Investing in local communities to build sporting habits for life

Community Sport Activation Fund
The Community Sport Activation Fund (CSAF) is a funding programme that was launched by Sport England in 2013 aiming to increase and sustain regular sport participation in England. The fund aimed to deliver flexible investment at a local level enabling funding recipients to target local sporting needs. This case study shows how the tools and resources in Sport England’s Evaluation Framework could have been used to develop and implement a measurement and evaluation approach to assess the impact of Sport England’s investment in CSAF projects.

This case study includes examples and guidance on the following resources:
Overview: The Purpose & Rationale Form is designed to help you document the key decisions you make about what your project is aiming to achieve, your intended outcomes and how you plan to deliver them.

Step 1/ Define intervention purpose & rationale

Purpose and Rationale Form

Defining the purpose of your funding stream is one of the most critical steps in the M&E process—it will act as the foundation for all of the decisions you will make about what you need to measure and how you will measure it.

In this section any relevant context about how and why the investment programme came about, how it links to your organisation’s strategic objectives and why particular audiences or areas are the focus of the investment.

The outcomes of your funding stream are the observable impacts or changes that you want to bring about as a result of your investment. They should enable you to answer the question "what difference has it made?".

Outcomes need to be expressed in a way that is more specific than your overarching objectives. You can see in this example specific references to:

• Increasing regular physical activity participation
• Improving local physical activity delivery networks
• Delivering non-sport outcomes such as improved wellbeing

You don’t need to think at this stage about exactly how you will measure each outcome, but try to be as specific as possible.

Tip: Rather than completing this form on your own, work with other people involved in the project to define and agree what you are aiming to achieve and how you expect it to work.
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Purpose and Rationale Form

Overview: The Purpose & Rationale Form is designed to help you document the key decisions you make about what your project is aiming to achieve, your intended outcomes and how you plan to deliver them.

Summary of evidence: Briefly summarise the existing evidence that you will use to inform your approach.

- There is significant evidence that shows projects with a clear understanding of their local area and target audience, designed in a way that addresses local needs, are more likely to be effective than “one size fits all” approaches (BMHP, 2013; Varney et al., 2014; Baxter et al., 2016). Evidence suggests that the following characteristics of a localised approach are the ones most likely to achieve sustainable increases in participation:
  - A focus on a clearly defined geographical area and community
  - A clear understanding of sporting needs and the needs and wants of potential participants
  - A tailored approach to addressing locally identified challenges
  - A range of local partners that work together to deliver the project

Programme Approach: Describe the approach you plan to take to bring about the outcomes you identified. This may include the types of activities you plan to deliver, how they will be delivered and how you plan to reach your target audience.

The Community Sport Activation Fund is designed to unlock local potential and resources. This means Sport England will not prescribe what projects should be done or how they should be delivered. The fund will invest over £40 million over 5 years in local projects that we believe will work effectively in the geographical areas where they operate. A variety of different organisations, approaches and interventions will be funded in an effort to offer an appropriate range of activities delivered in the right way, in the right place and at the right time to get as many people as possible physically active.

Oversight and support will be provided by Sport England and funding recipients will have access to our insight, in addition to local expertise and support (via Sport England LGRM).

Funding awards will range from £50,000–£250,000 and will be distributed across five rounds.

Programme Rationale: Describe the rationale for the approach adopted. Explain why you think this is the best approach to achieve the outcomes and what assumptions it is based on.

The principle that underpins the CSAF is that there is un-tapped potential in combining the funding, insight and expertise of Sport England with the knowledge of local sport delivery partners. This will enable the development of tailored participation programmes that address local challenges to effectively drive sustainable increases in regular physical activity participation.

Based on existing evidence of effective approaches to driving sustainable improvements in participation, giving local networks of organisations freedom to approach local participation challenges in their own way will allow them to target specific groups who are inactive within their communities. This will facilitate the design and development of a range of activities and opportunities that address specific barriers to participation faced by these groups.
Step 1/ Define intervention purpose & rationale

Logic Model

Overview: A Logic Model is a tool for visually illustrating relationships between a funding programme’s inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes. It can be used to help clarify outcomes and select relevant activities to reach the target audience.

INPUTS → ACTIVITIES → OUTPUTS → OUTCOMES

1. Funding to 100+ local projects of £50-£250k over 3 years
2. Clearly defined focus locality and target audience
3. Existing local partnerships and delivery networks
4. Local knowledge and insight = local needs and opportunities
5. Review of funding applications & selection of successful bids
6. Set/agree local targets & objectives based on local needs analyses
7. Engage & recruit participants from local communities
8. Deliver tailored programmes of sporting activities
9. Projects achieve participant and attendance (throughput) targets
10. Successful engagement with local ‘inactive’ demographic groups
11. Increase in sport participation (# of days per week) amongst project participants
12. Local sport delivery networks developed or strengthened
13. Sustained increase in local & national physical activity participation
14. A positive impact on participants physical health and wellbeing
15. A positive impact on community cohesion in local communities
16. Effective partnerships working to improve the quantity and quality of local sport delivery

Case Study: Community Sport Activation Fund (CSAF)

**Project Summary**

1) Define intervention purpose & rationale
   - **Rationale:** There is un-tapped potential in local delivery networks for tailored sport development interventions to improve physical activity levels
   - **Purpose:** To drive sustainable increases in rates of sport participation amongst 14+ population
   - **Approach:** Funding recipients will have flexibility to develop projects that target local needs

2) Identify measurement & evaluation priorities

3) Decide level of measurement & evaluation

4) Select data collection methods and tools

5) Develop and implement measurement tools

6) Reflect on learning to improve delivery