
The impact of COVID-19 on the social outcomes delivered through Community Sport and Sport for Development

Research Brief and Request for Proposals

210301/RfP

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1. Overview

1.1 The Sport for Development Coalition ('the Coalition') is seeking to better understand the cumulative effect that COVID-19 has had on the wider social outcomes delivered through community sport and sport for development, and what impact different support mechanisms may have in sustaining and enhancing the wider outcomes delivered by the sector during COVID recovery and rebuild.

1.2 To support this objective the Coalition is requesting proposals to produce secondary research that addresses three focus areas and associated sets of research questions:

- i. **Impact on wider social outcomes:** What impact has COVID-19 had on the wider social outcomes delivered through community sport and sport for development across the country? How does this compare with other sectors?

- ii. **Adaption and modification:** To what extent have organisations utilising sport for development approaches adapted and modified delivery models and programming in response to COVID-19? What inferences can be made about the impact of these adaptations on sustaining the wider social outcomes delivered by the sector?
- iii. **Targeting responses and support:** What additional responses and support within the sector, from government (across levels and portfolio areas) and public bodies, and from third sector and business partners, would help to sustain and enhance the wider outcomes delivered by community sport and sport for development? What impact will different types of support, and different targeting of this support, have on the wider social outcomes delivered? How does this compare with other sectors?

1.3 It is envisaged this research will draw on secondary data and utilise a range of analytical approaches that reflect the varied nature of the data to be analysed, including inferential statistical modelling and scenario planning.

1.4 The total budget for this research is £15,000 (including VAT), with proposals requested by 28st March 2021.

2. Sport for Development Coalition

2.1 The [Sport for Development Coalition](#) is a network of more than 160 organisations that use sport and physical activity to generate positive social outcomes. The Coalition mobilises collective action to measure the impact of sport for development at scale, support the creation of an enabling policy environment and unlock investment and resources to help realise the potential of community sport and physical activity to contribute to positive social change.

2.2 The Coalition is made up of a diverse group of organisations that include sporting bodies, community organisations, social enterprises, charities, and aligned sector networks and support organisations. The Coalition is supported by Sport England, Comic Relief and Laureus Sport for Good.

2.3 Following the announcement of the third national lockdown the Coalition launched a new initiative entitled '[Adapt, Support, Respond](#)' which aims to understand how community sport and sport for development organisations have adapted their services to continue to support individuals and communities at this time, and how they can best play their part in the nation's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. This request for proposals is part of this initiative.

3. Background and Context

3.1 COVID-19 has had a profound and far-reaching impact on the country. The health emergency, wellbeing crisis and economic shock brought on by the virus and associated

lockdowns have created the most serious societal challenge for generations and exacerbated many deep-rooted inequalities. The substantial death toll and infection rate, [forecasts](#) that real GDP could fall by over 10% and [reports](#) showing the profound impacts on people's mental health underscore the scope of this challenge.

- 3.2 As with all areas of society, the pandemic has had a substantial impact on community sport and sport for development. With much of the sector shuttered as part of restrictions and lockdowns to limit the spread of the virus, [adults](#) and [children](#) are now less active than before than pandemic and many existing inequalities in participation levels have been accentuated. Government support for businesses and voluntary sector, alongside specific funding made available by Sport England, has provided a lifeline for many community sport and sport for development organisations. The monitoring and evaluation processes associated with this support, in particular from Sport England, has provided valuable insight into the challenges facing the sector and how organisations have responded.
- 3.3 Even so, concerns remain about the sustainability of organisations across the sector. In response, coordinated [campaigns and research](#) have been initiated in order to understand, support and advocate for the ongoing viability of community sport.
- 3.4 Given [evidence](#) of the contribution that community sport and sport for development can make to wider societal outcomes, the impact of the pandemic on the sector has significance beyond the issue of organisational sustainability. Better understanding what adaptations and support is required from within community sport and sport for development, of partners, and through policy change and funding frameworks, in order to sustain and enhance the outcomes delivered by the sector, are highly pertinent and important to explore further.
- 3.5 The resilience and sustainability of organisations and groups using sport to contribute to achieving these outcomes is critically important. However, a focus on the impact of the pandemic on the wider societal outcomes delivered by the sector, requires additional analysis, modelling and scenario planning.
- 3.6 Initial consultation conducted across the Coalition network indicates that the support requirements of organisations extend beyond direct financial support and include regulatory and policy change, guidance and capacity building related issues that have both direct and indirect cost implications.
- 3.7 Understanding the support requirements of organisations is now particularly timely given the release of the [Government's roadmap out of lockdown](#), which has outlined a plan for a phased return of organised sport and physical activity, with the return of outdoor sports for all ages at the end of March and [Sport England's continued work](#) with the Government to set out more details on subsequent steps including the reopening of indoor facilities.

4. Research Objectives and Questions

4.1 In this context, the primary objective of this research is to help sector leaders, policy makers across level of government and portfolio areas, funders, and partners to better understand the cumulative effect that COVID-19 has had on the wider social outcomes delivered through community sport and sport for development, and what impact different support mechanisms may have in sustaining and enhancing the wider outcomes delivered by the sector during COVID recovery and rebuild.

4.2 To support this objective there are three primary focus areas and a sets of questions for this research:

i. Impact on wider social outcomes

- a. What inferences can be made about the impact that COVID-19 has had on the wider social outcomes delivered through community sport and sport for development across the country? How does this compare with other sectors?

ii. Adaption and modification

- a. To what extent have organisations utilising sport for development approaches adapted and modified delivery models and programming in response to COVID-19?
- b. What inferences can be made about the impact of these adaptations on sustaining the wider social outcomes delivered by the sector?

iii. Targeting responses and support

- a. What has been the reach and initial impact of the support provided to the sector by government, public bodies, and business and third sector partners, in response to the pandemic? What additional responses could be considered within the sector, from government (across levels and portfolio areas), public bodies, and third sector partners, in order to sustain and enhance the wider outcomes delivered by community sport and sport for development?
- b. What inferences can be made about the impact that different types of support, and different targeting of this support, will have on the wider social outcomes delivered by community sport and sport for development? How does this compare with other sectors?

5. Methodology and Approach

- 5.1 It is envisaged that this research will be conducted through secondary analysis of existing quantitative and qualitative data. It will likely require a range of analytical approaches that reflect the varied nature of the data to be analysed (qualitative and quantitative survey data, grant data, monitoring and evaluation data etc.), including inferential statistical modelling and scenario planning.
- 5.2 Although not an exhaustive list, it is envisaged that the approach utilised to respond to the research questions will include analysis of data from the following qualitative and quantitative sources:
- i. Sport England Community Emergency Fund, Tackling Inequality Fund and Return to Play Fund data (through 360 giving)
 - ii. Sport and Recreation Alliance and Sheffield Hallam University Impact of Covid-19 on Grassroots Activity Survey Data
 - iii. Sport England Active Lives data, including the next release of Active Lives scheduled for late April 2021
 - iv. Data collected through the Sport for Development Coalition 'Adapt, Support and Respond' initiative along with research, survey and monitoring and evaluation data collected across the Sport for Development Coalition Network
- 5.3 Where required and possible the Sport for Development Coalition will broker relationships between the research team and key partners to facilitate access to available data.
- 5.4 In addition, it is envisaged the following published analysis and findings will be used to frame and compliment analysis and modelling of the data identified above:
- i. Sport England and Sheffield Hallam University Social and economic value of community sport and physical activity in England
 - ii. Sport England Active Lives and Active Lives Coronavirus Reports, including analytical reports accompanying the next release of Active Lives scheduled for late April 2021
 - iii. CIMPSA Workforce Impact Survey
 - iv. Relevant publicly available Government data (e.g. DCMS Coronavirus Business Survey; Financial support for voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE); and, ONS analysis of Coronavirus in the UK and its effect on the economy and society)
- 5.5 It is envisaged that, as much as is possible given the varied data sets to be utilised, analysis and modelling will be coherent and joined up (as opposed to each source being analysed in isolation), especially in relation to setting out plausible scenarios for the sector.
- 5.6 The nature of the research questions and variance of data sources, means it is accepted that the outputs of this research will primarily be inferential in nature and based on modelling.

6. Additional Considerations

- 6.1 The picture emerging from the Coalition's preliminary analysis is that the impact of the pandemic on the outcomes delivered by community sport and sport for development varies significantly based on organisational profile and location, the communities and groups served, the outcomes an organisation works to deliver, the level of fixed liabilities an organisation has, expenditure variation related to restrictions across supply and delivery chains, and ability to access local and place-based support mechanisms.
- 6.2 The way in which the pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities within the sector and society more broadly, is a linked and a critically important consideration. Therefore, building appropriate disaggregation into research design is essential. In particular in order to better understand which communities are potentially most affected by changes in the outcomes delivered by community sport and sport for development.
- 6.3 The adaptations and pivots many community sport and sport for development organisations have made in response to the pandemic are notable (e.g. to online offerings or to provide other community services). Understanding the scale, impact and sustainability of these adaptations is therefore a relevant issue.
- 6.4 The impact of the pandemic on the wider outcomes delivered by community and sport and sport for development is not unique to this sector. Equally, the impact is not uniform across sectors and interventions types. To better understand the most impactful and effective investment for government and third sector partners, it is therefore prudent to consider and model out (to the extent possible) the impacts and value of investment in community sport and sport for development in a post-COVID landscape vis-a-vis other interventions and approaches. That is, is further investment in community sport and sport for development a best buy when compared to other community interventions that also contribute to similar outcome areas?
- 6.5 In seeking to better understand these issues, and provide recommendations on potential responses, considerable 'survey' fatigue reported by community sport and sport for development organisations must be considered, hence why secondary data analysis and research is to be prioritised.
- 6.6 Modelling more accurately the number of the community clubs, organisations and groups that deliver community sport pre- and post-COVID is an important associated research need. To fully communicate the scale and wider outcomes delivered through community sport and sport for development, this analysis and modelling would need to extend beyond traditional conceptualisations of community sport clubs and encompass the wider community sport system.

7. Outputs and Deliverables

7.1 It is expected that the following deliverables will be produced through this assignment:

i. Inception Report

Inception report outlining in detail the proposed methodology, modelling and scenario planning to respond to the research questions.

ii. Interim report and data analysis

Mid-project report that provides an overview of emerging themes and preliminary recommendations. This report should also provide an assessment of available data sets and where required set out proposed proxy indicators and any refinement of the qualitative modelling and scenario planning approach set out in the inception report.

iii. Final deliverable

Final deliverable that presents the results of the research and outlines recommendations to help inform the response of the sector, government and partners seeking to sustain and enhance the wider outcomes delivered by community sport and sport for development in the context of COVID-19.

7.2 In addition to the delivery of these outputs it is expected that the following activities will be undertaken by the successful organisation:

i. Inception Meeting

Attend and co-facilitate an inception meeting with designated stakeholders from the Sport for Development Coalition.

ii. Iterative development meetings

Participate in fortnightly briefings with the Sport for Development Coalition management team to garner iterative input from the sector as the project develops.

iii. Consultative workshop

Facilitate a consultative workshop at the mid-point of the project to explore and test key themes and emerging recommendations.

iv. Forum and launch

Participate in a policy forum and roundtable to launch the research and set out the key recommendations presented.

8. Budget

8.1 The total budget for this project is £15,000 (including VAT and expenses).

8.2 Terms of payment will be as follows:

- i. 35% of signature of contract
- ii. 65% upon satisfactory submission of final deliverable.

9. Timelines

9.1 Project Timelines

Date	Milestone
24 th March 2021	Final date for questions on the RfP
28 th March 2021	Closing date for submission of proposals
7 th April 2021	Interviews with shortlisted proposals
9 th April 2021	Successful organisation notified
14 th April 2021	Signature of contract and inception meeting
11 th June 2021	Final deliverable produced

10. Submission Requirements

10.1 Proposals should include the following:

- i. Proposed methodology and approach to respond to the brief and research questions.
- ii. Clear outline of the type, nature and scope of the 'deliverables' that will be produced to respond to the brief.
- iii. Overview of the organisation and profiles of the team who will be working on the project, with a clear outline of the roles and responsibilities of each team member.
- iv. Examples of relevant work and deliverables that demonstrate the capability of the team to deliver the research, including a clear outline of the role proposed team members played in producing these deliverables (links to research outputs, or copies, should be provided).
- v. Breakdown of the budget, including the time allocation/cost for each team member.
- vi. Outline of relevant data protection, compliance and safeguarding issues, and links or copies of relevant privacy, data processing and safeguarding policies and data controller status.
- vii. Any other relevant information.

Proposals should be a maximum of ten pages (excluding policies).

10.2 Proposals should be received no later than **Sunday 28th March 2021**. All proposals should be submitted to: coalition@sportfordevelopmentcoalition.org

10.3 Short listed organisations may be requested to take part in an interview with representatives of the Coalition on 7th April 2021.

11.Selection Criteria

11.1 The following criteria will be used to evaluate proposals:

- i. Demonstrated understanding of research objectives.
- ii. Clarity, effectiveness and credibility of methodology and approach.
- iii. Scope, innovation and unique contribution of proposed deliverables.
- iv. Relevant expertise and experience of the research team.
- v. Demonstrated commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- vi. Demonstrated capability to deliver the proposed outputs.
- vii. Value for money, including contribution of in-kind resource in budget proposals.

12.Questions and Further information

12.1 Please submit questions or enquires related to this brief via email to the Sport for Development Coalition by 24th March 2021 (e.coalition@sportfordevelopmentcoalition.org)