



2021 Social Science Research Grant Program

Overview and Guidance for Applicants

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Explanation of Terms

Anti-Doping Organization (ADO): Based on the World Anti-Doping Code (Code) definition, for the purposes of this document, it is any Signatory/Organization to the Code responsible for enforcing any part of the doping control process. This includes National Anti-Doping Organization, International Federation, Major Event Organizer or Regional Anti-Doping Organization.

Expression of Interest (Eoi): The application form for stage-one of the application process for Tiers 1 and 2 projects before being approved for the full application process. It serves as a full application form for Tier 3 projects (see Table 2 for description of Tiers).

Social Science Research Program (SSRP): The overall program that includes all related activities to do with social science research.

Social Science Research Strategy 2020-2024 (SSR Strategy): The document that outlines six key strategic priorities related to social science research and subsequent areas of focus and outputs.

Social Science Research Grant Program (SSR Grant Program): The program WADA uses to choose research projects to invest in that are in line with its strategic goals.

Social Science Review Panel: A Working Group as part of WADA's governance structure that advises the Education department and Education Committee on social science research matters, including analysis of applications to the SSR Grant Program.

WADA: World Anti-Doping Agency

WADA Grants: The online grant management system used by WADA to manage the application and review process (<https://grants.wada-ama.org/>).

WADA Prevention Model: The model encompasses five key strategies with the purpose of ensuring harmonized, coordinated and effective anti-doping programs with regard to the prevention of doping, including: education, deterrence, detection, enforcement and rule of law (see 2021 World Anti-Doping Code, page 9).

1.0 Introduction: WADA Social Science Strategy 2020-2024 and Social Science Research Grant Program

Context

WADA is the leading authority for anti-doping worldwide. WADA seeks to protect the integrity of sport by promoting, coordinating and monitoring activities that contribute to the prevention of doping. As part of this, it plays a key role in facilitating research, including social science research.

Research is prominent in WADA's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan as a key initiative of its 'Lead' strategic priority. It sets a clear focus for stakeholders – the need for 'impactful research' that helps us achieve our vision of doping-free sport. Leveraging data to enable more informed decision making across the system is also a strategic priority.

Social Science Research – 2020-2024

To support WADAs research focus, the new WADA Social Science Research Strategy 2020-2024 (SSR Strategy) sets the scene for a new and expanded Social Science Research Program (SSRP) that is more proactive and strategic in its approach. The SSR Strategy prompts us to take a leading role in the social science research agenda as it relates to clean sport, with the aim of maximizing its benefits for WADA stakeholders. The SSR Strategy also aims to address challenges within the field of social science research such as the translation and implementation of research into anti-doping programs and enabling investment in geographical regions that are traditionally less funded. WADA will instigate several initiatives to deliver the SSR Strategy over the next four years – this is our SSRP.

A core aim of the SSRP is to invest in social science research to maintain and increase our understanding of athlete behaviors that we are seeking to reinforce or prevent, alongside the social and environment factors that influence athlete behaviors. Such understanding will improve WADA's and the global clean sport community's ability to develop effective policies and programs, enhancing the sporting experience for all.

WADA's SSR Grant Program (Grant Program) has been the main mechanism to fund social science research since 2005. The development of the SSR Strategy expands the scope of social science research activities (the SSRP), with the Grant Program being one key initiative.

To support the implementation of the SSR Strategy, the Grant Program has been revised. This revised Grant Program will come into effect in October 2020. The investment decisions made through the Grant Program will be aligned to a new set of research priorities published as part of the Call-for-Proposals. Those wishing to apply for a WADA social science research grant should consult these research priorities, as outlined in this document, to be clear on what research areas we are most interested in investing in. The research priorities developed in collaboration with the Education Department and the Social Science Review Panel are approved by WADA's Education Committee.

The Grant Program is competition-based with the budget being allocated to successful applicants approved by WADA's Executive Committee each year.

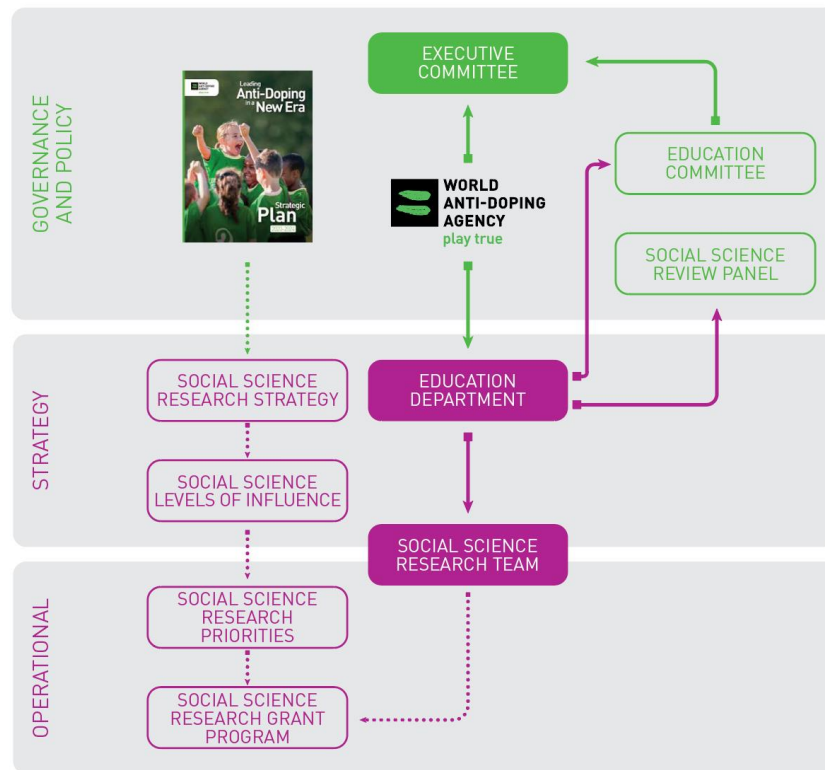


Figure 1: WADA Social Science Research Governance Structure

2.0 Our Research Priorities

The social science research priorities have been developed based on a social ecological model that identifies six overarching levels of influence, with athletes placed at its center (as outlined in Table 1).

This model was developed based on a review of the previous research priorities, literature reviews, consultation with partner organizations and WADA's Strategic Plan. It is also informed by a comprehensive Delphi study conducted with the clean sport community regarding social science research priorities initiated as part of an Erasmus+ Collaborative Partnerships funded research project ([RESPECT-Clean Sport Alliance](#)).

WADA may look to focus on particular research priorities in different years and as such, add weighting to projects addressing these priorities. Please be sure to refer to the published Call-for-Proposals each year on WADA's website.

Applicants can also make a case for investment outside of this model. A mechanism within the application process allows for a case to be presented for such research. WADA welcomes innovative projects and approaches within the model presented and outside of it.

Table 1. Levels of influence, research priorities and indicative areas of enquiry

Level of Influence	Research Priorities	Indicative Areas of Enquiry
Athlete	Athlete pathway and experience	What factors contribute to doping vulnerability and what factors are protective at each stage of the athlete pathway? How do athletes experience the anti-doping system?
	Clean sport behaviors	What are the behaviors that contribute to clean sport?
Athlete Support Personnel	Role and influence of ASP	What role and influence do ASP have on clean sport behaviors and doping vulnerability at each stage of the athlete pathway?
	Experience of ASP in clean sport	How do ASP experience anti-doping and how does that interact with their role in clean sport?
Education Programs	People investment in anti-doping	What is the impact of investment in people within the antidoping system on implementing key anti-doping functions and overall contribution to clean sport? What supports people to do their jobs more effectively and what are the challenges?
	Effectiveness of anti-doping/ clean sport	What are the components and principles of education programs and interventions that will maximize the development of clean sport behaviors?
World Anti-Doping Program	WADA Doping Prevention Model	What are the most effective methods for integrating and implementing the five strategies of the WADA Doping Prevention Model in anti-doping programs?
	Anti-Doping Policy Impact	What is the impact of policies implemented to prevent doping at each level of the anti-doping system?
Sport Environment	Sport Policy	What impact does wider sport policy have on the culture of sport and specifically, behaviors related to clean sport? (e.g. national sport funding structures, rule changes, CAS decisions, etc.).
	Evolution of sport practices	What impact do the evolving practices in sport have on athletes' and ASPs' clean sport behaviors? (e.g. technology, medicalization, commercialization, training innovations).
Society	Horizon scanning	What strategies and learning from other industries/ sectors can be applied to clean sport / anti-doping?
	Non-sport influences	What are the potential non-sport disruptors and influencers on clean sport? (e.g. societal, geo-political, cultural).

3.0 Overview of the Revised WADA Social Science Research Grant Program

The Grant Program now has three distinct tiers of investment that are available for applicants. The ‘tier’ is defined by the scale and scope of the research projects. A description of each tier is given in Table 2. The tiered system will allow for more tailored application requirements for projects rather than a one size fits all approach.

Table 2: Overview of Tiers of Investment

Please note: This table provides a guide to help applicants determine which tier they should apply to. These are not strict criteria to guide investment decisions for projects and it is recognized there is likely to be a degree of fluidity between tiers. The primary criteria to determine which Tier you apply to should be the budget scale.

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing an evidence base to inform international anti-doping policy and practice - Facilitating international research exchange across academic disciplines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contributing to program or intervention development or improvement at national level or within a single sport to support the prevention of doping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investing in smaller scale research projects to pilot or examine the viability of interventions, particularly projects led by early career researchers or targeting under-funded regions
Indicative Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International study - Multi/interdisciplinary team - Multi-sport - Partnership with at least two Anti-Doping Organizations (ADOS) - Endorsement of at least two additional ADOs - Policy impact investigation - Other sources of investment - Country/sport/gender and cultural differences as research variables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National study/multi-sport - Single sport study/multinational - Multi/interdisciplinary team - Partnership with at least one ADO - Endorsement of at least one additional ADO - Other sources of investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small scale projects looking at developing and piloting interventions, conducting literature reviews, position papers, etc. - Piloting an existing program /intervention in an under-represented sport or region - Early career researchers* who may be applying for as first time Principal Investigators
Budget scale	- 75,000 - 150,000 USD	- 20,000 - 75,000 USD	- < 20,000 USD
Application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two-stage process - Expression of Interest submitted through the call for proposals procedure - Full application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two-stage process - Expression of Interest submitted through the call for proposals procedure - Full application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application submitted as part of the call for proposals - Targeted questions and clarifications where required, including assigning a mentor if needed

Assessment and decision process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stage 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Education Department assessment o Social Science Review Panel assessment o Criteria: paragraph 4.1 - Stage 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Peer reviews x 2 o Social Science Review Panel review o Education Committee o Executive Committee o Criteria: paragraph 4.6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stage 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Education Department assessment o Social Science Review Panel assessment o Criteria: paragraph 4.1 - Stage 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Peer reviews x 2 o Social Science Review Panel review o Education Committee o Executive Committee o Criteria: paragraph 4.6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education Department assessment - Social Science Review Panel review and recommendation - Education Committee - Criteria: paragraph 4.1
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***Early career researchers** are defined as individuals who have 5 years or less experience since their first academic/research appointment

4.0 Application and Review Process

All applicants of Tier 1 and Tier 2 must submit an initial Expression of Interest (Eol) through [WADA Grants Platform as part of the two-stage process](#). Please consult and read fully, the following documents prior to preparing your Eol submission: The WADA SSR Grant Program, The WADA Grants User Guide, and WADA Social Science Research Strategy.

The closing date for Tier 1 & Tier 2 Eols for the 2021 Call-for-Proposals is **Sunday 22 November 2020 at 11:59 pm (EST)**. The review of the Eols will be conducted and communicated within five weeks of the application being submitted. Applicants are encouraged to submit ahead of this time if possible, in order to facilitate a quicker turnaround time for decisions.

Applicants whose projects are approved to move to stage two will be invited to proceed to a full application process. The closing date for the full application is **Sunday 31 January 2021 11:59pm (EST)**.

Tier 3 applicants must complete and submit an Eol Form by **Sunday 31 January 2021 11:59pm (EST)**. Following the initial assessment, further questions and clarifications may be sought of applicants before a decision is made. Where appropriate, a session with an experienced researcher may be facilitated (this may include a member of the WADA Social Science Review Panel), in particular with early career researchers or under-represented regions in research where the project is of particular interest.

For Tier 1 and Tier 2 projects the Social Science Review Panel will present its analysis to the WADA Education Committee who will make recommendations for investment. The final investment awards will be made by WADA's Executive Committee at its meeting in **May 2021**.

Tier 3 projects will be reviewed by the Social Science Review Panel and final decisions will be made by the Education Committee on or before **May 2021**.

4.1. Expression of Interest (Eoi) Application

The purpose of the Eoi is to provide a brief description of the:

- Context for the research and proposed research question and specific objectives of the project.
- Alignment of the research with wada ssr strategic priorities or make a case for another relevant issue.
- Proposed research design and methods.
- Engagement and impact plan, outlining how you will engage with the clean sport community to deliver impact from the research
- Experience and expertise of the research team.

An Eoi (and Tier 3 applications) will be reviewed according to the following criteria:

1. Quality and importance

- The extent to which the project meets WADA's social science research priorities
- The significance and importance of the project, and the contribution it will make, if successful, to preventing doping in sport.
- The extent to which the research questions, issues or problems will be addressed in the course of the research are defined and the importance and appropriateness specified
- The appropriateness, effectiveness and feasibility of the proposed research methods and/or approach

2. People and resources

- The appropriateness and balance of the research team
- The capability of personnel
- Adequacy of resources available
- The extent of consultation with athletes, including being part of the research process (with projects that will directly impact athletes).

3. Value for money

- Adequacy of the proposed budget and the value for money vis a vis the contribution of the research to the Clean Sport community.

4. Outputs, dissemination and impact

- The likelihood that the outputs and outcomes of the project will be highly valued and widely exploited, both in the research community and in the wider sporting contexts where they can make a difference.
- Whether sufficient attention has been given to who the beneficiaries of the research might be and appropriate ways to engage them throughout the project.

4.2. Frequently Asked Questions about Expression of Interest Application

Q: How developed does my research proposal have to be for the Expression of Interest application?

A: A fully developed research proposal and a detailed project budget is not required at the EoI stage. As well as the information provided in Section 4.1 above, the EoI Application Form on the WADA Grants platform will help guide you on the level of information required for each item.

Q: Do I need to have an agreement in place with the ADOs I want to work with before I submit the EoI?

A: No, but you should have a conversation beforehand and indicate that they are open to being fully involved with the research project. Confirmation of their involvement can then be provided at the full application stage.

4.3. Full Application (Tiers 1 and 2 only)

The purpose of a Full application is to:

- Provide more detail on the research project and the knowledge translation plan
- Provide a literature review to justify the research, intervention and methods

- Provide a research plan to demonstrate that the methods are scientifically rigorous
- Demonstrate the establishment of relevant partnerships with anti-doping organizations (ADOs)

The full application requires more detail compared to what is submitted in EoI. Some aspects may have changed following feedback on EoI. The concepts and methods are expected to be fully developed and elaborated by submission of this application.

The full application must contain the following details:

- Administering institution's details
- Principal Investigator and research team details
- Project title
- Project description: this will give details on:
 - Research question(s)
 - Primary target group and setting
 - Hypotheses, if appropriate to your research design.
 - Research design and methods
 - Research objectives, significant outcomes and policy/program/practice implications for the clean sport community
- Literature review
- Research 'translation' strategies
- Collaborations and partner organizations
- Research ethics review (see paragraph 4.6)
- Research ethics safeguards (see paragraph 4.6)
- Statement on research ethics safeguards
- Detailed research budget
- Other sources of funding

A full application will be reviewed according to the following criteria:

1. Quality and importance

- The extent to which the project meets WADA's social science research priorities

- The significance and importance of the project, and the contribution it will make, if successful, to preventing doping in sport.
- The extent to which the research questions, issues or problems will be addressed in the course of the research are defined and the importance and appropriateness specified
- The appropriateness, effectiveness and feasibility of the proposed research methods and/or approach.
- The strength and breadth of the evidence base provided to underpin the rationale for the project.
- Scientific merit:
 - Strength and robustness of the research design, conceptual/theoretical frameworks, literature review, research methodology and overall technical merit

2. People and resources

- The appropriateness and balance of the research team
- The capability of personnel (including the quality and importance of their work to date).
- The adequacy of resources available.
- The extent of consultation with athletes, including being part of the research process (with projects that will directly impact athletes).
- The degree of partnership with ADOs, whether they have been included as part of the creation process and level of involvement throughout whole research process.

3. Value for money and likelihood to deliver on time

- Justifiable and reasonable calendar
- Justifiable and reasonable budget
- Adequacy of the proposed budget and the value for money vis a vis the contribution of the research to the clean sport community.

- Other sources of investment – both direct and indirect (through in-kind contributions)

4. Outputs, dissemination and impact

- The likelihood that the outputs and outcomes of the project will be highly valued and widely exploited, both in the research community and in the wider sporting contexts where they can make a difference
- Whether sufficient attention has been given to who the beneficiaries of the research might be and appropriate ways to engage them throughout the project
- Quality of dissemination plan
- Quality of mentoring plan
- Has the potential to provide impact and influence the prevention of doping

4.4. Review Process of Full Applications

Step 1: Education Department Assessment

All submissions will undergo a preliminary assessment to ensure that they are complete, conform to administrative requirements and have been submitted according to the application process laid out in this document.

Step 2: Independent Peer-Review

All eligible submissions will be sent to a minimum of two external peer-reviewers. Reviewers will be selected from a pool of international scholars and experts based on the relevance of their work to the proposal. Given that peer-reviewers are asked to assess the “capability of personnel/resources” (as described below), reviewers will know the identity of the research team members. Reviewers will be required to report any potential conflicts of interest and sign a declaration to that effect prior to commencing any review. Peer-reviewers will provide WADA with a report on the strengths and weaknesses of the submission and, to the extent possible, a recommendation for investment. Each applicant will receive upon request, a copy of the anonymous peer-review reports related to the submission.

Step 3: Review by Social Science Review Panel

All submissions and peer-review reports will be submitted to the WADA Social Science Review Panel, composed of senior researchers and at least one member of WADA's Education Committee. The Review Panel will review the proposals in order to identify the projects that will best contribute to priorities identified in WADA's SSR Strategy.

Step 4: Review by Education Committee and Decision by Executive Committee

The Review Panel will provide WADA's Education Committee with the conclusions of their review. Taking these reviews into consideration, WADA's Education Committee will make recommendations to WADA's Executive Committee regarding the selection of proposals for investment. The Executive Committee will approve or reject the recommendations from the Education Committee.

To ensure an unbiased review process, and should a conflict of interest occur at any stage, the peer-reviewer, Review Panel Member, Education Committee Member or Executive Committee Member concerned will give full disclosure of the nature of his/her conflict of interest and will be removed from being part of the selection process related to that proposal. An applicant may withdraw his/her application at any time during the assessment process. A request to withdraw an application must be signed by the Principal Investigator and an authorized person from his/her institution of affiliation.

4.5. Budget Policies

A budget template will be provided to applicants as part of the full application process in order to document expenditure by category and for each year of the project. Below is an outline of WADA policies on specific expense categories.

Research Assistant Services: Remuneration to a graduate student for gaining research experience may be offered. Include the following information in the application: detailed job description of the position and specific functions of the research assistant; required academic level (i.e., masters, doctoral or post-doctoral student); projected dates (starting and ending months/years) of employment; and salary.

Contractor or Consultant Services: Where private professional contractor/ consultant services are needed, quotes from at least two potential providers must be submitted with the proposal. Justification for such services should include the specific expertise sought and explain why this expertise cannot be provided by a research team member. What are the unique qualifications of the contractor or consultant?

Equipment and Supplies: Items to be purchased or services to be obtained, such as survey and field expenses, and printing and mailing costs. Please note that WADA will not fund the purchase of computers or other office equipment.

Travel Expenses: Anticipated travel expenses must be specific and justified. Only travel expenses to be incurred by the investigators for the purpose of data collection are allowable.

4.6. Ethics

Research Ethics Review (full applications only): In accordance with WADA's Research Ethics Policy, all research involving human subjects are required to be reviewed by the Principal Investigator's (PI) university ethics committee or some other ethical review process prior to funds being released. Proof of approval shall be submitted with the application. If the project is in the process of being approved, WADA may approve the project contingent on ethics approval.

Research Ethics Safeguards (all applications): A brief statement of the ethical issues that may arise from your research project is required, and an explanation of how each of these issues will be addressed prior to, during, or after the research project has been completed. Include in your statement any potential ethical, safety or regulatory aspects of the proposed project, and the way they will be addressed in your proposed project.

WADA Ethics Review (all applications): Before WADA's Social Science Research Grant Program funds a research project, all projects involving human subjects must undergo an ethics review carried out in accordance with the terms of the Research Ethics Policy published on WADA's website. An ethics check will take place during the evaluation of all grant submissions.

5.0 Key Dates

Call-for-Proposal publication	Friday 16 October 2020
Expression of Interest due (Tiers 1 & 2 only)	Sunday 22 November 2020, 11:59 p.m. EST
Full application due (Tiers 1 & 2 only)	Sunday 31 January 2021, 11:59 p.m. EST
Tier 3 application due	Sunday 31 January 2021, 11:59 p.m. EST
Announcement of successful Grant Applicants	May 2021