications and, therefore, the required partnership funding must be found for each submitted application.

As with all projects, we expect natural resource-based projects to establish monitoring systems to gauge success, usage and value for money. In some cases, we request that such monitoring systems last for up to ten years, especially where the project is phased.

- **Technical guidance** - All applicants must meet the minimum guidelines set out in the Sport England Technical Guidance Notes. Applicants must be aware that the surface for a cycle route, for example, is just as important as the required size of a changing room. Where the Guidance Notes do not provide adequate recommendations, applicants should refer to documents published by relevant organisations.
- **Project location** - Applications requesting funding for a facility that falls outside the catchment area of the applicant organisation are still eligible for

consideration. For example, a mountaineering club based in Leicester may request funding for a climbing hut in the Peak District. Another example is where the applicant organisation is based in an urban area but its activities take place in the countryside.

- **Security of tenure** - The applicant must provide evidence of security of tenure for its project. For example, if an organisation is applying for funds to upgrade fishing platforms on a river, then there must be guaranteed access to the entire site for the entire period of the award (up to 21 years). Likewise, support for facilities such as sailing clubhouses will only be considered if there is legal or customary access to the water space.
- **Public rights of way** - Sport England will consider supporting applications that aim to improve or extend the long-term accessibility of the countryside. To this end, Sport England will consider funding non-statutory work on rights of way or assist in the creation of new rights of way. Applications for funding towards licences (for example, for angling or canoeing) may also be eligible as long as they secure public access, management, maintenance and publicity arrangements and there are no unreasonable restrictions.

We have to be assured that the route will be secure and available for a minimum period of time (this is usually related to the amount of grant). Making a route secure can be done in a number of ways. Public rights of way, as recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement, give guaranteed access for the public. Routes not recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement must be supported by additional, enforceable agreements with the leaseholders or freeholders for the whole route.

#### Priority Areas Initiative

The Sport England Lottery Fund also addresses the need for rural development under the Priority Areas Initiative (PAI). Projects that serve populations based

in Rural Development Areas can be considered under the PAI. If applicants can satisfy the additional PAI criteria, they are eligible to apply for up to 90% of the total project cost.

#### Examples of ineligible projects

Taking the above into account, the following projects are ineligible for funding:

- the replacement of an existing cycle path due to poor maintenance;
- a proposed bridleway which only accounts for its upkeep and usage for the next two years;
- the acquisition of undeveloped land or buildings that would not provide a usable sports facility within a reasonable period of time;
- a project that is the statutory responsibility of the applicant; or
- the completion of a project that has already been started.

#### Organisations eligible for grants

Sports and activities such as equestrian pastimes, water skiing and golf are often led by the private sector. Lottery funding cannot be used for private gain, so applications from individuals or sole traders are ineligible. Other private sector organisations must demonstrate that they will not make a commercial gain as a result of receiving a Lottery grant. Companies limited by guarantee are usually eligible because they do not issue share capital and are constituted as non-profit-distributing bodies.

Non-departmental public bodies (N.D.P.B.'s) are autonomous public sector organisations, accountable to Parliament and funded by Government. They are eligible to apply for Lottery funding, but they must demonstrate that any funding is for a project that is additional to their ordinary existing public expenditure programmes.

Sport England will consider applications from eligible organisations involved in a partnership with relevant local authorities, or from an N.D.P.B. in association with voluntary organisations, as long as there is a contract between them and the roles and responsibilities of each partner are clearly defined.

#### Examples of Countryside Projects

The following are examples of countryside projects that have been funded by the Sport England Lottery Fund.

- **Colne Valley Groundwork Trust Ltd** - awarded £61,177 towards a total project cost of £105,177 for the construction of an 11 kilometre cycle route from Rickmansworth to Uxbridge through the Colne Valley Regional Park.
- **Mallory Park Fisheries** - awarded £70,057 towards a total project cost of £113,809 for the construction of three fishing lakes with facilities for the disabled.
- **Countryside Commission** - awarded £1,841,876 towards a total project cost of £3,683,752 for the construction of the Pennine Bridleway from Middleton Top in Derbyshire to Long Preston in North Yorkshire.
- **Bath Canoe Club** - awarded £66,446 towards a total project cost of £102,224 for the refurbishment of its changing rooms, showers and toilet, the improvement of access to the river and the purchase of new canoes.
- **Wolds Gliding Club Ltd** - awarded £77,272 towards a total project cost of £134,427 for the purchase of two modern, two-seat training gliders and one high performance single-seat glider.

#### Conclusion

In its five years, the Sport England Lottery Fund has provided levels of funding for sports facilities that were not previously possible. Indeed, the amount of lottery funding awarded to sports facilities since March 1995 is equivalent to sixty years of exchequer funding for sports facilities. However, the changes initiated by the new Lottery Strategy will ensure that lottery funding reaches those areas most in need and provide everyone with access to sporting facilities.

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