

# The economic contribution of the Scottish Professional Football League



*The analysis in this report has been conducted by the Fraser of Allander Institute (FAI) at the University of Strathclyde. The FAI is a leading academic research centre focussed on the Scottish economy. The report was commissioned in 2019 by the Scottish Professional Football League (SPFL). The SPFL asked the FAI to provide an estimate of the contribution from their activities on the Scottish economy.*

## Overview

In 2019, the Fraser of Allander Institute at the University of Strathclyde was commissioned by the Scottish Professional Football League (SPFL) to estimate the economic contribution of the SPFL to the Scottish economy.

This short report summarises the key findings of that analysis.

All the results have been prepared independently by the Fraser of Allander Institute.

The analysis finds that –

- For the 2017-18 season, the SPFL clubs' activities plus all spending by spectators at SPFL matches contributed £444 million to Scottish Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2016 prices, helping to support around 9,300 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs.
- On a net basis – i.e. adjusting for the impact of spending which is not additional to the Scottish economy – we find a contribution to Scottish GDP of £214 million (2016 prices), helping to support around 5,700 FTE jobs.

## Methodology

The principal function of the SPFL is the organisation of the men's professional football game.

As well as the running of the competitions, the SPFL also acts on behalf of its member clubs to secure advertising and broadcasting revenues, which are then distributed. Club income is therefore comprised of both their own match-day and commercial income, plus the distribution of centrally negotiated rights for league and cup competitions.

We examine the contribution of the SPFL to the Scottish economy in the season 2017-18 through two channels:

- i. the economic footprint of the SPFL clubs themselves plus
- ii. the economic boost from those attending matches involving clubs in the SPFL's league and cup competitions.

In order to make such an assessment, we firstly examine information on clubs' economic activities, including their revenues and day-to-day spending. These data were compiled from club accounts and from detailed research of a select number of SPFL member clubs across all four divisions.

Secondly, to capture the economic impact of supporter activities associated with matches, we undertook a survey of fans of SPFL clubs. This provided detailed information on the spending undertaken by attendees at football matches in Scotland, specifically those elements which are not spent in the stadium (which would be captured in the clubs' accounts) .

We then use a detailed economic model to capture the direct impact of these clubs' and spectator activities and the wider spill-over effects on the Scottish economy. In our analysis therefore, we assess not only the direct impact of SPFL clubs' activities and spending by spectator at SPFL matches, but also the wider spill-over effects into the Scottish economy.



**£214 million**

net contribution to the Scottish economy.



**5,700**

net jobs supported in Scotland.



**4,871,000**

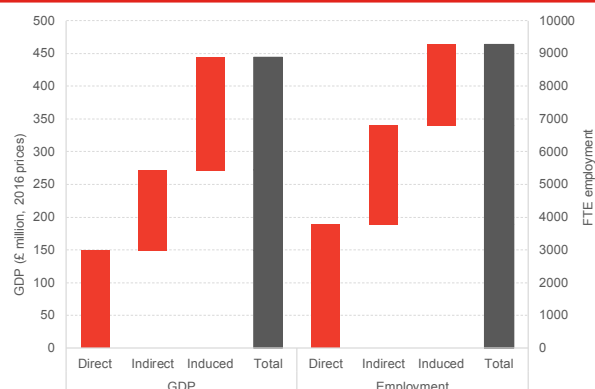
attendances at SPFL matches in the 2017-18 season.

## Results

Our analysis finds that –

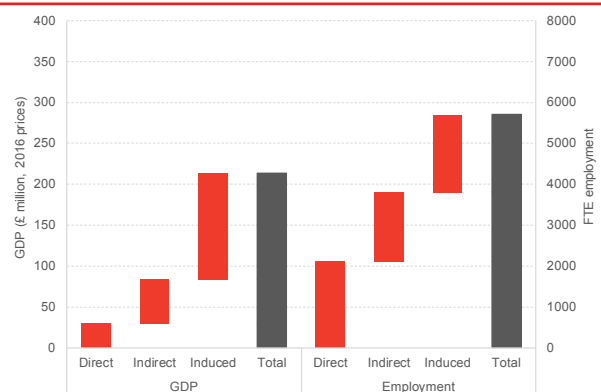
- In the course of the 2017-18 season, the turnover of SPFL clubs was £223 million (in 2016 prices), and they directly employed approximately 2,770 people.
- That season saw a total of 4,870,000 attendances at SPFL matches (including the SPFL cup competitions), with the majority of these in the Premiership.
- For the 2017-18 season, SPFL clubs’ activities plus all spending by spectators at SPFL league and cup competitions contributed £444 million to Scottish GDP, helping to support 9,300 FTE jobs.
- On a net basis – i.e. adjusting for the impact of spending which is not additional to the Scottish economy – we find a contribution to Scottish GDP of £214 million, helping to support around 5,700 FTE jobs.

**Chart 1:** Gross economic impact of SPFL activities on Scottish GDP and employment, 2017-18



Source: FAI Modelling

**Chart 2:** Net economic impact of SPFL activities on Scottish GDP and employment, 2017-18



Source: FAI Modelling

**Table 1:** Match day attendance, 2017-18

Match Type	Total Attendance
Premiership	3,632,000
Championship	519,000
League One	154,000
League Two	90,000
Playoffs	51,000
League Cup	381,000
Challenge Cup	45,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,871,000</b>

Note: Attendances are rounded to the nearest thousand.

The technical analysis, methodology and writing-up of the results was undertaken independently by the FAI. The FAI is committed to informing and encouraging public debate through the provision of the highest quality analytical advice and analysis. We are therefore happy to respond to requests for factual advice and analysis. Any technical errors or omissions are those of the FAI.