

ENGLAND AND WALES CRICKET BOARD



BUILDING BELONGING IN CRICKET FUND (BBCF) 2026

GUIDANCE NOTES
FOR APPLICANTS



INSPIRING
GENERATIONS





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1. ABOUT THE SCHEME

- 1.1 The £45m Building Belonging in Cricket Fund (BBCF) will support projects across England and Wales which benefit women and girls, disabled participants, people with lower incomes or ethnically diverse communities, as part of making cricket the most inclusive team sport.
- 1.2 The BBCF will be locally led, with projects to be developed out of needs identified in Recreational Cricket Board (RCB) County Facilities Strategies and Countywide Strategic Plans. RCBs will identify projects and instigate the application process, set out in the flowchart in section 15.
- 1.3 It is anticipated that most projects will be owned and operated by third party property owners, with RCBs playing a critical role in supporting the project to be developed to meet the needs of cricket in their area and in ensuring the desired participation and development outcomes are achieved.
- 1.4 It is expected that projects will deliver over £150m in total economic value as well as participation outcomes aligned with the goal of cricket becoming the most inclusive team sport.
- 1.5 BBCF will not invest in preliminary project development costs (for example, costs associated with the design and approval of projects) (though these can be considered as ‘partner funding’) in order to maximise the impact of the fund and avoid abortive costs to the programme.
- 1.6 While there is an expectation that BBCF will deliver £3:£1 in total economic value, and partnership funding is an expectation of every project, projects will be assessed individually based on overall impact. Grants will not be based on a strict percentage of economic value, accounting for particular needs and challenges of demography, geography and differential outcomes.
- 1.7 Grants are expected to be in the range of £50,000 to £1m (though may be varied under exceptional circumstances).
- 1.8 The application process is solicited via RCBs and will be in two stages set out section 15:
 - Feasibility review.
 - Formal application.
- 1.9 The feasibility review stage is included to enable RCBs and applicants to receive an early indication of support, providing confidence to invest further in detailed project development and indicate the likelihood of EWCT investment¹ to other potential investors. It will also provide important feedback that may evolve project development and prevent abortive costs for applicants.

2. PROJECT TYPES

- 2.1 Projects that may be considered eligible for funding include (but are not limited to):
 - Covered outdoor cricket facilities (e.g. Cricket Domes).
 - Indoor cricket / sports halls.
 - Community cricket venues (including pavilions, cricket grounds and clubs).
 - Multi-sport hubs (including clubs and venues operated by others).
 - ECB approved non-turf pitches and practice facilities (typically at scale, such as a local authority wide approach).

1. EWCT will distribute the funds and monitor their use. ECB will manage the application process for EWCT.

2.2 Note that, where a project will involve some activities which are charitable and some which are non-charitable, funding will only be provided pro rata based on the proportion of activities which are charitable.

3. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND FEASIBILITY REVIEW

3.1 Projects that have been identified as a priority for investment by the RCBs (where they have an adopted County Facilities Strategy and Countywide Strategic Plan) will be supported by an ECB Facilities Planning Manager (FPM). When sufficient information is available, the projects may be submitted for review by the Feasibility Review Panel.

3.2 Applications must be submitted by the organisation that will own or operate the Facility (the ‘applicant’). RCBs play a supporting role in identifying and developing projects but are not normally the applicant, unless otherwise agreed with ECB.

3.3 Each project will require the following evidence for the feasibility review (as a minimum):

- **Project Owner / Organisation details** – including governing documents (e.g. constitution, articles of association).
- **Outline Design** – This will vary depending on project type but will typically be a preliminary design that satisfies a clear brief and can be costed to give an indication of project budgets.
- **Outline Costs** – This should be a reasonable evidence-based estimate of total project costs, including professional fees. For simple projects this may be initial quotes from suppliers while for complex projects, evidence may be a cost report provided by a suitably qualified professional.
- **Partner Funding Plan (can include confirmed and unconfirmed funding and in-kind contributions)** – This should be a brief outline of how the applicant intends to fund the full project cost, including its own funds, third party funds (confirmed or unconfirmed), fundraising plans and in-kind contributions. The plan should clearly specify the status of each funding source, indicating whether it is secured, under negotiation, or yet to be confirmed.
- **Business Plan (including operating model, cricket outcomes and finances)** – This document will be particularly important as it will outline the strategic rationale for the project (including RCB and partner organisation priorities) and make the case as to how the project will operate sustainably and deliver a significant impact. A separate guidance document on the details of developing a business plan for feasibility review is available from ECB on request.
- **Draft Partnership Agreement** – This will be a two-way agreement between the project owner and the RCB, outlining roles and responsibilities and participation outcomes. The ECB will provide a template Partnership Agreement for this purpose.

| Grant requested | Minimum term of Partnership Agreement and security of tenure |
|------------------------|--|
| Up to £100,000 | Minimum 5 years |
| £100,001 to £250,000 | 10 years |
| £250,001 to £1,000,000 | 15 years |

- **Information on status of Planning and Tenure** – Projects do not need to have applied for planning or have fully secured tenure at this stage. Information is required for risk analysis and any ‘in principle’ decision may be conditional on further detail. This information may be a simple statement but could also include pre-planning advice from local authority planning officers or draft heads of terms on a lease. The length of security of tenure needed is the same as for the minimum term of the Partnership agreement set out in the table above.
- **Project development plans** – should be discussed with your ECB Facilities Planning Manager (FPM) at an early stage.

3.4 All feasibility review requests will be examined by the Feasibility Review Panel, which will include representation from both the ECB Facilities and Recreational Game departments, to ensure that there is expertise to review the technical, financial and cricket development aspects of each proposal.

Alignment with other ECB/EWCT revenue funding programmes (such as the Gamechanger Fund) and strategic planning will also be considered.

For larger scale projects (value over £500k), the panel will also include independent expertise to ensure that scrutiny is robust and in line with the expected aims of BBCF.

3.5 The Feasibility Review Panel will be convened multiple times a year with a schedule provided to RCBs.

3.6 If the Feasibility Review Panel outcome is support for a project, the applicant and RCB will be provided with an ‘in principle’ letter that details the scope of this support, any conditions required to be resolved prior to a full application and outlines the next steps in the process. If the panel elects to defer or reject a feasibility review request, details will be provided in writing as to the reasoning and an explanation of required information for a re-submission will be provided.

3.7 Following receipt of an ‘in principle’ support letter, applicants will receive access to develop and submit a full application via the Investment Management System (IMS). Additional evidence will be required for full applications, including (but not limited to) detailed designs, final tendered costs, full financial evidence (including partner funding and banking details), a completed partnership agreement and a finalised business plan.



4. INELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

The scheme may not be used to fund the following:

- Any project already funded by an ECB / EWCT capital grant or loan. For the avoidance of doubt this does not prevent an Organisation from applying for an EWCT Interest Free Loan in accordance with Section 7.6.
- Professional fees and project development costs*, including but not limited to:
 - Legal, Architect or Surveyor fees or Third Party and Planning consent.

**Professional fees may be considered as 'in kind' contributions and form part of the partnership funding (see section 7.4).*

5. FULL APPLICATION - MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

As a minimum, applicants will need to have the following:

| Requirements | Affiliated cricket clubs | Other organisations |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Constitution, Articles of Association or equivalent governing document | ✓ | ✓ |
| Valid Buildings, Contents and Public Liability Insurance | ✓ | ✓ |
| Security of Tenure – Freehold or Leasehold, including details of any legal charges held over the property which is the subject of the project | ✓ | ✓ |
| Bank account in the Organisation name | ✓ | ✓ |
| Financial accounts for last budget year (excludes Local Authorities) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Club Safeguarding Officer (fully compliant on ECB Safe Hands Management System (SHMS)) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Adoption of ECB Safe Hands Policy or equivalent | ✓ | ✓ |
| Adoption of ECB Anti-Discrimination Regulations or equivalent | ✓ | ✓ |

6. AMOUNT OF GRANT

- 6.1 Most grants are expected to be in the range of £50,000 to £1m (though this may be varied under exceptional circumstances). The actual grant amount will be determined via consultation with ECB, following review of the project development plan.
- 6.2 The grant cannot be used to retrospectively fund projects (see Section 10.7).

7. PARTNERSHIP FUNDING AND ADDED ECONOMIC VALUE

- 7.1 Partnership funding is the difference between the total project cost and the amount of grant. It can be sourced from the applicant Organisation's own funds, other grant bodies or sponsorship etc.
- 7.2 There is no minimum level of partnership funding required, although it is expected that most projects will include capital partnership funding and, for very large scale projects, EWCT will likely be a minority funder.
- 7.3 Where the outcome of a project is of particular strategic importance, we may invest a proportionally larger amount, but it is of vital importance that each project has a sustainable business plan. Developing the business case for each project is an important part of the application process and the ECB Facilities Planning team will provide support to applicants as needed. If you have any questions, please discuss with your ECB Facilities Planning Manager.
- 7.4 'In-kind' capital contributions may be included as partnership funding where they can be evidenced by accurate valuation of donation of materials or labour.
- 7.5 Partnership funding may also be provided by way of an EWCT Interest Free Loan. Applicants can choose to apply for a joint grant and loan as part of the online application.
- 7.6 Excluding Section 7.5 (above), the scheme cannot be partnered with any other ECB / EWCT capital funding programme.
- 7.7 Where relevant, applicants will be asked to provide a statement of Added Economic Value within the application process. This may include a calculation of subsidies, project development costs and provision of land.

8. KEY DATES

- 8.1 The scheme will open to applications from 1 June 2026.
- 8.2 Each successful project will have individual contract dates in relation to commencement, completion and drawdown of funds.



9. PLANNING YOUR PROJECT

9.1 Where the cost of construction / development of the Facility is up to and including £25,000, the applicant shall obtain 2 quotes / tenders for the provision of the Project. Where the cost of construction / development of the Project exceeds £25,000, the applicant shall obtain at least three competitive quotes / tenders for the provision of the Facility in accordance with normal tender and contract procedures and shall comply with all relevant law on public procurement, including without limitation the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

9.2 All quotations or tenders must be legible and contain the following information:

- Contractor / Supplier's details.
- Date of quote or tender (no more than 6 months old).
- Full details of the project.
- Total Project Cost including VAT, delivery fees and any discounts.

9.3 All applicants must contact the local planning authority, at the earliest opportunity, to obtain written confirmation of whether planning permission will be required or not. Never assume it will not be required - only the local planning authority can confirm this. If planning permission is required, the process can take on average 12 weeks for a decision.

9.4 A list of useful resources to assist with planning your project can be found in Section 14.

10. THE FULL APPLICATION PROCESS

10.1 Access to the application will be via the online Investment Management System (IMS) at <https://ims.ecb.co.uk>

10.2 The applicant will need to identify two contacts (authorised signatories) to act on its behalf for the duration of the project:

- Contacts must be authorised to enter into and sign contracts on behalf of the Organisation.
- The key contact will be responsible for completing the application process and signing and accepting the terms and conditions incorporated into the Grant Offer Letter.
- The second contact will be responsible for countersigning and accepting the terms and conditions incorporated into the Grant Offer Letter.
- Contacts must have reasonable IT skills, have access to a personal email address and set up a personal user account on IMS.
- Contacts should not share the same home address, email or phone number.

10.3 Once the new user account details have been verified by ECB, the designated authorised signatories will be able to access the application process.

10.4 The application will be initiated by either the CCB County Administrator (County Admin) or ECB Facilities Planning Manager (FPM), before being passed to the Key Contact to complete.

- 10.5 On completion of the full application, it can be submitted to us for approval.
- 10.6 The ECB may refer the application back to the applicant for further evidence, if required.
- 10.7 Applicants must not proceed with their project before they receive the Grant Offer Letter from EWCT. If an applicant is subsequently found to have completed the project before receiving the Grant Offer Letter, the funding will be withdrawn (see Section 6.2).

11. IF THE APPLICATION IS SUCCESSFUL

- 11.1 Once the ECB is satisfied with the application, the Grant Offer Letter (which incorporates the terms and conditions) will be issued to the applicant by email, usually within 30 days of receipt of the completed application.
- 11.2 Each Grant Offer Letter will contain individual contract dates in relation to commencement, completion and drawdown of funds.
- 11.3 Grants will be made to the applicant (i.e. the owner/operator of the project/facilities) and there will be a grant agreement in place between the EWCT and the applicant.
- 11.4 The Grant Offer Letter and the accompanying Terms & Conditions (which together constitute the grant agreement) will set out monitoring and reporting requirements, ongoing obligations during the clawback period, and EWCT's clawback and repayment rights. Importantly, it will also set out asset control and property security requirements, including terms which:
- permit EWCT to enter a caution or legal charge over the property's registered title at HM Land Registry;
 - restrict the sale, lease or change of use of the facility without EWCT's approval; and allow EWCT to require repayment on disposal or change.
- 11.5 To accept the terms and conditions of the grant offer, the two authorised signatories will be required to electronically sign and return the Grant Offer Letter (using the DocuSign process) within 30 days of receipt.
- 11.6 Once we are in receipt of the signed Offer Letter, the applicant may commence the Project.
- 11.7 Any changes to the project specification or supplier(s) after the Grant Offer Letter has been issued must be notified to ECB immediately as this may affect the amount of grant. Failure to notify ECB may result in the revised project being ineligible and the grant being reduced or withdrawn in its entirety.
- 11.8 The applicant may submit multiple interim claims via IMS, throughout the duration of the scheduled works programme, and / or a Final Claim on completion of the Project. Each claim must be supported by invoices at least equal to the value of the claim submitted, up to the value of the Final Project Cost.
- 11.9 In exceptional circumstances, ECB will accept a pro-forma invoice(s) ahead of completion. Any applicant that submits a pro-forma invoice with a claim will be required to complete a reconciliation on completion of the project, where they will need to upload any outstanding VAT invoices.

- 11.10 Payment(s) are typically made within 10 working days of receipt of each claim by BACS transfer direct to the applicant's designated bank account.
- 11.11 The applicant shall immediately on receipt of the funds pay those sums received by it from the ECB to the relevant Contractor / Supplier.
- 11.12 The applicant will be asked to provide an initial Post Project Review on the impact of the project, after completion. This may include, without limitation, outcomes, numbers impacted, photos, publicity etc., and any other information reasonably requested by, or on behalf of, ECB.
- 11.13 A selected percentage of applicants will be asked to support an independent monitoring and evaluation process (for up to 15 years) on the impact of the grant, depending on the project type, e.g. to measure any increase in the number of women and girls playing cricket. These annual reports will be based on Partnership Agreements with RCBs and the information submitted as part of the application process.

12. WARRANTIES AND WAIVERS

- 12.1 The grant is offered on the understanding that the conditions of the scheme are met. EWCT/ECB reserves the right to withdraw a grant in whole or in part if it considers that the conditions of the scheme or the conditions set out in the Grant Offer Letter have not been met.
- 12.2 Where final expenditure is less than the quotation on which the award is based, and as set out in the Grant Offer Letter, EWCT/ECB reserves the right to reduce the grant.
- 12.3 All awards will be granted by EWCT in its absolute discretion. Not all applications will be successful even if all criteria set out above are met.
- 12.4 ECB/EWCT is not under any obligation to consider any proposal or application that it may receive and reserves the right to defer or reject an application it considers does not comply with these terms.
- 12.5 ECB/EWCT reserves the right at any stage to change any or all requirements for qualification for a grant and / or any terms and conditions relevant to the award of any grant to any applicant.
- 12.6 These guidance notes set out an outline of the process for application and requirements to be fulfilled by an applicant prior to, or as a condition of, the award of a grant by EWCT. This guidance is correct as at the date on which it was printed.
- 12.7 Neither these guidance notes nor any other information supplied by the ECB / EWCT (or its officers or agents) constitutes a contract or an offer which is capable of acceptance by any applicant with the exception of the Grant Offer Letter. These guidelines do not contain any representation upon which any applicant is entitled to rely at any time.
- 12.8 ECB / EWCT (and its officers or agents) will not be responsible for any costs, losses or expenses which an applicant or any other parties incur in the preparation and submission of applications or in complying with any of the mandatory requirements set out in this guidance note.

13. CONTACTS

Should you have any queries relating to the Building Belonging in Cricket Fund (BBCF), please contact your Regional Cricket Board (RCB) at (insert link) or email your ECB Facilities Planning Manager (FPM) at: facilities@ecb.co.uk or grantmanagement@ecb.co.uk



14. USEFUL RESOURCES

Covered Outdoor Cricket Facilities

<https://www.ecb.co.uk/cocf>

General ECB facilities guidance

<https://www.ecb.co.uk/play/club-support/facility-management>

Sport England Accessible and Inclusive Sports Facilities

[Accessible and inclusive sports facilities | Sport England](#)

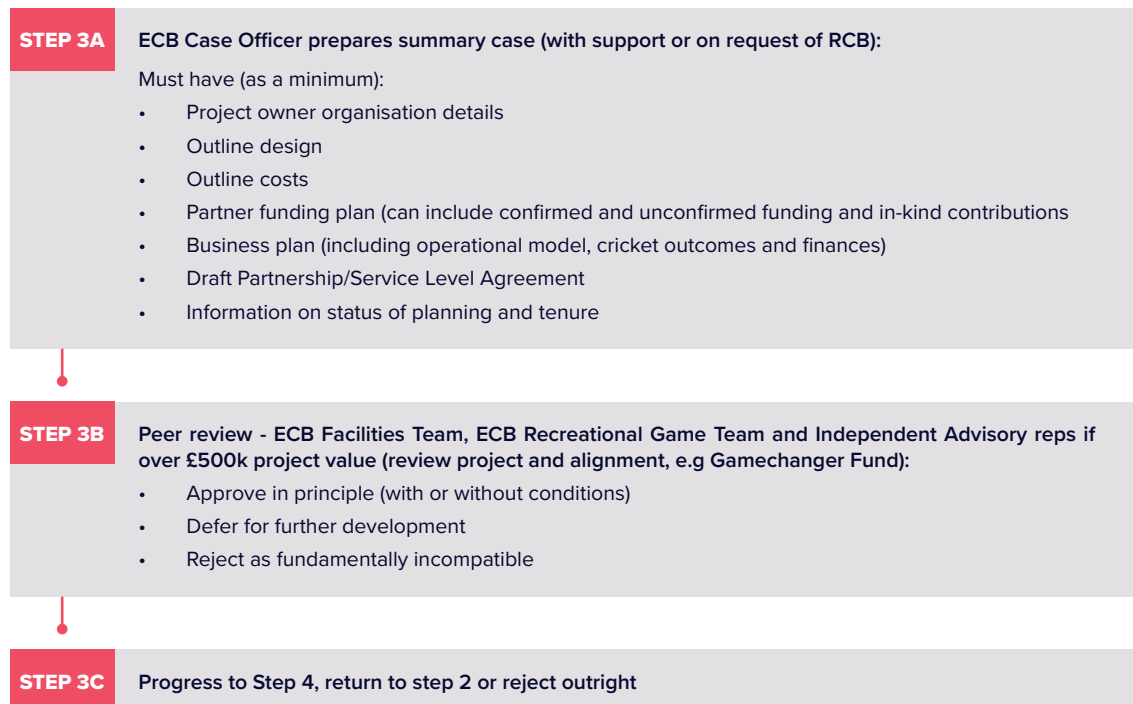
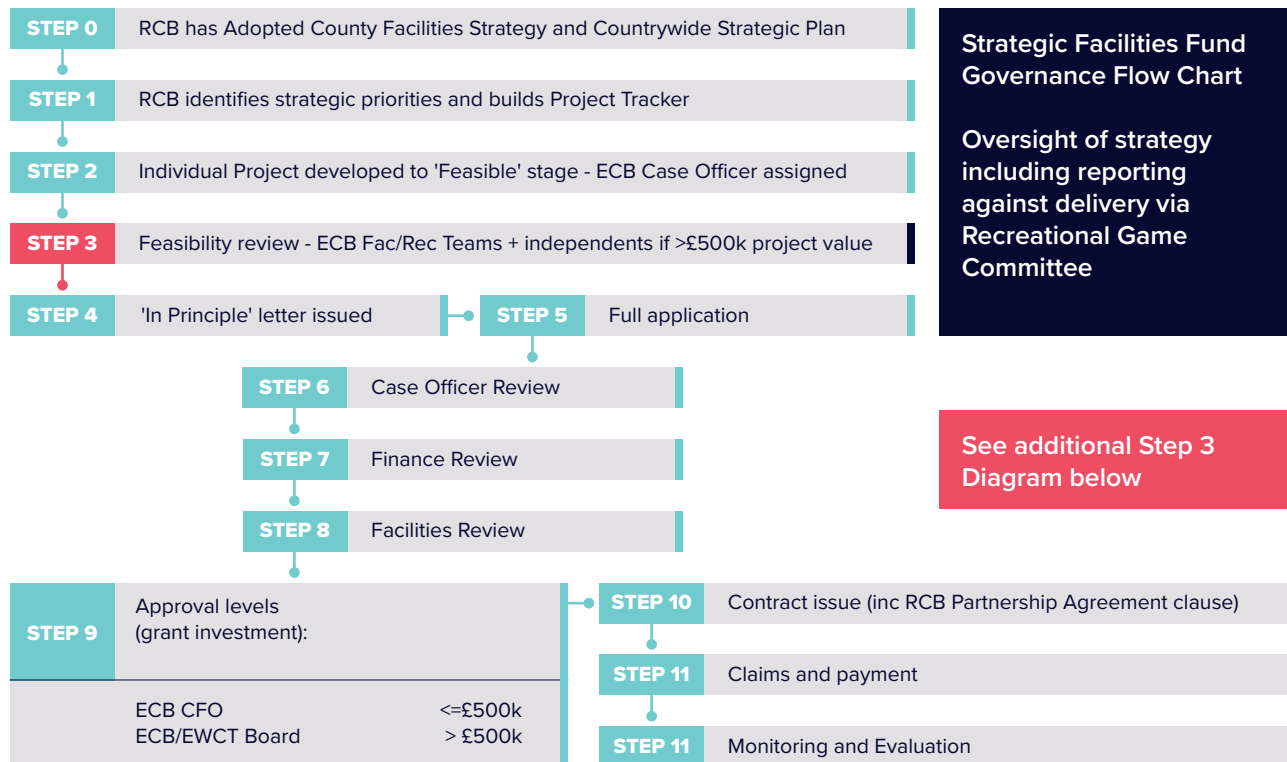
Creating Welcoming Environments

<https://www.ecb.co.uk/news/2183201/creating-welcoming-environments>

Sport England Planning Guidance

<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/sports-club-planning-application-guide>

15. PROCESS FLOW CHARTS - HIGH LEVEL OVERVIEW



16. PROCESS FLOW CHART - INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Key Contact will be responsible for completing the application process, and to sign and accept the terms and conditions of the Grant Offer Letter. The 2nd Contact will be responsible for countersigning and accepting the terms and conditions of the Grant Offer Letter.

On completion of the full application, it can be submitted to ECB for approval. The ECB may refer the application back to the applicant Organisation for further evidence, if required.

Once the ECB is satisfied with the application, the Grant Offer Letter will be issued by email, usually within 30 days of receipt of the completed application.

To accept the terms and conditions of the grant offer, the two contacts (authorised signatories) will be required to electronically sign and return the Grant Offer Letter (using the DocuSign process) within 30 days.

On receipt of the signed Grant Offer Letter by ECB, the Organisation may proceed with the project.

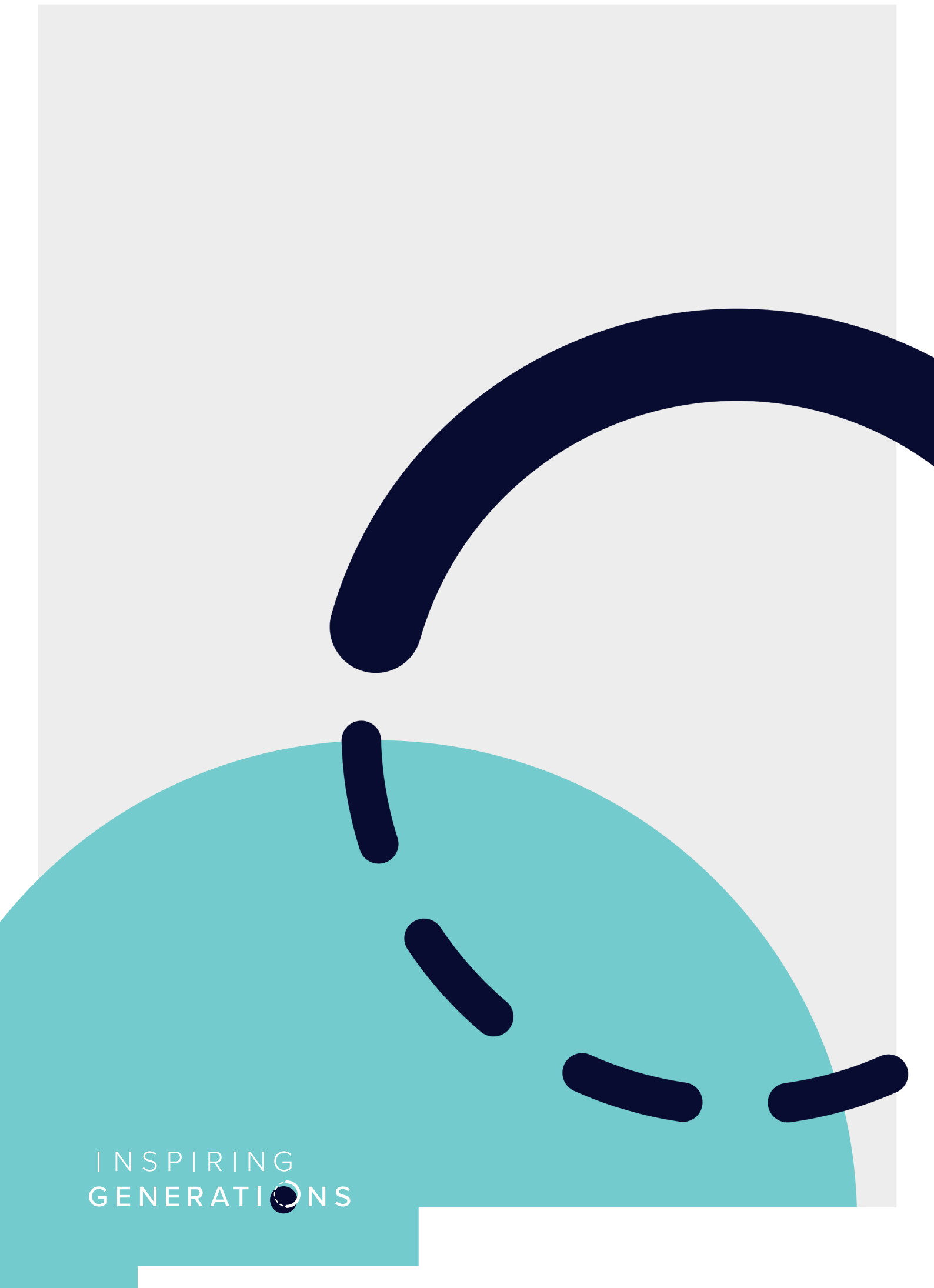
All projects must be commenced, completed and the grant claimed by the dates specified in the Offer Letter, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the ECB.

The Organisation may submit multiple interim claims, throughout the duration of the scheduled works programme, and / or a final claim on completion of the project. Each claim must be supported by invoices at least equal to the value of the claim submitted, up to the value of the final project cost. In exceptional circumstances, ECB will accept a pro-forma invoice(s) ahead of completion. Any Organisation that submits a pro-forma invoice(s) with a claim will be required to complete a reconciliation on completion of the project, where they will need to upload any outstanding VAT invoices.

Payment(s) will be made by BACS transfer direct to the Organisation's designated bank account, usually within 10 days working days of receipt of each claim.

All Organisations will be asked to provide an initial Post Project Review on the impact of the project, after completion. This may include, without limitation, outcomes, numbers impacted, photos, publicity etc., and any other information reasonably requested by, or on behalf of, ECB / EWCT.

A number of Organisations may be asked to provide annual reports (for up to 15 years) on the impact of the grant depending on the project type, e.g. to measure any increase in the number of women and girls playing cricket.



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