



FUNDING SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS



INTRODUCTION

Taking action on sustainability does not always require a large budget. Many improvements can be delivered at little or no cost, while others, such as solar panels, energy efficiency upgrades, rainwater harvesting, drainage improvements or biodiversity projects, may require investment.

Funding can help Clubs turn their sustainability ambitions into practical projects while reducing the financial burden on the Club.

There are several ways a Club can secure support. These include grant funding, community fundraising, crowdfunding, commercial sponsorship, in-kind support, partnerships and self-funded investment.

This resource provides a practical introduction to finding and securing financial or other support for sustainability projects. It is not designed to provide a list of specific grants, as funding programmes change regularly. Instead, it focuses on the process, preparation and principles that can help your Club identify opportunities and submit stronger applications.

This resource will help your Club to:

- Understand the different ways sustainability projects can be funded.
- Identify projects that may be suitable for external funding.
- Build a strong investment case.
- Find potential funding and partnership opportunities.
- Prepare information before starting an application.
- Write clearer and more compelling funding applications.
- Demonstrate environmental, financial and community benefits.
- Understand what funders and sponsors may want in return.





BENEFITS

Why Obtain Funding for Sustainability?

Sustainability projects can create long-term environmental and financial benefits for Clubs, but the upfront cost can sometimes be a barrier.

External funding, sponsorship or community fundraising can help Clubs make improvements sooner while allowing them to invest in projects that may reduce running costs, improve facilities, support participation or benefit the wider community. The strongest sustainability projects often combine several sources of support rather than relying on a single funder.

Funding Can Help Your Club:

- **Reduce Costs** - Energy efficiency, renewable energy, water conservation and waste reduction projects can potentially reduce ongoing operating costs.
- **Accelerate Action** - External investment can enable a Club to deliver projects that would otherwise take several years to fund from normal operating budgets.
- **Improve Facilities** - Sustainability funding can contribute towards improvements that make facilities more efficient, resilient and fit for the future.
- **Strengthen Community Impact** - Projects can deliver benefits beyond the Club, for example, through biodiversity improvements, community spaces, education or environmental volunteering.
- **Demonstrate Leadership** - Securing investment for sustainability demonstrates that your Club is taking practical action rather than simply making commitments.
- **Create Partnerships** - A sustainability project can create opportunities to work with local businesses, councils, environmental organisations, schools and community groups.





WHERE TO START?

Start With the Project

Before looking for funding, be clear about what you are trying to achieve.

A common mistake is to start with the question:

“What grants can we apply for?”

A stronger approach is:

“What does our Club need to change, and what funding or partnership opportunities could help us deliver it?”

Your Together Greener audits and action plans should provide a useful starting point.

Use What You Already Have

Consider the findings from your:

- Energy, Waste, Travel, Biodiversity, Water Audits and Management Audits.
- Climate Action and Adaptation resources.
- Carbon Footprint Measurement.
- Sustainability Strategy.
- Sustainability Action Plans.

These resources can provide evidence of why the project is needed.





WHAT'S THE NEED?

Define the Need

Funders and potential partners need to understand why a project matters. A good funding application should explain the problem, opportunity or need before describing the solution.

Ask:

- What problem are we trying to solve?
- What evidence do we have?
- Who is affected?
- Why is action needed now?
- What happens if we do nothing?
- What environmental benefit could the project deliver?
- What financial benefit could it provide?
- Who else will benefit?
- How does it support our Club's sustainability objectives?

Use Evidence

Evidence turns an idea into a credible project.

Evidence might include:

- Energy or water bills.
- Meter readings.
- Carbon footprint data.
- Audit findings.
- Photographs.
- Maintenance records.
- Pitch or facility data.
- Member feedback.
- Quotes from suppliers.
- Evidence of flooding or weather impacts.
- Biodiversity observations.
- Waste volumes.





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FUNDING ROUTE

Identify the Right Funding Route

There is no single way to fund sustainability projects. Different projects will suit different approaches, so consider the full range of options available to your Club.

Grant Funding

Grants may be available from:

- Sport organisations (i.e. Sport Wales, Welsh sports Association).
- Charitable foundations.
- Community funders.
- Environmental organisations.
- Local authorities.
- Welsh Government programmes.
- UK-wide programmes.
- Lottery funding.
- Energy or environmental programmes.
- Utility companies.

Always check current eligibility, deadlines and criteria directly with the funder.





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Community Fundraising

Clubs can raise funds through:

- Crowdfunding.
- GoFundMe-style campaigns.
- Sponsored activities.
- Community events.
- Donations.
- Member fundraising.
- “Sponsor a tree” or similar campaigns.

Commercial Partnerships

Businesses may be willing to support projects financially or through:

- Sponsorship.
- Equipment.
- Materials.
- Professional expertise.
- Volunteer time.
- Discounts.
- In-kind donations.

Club Investment

Some projects may be best funded directly by the Club where the long-term financial savings justify the initial investment.

Consider a Blended Approach

For example:

£5,000 Club contribution + £10,000 grant + £2,500 local business sponsorship + £2,500 community fundraising = £20,000 project.

A blended approach can make larger projects more achievable.



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RIGHT OPPORTUNITY

Find the Right Opportunity

Finding funding requires research. Do not assume that a fund labelled “environmental” is the only potential source of support. Sustainability projects can also contribute to sport, community development, health, participation, education, energy efficiency, climate resilience and local regeneration.

Search Around the Outcomes

Instead of only searching for:

“Sustainability grants for football Clubs”

consider:

- Community facility grants.
- Sports facility funding.
- Energy efficiency funding.
- Renewable energy funding.
- Biodiversity funding.
- Climate action funding.
- Community development grants.
- Youth and education funding.
- Environmental improvement funding.
- Active travel funding.
- Community resilience funding.





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SEEK ADVICE

Speak to People

Your Club may already have access to useful knowledge through:

- FAW staff (i.e. Club Development Officers).
- Local authority officers.
- Sport Wales.
- Regional Sport Partnerships.
- Community development teams.
- Environmental organisations.
- Local councillors.
- Other Clubs.
- Community foundations.
- Local businesses.

A conversation before an application can sometimes save significant time.





UNDERSTAND

Understand the Funder

Once you identify a potential funding opportunity, read the guidance carefully.

The aim is not simply to explain your project; it is to explain why your project meets the funder's objectives.

Before Applying, Check:

- Who can apply?
- What activities are eligible?
- What costs are eligible?
- How much funding is available?
- Is match funding required?
- Can the Club contribute funding?
- Are there minimum or maximum awards?
- What evidence is required?
- What are the deadlines?
- Are there restrictions on when work can begin?
- What reporting will be required?
- Does the Club need to own the facility?
- Are permissions or leases required?

For example, the current Sport Wales Be Active Wales Fund is open to eligible not-for-profit sports clubs and community groups in Wales and includes some facility and pitch-related projects, with specific eligibility and contribution requirements.

Never design a project around assumptions about eligibility. Check the current guidance.





TELL A STORY

Build a Strong Application

A strong funding application tells a simple story:

THE NEED

What problem are we addressing?

THE PROJECT

What are we going to do?

THE BENEFIT

What difference will it make?

THE EVIDENCE

How do we know it is needed and how will we measure success?

THE LEGACY

What will continue after the funding ends?





WIDER BENEFITS

Show the Wider Benefits

A sustainability project can often deliver more than one benefit. Funders increasingly want to understand the wider value of an investment.

Consider:

Environmental

- Reduced carbon emissions.
- Reduced energy or water consumption.
- Less waste.
- Improved biodiversity.
- Reduced pollution.
- Greater climate resilience.

Financial

- Lower operating costs.
- Reduced maintenance costs.
- Greater financial resilience.
- Long-term savings.

Football

- Better facilities.
- More reliable pitches.
- Improved matchday experience.
- Reduced disruption.
- Better conditions for players.





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Community

- Volunteer opportunities.
- Education.
- Community engagement.
- Improved local environment.
- Partnerships with schools and organisations.

Social

- Diversity and Inclusion.
- Health and wellbeing.
- Youth engagement.
- Skills development.
- Community pride.

Think in terms of multiple benefits, not just one output.





BUDGETING

Create a Realistic Budget

A clear budget gives funders confidence that the Club understands what it is proposing.

Include costs such as:

- Equipment/materials.
- Installation.
- Professional fees.
- Planning/permissions.
- Project management.
- Training.
- Communications.
- Contingency.

Where possible, obtain quotations or indicative costs.

Also identify:

- Funding requested.
- Club contribution.
- Other funding.
- In-kind contribution.

Don't Forget the Whole Project Cost

Always consider ongoing costs, a project should be affordable after the grant has been spent.





HIGHLIGHT VALUE

Demonstrate Value for Money

Funding is an investment. Your application should explain why the proposed approach represents good value.

Consider:

Cost: What will the project cost?

Benefit: What will it deliver?

Longevity: How long will the benefits last?

Savings: Could it reduce future costs?

Impact: How many people or areas will benefit?

Additionality: What will funding allow you to do that you could not otherwise do?

Example

Instead of simply stating:

“We need £8,000 for LED lighting.”

Explain:

“The project will replace inefficient lighting with LED technology across the clubhouse. This will reduce electricity consumption, lower running costs and improve lighting quality. The Club expects the installation to provide benefits over many years while supporting its carbon reduction objectives.”





COMMERCIAL

Commercial Partnerships

Businesses can be valuable sustainability partners, particularly where they have a connection with the Club or local community.

A business may provide financial support, but partnership opportunities can also include equipment, expertise, materials, professional services or volunteers.

When Approaching a Business, Explain:

Why Them?

Why would this partnership be relevant to their business?

Why Your Club?

What reach, community connection or values does your Club offer?

Why Sustainability?

What shared environmental or community objective could you work towards?

What Will They Support?

Be specific.

For example:

“We are looking for a £5,000 sustainability partner to support the installation of rainwater harvesting at our Club.”





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What Do They Receive?

Potential benefits could include:

- Recognition as a sustainability partner.
- Branding opportunities.
- Social media exposure.
- Matchday recognition.
- Community engagement.
- Staff volunteering opportunities.
- Sustainability impact reporting.
- Opportunities to engage with young people.

Avoid selling sustainability as simply another sponsorship package.

Build a genuine partnership around shared values and outcomes.





CROWDFUNDING

Crowdfunding & Community Campaigns

Not every project needs a traditional grant. Crowdfunding can be particularly effective where a project has a clear community story and people can see the difference their contribution will make.

A Strong Campaign Should Explain:

The challenge

What needs to change?

The vision

What will the Club look like afterwards?

The target

How much are you trying to raise?

The impact

What will the money achieve?

The community

Who will benefit?

The progress

How much has already been raised?





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Make It Visible

Use:

- Short videos.
- Photographs.
- Player stories.
- Member testimonials.
- Before-and-after visuals.
- Regular progress updates.

Consider involving teams, parents, volunteers, local businesses and the wider community.

Be Transparent

Explain:

- The fundraising target.
- How money will be used.
- What happens if you exceed the target.
- What happens if you don't reach it.
- Any fees or conditions associated with the platform.

There are a variety of crowdfunding platforms you can use for your fundraising campaign such as [Crowdfunder](#), [GoFundMe](#) and [JustGiving](#).



APPLICATION CHECK

Make the Application Stronger

Before submitting, ask someone who has not been involved in developing the project to read the application.

Can they understand:

- What the problem is?
- What you are proposing?
- Why it matters?
- How much it costs?
- Who benefits?
- What difference it will make?
- How you will measure success?
- What will happen after the funding ends?

Final Application Checklist

- ✓ The project meets the funder's criteria.
- ✓ The need is clearly explained.
- ✓ Evidence supports the need.
- ✓ The project is realistic.
- ✓ Costs are accurate and supported.
- ✓ Quotes have been obtained where appropriate.
- ✓ Responsibilities are clear.
- ✓ Timescales are realistic.
- ✓ Risks have been considered.
- ✓ Outcomes and measures are identified.
- ✓ Permissions and ownership issues have been checked.
- ✓ Match funding has been identified.
- ✓ The application has been proofread.
- ✓ All supporting documents are included.





FUTURE FOCUSED

Think Beyond the Funding

Securing the money is only the beginning. A successful sustainability project should be delivered, monitored and communicated so the Club can demonstrate what the investment achieved.

After Funding Is Secured:

Deliver - Complete the project in line with the agreed plans.

Record - Keep invoices, photographs, data and evidence of delivery.

Measure - Track the environmental, financial and community benefits.

Communicate - Share progress with members, partners, funders and the community.

Report - Complete any funder reporting requirements.

Learn - Capture what worked and what could be improved.

Build On It - Use the project as a foundation for the next sustainability action.

This links directly to the Together Greener [Monitoring, Measuring & Reporting Progress](#) resource and [Sustainability Progress Tracker](#).



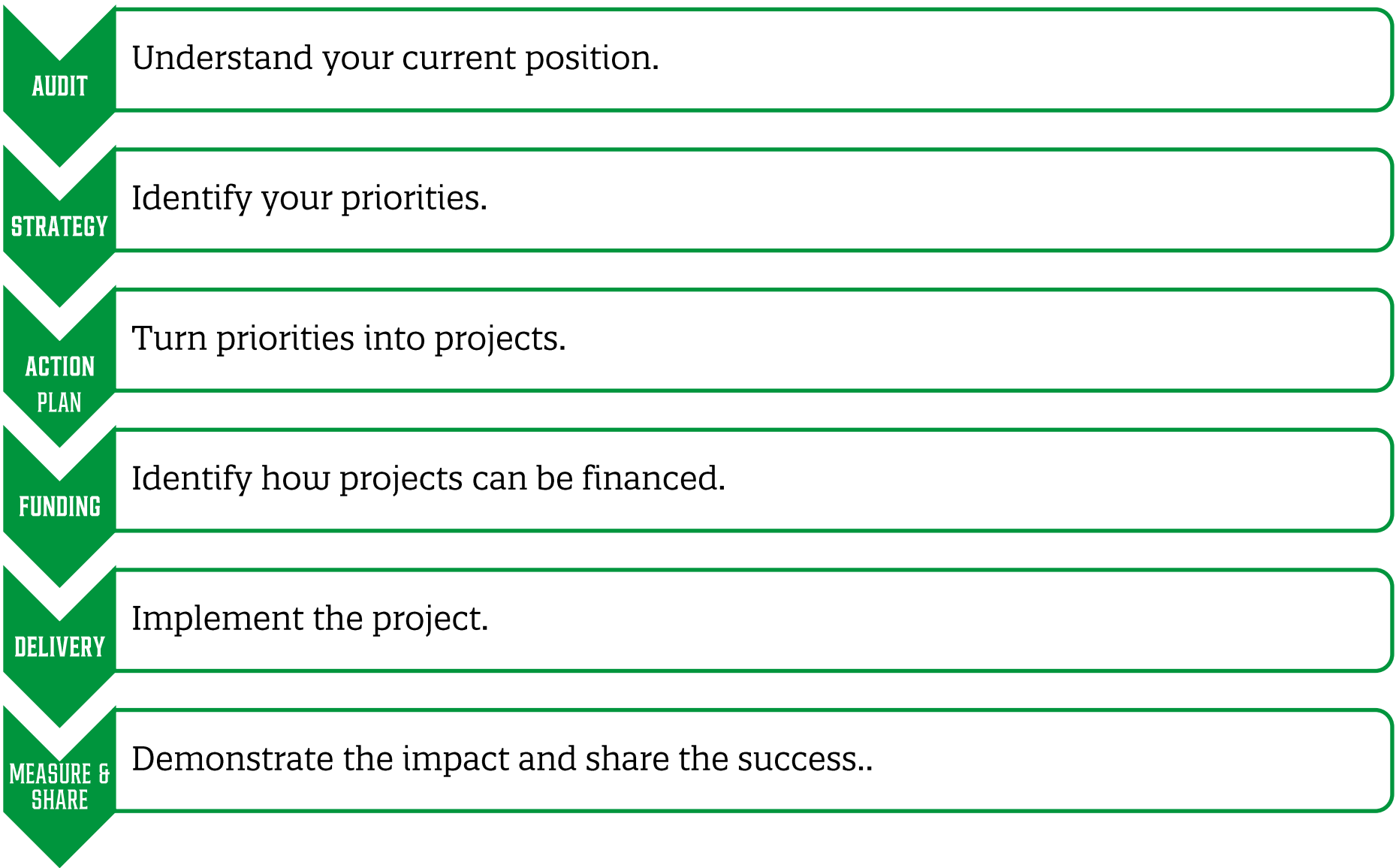


STRATEGY SUPPORT

Funding Should Support Your Strategy

Funding should not determine your sustainability strategy. Your Sustainability Strategy should identify your priorities, with funding helping you deliver them.

A useful sequence is:



This approach helps prevent Clubs from chasing funding opportunities that do not contribute meaningfully to their longer-term sustainability objectives.





FUNDING OPTIONS

Potential Funding & Support Opportunities

Funding opportunities change regularly, so Clubs should always check current eligibility, deadlines and criteria before applying.

Potential sources to investigate in Wales include:

Cymru Football Foundation

Cymru Football Foundation's [Sustainability Fund](#) provides grants that support grassroots Clubs and organisations to reduce their carbon footprint and become more self-sufficient. Grants are available for support towards items including solar panels, biodiversity initiatives, sustainable lighting and water options as well as electric charging points.

Sport Wales

The [Be Active Wales Fund](#) supports eligible not-for-profit sports Clubs and community organisations, while Sport Wales also highlights other opportunities including [A Place for Sport](#) and energy-related support through the [Energy Saving Grant](#).

Welsh Sports Association

The [Sustainability in Sport Fund](#) is a £100,000 grant program run by the Welsh Sports Association (WSA) in partnership with Admiral.

National Lottery Community Fund – Wales

[National Lottery Awards for All Wales](#) supports projects that bring people together and improve communities. The National Lottery also have [other funding options](#) available which your Club might be eligible for.



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Local Authorities

Check your local authority for community, environmental, climate, biodiversity, facility and regeneration funding.

Community Foundations

Regional and community foundations can provide funding for projects benefiting local communities.

Environmental Organisations

Look for funding linked to biodiversity, nature restoration, climate action, water, trees and environmental education.

Energy & Climate Programmes

Monitor programmes supporting energy efficiency, renewable energy, carbon reduction and climate resilience. Sport Wales, for example, has previously supported Welsh sports clubs through its Energy Saving Grant, including solar PV, batteries, LED lighting, windows, doors and insulation.

Community & Corporate Partnerships

Approach local businesses, sponsors and organisations whose values align with your project.

Crowdfunding

Consider community fundraising platforms where the project has a strong local story and community benefit. Find out more about '[A Place for Sport](#)' Crowdfunder.

Opportunities, eligibility and deadlines change. Always use the funder's current information rather than relying on an old funding list. [SPORTED](#) also provide an up-to-date list of local and national funding opportunities for sport.



FURTHER SUPPORT

The purpose of funding is not simply to secure money. It is to help your Club deliver meaningful improvements that make football more sustainable, resilient and beneficial to the communities it serves.

A strong funding application starts with a clear need, a realistic project and a compelling explanation of the difference the investment will make. The strongest projects are those that solve a genuine Club or community need, align with the Club's sustainability priorities and create benefits that continue long after the funding has been spent.

Your Together Greener work gives you a strong foundation because you are not starting from scratch. Your audits, Green Goals, Sustainability Strategy, Carbon Reduction Plan and Action Plans can provide the evidence and direction needed to develop credible projects.

Use what you have learned in this resource to:

- Review your Together Greener audits and identify potential investment projects.
- Prioritise projects within your Sustainability Strategy.
- Add funding requirements to your Sustainability Action Plan.
- Research potential funding routes.
- Build a simple funding pipeline.
- Prepare evidence before applications open.
- Develop realistic project budgets.
- Explore grants, crowdfunding and community fundraising.
- Identify potential commercial sustainability partners.
- Develop clear environmental, financial and community outcomes.
- Track and communicate the impact of funded projects.
- Reinvest savings where possible into further sustainability improvements.
- Share successful projects with the wider football community in Wales.

Further information on Management can be found at www.faw.cymru/togethergreener-management

If you require support with this resource, please contact sustainability@faw.cymru