

Structural Effectiveness Pilot – Frequently Asked Questions (Anonymised)

This FAQ compiles questions asked across supplier clarification calls and the answers provided. Questions have been anonymised and grouped by theme.

1) Project scope & context

Q: What is this pilot and how does it fit within wider system reform?

A: The Structural Effectiveness pilot is one strand of a broader UK Sport-led system reform programme, called System Master Planning and is delivered collaboratively with the Home Country Sports Councils. Early phases focused on data & digital transformation, Safe Sport, and the relevance/commercial value of Olympic & Paralympic sport. System Master Planning is now turning to also explore sport-by-sport structural effectiveness, NGB organisational health, shared corporate services, and people across the system.

Q: Is UK Sport the sole lead, or is this a collaborative endeavour?

A: It is explicitly collaborative. UK Sport fronts the tender, but strategic leadership and a working group include representatives from Sport England, sportscotland, Sport Wales, and Sport Northern Ireland. Selection panels and ongoing delivery will involve Home Country colleagues.

2) Cohort size, selection, and eligibility

Q: How many sports will be in the pilot?

A: A small cohort of approximately three to five sports is anticipated. In parallel, some sports may require bespoke support outside the cohort due to size or complexity.

Q: How are sports selected and what level of buy-in is required?

A: Sports express interest through Home Country relationship leads and UK Sport sport advisors (deadline currently set for early February). Inclusion requires evidence of consensus across relevant governing organisations within the sport (e.g., GB and Home Country bodies) and readiness to engage.

Q: Are Olympic and Paralympic-only bodies treated differently?

A: No predetermined separation. The pilot remains open; the mix will be decided once sports come forward. Some NGBs govern both Olympic and Paralympic disciplines and will be handled accordingly.

Q: Are Irish institutions eligible to bid? What about cross-border bodies (Ulster/ROI) and Sport Ireland?

A: Bids from Irish institutions are welcome however the contracting process may be different contracting process.differ. In-scope participation of cross-border or ROI entities depends on the sport's governance structures and will be brokered via Sport Northern Ireland and counterparts as relevant.

3) Deliverables, approach, and ways of working

Q: What does “strategic visioning” mean in this context?

A: It refers to a clear, shared plan for how the governing organisations within a single sport will work together (structures, roles, governance, shared services), not a wholesale rewrite of each sport's entire strategic plan.

Q: How will workshops and facilitation run (online vs in-person) and who organises logistics?

A: The appointed Learning Partner should propose a pragmatic blend of in-person and online engagement. UK Sport/Home Country teams will collaborate closely, attend sessions where appropriate, and can support room bookings and coordination if required.

Q: What is expected of the Learning Partner versus the sports?

A: The Learning Partner convenes and facilitates, helps surface opportunities and barriers, and synthesises lessons across the cohort. Sports lead on describing current structures, propose options, and commit to next steps. The ethos is sport-led, council-supported.

Q: Should work include desk research or new diagnostics?

A: Light-touch desktop activity may be useful, but priority is convening sports and drawing on what they already know. The Organisational Health Diagnostic is available and can be requested for GB and Home Country bodies to inform a whole-sport view.

Q: Will activities cut across sports (e.g., shared services for IT/marketing)?

A: Primary focus is within a single sport across multiple organisations. However, cross-sport shared-service recommendations (e.g., IT already shared by some NGBs) are welcome and will feed parallel System Master Planning workstreams.

4) Timeline, budget, and submissions

Q: What is the delivery window and how “complete” must changes be by the end?

A: The initial window is around six months to reach clear, agreed roadmaps and tangible readiness to implement. Actual implementation may continue beyond this phase with further support or grant funding.

Q: What is the tender submission deadline?

A: Submissions are due by 23:59 on 21 January; they will not be reviewed until the following day.

Q: Is the stated budget inclusive of VAT? Are university overheads allowable?

A: The budget is inclusive of VAT. Institutional overheads must either be costed in to your submission or if applying as an independent it is the responsibility of the supplier to liaise with their university.

5) Collaboration, roles, and stakeholders

Q: Who will the Learning Partner work with from the councils/sports?

A: Primarily CEOs and Chairs from GB and Home Country bodies, alongside Sport Advisors/Relationship Leads and project team. Depending on context, volunteers and staff from specific functions may be involved.

Q: Can other system stakeholders be engaged (e.g., UK Sports Institute)?

A: Yes. Stakeholders may join workshops as observers or contributors where their perspectives add value.

6) What good looks like, risks, and systemic lessons

Q: What does success look like at the end of the pilot?

A: Positive feedback from sports on the value of convening and facilitation; strengthened relationships and immediate collaboration; a clear, sport-owned roadmap of actions; and actionable lessons to UK Sport/Home Countries on system enablers and barriers to scale.

Q: What are likely friction points or barriers?

A: Devolution dynamics; misaligned investment/funding mechanisms across councils; capacity constraints in sports; and situations where rational organisational interests diverge across GB/Home Country bodies. The pilot should surface these tensions candidly and respectfully.

Q: Are there recent examples of progress that inform this work?

A: Examples include Ice Hockey bodies agreeing on a merger path driven by a compelling commercial/event opportunity, and Table Tennis bodies improving cooperation to influence the International Federation and strengthen GB performance. Leadership buy in, trusting relationship building and shared purpose were critical.

— End of FAQ —