



SPÓRT ÉIREANN
SPORT IRELAND

INNOVATION FOR SPORTS INCLUSION FUND

Summary 2021

Authors

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ciste na
gcuntas díomhaoin
the dormant
accounts fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2000-2001, Sport Ireland invested €995,000 under the Innovation for Sports Inclusion Fund, as part of the 2020 Dormant Accounts Fund to fund in 13 innovation projects across the country. Informed by the development of a programme logic model, analysis of project documents; surveys of project managers stakeholders and participants; and semi-structured interviews, this report sets out an independent, process and outcome evaluation of the funded innovation projects for 2020. The aim of the evaluation was understand to what extent funded bodies who have rolled out the projects have achieved their intended outputs and outcomes and what factors influenced this.

Results

 <p>Reach:</p> <p>Participant engagement was limited for most projects, mainly due to revisiting the original concepts and conducting more detailed customer insight work.</p>	 <p>Fidelity:</p> <p>Funded bodies generally operated within the fund guidelines and looked to test innovative approach to engaging target audiences.</p>	 <p>Partnership:</p> <p>Most of the projects found partner/ stakeholder engagement to be a very positive aspect of the process.</p>	 <p>Relevance:</p> <p>Partners welcomed the opportunities to be innovative, beyond the usual constraints of traditional funding programmes.</p>	 <p>Sustainability:</p> <p>There is significant evidence of legacy, in particular relating to changes in the way organisations will approach future project developments and in the way Sport Ireland think about project funding.</p>
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Recommendations

Spend time clearly defining the type of innovation that should be supported, compared to ideas that might otherwise be classified as best practice but are not inherently innovative.

Carefully consider which innovations may have the potential to lead to increased participation in the longer term.

Allow more time for innovation: ideas need to be thought through in detail.

It is worth considering the introduction of 'seed funding' to allow promising ideas to think and work through innovation before significant funds are allocated.

The very concept of innovation means testing new ideas. This means accepting in advance that many ideas will fail to achieve their intended outcomes.

Continue to focus on building partnerships. For many sporting organisations it is a new approach to engage with non-traditional partners and this has been a key positive from this year 1 approach, bringing a broader shared understanding.

Provide access to specialist tech support. Where development of new technology is involved, there is a lack of expertise within many sporting organisations in tendering, procurement and project managing tech development projects.

Carefully consider the intended impact and outcomes ideally using logic models and the realistic timescales required to achieve these.

Continue to keep process evaluation as a critical component of future investment.

Share the learning of this evaluation with colleagues across sport and physical organisations.



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