Sports Funding Jargon Buster

Many funding bodies and grant application forms use a wide number of phrases and expressions that can often be confusing and difficult to understand what exactly they mean.

Funding 4 Sports “Jargon Buster” looks to provide an explanation to some of these commonly used funding terms and assist you in better preparing your funding application.

Activities
The actions, tasks and work a project or organisation carries out to create its outputs and outcomes, and achieve its aims. Activities include all the things you do to put on service, run facilities or create products.

Aims
Particular changes or differences the project or organisation plans to bring about for its users.

Baseline
Information about the situation that a group is trying to change, showing what it is like before they intervene

Benchmark
A standard of achievement that an organisation or project has already achieved that they can compare current achievement or use to set a target. The benchmark may be about the quality of your services, how people view the service, or the levels of success it is achieving. It is usually a statistical measure, though sometimes benchmarks can be in the form of milestones against which to measure progress.

Evaluation
Using information from monitoring and elsewhere, to judge the performance of an organisation or project. There are a number of different kinds of evaluation:

- “Self-evaluation” is when an organisation uses its own expertise and resources to judge its own performance.
- “External evaluation” is when you hire a consultant or other organisation to make these judgements.
- “Formative” evaluation is when you use evaluation while you are still carrying out your work to improve it while it is still happening.

Hard outcomes
These are outcomes that are clear and obvious or ones which involve an external change in people’s behaviour or circumstances.

Impact
These are the broader or longer-term effects of a project or organisation’s outputs, outcomes and activities. Many people use it simply to mean “outcome”. The meaning we use here is “the broader or longer-term effects of a project or organisation’s outputs and activities”. Often, these are effects on people other than the direct users of a project. Impacts can be negative for some people as well as positive.
Indicator
These are well-defined information which shows whether something is happening. You use indicators to see if you are reaching your targets or milestones, creating your outputs and objectives or achieving your outcomes, aims and impacts. An indicator is something you can observe or measure, and which is a sign that any of these things has happened. To be useful, an indicator must really be a test of what you want to find out about. It must also be something you can collect information about consistently.

Input
All the resources a group needs to carry out its activities.

Milestone
This is a well-defined and significant step towards achieving a target, output, outcome or impact, allowing a group to track progress.

Monitoring
Collecting and recording information in a routine and systematic way to check progress against plans and enable evaluation.

Mission
Why an organisation or project exists and the broad effect that it wants to have. A summary of the overall difference it wants to make. The mission statement or overall aim is also usually just one or two sentences. It describes the people, situation or problem a project or organisation want to make a difference to. It also describes the particular difference the project or organisation wants to make. As with a vision, the aim may take a long time, be very general or very specific. It is not what a group will achieve specifically this year, or next year, but the thing they ultimately want to achieve.

Objectives
The areas of activity or practical steps a project or organisation plans to accomplish its aims. People often express this as a short list of what they will do.

Outcomes
The changes, benefits, learning or other effects that result from what the project or organisation makes, offers or provides. Outcomes relate to aims. Aims describe the changes or benefits you intend to achieve within your target group. Outcomes are all the changes that actually occur when you carry out activities to achieve the aims. They may not be the same as the outcomes you planned.

Outputs
These are products, services or facilities that result from an organisation’s or project’s activities. Outputs relate to objectives.

Qualitative information
Information about what you do, achieve or provide that tells you the nature of the thing you are doing, providing or achieving.
Quantitative information
Information about what you do, achieve or provide that tells you how many, how long or how often you have done it, achieved it or provided it.

Resources
Everything a project or organisation draws on to carry out its activities. These will include the people, equipment, money and services you need. They may also be intangible, such as time, morale and knowledge.

Soft outcomes
Outcomes that are less easy to observe or measure, or which involve some form of change inside people, such as a change in attitude or a change in the way they see themselves.

Target
A defined level of achievement which a project or organisation sets itself to achieve in a specific period of time. Note: In everyday English you may also hear the words objectives and goals.

Vision
The ideal state a project or organisation wants the world to be in. What the world will look like if the project or organisation is successful in achieving its mission. A vision statement is usually just one or two sentences. It describes the situation that would exist if everything the project or organisation is working for happened. In other words, it says what would count as complete success for that project or organisation. The vision is not what a project or organisation thinks it will achieve this year or next year, but what things would look like eventually, if it achieves all its aims. A vision can either be something specific, or something general, depending on the project or organisation. It is often something that needs the work of many other organisations and projects in order to happen.