

From idea to funding application

Resources to help you with your funding

We provide a range of resources to help you find, apply, secure and sustain funding for physical activity and sport in Cornwall. Some of these are in the form of written bitesize guides, to help you with a specific stage in the funding process. When using this guide you may also want to use it alongside any or all the following resources:

1. From idea to funding application
2. The Do's and Don'ts when writing a funding application
3. Developing a strong evidence base to support your funding application
4. Applying for facilities funding
5. Securing sponsorship
6. Funding guide for individuals

Introduction

This document provides an overview of the process that is useful to go through when considering how to develop an initial idea to the point where potential funders are being asked to invest in it. It is often the case that steps in this process are missed, and that the application is unsuccessful as a result.

Step 1: From project idea to project concept

Any project usually starts with an idea, usually a simple anecdote on what is needed. For example, it may be “we need some new trampolines”, “we should start a women’s team”, or “those kids *aren’t active* – they need some support”.

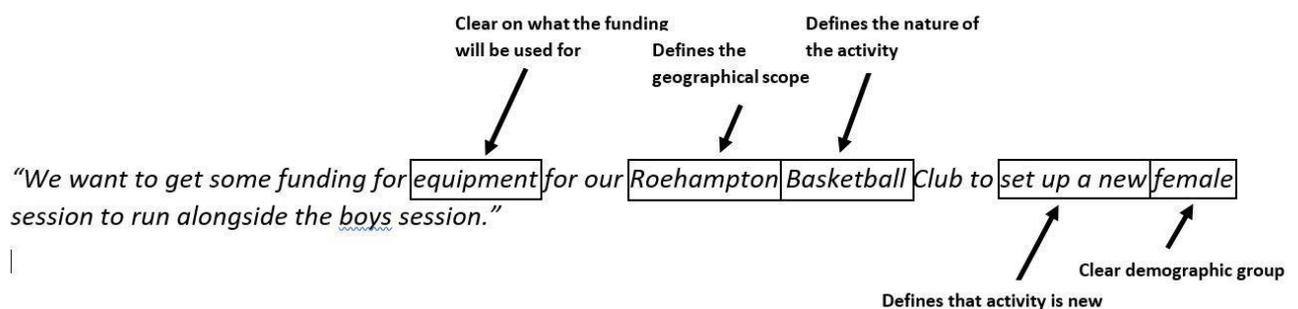
To work towards a position where this idea becomes a project, the idea needs to be developed. The result of this process is ‘the project concept’, and can be viewed as a better developed version of the original idea. It is a plan or intention, and may include details such as the potential beneficiaries, the geographical location, the activity to be delivered, and what the money will be spent on.

The table below develops the ideas presented above into a project concept:

Idea	Concept
We need some new trampolines	“We will support the continued development of our 5-8-year-old trampolinists by purchasing 3 new age-appropriate trampolines that will be used for squad sessions on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday evenings. This will help retention of trampolinists, and as they are new they can also support the establishment of a new session.”
We should start a women’s team	“Big Town Football Club aims to start delivering female sessions during our Saturday morning sessions on Big Town Rec, utilising half the pitch. Initially the focus will be on 11 – 14 year olds, to match the existing boy’s session at that time.”

Those kids aren't active – they need some support	“We want to develop a programme of social sport and physical activities on the XX estate in Penzance, aimed at those aged 16 – 18 who are at risk of anti-social behaviour. Initially we would provide multisport activities in outdoor spaces where young people congregate over summertime and then if successful expand to indoor venues from Autumn.”
---	---

A project concept is invaluable for the following stages in its development, in that it helps specify the exact details of the potential project. This is useful in evaluating the practicalities, and for searching for potential funders. An example of a project concept and its benefit for clarifying details on the project is provided below:



Step 2: Consider the feasibility of the concept

With a specific project concept, it is important to establish the feasibility and practicality of a project, before you invest considerable time over the following stages. At this point it is useful to think of the question “How will you make your project happen?”, a common question on an application form. Practicalities might include whether you can get a venue at the appropriate time, whether you find someone to deliver the project, or whether it is feasible that you could manage the project. For a facilities project, it might be whether there is a suitable security of tenure to make the project worthwhile, or considerations around planning permission at the location.

Step 3: Build the evidence base

The next recommended stage is to build the evidence base to support the project concept. Usually the concept is underpinned by an idea that stemmed from an issue being identified, but this issue needs to be fully understood and importantly will need to be demonstrated to the funder in an answer.

This stage is covered in detail in the guide [Developing a strong evidence base to support your funding application](#), which provides advice on establishing a mix of strategic and localised evidence, and quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (anecdotal) evidence. However, it is important to note that whatever the project, it is likely that some groundwork will be required to build a better understanding of the level of evidence. So, in the example above, the fundamental question is ‘Are females in Roehampton interested in a Basketball session?’ If so, when should it be? Who should deliver it? Is it appropriate to run it alongside the boy’s session?’

Step 4: Search for funding opportunities that match the concept

There is the potential to swap steps three and four around, or go through the steps in tandem.

However, it is important to note that through helping build the evidence base under step three, the project concept may need to be adapted or changed, which could impact on the potential funding opportunities available. Therefore, the most logical method is to undertake the funding search after the evidence base is established.

Step four is fundamentally about understanding the range of opportunities available. This can easily be achieved by using the [CSP Funding guide](#).

Step 5: Read the fund's prospectus or guide and look at the application form

This stage is often not given enough time, but it is vital to assess your shortlist in detail. Most funders have very clear and specific guidelines and it can often only take a minor technicality for the project to not be eligible. It is therefore vital to read the guidance notes or prospectus in full, and to try to gain a copy of the application form if this is available. Some important things to look for:

- Make sure the fund is either currently open or that it is open within an appropriate timeframe. Deadlines and timeframes are changed all the time, and it is vital that these are known
- Check the eligibility criteria thoroughly to ensure that nothing will rule your organisation's project out before anyone even looks at the detail. Check the types of organisations funded, the maximum project size, the documents required to be supplied and key project beneficiaries
- Check the aims of the fund are clearly aligned to your project, and if you are unsure then try to find a list of who they have funded previously, and whether there are any comparable projects to your concept.

Write the application

Finally, having developed the concept, considered the practicalities, established an evidence base, searched for funders, and read the guidance of the relevant funds, you will be able to start typing. At this stage, it is worth referring to London Sport's guidance note [The Do's and Don'ts when writing a funding application](#) to aid you, as even if you follow these steps it is easy to undo all the good work at the final hurdle. In headline terms however, don't leave an application to the last minute, use the guidance notes to steer your answers, and don't write too little or too much