



# **SPORT IN OUR COMMUNITY**

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## **Monitoring Guide**

**May 2006**



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Sports Council for Northern Ireland (SCNI), as the lead agency for the development of sport in Northern Ireland, recognises the importance of vision, strategic leadership and focused support in delivering tangible outcomes for the sporting community and the wider society.

We value the important contribution made by the community, voluntary and statutory sectors to sport in Northern Ireland and work closely with these sectors to build capacity and sustainability in development.

The Sports Council for Northern Ireland believes that by investing in community sport real progress can be made in meeting the Council's Corporate Plan outcomes of:

- increased number of physically literate young people;
- increased participation in sport and physical activity among under represented groups;
- a competent sporting workforce;
- professional, accountable and autonomous sporting organisations;  
and
- increased efficiency through improved planning and administration.

The 'Sport in Our Community' investment programme is the result of several months of consultation with the broad sporting community and the learning that has emerged from previous programmes such as Investing in Sport and the Sport in Our Community Programme.

## **2. ABOUT SPORT IN OUR COMMUNITY**

In response to identified and ongoing need within the sports community, the Sports Council has developed an investment programme, called **'Sport in Our Community'**. We can invest in voluntary, community, and statutory sectors, which aim to deliver innovative and creative projects resulting in:

1. increased number of physically literate young people;
2. increased participation in sport and physical activity among under represented groups; and specifically among people with disabilities
3. a competent sporting workforce;
4. professional, accountable and autonomous sporting organisations; and
5. increased efficiency through improved planning and administration.

### **2.1 Priorities**

The priority beneficiaries of the Sport in Our Community Programme are:

- (a) development and improvement of physical literacy;
- (b) development of opportunities for people with disabilities; and/or
- (C) creation of sport or physical activities in areas of high social need for those who have not previously had a sustained interest in sport or physical activity.

## **2.2 Why Monitor?**

Monitoring is an ongoing process to assess the extent to which your project is performing as expected, meeting its targets and making progress towards the achievement of its objectives.

In short, regular monitoring enables the identification of the need for and nature of, any adjustments and improvements to ensure maximum progress towards your projects aims and objectives.

## **2.3 A Project Focused Approach**

If we help some specific projects introduce systems that they find useful, the rest will follow. They will learn from the experience of others. We are providing support to projects to monitor in ways that suit them – by using a framework which has been developed in consultation with you and five pilot projects.

## 2.4 Using this Guide

This guide is to help projects put in place an effective monitoring system.

The core of the guide is a set of key indicators that we have developed for you to use. These indicators enable you to track your progress towards the outcomes you want to achieve. This guide also includes some clear advice on developing effective monitoring.

It also provides information on where you can go to find more help. In addition we have provided a wide (and increasing) range of practical tools, documents and publications which can also be downloaded from the Onlineni Communities website: [www.onlinenicommunities.net/sport](http://www.onlinenicommunities.net/sport) or from the Sports Council's website: [www.sportni.net](http://www.sportni.net):

1. Needs Analysis Questionnaire, which captures Group/Organisation information (Appendix 1);
2. Participant Monitoring Form, which includes Monitoring Information, Adult Registration Form and Children's/Young Person's Registration Form, Volunteer/Coach Registration Form, Attendance Form and Follow-up Regular Participation Form for Adults and Children/Youth (Appendix 2).

### **3. BASIC PRINCIPLES**

#### **3.1 Keep it Simple**

Monitoring and evaluation is an essential tool in delivering effective services; it can also lead to a bureaucratic paper trail that adds nothing to a project. An effective approach to monitoring is a system that:

- Chooses measurable indicators.
- Needs modest time and money.
- Gathers and spreads information regularly.
- Communicates information clearly.
- Leads to decisions.

#### **3.2 Focus on what Matters**

So-called 'hard indicators' such as the number of participants, members or number of volunteers will only show (an important) part of the picture. You may also need 'soft', or 'qualitative', indicators to show other impacts of your project. Soft indicators track changes in opinions and behaviour. They suggest changes in underlying perceptions, feelings and motivations. For example:

- Increase in self-confidence;
- Feelings of well-being, of safety and of satisfaction;

- Personal skills such as problem solving, time management and social skills; and
- Social cohesion and collective sense of place and purpose.

Changes in these indicators are as important as the so-called 'hard' indicators. For example, someone with increased self confidence, motivation or interpersonal skills may succeed in other areas of their life – including education and employment.

You can usually measure these indicators by one of:

- Observation; or
- Subjective questioning.

The following website [www.bigcsi.com](http://www.bigcsi.com) has details of techniques you can use to capture softer indicators.

We will also use our quarterly meetings to capture these by providing an opportunity for you to present and discuss key projects and progress.

### **3.3 What is Monitoring?**

**Monitoring** – means systematically collecting progress information while you deliver a project or service. *(But it also means using the information to*

*make decisions about what you do. It is probably better to talk about management information, because that's what it is).*

**Indicators** – are the building blocks of management information or monitoring systems. You cannot track everything that happens – so you choose a few measures that **indicate** overall progress.

**Research** – goes well beyond monitoring and should try to explain why something happens. So it will need to go beyond a few Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). But managers are not researchers – don't make the common mistake of trying to get your monitoring system to explain everything. It will just become unusable.

**Evaluation** – is research to assess the impact of a strategy, programme or project. It looks at value for money, long-term impacts and wider lessons for the future. Evaluation will always involve extra work to add to, and explain, the data in your monitoring system.

**Targets** – are specific levels of indicators achieved by a specific time. It is not always appropriate to set targets. And targets for a new project or service can only be rough guides. Even then they will only be useful if they are SMART:

**Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Time-bound**

### 3.4 Step One – Key indicators

Monitoring information is only useful if it can help you make decisions. So it needs to help you see links between cause and effect. We have chosen compulsory indicators for you, and these indicators will help you and others to understand the links between your project goals, what it does and how it is making progress.

You will need at least one way of tracking each of the following:

**Inputs** - These are the resources a project or programme consumes – usually money or peoples' time. Volunteers' time and donated goods and services can be inputs.

**Activities** - These are the work the project does. It might be training coaches or running events. Activities are what the input 'buys'. They do not *necessarily* produce a result.

**Outputs** - The *immediate* results of a project are outputs eg the number of 17-24 year olds participating in physical activity.

**Outcomes** - Outcomes are measures of how far the project has achieved its *real* purpose.

They are the longer-term effects of the project and will often be beyond the scope of your monitoring.

**Combining Indicators** - Consider how your indicators relate to each other. The indicators maybe combined to explore and explain your progress eg tracking the number of coaches and number of participants could show whether more coaches leads to more activity.

**Wider Outcomes** - Improving health and well-being of the population, improving community safety, and improved education are also longer term outcomes. Not all outcomes will be easy to measure.

**Monitoring Indicator Example**

Aim                      Increase the number of 16 year olds participating in physical activity

Input

Revenue funding for Active Lifestyles Projects.

Activity

No of 16 year olds attending projects

Output

Number of 16 year olds participating in physical activity

Outcome

Increase in number of physically active 16 year olds.

True outcome

Increase in numbers of physically active 16 year olds and health of young adults.

We have developed a menu of Key Performance Indicators. These all have standard definitions and advice on how to collect them.

By using these indicators you can:

- Save time;
- Save money;
- Compare your results with others on the same basis; and
- Help us build a Northern Ireland progress picture.

### **3.5 Step Two – Collect Baseline Data**

Start by gathering 'baseline' figures, which are the starting point for each of your indicators. You can use it to show progress over time by comparing your most recent results with it.

For example: you aim to attract more 17-24 year olds to a club. You would first need to know how many 17-24 year olds were *currently* attending the sports club. This would be your baseline. Then you could track how the numbers change and compare them with your baseline. The change (*hopefully an increase*) would be the result of your work (*and perhaps other factors too*).

You need to set a baseline position before you can set a target – although for a new service some of your baseline figures, such as membership, may be zero.

Usually you should use the same method to collect the baseline data as the regular monitoring data – so you can compare the information and see the change.

### **3.6 Step Three – Collect Regular Data**

The monitoring plan depends on gathering regular and accurate data. So using the supplied collection methods is a vital part of the process. They should be easy to use, because you will gradually abandon complex approaches as other priorities take up your time.

But don't just think about paper forms. Try:

- Photographs;
- Video/DVDs;
- Tape recording; and
- Computer-based surveys.

... or other approaches that suit the indicators for your project. Go to the Community Sport Initiative Learning Zone [www.bigcsi.com](http://www.bigcsi.com) for practical ideas and tools to help you.

### **3.7 Step Four – Use the Monitoring Data**

Collecting monitoring data is only one part of the process. If you simply use it to report to SCNI or other funders, you are wasting the effort you put into collecting it. You should use monitoring data to help **you** plan and make decisions for the future.

#### **Arrange Review Meetings**

Set up regular meetings to review what your monitoring data is telling you. These are best as part of existing regular management meetings, but you could set up separate meetings. Meet as often as your data changes – this is unlikely to be more often than once a month and may be once a quarter. For some projects often once every six months is all that is possible.

#### **Analyse Trends**

Sometimes one set of monitoring data will give you useful information. For example if the numbers of people using a service are well short of your target you may want to act. But often it is only when you look at changes over time that you will learn anything.

To do this you will need to present your data in a table or graph showing the results for each indicator for several time periods. Once you have gathered information several times, draw up a graph for each indicator to show trends. This helps people make sense of numbers.

Use other information and opinion to work out the reasons for any trends and identify any action you need to take as a result. Ask, “So what is the information telling us?”

## **Compare Data Sets**

The most useful information usually comes from comparing the progress and trends of different indicators. For example:

- Did spending more on each person lead to better results?
- Do more events result in more participants, or do the total numbers of people involved stay constant?

Sometimes you will need to look at information that you do not collect directly to explain your data. For example:

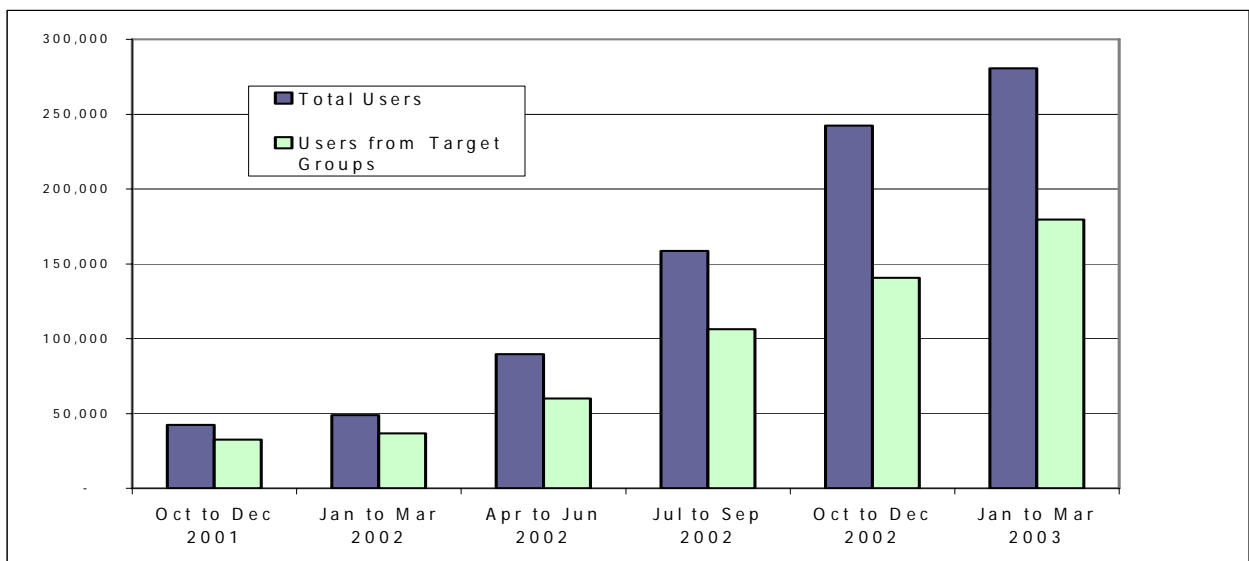
- Is an increase in the number of 17-24 year olds participating in physical activity because of your publicity? Or is it because lots of people have been attracted to an external event and have then been passed on to you?
- Is a decrease in crime locally a result of young people at risk taking part in your project, or is it in line with regional trends?

You cannot always explain every change. You may not have the capacity, the data or the money available to collect this.

## Decide on Action then Do It

Once you have reviewed the data, you can decide if you need to change anything you are doing. Often the monitoring data itself will not be enough to show exactly what is happening – but if it helps highlight key questions it will be worthwhile.

## Example of Analysing Monitoring Data



This graph shows the number of users of centres for each quarter for eighteen months. The second bars for each quarter shows how many were in the target groups. This points out that, although the number of users increased, the proportion of those in the target groups decreased. This is at least reason to consider if any action is needed.

## **4. INDICATOR SUMMARY**

As previously mentioned in Section 3.4, we have chosen KPI's that will help you and other to understand the links between your project goals, what it does and how it is making progress. Table 1 summarises the 12 indicators selected for the Sport in Our Community Programme. It also shows activities, outputs and outcomes which are suitable to track.

## Sport in Our Community Programme KPI's

No	Name	Type	SiOC Theme 1	SiOC Theme 2	SiOC Theme 3
1	Participants	Activity	✓	✓	✓
2	Coaches	Output	✓	✓	✓
3	Regular Coaching	Output	✓	✓	✓
4	Sports Qualifications	Output	✓	✓	✓
5	Volunteers	Output	✓	✓	✓
6	Regular Volunteering	Output	✓	✓	✓
7	Health Referrals	Activity		✓	✓
8	Regular Adult Participation	Output Outcome	✓	✓	✓
9	Regular Youth Participation	Output Outcome	✓		✓
10	Young people 'at risk'	Activity			✓
11	Sports Jobs	Output	✓	✓	✓
12	Funding	Output	✓	✓	✓

## 5. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS IN DETAIL

The following section outlines all of the Key Performance Indicators, their definitions, breakdowns, and possible collection methods within contained individual tables.

### 5.1 How to Use these Tables

We have provided clear definitions of each of the indicators on the following pages. To make this guide readable, we have not provided detailed guidance for every possible circumstance. Look at the “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)” on the website for further information [www.bigcsi.com](http://www.bigcsi.com).

The ‘**Definition**’ tells you exactly what the indicator is.

The ‘**Analysis**’ tells you what breakdown of the information you should gather. A summary of this appears in the tables for each indicator below. The analysis categories are very important to collect as part of the Sport in Our Community Programme. They are needed to identify any gaps in access to and opportunities in sport and physical activity amongst specific target groups.

The '**Collection**' suggests some ways you could collect the data – but see the website for more suggestions and practical tools:

[www.bigcsi.com](http://www.bigcsi.com).

We have also assigned themes to each of the KPIs, which show you how they fit into the Sport in Our Community themes as well as your project.

Themes are:

1. **SiOC Theme 1** - development and improvement of physical literacy;
2. **SiOC Theme 2** - development of opportunities for people with disabilities; and/or
3. **SiOC Theme 3** - creation of sport or physical activities in areas of high social need for those who have not previously had a sustained interest in sport or physical activity.

## 5.2 Key Performance Indicator Tables

Number	Name	Type	Theme
KPI 1	Participants	Activity	SIOC 1, 2 & 3
Definition	<p>The total number of individuals taking part in your activity.</p> <p>This is a count of all the people who benefit from your project – excluding coaches and volunteers. <b>Only count participants once</b> no matter how many times they attend.</p> <p>This figure is cumulative – it will keep growing as long as you attract new people. If you already had participants before your Sport in Our Community project began your baseline figure should be the number of participants you have had in the last year.</p>		
Collection	Registration forms, user surveys, photographs, community surveys.		
Important Notes	<i>Sport and physical activity does not include DIY, housework, gardening or active travel.</i>		

Number	Name	Type	Theme
<b>KPI 2</b>	<b>Coaches</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>SIOC 1, 2 &amp; 3</b>
Definition	<p>This is the number of coaches, leaders, instructors or teachers involved in your project who have coached at least once in the past year.</p> <p>It includes all coaches, whether qualified or not – but you should analyse the coaches by type (see below).</p>		
Collection	Coach attendance records, coach timesheets, team lists.		

Number	Name	Type	Theme
<b>KPI 3</b>	<b>Regular Coaching</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>SIOC 1, 2 &amp; 3</b>
Definition	<p>This is the number of coaches who provide at least one hour of coaching to your project each week, on average over the year.</p> <p>For seasonal or annual seasonal activities the time period is the season or the weeks the session runs over, and not the year.</p>		
Collection	Coach attendance records.		

Number	Name	Type	Theme
<b>KPI 4</b>	<b>Sports Qualifications</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>SIOC 1, 2 &amp; 3</b>
Definition	<p>The number of people gaining sports related qualifications. If an individual gains more than one qualification, count each time they do this.</p> <p>Qualifications include: Governing body of sport recognised qualifications, community sports leaders, junior sports leader, running sports courses, child protection in sport, sport first aid, sports academic qualifications.</p>		
Collection	Qualification records.		

Number	Name	Type	Theme
<b>KPI 5</b>	<b>Volunteers</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>SIOC 1, 2 &amp; 3</b>
Definition	<p>The number of volunteers involved in your project who have been active in your project at least once in the past year.</p> <p>Volunteers are the people who have a role beyond playing or coaching. They include committee members, team managers, caterers, marshals, and people who help any type of support role.</p> <p>Do not include volunteer coaches – use KPI 3 instead.</p>		
Collection	Registration forms, volunteer surveys.		

Number	Name	Type	Theme
<b>KPI 6</b>	<b>Regular Volunteering</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>SIOC 1, 2 &amp; 3</b>
Definition	<p>The number of individuals volunteering for at least one hour each week on average over the year.</p> <p>For seasonal or annual seasonal activities the time period is the season or the weeks the session runs over, and not the year.</p> <p>Volunteers are the people who have a role beyond playing or coaching. They include unpaid officials, committee members, team managers, caterers, marshals, and people who help any type of support role.</p> <p>Do not include volunteer coaches – use KPI 3 instead.</p>		
Collection	Attendance records, volunteer surveys, etc.		

Number	Name	Type	Theme
KPI 7	Health Referrals	Activity	SIOC 2 & 3
Definition	<p>The number of individual referrals from a health professional to your project who take part until the end of the prescribed course.</p> <p>GPs, health workers, Primary Care Trusts and other recognised health agencies may refer people to you for a course of exercise for specific health problems. To count, the individual must attend 80% of the sessions prescribed including one of the last two sessions. It does not include self-referrals.</p>		
Collection	Attendance records, referral forms.		

Number	Name	Type	Theme
KPI 8	Regular Adult Participation	Output and Outcome	SIOC 1, 2 & 3
Definition	<p>The number of adults who do 30 minutes of moderate physical exercise in a day – and the number of days in a week they do this.</p> <p>This is a count of the number of adults (aged 17+) who engage in 30 minutes of “moderate intensity” exercise. The exercise can be built up in bouts of 10 minutes or more – it does not all have to be done at once. “Moderate intensity” exercise results in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an increase in breathing rate;</li> <li>• an increase in heart rate, to the level where the pulse can be felt; and</li> <li>• feeling of warmer, possibly accompanied by sweating on hot or humid days or indoors.</li> </ul> <p>This indicator also counts the number of days in a week the person does this type of activity.</p> <p>All types of physical activity count – including dancing, gardening, housework and active travel – as long as they meet the definition of moderate intensity. By providing a breakdown or analysis of the type of activity (see below) you will show the contribution that sport and physical activity play.</p>		
Collection	<p>We recommend you survey individuals every 3 months or as a minimum every 6 months.</p>		

Number	Name	Type	Theme
<b>KPI 9</b>	<b>Regular Youth Participation</b>	<b>Output and Outcome</b>	<b>SIOC 1 &amp; 3</b>
Definition	<p>Number of young people (16 and under) who do 60 minutes of moderate physical exercise in a day – and the number of days in a week they do this.</p> <p>The definition is the same as for KPI 11 Regular Adult Participation, but for 60 minutes rather than 30.</p>		
Collection	<p>We recommend you survey individuals every 3 months or as a minimum every 6 months.</p>		

Number	Name	Type	Theme
<b>KPI 10</b>	<b>Young People at Risk</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>SIOC 3</b>
Definition	<p>The number of young people aged under 25 who are ‘at risk’, who take part in structured physical activity sessions lasting over 6 weeks or more.</p> <p>These are young people who are referred formally or informally by another agency such as the local Youth Justice Board, Youth Offending Team (Social Work) or other suitable agency.</p>		
Collection	<p>Referral and attendance records, user surveys, swipe cards.</p>		

Number	Name	Type	Theme
<b>KPI 11</b>	<b>Sports Jobs</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>SIOC 1, 2 &amp; 3</b>
Definition	<p>The number of full-time equivalent permanent (12 months or more) jobs created or safeguarded in your project or organisation by your project.</p> <p>A full-time job is one that involves a standard working week and the position is filled. Convert part-time jobs to “full-time equivalents (FTE)” by adding together the total hours all relevant employees work in a week and dividing the total by 30.</p> <p>A safeguarded job is one that existed before the project but would have been lost if it were not for the project.</p> <p>Do not include construction jobs.</p>		
Collection	Management records.		

Number	Name	Type	Theme
KPI 12	Funding	Output	SIOC 1, 2 & 3
Definition	<p>This is the further investment that your project has secured for sport and physical activity <i>after</i> it started.</p> <p>It measures further funding brought into the project but does not include the original funding sources. The extra funding may come from other public agencies, private sector, fee income and in kind contributions (cash value).</p> <p>It is a measure of the further investment for the previous year. It is not a cumulative measure.</p>		
Collection	Management records, Accounting information, Letter of Offer.		

## 6. WEBSITES

Useful websites relating to the Sport in Our Community Programme:

- [www.sportni.net](http://www.sportni.net)
- [www.onlinenicommunities.net/sport](http://www.onlinenicommunities.net/sport)
- [www.bigcsi.com](http://www.bigcsi.com)

You can use these websites as a practical resource for all projects. It has:

- details of forthcoming events;
- background information about the Community Sport Initiative.
- discussion forums;
- downloadable documents;
- downloadable examples of practical ideas for monitoring;
- downloadable examples of tools you can use and customise for your project; and
- links to the latest research and policies for sport and physical activity.

## 7. CONTACTS

Your point of contact at the Sports Council for Northern Ireland relating to Monitoring and Evaluation is:

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From time to time a representative from Hall Aitken may be in touch:

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