

# UK SPORT MAJOR EVENTS



# INVESTMENT GUIDE



## Introduction

Our support for major events is founded on the belief that we must do more to protect and widen the provision of live sport across the UK.

As the Government's major events agency, our role is to ensure there is an ongoing calendar of major sporting events that can reach, inspire and unite the nation. Our aspiration is that these events will resonate with every corner of the country, bring communities closer together, showcase and support our athletes and strengthen the UK's international reputation. We aim to host a balanced portfolio that appeals to different audiences, delivers economic impact and enhances the UK's global reputation.

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with information on how to submit events for our consideration and, should your event be designated as a strategic priority for the UK, the process to apply for National Lottery investment. We reserve the right to amend and update this Guide and it should be considered alongside our strategic framework, Making Live Sport Matters.

## UK Sport Events Funding Programmes

### Pinnacle Events programme

The purpose of this funding programme is to host a calendar of the world's biggest and most impactful events, that resonate with the UK public and maintain our position as a leading global host.

The type of events that are eligible are:

- Mega events\* (which are likely to require UK Government funding)
- World Championships (or equivalent) in Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth sports and disciplines, or in sports that we believe have a credible opportunity to become Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth sports.
- European Championships of scale in Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth sports
- Innovative new hosting concepts, that link to the above events, which resonate with the UK public and support a balanced portfolio.

*We reserve the right to invest outside of this eligibility criteria if the event is of strategic value.*

*\*We invest into 'mega events' on behalf of DCMS. If you believe your event is classed as a mega event (criteria includes the staging costs likely to be in excess of £10m and likely to attract in excess of 100,000 spectators), please refer to [DCMS' Gold Framework](#) and get in touch with our Major Events team to discuss further.*

## **Performance Events programme**

This programme supports the hosting of international events in those sporting disciplines funded through our World Class and Development Programmes, and is intended to support British athletes in their preparations for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The type of events that are eligible are as follows:

- World Championships (where not prioritised as part of the Pinnacle Programme)
- European Championships
- Top-Tier/Premium World Circuits or World Circuit Finals
- World Junior Championships
- Top-Tier World Leagues

# Building the UK Sport major sports events calendar

We take a long-term, strategic approach to enable the UK to secure major sporting events.

Our primary objective is to ensure we build an events calendar that appeals to the British public and has balance across location, year, gender, disability and ethnicity; ensuring an ongoing appeal outside of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

To create this balanced calendar, we assess every proposed event and its potential to deliver against our Pinnacle and Performance hosting objectives, the likely financial requirements and how it fits into our wider major events calendar. We are also open to applications for events from outside of the traditional NGB landscape, whether that's from International Federations, host cities or commercial entities.

We also work closely with our performance colleagues to understand the benefit of specific events to deliver qualification, classification and preparation opportunities for both the summer and winter Olympic and Paralympic Games.

From here, events are prioritised into three categories:

## 1. Strategic priority and hosting target

Events are currently considered to be a strategic priority and an investment is likely to be affordable.

These events can progress to full application stage in line with bidding timelines. It is important to note that there is no guarantee of investment.

## 2. Strategic priority but not currently affordable

We have finite resources, and it is possible that there may be events that meet our objectives but are unaffordable compared to other hosting targets.

These events will be placed on a reserve list should financial resource become available.

## 3. Not a strategic priority

Events that don't meet our strategic objectives or have not been prioritised in our hosting calendar, will not be progressed.

This includes events we don't believe are a realistic hosting target, due to operational considerations or winnability.

## Investment principles

To ensure that our investment is used effectively to secure events that best support our hosting objectives and portfolio, we have a set of investment principles that will shape and guide our decision making.

Please take the time to review these before beginning your investment application.

### **1. Your event is considered a strategic priority and is on the hosting target list.**

If your event is considered a strategic priority, you will be able to progress to investment application stage at an appropriate time prior to bidding. This process can take between 6-12 months, depending on the complexity of the event and if you need to run a host city/venue selection process.

We appreciate that hosting opportunities may arise from time to time that do not appear on our list. If these events are eligible for funding, meet our hosting objectives and are deemed an affordable strategic target for the Pinnacle or Performance programme, we will work with you to progress an application allowing for enough time to develop a considered business plan and bid.

### **2. You need to go through our investment application process ahead of bidding or submitting an expression of interest to your International Federation.**

Working with our team, you will develop your investment application. The team will work with you to develop the following:

- **Business plan** – documents the strategic benefits of hosting your event, the governance and workforce model, and bidding strategy.
- **Budget** – a benchmarked budget should be established to show the financial feasibility of your event, partner funding and the investment request of UK Sport.
- **Risk register** – to note the risks you foresee to bidding and staging your event.
- **Milestones** – detailing key tasks and timings in the bid, planning and delivery.
- For Pinnacle events, you will also need to develop plans for **sporting and social impact, environmental sustainability** and **EDI**.

If your event is considered feasible, affordable and winnable, a funding decision will be taken by UK Sport – and in most cases – our Major Events Panel. The Panel will consider how the event meets our hosting objectives, the potential social impact, opportunities and risks before making a recommendation to the UK Sport Board to invest or not.

Should you receive a positive funding decision, we will agree a payment schedule which is subject to meeting the Terms and Conditions of your investment award letter.

### 3. Investment of National Lottery funding will be made into major events which will help us achieve our hosting objectives.

This guide focuses on investment into events to be hosted from May 2024 through to March 2029, although key events that are only available outside of this timeframe will be considered. This period covers the lead-up to both the LA 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the 2026/2030 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Each programme has its own hosting objectives:

	<b>Pinnacle Events Programme</b>	<b>Performance Events Programme</b>
<b>Overview</b>	The purpose of this programme is to host a calendar of the world's biggest and most impactful events, that resonate with the UK public and maintain our position as a leading global host. Additionally, pinnacle events should prove economic impact and return on investment.	This programme supports the hosting of international events in those sporting disciplines funded through our World Class and Development Programmes, and is intended to support British athletes in their preparations for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.
<b>Funding range</b>	UK Sport is a deficit funder, so applications should be in line with your forecast budget deficit (after all partner contributions are defined). As a guideline, our investment range for Pinnacle events is £500,000-£3.5 million.	UK Sport is a deficit funder, so applications should be in line with your forecast budget deficit (after all partner contributions are defined). As a guideline, our investment range is £30,000-£450,000.
<b>Hosting objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Events resonate with the UK public</li><li>• Showcases sporting success</li><li>• Creates a positive impact</li><li>• Profiles the UK as a leading global host</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides qualification or classification opportunities</li><li>• Provides preparation opportunities</li></ul>

### 4. We will only invest into an appropriate and credible organisation which meets the standards set out in the [Code for Sports Governance](#).

This excludes Local Authorities who already adhere to UK Government requirements.

## **5. We will only invest where there is an appropriate, transparent and binding underwriting solution in place.**

We expect you to consider and have a proposed plan for underwriting any committed costs if the event is cancelled or does not achieve its income targets. This is a critical factor in the viability of an event that should be considered from the outset.

We recognise that securing an underwrite can be difficult and we are open to a flexible approach of a multi-agency underwrite (ie International Federation, Local Authority, NGB). We suggest you raise any underwrite challenges with us from the outset.

## **6. Your application for investment needs to demonstrate clear financial need and impact.**

As part of this process, we will consider the resources of other potential event hosting partners and make an assessment on the reasonableness of us providing financial support. It is anticipated that all event hosting partners will provide an appropriate level of investment, whether cash or budget-relieving value-in-kind support.

We won't provide financial support if we believe your event has the potential to be financially self-sustainable. We also reserve the right to clawback investment that is not required, or if an event delivers a surplus outturn.

We understand some events will be delivered in partnership with commercial operators who seek a financial return on their involvement. Whilst we are not opposed to this such a financial return being achieved, we reserve the right not to invest where that return is considered excessive.

We may consider investment solely on a contingency basis, where investment is only accessed in exceptional circumstances during the planning phase of your event and on demonstration of a clear financial need.

## **7. By receiving a financial investment from us there is an expectation that you deliver your event responsibly.**

While Pinnacle events will be mandated to be delivered ethically (with a social impact strategy, environmental sustainability and equality, diversity and inclusion action plans) we expect all major events to be delivered with this in mind.

We expect appropriate staffing plans to be put in place to ensure your event is well-governed and adheres to safeguarding and anti-doping best practice. Our investment may be fully or partially ring-fenced toward specific delivery components that support our hosting objectives.

As an investor into your event, we expect recognition of The National Lottery in marketing collateral and prominent venue branding, commensurate with the level of investment.

We reserve the right to appoint an appropriate person within the governance structure of your major event. This will typically be as an observer on the Board of the event; however, this could be as a nominated Board Member. We will also provide ongoing technical and strategic support to your event throughout its set-up, planning, delivery and close-down through a dedicated UK Sport events consultant.



# Investment application process at a glance

**NGB Major Events strategy**  
We strongly encourage applicants to have a strategy in place, which clearly sets out the sport's rationale for staging major events and informs its event hosting targets. We can assist with the development of your strategy.

**Hosting target list inclusion**  
Every year you can submit hosting targets to us. These are strategically assessed, and if we consider them a strategic priority are included on the hosting target list.

**Feasibility**  
A detailed feasibility exercise should be conducted to ensure your event is financially and operationally viable, as well as assessing the potential social impact and winnability. The outcome will help inform whether to progress to an investment application.

**Investment application**  
Working with the Major Events team, you will develop your investment application incorporating the feasibility work, building a business plan and budget.

**Major Events Panel**  
You will be invited to present the application to our Major Events Panel. The Panel will consider how the event meets our hosting objectives, the potential social impacts and risks before making an investment recommendation to the UK Sport Board.

**UK Sport Board**  
Our Major Events Panel has the authority to approve investment below £500,000. All applications for investment over £500,000 will be considered for approval by our Board. Only once Board approval has been received will the award be confirmed.

**Funding award**  
The official investment recipient will receive an agreement, including standard terms and conditions plus any additional conditions specific to your application.

**Bidding**  
A bid or Expression Of Interest (EOI) should only be submitted to the rights holder once our investment has been approved. We will work with you to develop a compelling bid.

**Bid outcome**  
If successful, you will set up the event following your submitted project plan. Failed bids may receive a funding contribution towards committed costs if that has been agreed in the investment agreement.

## Innovation events

We understand that the sporting world is changing and we will positively respond to this to ensure the UK continues to be a global leader in major sports events.

We may decide to invest flexibly and innovatively into new events or event concepts, and will specifically investigate innovation opportunities within our 2025-29 major events calendar.

This new approach is vital to appeal to different demographics and to provide us with a balanced and exciting events calendar. Applications for new and innovative events will be considered against our hosting objectives. It's important to note that as part of this, we will not consider investment into individual national championships, regular home fixtures or friendlies.

Due to our finite budget, if new events are added to the hosting target list, this may mean that other identified hosting targets will be removed from the list and no longer progressed.

### Other major events documents

You may find it is helpful to read these other documents as you consider and prepare an application.

- To understand UK Sport's hosting objectives and strategic approach to major events, please read: [UK Sport Major Events Strategic Framework](#)
- To understand the UK Government's desire to host major sporting events and how these can drive the nation to be more active, please read: [Sporting Future](#)
- If you are keen to bid for a mega event, we suggest you also read [The Gold Framework](#) and [The UK Mega Events Policy Framework](#)

## Appendix

Please find below further explanation on how we assess potential events.

<b>Pinnacle Events programme</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<b>Audience resonance and reach</b>	<p>To achieve our hosting objective of making extraordinary moments, we need to undertake due diligence on audience potential and ticketing targets for each event. Resonance is about appeal, the likelihood of the public to want to engage with and positively experience your event.</p> <p>In terms of reach, we assess the potential for your event to reach a wide audience both in-venue and through broadcast. We do this by looking at your reach in the UK – how many people participate, how many follow and engage with your sport’s social channels and evidence of previous attendance/viewership at the event. We also consider the geographic location of where the event, to broaden our geographic reach.</p>
<b>Showcase sporting success</b>	<p>The Pinnacle programme supports UK Sport’s organisational aim and our hosting objective to ‘keep winning and win well’ and the event should deliver against your sport’s performance objectives.</p> <p>We will therefore assess opportunities for home nation athletes to secure a podium finish.</p>
<b>Sporting impact</b>	<p>Events should not be considered in isolation and we want to ensure they leave a legacy to your sport as well as the local community.</p> <p>We expect to assess a strong, evidenced and resourced plan for how the sport will improve through staging the event. This could be through increased participation, provision, commercial health, fanbase or improved international relations.</p>
<b>Global profile</b>	<p>It is important for the UK to uphold its global reputation as a major event host and to continue to drive tourism.</p> <p>We will therefore assess the event’s status, reach and tourism opportunities as well as how this event adds to our hosting calendar to continue to drive our reputation.</p>
<b>Economic benefit</b>	<p>It is important that our events programme delivers economic impact to the UK as we are investing a substantial amount of public funding into pinnacle events. Events will be evaluated on the estimated economic benefit and benefit to cost ratio.</p>

<b>Performance Events programme</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<b>Event status</b>	<p>An assessment of the events qualification or classification value to allow us to understand the performance value. Direct qualifiers or those carrying high level games ranking points are of strong value.</p> <p>The event should provide a classification opportunity, with higher scores for sports where these opportunities are limited elsewhere.</p>
<b>Formal performance benefits</b>	<p>We assess how the event compliments your high-performance objectives and associated UK Sport performance investment.</p> <p>Higher scores are given for multi-medal winning sports, where the event will support the qualification of a high number of quota places.</p>
<b>Informal performance benefits</b>	<p>We assess how many additional performance benefits the event provides, such as home advantage, or additional host country entries. The greater the number of benefits, the higher the score.</p>