
SPARC Active Communities

Investment Guidelines

Updated July 2011

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ISBN: 1-877356-58-1

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Introduction

SPARC's vision: **Everyone. Every day. Enjoying and excelling through sport and recreation.**

To realise this vision, SPARC's mission is - **Creating a sport and recreation environment where more New Zealanders participate, support and win.**

SPARC is committed to achieving the following goals by 2015:

- More Kiwi kids in sport and recreation;
- More Kiwis in sport and recreation; and
- More Kiwi winners on the world stage

SPARC's Active Communities Investment is intended to support **innovative project-based** initiatives that demonstrate a collaborative approach to reducing barriers to participation in **sport and recreation** at a community level. The initiative supports pilot projects targeting **new/modified** methods of delivery to increase participation in sport and recreation. The intention is that lessons learned from projects will be shared with the sector.

Each year SPARC will seek applications for investment against identified areas of priority.

The Sport and Recreation Pathway

Sport and recreation are important contributors to the New Zealand lifestyle. Through sport and recreation we learn, grow, set and achieve goals, develop and master skills, find a sense of belonging and community, excel and win.

The Sport and Recreation Pathway models the lifelong sport and recreation journey through three phases. **Active Communities Investment supports two of the phases: foundation and community sport and recreation.**

The foundation phase is concerned with young people developing and mastering fundamental skills and their introduction and early experiences of sport and recreation. The community sport and recreation phase is concerned with the provision of quality sport and recreation experiences that lead to lifelong participation and/or individuals developing their potential as elite performers in sport.

The following link provides more information about the Sport and Recreation Pathway: <http://www.sparc.org.nz/en-nz/young-people/The-Sport-and-Recreation-Pathway/>

Key Information

- Areas of priority will be identified each year by SPARC and advised to the sector.
- Territorial Authorities will be given priority for investment.
- There will be no prescribed minimum cash contribution (previously set at 40%), however, **partner cash contribution levels** ('skin in the game') will be a **key** consideration in the **decision making process**. Cash contributions should also not be sourced from other SPARC funding i.e. Kiwisport, Community Sport Investment, contestable Outdoor Recreation Investment
- Increased emphasis placed on interagency/partner collaboration
- Stronger emphasis placed on project sustainability
- Greater emphasis placed on communication/sharing of project learnings
- A single funding round will be held each year with a 4-stage application process - Expressions of Interest by **7 November 2011** and Full Applications due by **2 March 2012**

2011 priority areas

SPARC has established the following priorities for Active Communities applications for 2011:

- Development of 'community sport and recreation hubs' including; Sportville developments, alignment of facilities:
<http://www.sparc.org.nz/en-nz/communities-and-clubs/Active-Communities/Sharing-Good-Practice/Sportville-Model-Review/>
- Initiatives targeting increased adult participation, in particular projects that develop new or modified sport and recreation opportunities
- Initiatives focussing on pre-school-aged children that also engage parents/caregivers so that they develop appropriate knowledge/skills for continued support
- Initiatives that address the retention of school leavers (16-20 years) in sport and recreation

Who can apply for investment?

Territorial Authorities, Regional Sports Trusts, Recreation Organisations, Iwi Organisations and recognised National Sport Organisations can apply for investment as part of, or on behalf of, wider stakeholder consortia. Territorial Authorities will be given priority for investment. Notwithstanding this SPARC reserves the right to invest in robust proposals led by other agencies that have territorial authorities as a key partner. Each project requires one lead agency to be the SPARC contract holder and to take overall responsibility for coordinating the project.

Expectations of successful applicants

Investment schedule

Successful applicants will be asked to sign an investment schedule with SPARC outlining the initiative and timelines to achieve key milestones. The investment schedule will set out the roles and intended requirements for investment.

Ongoing relationship

SPARC should be actively involved in the establishment phase of initiatives. This will allow best practice from other projects to be shared and provide opportunities for consistency and alignment of objectives. Project partners may be asked to present to SPARC throughout the term of investment.

Reporting and monitoring

Formal accountabilities will be set out in the investment schedule. The investment schedule will outline key stages in the initiative where SPARC officials will meet with the lead organisation to assess the effectiveness of the initiative. Frequency of reporting and monitoring will be agreed by both parties based on the scale and nature of the project.

Branding

SPARC's branding is to be integrated into all aspects of the project (logo and guidelines will be provided).

Criteria

Active Communities Investment is a **contestable fund**. SPARC seeks a broad portfolio of investments that are strategic and offer innovative/alternative solutions to problems of inactivity and low participation in sport and recreation.

Investment in a particular type of initiative in one region should not be interpreted as meaning investment will be provided for similar initiatives in other regions.

The following criteria need to be addressed in any application:

1. Identified need

Each application for investment should be based on an identified need expressed strategically or through a formalised needs analysis process with the community.

2. Interagency collaboration

The development of the initiative must involve other key stakeholders engaged in the promotion and delivery of sport and recreation. It is vital that communities avoid duplication and fragmentation of services when working on Active Communities projects.

3. Sustainability

Applicants should clearly articulate how the project and outcomes will be sustained beyond SPARC's investment. There needs to be a demonstrated pathway to sustainability by project partners.

Active Communities Investment is to be used as seed funding to help in the development of projects for up to three years.

4. Stakeholder investment

It is expected that there will be a **cash contribution** by project partners toward the total project budget. No minimum has been set for this contribution, but the level of partner support will be taken into account when considering applications.

In addition it is expected that the project identifies the amount of in-kind contribution from each partner to the total project budget. An explanation of the nature of in-kind contributions to the project is required as part of the application.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Applicants must demonstrate that the project will be effectively monitored and evaluated throughout the project timeframe.

As part of the approval process, projects will be expected to develop an agreed monitoring and evaluation plan with SPARC. Project budgets are required to identify the costs associated with monitoring and evaluation.

Ineligible projects

The following projects are not eligible for Active Communities Investment.

1. Applications for facility and/or amenity development
2. One-off events
3. Projects that do not involve territorial authorities as a key partner
4. Projects that are retrospective in nature
5. Projects that represent 'business as usual' for stakeholders
6. Projects that cannot demonstrate clear cash contributions from project partners
7. Projects that are predominantly social marketing campaigns

Decision making process and timelines

The application process for Active Communities Investment is divided into four stages.

STAGE 1: Expression of Interest

The first stage of the application process is a call for an 'Expression of Interest'. This preliminary Expression of Interest can be sent to SPARC anytime before the annual **closing date (7 November 2011)**. The Expression of Interest form is available on SPARC's website: <http://www.sparc.org.nz/en-nz/communities-and-clubs/Active-Communities/How-to-get-Funding/>

Applicants will receive feedback in relation to eligibility and basic project suitability. If the project is not deemed suitable for investment SPARC will explain why. If the project has potential, SPARC will work with project partners to develop the project further.

The Expression of Interest should highlight the key components of a possible application, including:

- ✧ Applicant key contact information
- ✧ Name of project
- ✧ Detailed project description
- ✧ Project partners
- ✧ Confirmation of alignment to identified priority area
- ✧ Target groups
- ✧ Project impact
- ✧ Evidence of need

- ✧ Pathway to sustainability
- ✧ Project duration
- ✧ Total estimated cost of initiative
- ✧ Total estimated SPARC investment sought
- ✧ Total estimate of partner contributors (including cash and in-kind)

SPARC will acknowledge each Expression of Interest immediately upon receipt. Within six weeks SPARC will provide feedback and will confirm if the proposal is to proceed to the full application stage.

Completed Expression of Interest forms should be sent to:

Debbie Curgenvan
SPARC Active Communities
Millennium Institute,
PO Box 302 145, North Harbour 0751

SPARC also requires an electronic copy which should be emailed to:
debbie.curgenvan@sparc.org.nz

STAGE 2: Full Application

Once an Expression of Interest has been accepted, a comprehensive application (including evidence of **confirmed** financial support from partners), should be made. Application Forms will be sent to applicants upon completion of the EOI stage and acceptance of the project for this next stage.

Full applications (where requested) need to be received by SPARC no later than 5pm on **2 March 2012**

Additional information can be attached to the Application Form but the fundamentals of the proposal must be clearly articulated within the application form.

SPARC will acknowledge each application immediately upon receipt. SPARC will assess each application and notify the applicant of the next step by the end of March 2012. Contact by SPARC and subsequent advice does not imply any commitment by SPARC to invest in a proposal.

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STAGE 3: Presentation

Following approval in the first and second stages eligible projects may be required to make an in-person presentation to SPARC.

STAGE 4: Investment Agreement and Schedule

Successful applicants will be required to sign an investment agreement and schedule with SPARC. These will not be signed by SPARC until partner investment is confirmed.

Frequently asked questions

Can stakeholders apply for capital investment?

- No, however small capital items, such as equipment, may be purchased as part of the project.

Can stakeholders apply for investment and then distribute it as subsidies/grants to other organisations?

- No, Active Communities Investment is a project-based investment and must be used for the sole purpose of the defined project. It must exclude the provision of subsidies or grants to other organisations and /or individuals.

Are stakeholders eligible to apply for more than one project?

- Yes, provided there is evidence that clearly articulates the need for each project in the community. However, SPARC will not invest in ongoing programmes that organisations have already committed to.

Can an application be made for the costs associated with employing staff?

- Yes, SPARC recognises that many projects have staffing requirements. Applications for cost contributions associated with additional staff will be considered, provided there is sufficient evidence that the position(s) will contribute to the outcomes desired in the project, and that there is also a contribution from the organisation concerned. Any staffing positions established as a result of the project should be sustainable beyond SPARC's investment, and not merely subsidise an existing position.

Who does SPARC contract with?

- Only Territorial Authorities, Regional Sports Trusts, Recreation Organisations, Iwi Organisations and recognised National Sport Organisations can apply for investment as part of, or on behalf of, wider stakeholder consortia. Each project requires one of these partner organisations to take the role of the lead agency/organisation on behalf of the project partners and will be required to sign the contract with SPARC. It is the lead agency/organisations responsibility to coordinate with other project partners.

What is SPARC's role in project management?

- Once a project is approved SPARC reserves the right to have a presence on the project steering group. The frequency of attendance at that steering group will be agreed between the project applicant and SPARC. In general, it is not envisaged that SPARC be involved in a 'hands-on' role once projects are under way.

Lessons learned

Over several years a number of lessons have been learned about developing, implementing and sustaining Active Communities projects. These include:

- Develop comprehensive, innovative applications with a very clear project purpose. Outline what the project will achieve, how achievements will be measured and the impact on sport and recreation. Set clear outcomes and key performance indicators.
- Obtain written partner commitment to cash and in-kind resources at the earliest opportunity.
- Projects take longer to establish and get under way than anticipated. Set realistic work programmes and timeframes and allow time to do the ground work to get the greatest impact with regards to implementation and sustainability.
- The appointment of a Project Manager position has worked well but it is crucial to get the right person in the role.
- Set clear accountabilities for those responsible for implementation.
- Communicate clear expectations to all partners early on that there is a need to demonstrate a commitment beyond the initial project timeframe. Plan for sustainability from the outset.
- Develop an evaluation framework very early in the project so that baseline and monitoring data can be collected as soon as the programme or activity commences. Agree with SPARC the outcomes that will be measured prior to the project starting.
- Plan and develop realistic measurable key performance indicators.
- It has been beneficial to have direct involvement on the project steering group from a senior manager or an elected member of council. This process can help get political buy-in to the project and keep councils aware of other aspects of the project.

For further information please contact;

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