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**2025 Sport Ireland**

**Research Funding Scheme**

**1-year Project**

**Application Guidelines**

**Introduction**

In 2025, Sport Ireland will provide support to recognised National Governing Bodies (NGB’s), Local Sports Partnerships (LSP’s) and other Sport Ireland Funded Bodies strictly based on the conditions and criteria outlined in this document.

Launched in 2021 the Research Grants Scheme (RGS) aims to support research endeavours across the Irish sports sector.  Sport Ireland is therefore seeking research applications that support the stated actions and goals from the [National Sports Policy](https://assets.gov.ie/15979/04e0f52cee5f47ee9c01003cf559e98d.pdf) (2018 – 2027) and the [National Physical Activity Plan](https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/b60202-national-physical-activity/) (2016). Projects which build on research carried out to date and demonstrate strong partnership working with third level institutions or other relevant research agencies will be scored higher on assessment.

 All RGS projects are offered through a competitive bid process and will be considered against the criteria set in the application form and guidelines document.

* NGB’s/LSP’s/Funded Bodies seeking funding will be required to submit a detailed application form.
* Only one 1-year project application per NGB, LSP or Funded Body will be accepted, however; NGB’s/LSP’s and Funded Bodies can partner together on more than one application. Each funded body may lead on one application form only. However, they are free to partner on as many applications as they wish.
* Applications will be considered up to a maximum of €18,000 (Only current funding will be covered).
* Projects should be completed by end of September 2026 with expenditure of all allocated funding.
* NGB’s/LSP’s/Funded Bodies are required to submit a signed copy of the Information & Declaration Form. Electronic versions of the handwritten signatures are also currently accepted as well as email confirmation of signature.
* Completed application forms must be submitted before the date as indicated on the Declaration Form to research@sportireland.ie
* As this is a competitive bid process, late applications will not be accepted.

**About the Scheme**

The RGS provides an opportunity for sporting bodies to undertake research on issues that are relevant to their own unique contexts. Furthermore, it provides a platform for NGBs/LSPs/Funded Bodies to build meaningful relationships with HEI’s and research consultants whilst building their own understanding and capability on how to do research.

The grant scheme is suitable for targeted research projects where sports bodies identify specific questions or problems in which they hope to gain insights in sport and exercise subject areas, such as participation, high-performance, athlete pathways, coaching, volunteering, outdoors, governance, technology, psychology and/or environmental sustainability. This may be achieved through a variety of quantitative and qualitative methodologies such as surveys, interviews, focus groups or research related to sport science or new technologies. All research projects should aspire to uncover new knowledge or insights into the specific challenges sport bodies experience.

This scheme specifically aims to bridge the gap between *research*, *policy* and *practice* by addressing the disconnect that can emerge between those who do research and those who apply research. Research undertaken by sports bodies through this fund may lead to new insights, which in turn could potentially lead to new ideas that may be developed and advanced through other Sport Ireland funding initiatives.

**Research Grant Scheme (RGS) Application Form**

Only the official Sport Ireland RGS application form will be accepted, this can be found attached to the announcement email.

The funding application form is divided into 6 sections. Questions with an asterisk (\*) are a required in the submission. Each section will be further explained below.

*Please note this is a competitive bid process and all applications will be evaluated against the criteria set.*

**Section 1- Application Lead (Questions 1 – 5)**

This fund is open to NGB’s/LSP’s/Funded Bodies to develop and deliver innovative sport and physical activity research initiatives and projects commencing in 2025 with completion by August 2026.  The grant scheme is also open to retiring High Performance athletes who are interested in doing research, although the application, funding mechanism and project management must be through an NGB/LSP/Sport Ireland Funded Body.

In this section we ask that you please list the contact details of the *lead applicant* from an NGB, LSP or other Sport Ireland funded body. Please note that the email address provided in this section will be used as the main contact point for all application and project related correspondence.

**Section 2- Project Partners (Questions 6 – 12)**

All applicants for the 1-year pathway will be required to partner and collaborate with a recognised HEI. Within this section you will be required to list the details of the organisation with whom you intend to partner on the proposed research project. This should include the name and role of the individual who will lead the project on behalf of the partnering HEI/agency.

Sport Ireland encourages lead applicants to partner with other National Governing Bodies (NGBs), Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs), other funded bodies as well as other sporting organisations, research organisations and other industry partners. We ask that you include a letter of intent from any third-party organisation or agency which outlines their willingness to collaborate on the project.

**Section 3 – Project Scope (Questions 13 – 17)**

**13. Research Area**

Please indicate which research area best represents your proposed application. If your proposed research area is not listed, include this under the ‘Other’ category.

**14. Lay Abstract**

Provide a lay abstract outlining your proposed research. This should be written in a manner accessible to a non-expert audience. If your project is chosen for funding, this abstract will be used to give other practitioners and researchers within the Sports sector insight into your research project.

**15. Central Research Question,** **Aims & Objectives**

Provide a clear explanation of the research questions that will being explored over the course of the project and discuss the intended aims and objectives of the research.This section is an opportunity for applicants to concisely articulate the specific question they are asking and how they will answer it.

**16. Existing Literature**

Provide a summary of the background to the proposed research topic via existing literature, i.e. what is currently known. This is an opportunity for applicants to demonstrate their understanding of the problem they are interested in.

**17. Advancement of Knowledge**

Outline how the proposed research will advance existing research and knowledge, i.e., how does this proposed research fill a knowledge gap. This is an opportunity for applicants to demonstrate the future impact of their proposed work within the sports sector. How will this work help your organisation or Sport Ireland achieve their strategic goals?

**Section 4 – Project Methods (Questions 18 – 21)**

**18. Research Design and Methodologies**

Discuss the proposed research design and methodologies. Sufficient detail should be provided to ensure an understanding of the research topic and how best to tackle the research issue. This is an opportunity for applicants to demonstrate they have a clear plan on how to execute their project.

**19. Data Collection & Analysis**

Outline the types of data that will be collected as part of the project (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods etc.). Discuss how this data will be analysed. This section provides an opportunity for applicants to demonstrate their understanding of data analysis, which is an important step in generating meaningful and actionable insights.

**20. Ethics**

Sport Ireland is committed to protecting all research participants in terms of their personal safety, data and psychological wellbeing. In this section applicants are required to clearly consider any ethical or data protection issues that may arise prior to and over the course their research programme. Some important sections to consider here include how participants will be recruited, provide informed consent, understand their rights as participants, and how their data will be used, stored and protected.

**21. Ethical Approval**

Please confirm whether you will be seeking ethical approval from a recognised body prior to carrying out your research (e.g. university ethics committee)

**Section 5 – Project Management (Questions 22 – 26)**

**22. Professional / Academic Experience of Applicant & Research Partner**

Outline both the professional and/or academic experience of the lead applicant and academic partner. Discuss how this experience might enhance the quality of your research.

**23. Milestones & Deliverables**

In this section applicants are required to outline a project timeline; this should include a breakdown of projected programme milestones, potential outcomes and deliverables. This section provides applicants an opportunity to outline in more detail the plan for implementing their research methods.

**24. Risks**

No research project will go exactly according to plan. Consider the risks that may compromise the research teams ability to achieve these deliverables and list potential ways to manage the risks. This section provides applicants an opportunity to demonstrate that they have considered contingencies in the event of unexpected changes to the project.

**25. Partnership Management**

One of the overarching aims of RGS is to build capacity and develop partnerships between Sport Ireland funded organisations and external institutions with expertise in the field of research. In this section, please describe how your organisation would manage such a relationship over the duration of the project. Think about how your collaboration will operate over the duration of the project. Elements to consider include delegation of work, the sharing of resources and expertise, project communication, use of project management tools or platforms for secure collaboration, scheduling of research meetings etc.

**26. Dissemination**

Outline plans for sharing the project learnings. This includes activities such as publications, conference attendance and presentations, reports and outreach activities. Please note the dissemination activities can go beyond the 12-month funding window. This is an opportunity for applicants to demonstrate how they plan for their research output to make a meaningful and sustainable impact on the sports sector.

**Section 6 – Funding (Questions 27 – 29)**

**27. Requested Funding**

The amount of funding you are requesting from Sport Ireland (up to a maximum of €18,000)

**28. Match Funding**

 If you are receiving other income or matched funding from other sources, please include the amount and the funder. \*Please note match funding is not a requirement to apply for the 1-year project funding scheme.

**29. Project Expenditure**

Please provide a clear breakdown of project expenditure. If receiving funding from additional sources this should be included within the overall budget. Please note only Current expenditure can be funded as part of the scheme.

**Additional Details / Documents**

**Partnership** / **Letter of Agreement / Intent**

If the research is to be delivered in partnership with a third level university/IT/higher educational institution or a private research consultant, you are requested to attach a letter of agreement or intent from your research partner as part of your application submission.

* Please note this is an optional requirement for application submission.
* Projects demonstrating appropriate partnerships will be scored higher on evaluation.

All applications are required to attach a signed copy of the Information & Declaration Form, as part of their application submission. Electronic versions of the handwritten signatures are accepted, as well as email confirmation of signature.

**Scoring**

Scoring to be applied to applications based on:

* **Innovation / Impact:** What is the problem? Who does this affect? What work has already been done? Will the proposed project inform changes to practice or protocol for the beneficiary? Will the project be advantageous to other areas? Will the project improve research(er) capability and/or capacity?
* **Feasibility:** Are the methods appropriate? How have ethical considerations been addressed? Are the timeline and budget realistic? Are there experienced project leads?
* **Strategy:** Do the project objectives align with strategic goals?
* **Assessment:** How will the research questions be answered? Are the measures appropriate? How will project milestones be measured?
* **Partnership:** How will the project team work together and learn from each other?
* **Sustainability:** What will the impact of this project be? How will the research findings be disseminated? How might this research advance your organisation’s knowledge into the future?

**Timescales**

All projects must be completed by end of August 2025.  Below is an indicative timescale of the fund.

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| Event | Date |
| RGS Funding scheme launched / submission live  | Friday January 24th 2025 |
| RGS application closing date (5pm\*) | 5pm Monday March 31st 2025 |
| Successful applicants notified | May 2025 |
| Funded schemes project activation meeting | September 2025 |
| Funded Schemes Project Midterm Report  | February 2026 |
| Final Report Submission | 30th September 2026 |

**Terms and Conditions**

The funding guidelines are to be read in conjunction with Sport Ireland 2025 Terms and Conditions of Grant Investment**.**

Funded projects will be required to fill out a Sport Ireland Research Impact Tracking Assessment at the end of the project. This form will be provided upon the award of grants to ensure research impact considerations are present from the start of the project.

Sport Ireland may invite principal investigators (or suitable alternative representatives) to present at upcoming conferences, seminars, workshops, etc. where topics may be of interest to an audience.

**Responsibilities of Grant Recipients**

It is the responsibility of successful Principal Investigators of funded projects to:

* Participate in researcher skill training workshops and/or networks which will be organised by Sport Ireland with the aim to assist with building researcher capacity and capability, as well as to assist with research project impact, and the dissemination of results and insights; and
* Adhere to ‘[ALLEA (2023) The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity - Revised Edition 2023](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/european-code-of-conduct-for-research-integrity_horizon_en.pdf)’;
* Allocate resources to support the research methods design and statistical analysis as well as the effective and engaging dissemination of results;
* Work with the Research Manager (or appropriate representative), Research and Innovation Unit, Sport Ireland, for the purpose of monitoring progress of the research project;
* Provide project reports and outputs as requested;
* Promptly notify and seek approval from Sport Ireland if the grant activity and research project has been delayed/postponed due to circumstances, and/or there has been a significant change of plan; and
* Seek written approval from Sport Ireland in case of any changes to the project.

**Acknowledgement**

In the promotion and dissemination of the research findings funded by this scheme, Sport Ireland requests the Sport Ireland logo be included on all materials and for Sport Ireland to be acknowledged as the funders/co-funders in presentations, publications and related materials.

If you have any questions throughout the application process, please refer to this guidelines document or contact research@sportireland.ie for further information.