



2021-25

International Relations Investment Strategies (IRIS)

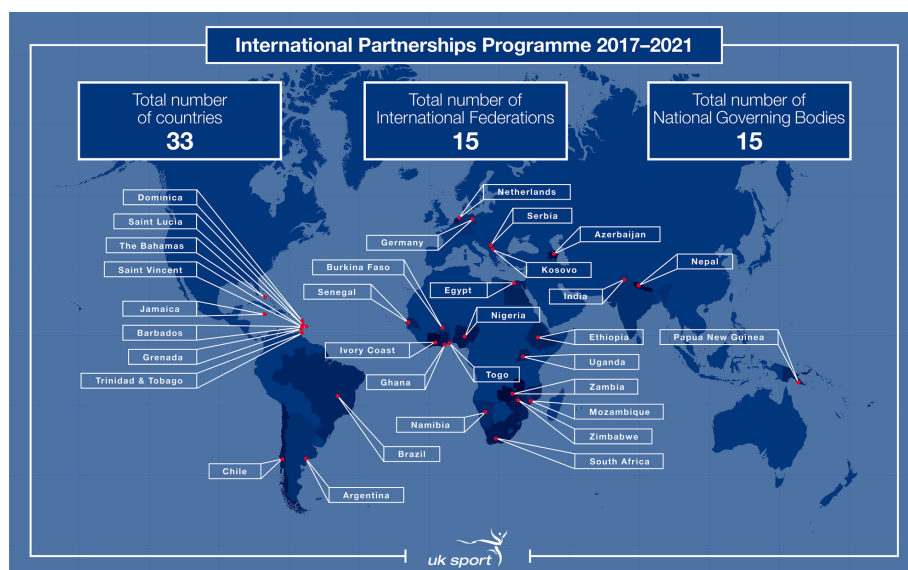
Introduction

The UK is currently one of the most active and influential nations in international sport. British voices are often at the top table where decisions on the rules of a sport, the location of a major event or the inclusion of a discipline in a future Olympic or Paralympic Games are made. They can be heard prominently in the corridors or Congresses of international federations; and are sought after by individual nations and world governing bodies alike for their leadership and expertise, particularly in the areas of high-performance success, sport development, events, governance, safeguarding, integrity, equality and inclusion.

National Governing Bodies of sport (NGBs) are at the heart of this success story. In 2017-21, our investment into 32 NGBs across Summer and Winter Olympic and Paralympic sports, and those with agreed Major Events targets, focused on ensuring that the UK has a strong, respected and supportive voice in international sport.

Through our investment programme, NGBs have been able to lead or support governance reforms; changes to technical rules, refereeing and medal events; policy developments on safeguarding or gender equality; major events bidding, including delivery of global sport development projects; and elections to positions on Committees, Councils or Boards of International Federations.

As shown in this map, the UK has also developed a vast global footprint of international partnerships, ensuring NGBs are connected and play a positive role in the growth of their sport around the world through impactful sport development programmes.



The international landscape

A consultation with international post-holders conducted in 2020 on the issues that could affect UK Sport's and NGBs' future international relations strategies highlighted a number of significant shifts in the sporting landscape, including:

1. Impact of Covid-19 on the sustainability of the international sporting system, alongside significant flux in relation to the sports, disciplines, events and athletes in future Olympic and Paralympic programmes, impacting on the medal market.
2. Widening spectrum around ethical, integrity and governance standards, putting the future of some sports on the Olympic and/or Paralympic programme at risk, whilst decision-making is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few rather than traditional structures.
3. Increasing challenge to International Federations' legitimacy and monopoly over their sports – from athletes, courts as well as public and private sector organisations – with competition for audiences, events and commercial rights within the same sport; as well as pressure to change and operate as major commercial businesses, requiring a different type of leadership and skillset.
4. The rise of athletes' voice and autonomy on issues such as athletes' rights, welfare and safeguarding, ethical decision-making, human rights, sponsorship, environmental sustainability - with wider demand for sport to truly shift the dial on equality, diversity and inclusion.
5. Competition from other nations for influence, norms and values, coupled with changing perceptions of the UK as it charts a new global path amidst major geo-political and economic shifts.

IR Investment Strategies: 2021-25

Navigating all this and more as we look beyond Tokyo is complicated. As set out in these Principles of Investment, the basic framework for UK Sport's International Relations investment programme for 2021-25 will remain broadly similar to the previous cycle.

However, as the international landscape becomes more unpredictable and fractious, NGBs will need to think carefully about the issues which will most likely affect their

sport and their interests for the next 4-8 years; identify a clear set of objectives or important decisions that they wish to achieve or help shape; and target activities and people that will directly support them to achieve those objectives, whilst creating a climate conducive for effective international relations.

NGBs are particularly encouraged to think about:

- Strengthening their voice in European as well as International Federations.
- Maximise the opportunities to convene international meetings and events in the UK as a global hub for sport business and ideas, whilst extending international sport development partnerships and alliances with and beyond natural partners, including in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Commonwealth and MENA region.
- Identify and support high-calibre and diverse candidates for international positions – not just on Boards but also on sub-committee structures.
- Advocate for gender equality and be thought leaders in shaping and supporting reform in the governance, ethics, integrity and sustainability of the international sporting system
- Enhance athletes' voice on the world stage.

UK Sport will have tighter resources than in the previous cycle, which means NGBs will need to be more targeted in what they seek to achieve and how. As a result, we are giving NGBs greater flexibility to prioritise which International Relations activities (and people) they wish to support and how they wish to allocate funding.

We will support NGBs in the development and implementation of their strategies through ongoing collaboration, insights and reviews, as well as by connecting more systematically with other partners, particularly the BOA, BPA, UKAD and DCMS.

We are excited to working in partnership to ensure that - through the NGBs, other partners and our targeted investment - the UK enhances its reputation and role as a trusted and respected global leader, partner and broker in shaping the future direction and development of international sport.

UK Sport International Relations Team, March 2021

Principle 1

The main purpose of UK Sport's investment into National Governing Bodies' (NGBs) International Relations strategies is to enable the UK to have a leading voice on matters and decisions that affect international sport.

In practice:

In determining our investment into NGBs' International Relations (IR) Strategies, the most important factor will be the potential for that activity to align behind our investment into high performance success and major events ambitions, whilst advancing the highest standards of integrity, ethics and governance in international sport.

Investment will also be based on NGBs' ability to drive international partnerships and alliances in support of their IR objectives and 'UK sports diplomacy', thus ensuring the UK is recognised as a global leader and force for good within and beyond international sport.

Implications:

- UK Sport's investment into NGBs' IR strategies will be targeted at NGBs in receipt of UK Sport World Class Programme and Progression funding; and/or those Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth sports with a future Major Events target agreed under UK Sport's Major Events strategy.
- As a discretionary investor with a finite budget, UK Sport may prioritise higher levels of funding to NGBs which can demonstrate the greatest potential to deliver against our organisational mission and ambitions. Prioritisation will consider an NGB's ability to deliver all or any of the following objectives:
 - To play a leading voice in decisions and developments impacting UK high-performance success at an international level.
 - To impact on governance reform, ethics, integrity and sustainability within its respective International and/or Continental (e.g. European) federation.
 - To contribute to the UK being one of the most represented nations in

international sport through a high calibre, gender-equal and diverse network of British individuals seeking or having secured positions on International Federations (IFs) and/or Continental bodies.

- To drive international partnerships and alliances in support of its IR objectives, the development of the international sporting system and broader 'UK sports diplomacy'.
- To support major events bidding and global legacy projects.
- To enhance athletes' voice on the world stage.
- To adequately oversee, manage and deliver IR investments.
- For those NGBs which are not in receipt of World Class Programme and Progression funding but have an agreed Major Events target, IR financial support will be agreed at an appropriate point in the funding cycle, in consultation with UK Sport's Major Events team. Any agreed funding will be expected to stop by the end of the financial year in which the event has taken place.
- Should a sport cease to have a UK Sport-funded World Class Programme, Progression Funding and/or an agreed Major Event target during the course of the funding cycle, the implications of this will be considered at the subsequent IR review period. At that point, UK Sport may choose to withdraw IR funding.
- Whilst priority will be given to sports in receipt of World Class Programme, Progression funding and NGBs with a Major Events hosting target, UK Sport will consider providing limited IR investment to Olympic and Paralympic sports or bodies not in receipt of World Class Performance and Progression funding. However, investment decisions into these sports will be based on affordability within UK Sport's IR budget, and will only be made once funding decisions have been reached on other IR Strategies.

Principle 2

Through IR investment, UK Sport seeks to enhance the strategic relationship between an NGB, its International Federation (IF) and other significant international stakeholders within the sport. To ensure the greatest impact, investment decisions will be taken in the context of a four-year strategic vision for IR.

In practice:

NGBs are best placed to deliver international relations in their own sport and through their own sport structures. UK Sport will work in partnership with, and direct the majority of its funding to, NGBs to support and enhance bespoke sport-by-sport IR strategies over a four-year cycle.

Implications:

- UK Sport will only fund IR strategies that are endorsed by NGBs that are formally recognised as voting members of their IF or - in special cases - the UK Sport World Class Programme-funded body.
- Where a British NGB is a voting member of their IF, UK Sport will only consider support for that NGB.
- UK Sport will consider supporting a home country NGB where: there is no British NGB that is a voting member of their IF; where that home country NGB is a voting member of their IF; where that home nation has been nominated by the other home country NGBs to operate the World Class Programme, Progression Funding and/or Major Events investment; and where their proposed IR activity is confirmed as supporting the objectives of the British World Class Programme, Progression Funding and/or agreed Major Event targets. UK Sport will not invest into conflicting IR objectives or activities across home country NGBs.
- Given UK Sport's investment cycles, winter Olympic and Paralympic sports in receipt of World Class Programme funding and/or with an agreed Major Event target will receive IR funding over two two-year cycles. However, they would still be underpinned by a four-year strategic vision for their IR objectives.

Principle 3

International Relations is primarily driven by and through individuals. Organisations in receipt of IR investment will be expected to support the development of high-calibre and gender equal [1] network of pathway candidates and international postholders, with diversity of thought and background representative of UK society. Postholders will also demonstrate the highest levels of integrity and credibility to lead and operate in international sport.

In practice:

UK Sport expects NGBs' IR strategies to be focused on credible, high-calibre and diverse individuals aiming to attain international positions and make a demonstrable, positive impact in international sport. We will invest into long-term pathways and succession planning, underpinned by agreed strategies and activities, to support identified individuals' skills, ambitions and growth.

All individuals in receipt of UK Sport IR funding will be expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct when using public funding for international relations activity. UK Sport reserves the right to pause or withdraw funding in the event of any reasonable concerns over an individual's misconduct or integrity.

Implications:

- Through its IR investment, UK Sport aims to ensure that the UK remains one of the most represented nations in international sport through a high calibre, gender-equal and truly diverse network of British individuals on International and/or European Federations. Selection for candidates for international positions should be conducted through a transparent and inclusive process, on the basis of skill and diversity of thought and background.
- When investing in individuals targeting a senior position on their International or Continental Federation, UK Sport reserves the right to carry out due diligence on those individuals, before confirming any financial and/or advisory support.
- It will be the responsibility of NGBs to ensure that UK Sport funding for IR activity

is used in a manner which complies with domestic and international rules. NGBs and individuals targeting a senior position in their IF or Continental body will be required to declare that they will commit to the highest standards of ethical conduct when using UK Sport funding and be aware of all relevant legislation, including the UK Bribery Act. These individuals will also be expected to declare and balance any conflict of interests between their domestic and international responsibilities, including any commercial interests they may have.

- For those sports or bodies which do not have an agreed IR Strategy, UK Sport will consider IR support if a credible individual from those sports is targeting a presidential or other senior positions in an IF or Continental body. Investment decisions in these cases will be at UK Sport's discretion.

[1] We recognise that "gender-equal" does not capture the full spectrum of gender identities. In the context of these Principles, we are aiming for women to make up half the network of candidates seeking international positions.

Principle 4

UK Sport will only invest in IR activities that are complementary and add value to an NGB's existing IR Programme, and where there is evidence of effective management and governance of IR policy and activity.

In practice:

It is a basic responsibility of an NGB to engage within the International Federation of their sport. Therefore, UK Sport expects NGBs to already carry out some of this activity, and for its funding to be primarily aimed at adding value and driving complementary IR work.

NGBs will need to evidence not only that they have an appropriate IR strategy in place, but also that their international policy positions are being discussed, agreed and disseminated within their organisation in a structured manner.

Implications:

- The costs of an NGB to attend its IF Congress are expected to be covered by the NGB. UK Sport will consider supporting Congress attendance for an NGB's nominated pathway candidates. In exceptional circumstances and at its sole discretion, UK Sport may consider contributing to the costs towards Congress attendance for those NGBs with limited IR investment, such as those Olympic and Paralympic sports not in receipt of World Class Performance and Progression funding.
- NGBs and nominated postholders or candidates cannot use UK Sport funding for any international relations activity that is already paid for by their respective IFs or Continental bodies.
- Where individuals are receiving support to fulfil roles internationally, NGBs must ensure that costs are appropriate and reasonable. NGBs must adopt and apply UK Sport's Travel and Subsistence Guidelines for IR in respect of all funded activity.
- NGBs in receipt of IR funding will establish IR Management Groups or equivalent to meet (at a minimum of twice a year) in order to discuss and oversee IR issues and implementation of the strategy. IR Management Groups should be endorsed

by, and connected to, the NGB Board and other key sporting functions within the NGB (e.g. Performance). An NGB's failure to establish and maintain an appropriate IR Management Group may put the IR investment into the NGB at risk.

- Where international postholders and/or pathway candidates receive IR investment, NGBs would be expected to consider them to either sit on the IR Management Group or be engaged with the Group's objectives.
- NGBs should engage on at least a quarterly basis with UK Sport IR Team and complete reporting requirements as requested. Moreover, all investments will be monitored through, and subject to, formal six-monthly and annual reviews assessing IR delivery, impact and management, as well as affordability within UK Sport's financial provision.
- Delivery will be measured against the NGB's progress in achieving its IR objectives. An NGB's failure to engage with, and report to, UK Sport as required may put its IR investment at risk.

UK Sport International Relations

UK Sport's International Relations team works to ensure the UK has leading voice and is a global player in the direction and development of the international sporting system.

We partner with National Governing Bodies of sport (NGBs) in order to:

- Strengthen their voice within their world governing bodies through bespoke International Relations Investment Strategies (IRIS).
- Support the development of a connected, high-calibre and diverse network of British postholders on International and Continental Federations.
- Ensure that the UK plays a thought leadership role in advocating and driving reform in the governance, ethics, integrity and sustainability of the international sporting system.
- Build international partnerships, strengthening our alliances around the world and ensuring the UK is recognised and respected as a globally connected, engaged and supportive partner.

For more information, visit: www.uksport.gov.uk/our-work/international-relations
