

# Sportsmatch guidance for sponsors



## 1.0 Introduction

Sportsmatch is a funding programme managed by Sport England to support the development of grassroots sport in England. It makes awards of up to £100,000 to voluntary and community organisations, sports clubs and local authorities to run projects aimed at increasing or sustaining participation in sports at community level.

We do this through matching sponsorship from commercial companies, charitable trusts or private individuals wishing to invest in community sport.

This guidance will cover who can be a sponsor and what the potential benefits could be.

## 2.0 Eligible sponsors

To be an eligible sponsor (one which the Sportsmatch can match against) you will either need to be a commercial company, a charitable trust/charity with grant giving powers or a private individual.

Sportsmatch can match up to five eligible sponsors on any one project or application, each of whom must contribute a minimum of £1,000.

To be eligible, a sponsor must be one of the following:

1. a first time sponsor of grassroots sport
2. an existing sponsor investing additional money to previous years' investment
3. a new sponsor to that organisation (or have not sponsored the organisation in the past 3 years).

## 3.0 Sponsors ineligible for match funding

### 3.1 Commercial companies:

The majority of commercial companies will be eligible to act as a sponsor for matched funding. The exceptions to this are:

- Companies whose primary purpose is the sale of alcohol or tobacco where project beneficiaries are under 18 years of age
- Companies whose business may harm the reputation of Sport England
- Companies who receive more than 25% of their funds from government sources, the delivery of sporting activities, a national governing body or professional sporting body and who are investing in their own sport (investment in other sports will be considered on a case by case basis)
- Companies without a base in the UK
- Professional or trade associations.

### 3.2 Charitable trusts / charities:

Most charitable trusts and charities will be eligible to act as a sponsor. The exceptions to this are:

- Charities who do not have a provision in their constitution to give grants.

- Charitable trusts or charities who receive more than 25% of their funds from government sources, the delivery of sporting activities, a national governing body or professional sporting body and who are investing in their own sport (investment in other sports will be considered on a case by case basis)
- Charities connected with a particular sport wishing to sponsor another organisation in the same sport.

#### **4.0 Why sponsor a Sportsmatch project?**

With the potential to match your sponsorship pound for pound with exchequer funds, by sponsoring a Sportsmatch project there is a unique opportunity to add even more value to the project. Providing sponsorship can enhance a company's profile through association with an event, club or team. This can be a powerful association, as it is perceived as an endorsement by an independent third party. Consumers are aware of the costs of sponsorship, but the message is more subtle than paid-for advertisements.

Typical activities include:

- Display of the brand name on kit, banners around a venue, and advertisements in programmes and in other media or merchandise
- Use of the club, event, team or individual in advertisements and other promotions undertaken by the brand
- Personal endorsement of the sponsor's products by teams or individuals - by use of the sponsor's products, kit or equipment. Sportsmatch will only consider matching in-kind amounts up to 50% of the total sponsorship amount (for example, a £100k project with £50k being requested from Sport England, at least £25k of the remaining funding would need to be cash sponsorship)
- Joint websites or close links between separate websites.

#### **5.0 Why sponsor sport?**

For many commercial companies there is intense competition among companies and brands, and there often seems little difference in terms of quality, content or price. Sponsors use sport to make their brand stand out from the crowd, creating a unique impression in consumers' minds. Here are some of the most common reasons companies provide sponsorship:

- Brand / corporate awareness: sponsorship can make a brand or organisation name more familiar to consumers so it stands out in a crowded marketplace
- Brand / corporate image: sponsorship can help establish a personality and style for a product to distinguish it from others in the market and allow, for example, premium pricing
- Customer relations: sports sponsorship can provide useful opportunities for companies to offer hospitality to clients. It can also show the sponsor as

someone who's good to do business with, and raise the sponsor's profile among current and potential customers

- Employee relations: sports sponsorship can encourage company pride and loyalty, which helps attract and retain staff
- Potential to match micro sponsorship with participant profiles specific to a project
- Community relations: sponsorship can show that a company cares about its community and is prepared to invest in the future and welfare of local people.

## **6.0 What do companies want from sports sponsorship?**

As a general rule, sponsors want:

- Media coverage. Sporting activity creates opportunities for exciting media coverage showing sponsor logos on shirts or banners. Such exposure creates brand familiarity for consumers, making the sponsor's logo stand out from competitors' logos
- Memorable, enjoyable experiences. The sponsor will want memorable, enjoyable activities that provide occasions to build the brand and develop sales
- Quality leisure time with clients. The sponsor may want opportunities to offer hospitality and communicate with customers in a relaxed setting
- An enhanced profile in the community
- Value for money. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, sponsors and their employees want to feel comfortable with a sport and feel that they are getting good value for money.

## **7.0 Should your company sponsor sport?**

Your company can definitely benefit from sports sponsorship if:

- Your customers or potential customers are sports participants, spectators or viewers
- Your company or product would benefit from an association with sport
- You want to reach an audience with a relatively straightforward message
- You are prepared to integrate sponsorship with other marketing communications such as advertising, point-of-sale, direct mail or corporate hospitality
- Your employees can benefit from the association, for example by becoming a volunteer
- You want to demonstrate a commitment to your local community.

## **8.0 Further Information**

You can find more information by visiting our website at [www.sportengland.org/funding](http://www.sportengland.org/funding), by calling our advice line on 08458 508 508 or by e-mail at [funding@sportengland.org](mailto:funding@sportengland.org).