

Destination & Sector Marketing Fund Criteria

Guidance for applicants

Background

Covid-19 has forced a monumental shift in the tourism industry and as we map our recovery, we must recognise that we are now operating in a new tourism landscape. With constantly evolving international travel restrictions, stimulating domestic visitor demand and extending the season where possible are crucial to Scotland's immediate tourism recovery.

The focus of the Destination & Sector Marketing Fund is to encourage Destination and Sector groups to collaborate to develop strong visitor propositions that are reflective of identified post-Covid trends and promote these in a responsible way, using targeted campaign activity in the UK and Ireland market, inclusive of the local and day visits market. By marketing visitor experiences that are aligned to what consumers are looking for in this 'new' world and aligning them to the latest consumer trends, it will help to ensure a sustainable recovery going forward.

The Destination & Sector Marketing Fund is open to applications from Destination and Sector groups across Scotland. Applicants will be expected to develop and deliver a strong visitor proposition, or unique selling point, that stimulates demand. This could be a seasonal proposition or a campaign to promote a particular theme or a unique collection of product experiences within the destination or sector, accompanied with an effective promotional plan.

The Fund

What is the purpose of this Fund?

This Fund focuses on post-pandemic recovery and aims to enable Destination and Sector groups in Scotland to harness the latest consumer insights to develop and market their visitor experiences sustainably and responsibly to stimulate holidays; ensure Scotland is a year-round destination; and to support the recovery of the tourism sector and the delivery of the following:

- A national, substantial, coordinated marketing effort to put Scotland front of mind for domestic consumers year-round.
- A sector and destination led approach in partnership with communities to support the re-building of local visitor economies enabling organisations to extend their reach in targeting potential visitors looking for a domestic holiday.
- The development and packaging of Scotland's tourism product into world-class visitor experiences aligned closely with long term responsible tourism objectives to ensure a sustainable recovery.

Find more information on the latest consumer insights here; www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/funding/destination-sector-marketing-fund.

What is the value of this Fund?

The total value of the fund is £3million. This fund is part of a wider Scottish Government support package linked to the Tourism Task Force Recovery plan and is being delivered by VisitScotland.

How much can organisations apply for?

This is a competitive fund with a limited overall budget. The fund will be split into 3 tiers, identified below. These tiers will dictate the level of award available. Please note that this Fund may be oversubscribed and therefore we do not expect to be able to support all applications. We also reserve the right to award an amount lower than requested. Applicants will be required to spend awarded funds on activities that must be delivered by the end of the 21/22 financial year, ending 31st March 2022.

No match funding is required as part of the application but applicants are welcome to include additional budget or upweighting from other partners within their application. Groups who are currently delivering a delayed Growth Fund campaign are not precluded from submitting an application.

Tier One	Tier Two	Tier Three
City Region Award Programme Awards Between £50,000 - £100,000	Pan Scotland Sector Groups & Regional Destination Organisations Awards Between £40,000 - £80,000	Local Destination Organisations, Marketing Groups & non-Pan Scotland Sector Groups Awards Between £10,000 - £20,000

Who this Fund is for and Group Eligibility Criteria

Tier 1 – City Region Award Programme - Awards Between £50,000 - £100,000

This Tier is open to the seven cities, one award will be available to each city, and applications must demonstrate collaboration with strategic partners and stakeholders within their destination or city region. Multiple applications from one city region will not be considered.

Please note that larger awards will be paid in two instalments, details of which will be set out in the grant award letters.

Group Eligibility - Tier 1

- Tier 1 is open to organisations who represent one of the seven cities (Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Perth and Stirling).
- Applicants will be required to be incorporated organisations listed on Companies House or legally constituted groups to allow for formal business checks to be carried out. Local Authorities who are working with tourism industry businesses and groups and are the lead for destination marketing and promotion for their region may also apply. Applications will also be considered from Tourism Business Improvement Districts. Applications from Business Improvement Districts will not be considered.
- Applications must demonstrate collaboration and strategic alignment at a regional level. Duplication of similar activity by groups within the same area will result in none of the applications being considered.
- Applicants will preferably have existing consumer facing channels.
- Must have a place of business in Scotland and be delivering and/or operating in Scotland.
- All applications must either have a registered bank account in the name of the applicant, or a registered bank account in the name of the lead organisation. A bank account in the name of an individual will not be acceptable.
- Confirmation that the business was NOT in financial difficulty before December 2019 (if you are an SME or Large organisation) – please see the Subsidy Control section in the guidance document for more information.

Tier 2 - Regional Destination Organisations & Pan-Scotland Sector Groups - Awards Between £40,000 - £80,000

This Tier is open to Destination Organisations and Pan-Scotland Sector Groups who can demonstrate the following:

Destination Organisations:

Destination Organisations must demonstrate that they are operating at a regional level and that they fully represent a single or multiple Local Authority regions. They must have a proven track record of delivery of projects and demonstrate how they have collaborated across the region to ensure that different parts of the destination's tourism product is represented. Applications for this Tier must demonstrate collaboration with strategic partners and stakeholders within their region.

Pan-Scotland Sector Groups:

Pan-Scotland Sector Groups must demonstrate significant geographic spread of membership or coverage within their sector and their existing activities; this should be pan-Scotland. Applications for this Tier must demonstrate collaboration with members and stakeholders across Scotland.

Please note that larger awards will be paid in two instalments, details of which will be set out in the grant award letters.

Group Eligibility - Tier 2

- Tier 2 is open to established Pan-Scotland Sector Groups and Regional Destination organisations whose role is critical to the ongoing success of the tourism industry in Scotland. These organisations should promote the majority of tourism businesses and work with key tourism stakeholders within their destination and sector.
- Applicants will be required to be incorporated organisations listed on Companies House or legally constituted groups to allow for formal business checks to be carried out. Local Authorities who are working with tourism industry businesses and groups and are the lead for destination marketing and promotion for their region may also apply. Applications will also be considered from Tourism Business Improvement Districts. Applications from Business Improvement Districts will not be considered.
- Applications must demonstrate collaboration and strategic alignment at a regional level for destinations or Pan-Scotland level for sector groups. Duplication of similar activity by groups within the same area will result in none of the applications being considered.
- Applicants will preferably have existing consumer facing channels.
- Must have a place of business in Scotland and be delivering and/or operating in Scotland.
- All applications must either have a registered bank account in the name of the applicant, or a registered bank account in the name of the lead organisation. A bank account in the name of an individual will not be acceptable.
- Confirmation that the business was NOT in financial difficulty before December 2019 (if you are a SME or Large organisation) – please see the Subsidy Control section in the guidance document for more information.

Tier 3 - Local Destination Organisations, Marketing Groups & non-Pan Scotland Sector Groups - Awards Between £10,000 - £20,000

This Tier is open to established local destination marketing groups that promote a specific part of a Local authority Area or a specific product (e.g. golf) within a single Local Authority area. Applications across this Tier must reflect regional tourism plans and strategies in place where applicable.

Group Eligibility - Tier 3

- Applications for Tier 3 should be submitted by Local Destination Marketing Organisations and non-Pan-Scotland Sector Groups. A collaborative approach must be demonstrated with a strong mix of businesses from the tourism sector for Destination Groups or an extensive reach across product focus for Sector Groups.
- Applicants will be required to be incorporated organisations listed on Companies House or legally constituted groups to allow for formal business checks to be carried out. Local Authorities who are working with tourism industry businesses and groups and are the lead for destination marketing and promotion for their region may also apply. Applications will also be considered from Tourism Business Improvement Districts. Applications from Business Improvement Districts will not be considered.
- Applicants will preferably have existing consumer facing channels.
- Applications must demonstrate collaboration and strategic alignment at a regional and local level. Duplication of similar activity by groups within the same area will result in none of the applications being considered.
- Must have a place of business in Scotland and be delivering and/or operating in Scotland.
- All applications must either have a registered bank account in the name of the applicant, or a registered bank account in the name of the lead organisation. A bank account in the name of an individual will not be acceptable.
- Confirmation that the business was NOT in financial difficulty before December 2019 (if you are a SME or Large organisation) – please see the Subsidy Control section in the guidance document for more information.

What activities does this Fund support?

This Fund will support activities that focus on the development and promotion of strong visitor propositions and experiences in line with identified post-Covid consumer trends. You can find more information on post-Covid consumer trends here <https://www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/funding/destination-sector-marketing-fund>.

These propositions, or unique selling points, could be a seasonal proposition or a campaign to promote a particular theme or a unique collection of product experiences within the destination or sector. We are looking for a campaign that will demonstrate how these unique aspects will be creatively packaged and promoted to drive measurable uplifts in bookings and visits in a responsible, sustainable way.

Successful applications will contain plans that demonstrate clearly how these propositions will be promoted through a range of activities, including paid media, PR, optimising and leveraging owned channels and amplifying reach through collaboration.

Generic awareness campaigns will not be considered. The recovery marketing campaign activity must be delivered in accordance with the relevant Scottish Government guidelines and be flexible and agile enough to respond to any changes in guidelines.

This Fund can support the types of activities identified below. Please note this is not an exhaustive list; if you are unsure if an activity is eligible, please contact; Destination&SectorMarketingFund@visitscotland.com prior to application.

Audiences & Marketing Activity

- Promotional activities should target the UK and Ireland market only, this is inclusive of the local and day visitor market. You can find more information and insights about the UK market here; <https://www.visitscotland.org/research-insights/about-our-visitors/uk>. and the Ireland market here <https://www.visitscotland.org/research-insights/about-our-visitors/international/ireland>
- Applications should focus on key post-Covid trends identified specifically for the domestic market. You can find more information on consumer trends here: www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/funding/destination-sector-marketing-fund.
- We welcome applications from groups who will be actively engaging with Scotland's Themed Years. The next Themed Year will be Scotland's Year of Stories in 2022.
- Focus should be on creating inspiring and engaging content (primarily digital) that demonstrates responsible tourism activity supporting environmental and cultural sustainability, inclusion, and community input and benefit.
- Applicants should have a well-considered activity plan that demonstrates how target audiences will be reached effectively.

Content Creation

The main focus of content creation should be consumer focused, however content created for travel trade is also eligible if applicants are able to demonstrate the rationale for this. All content created should conform to both VisitScotland guidelines and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). More detail will be provided to successful groups ahead of any content being created.

Eligible Content includes:

- Video
- Photography
- Editorial digital content on group's website
- Influencer Marketing
- Media Visits
- Digital Itineraries
- Audio content e.g. Podcasts

Website Enhancement

Applicants will preferably have an established website; funding the creation of a new website should not be the focus of any applications. If the applicant group has had an SEO/User Experience audit done on their website, recommendations from that should be used as the basis for any website enhancements.

Promotional Activities

Paid promotional activity plans should be well considered and be able to demonstrate how each activity will deliver measurable impacts. Successful applicants will also be offered the opportunity to upweight VisitScotland national campaign activities where appropriate.

Project Management

Project Management – including consultancy, campaign management and delivery – can form part of the overall budget. No more than 15% of the total campaign budget can be claimed for Project Management. The Project Management fee can only be paid to someone who is not a full time employee of the applicant.

What Activities does this Fund not support?

- Core or repeated marketing activity
- Business or product development such as: business memberships, feasibility studies, research or business engagement activities
- New app development
- Capital costs and overheads, for example office or core staff costs, equipment, etc. Full time employees cannot claim for Project Management fees.
- The Destination & Sector Marketing Fund does not support standalone event marketing. Event Organisers who are seeking support to market local or regional events should visit; <https://www.visitscotland.org/events> for further information

Application Process

1. Organisations which meet the eligibility criteria will be able to complete an application form available to download from midday on the 1st June 2021 and send it along with appropriate supporting documentation to; Destination&SectorMarketingFund@visitscotland.com.
2. Application deadlines will be staggered by Tier. Applicants for each Tier may submit an application at any time during timings identified below:

Funding Tier	Applications Open	Applications Close
Tier 1 – City Region Awards Programme	Midday 1st June 2021	3pm 29th June 2021
Tier 2 – Pan-Scotland Sector Groups & Regional Destination Organisations	Midday 1st June 2021	3pm 13th July 2021
Tier 3 – Local Destination Organisations, Marketing Groups & non-Pan Scotland Sector Groups	Midday 1st June 2021	3pm 23rd July 2021

3. Applications must be emailed to Destination&SectorMarketingFund@visitscotland.com between the above dates and times to be considered for funding. Any applications received after this identified period for each Tier will not be considered. Applications WILL NOT be assessed on a first come, first serve basis.

4. Once you have submitted your application, you will receive an automatic reply from VisitScotland advising that your application has been received. If you do not receive an automatic response advising that your application has been received, please contact Destination&SectorMarketingFund@visitscotland.com.
5. Following the assessment of applications, a rolling panel, consisting of Senior VisitScotland staff and a representative from the Scottish Tourism Alliance, will make the final decisions on the success or deferment of all applications along with level of award.
6. Your application will be rejected if you do not meet the eligibility criteria.
7. If you do meet the eligibility criteria but are not successful following assessment of your visitor proposition and panel process in phase one, your application will be deferred. This means you will be given the opportunity to receive feedback from the Destination & Sector Marketing Fund Team and will be invited to update your application based on the feedback and re-submit your application to the second phase panel. The second phase panel will only be open to deferred applications from the first phase.
8. The second phase panel, consisting of Senior VisitScotland staff and a representative from the Scottish Tourism Alliance, will make the final decisions on the success or rejection of all applications along with level of award.
9. If your application is rejected, you can appeal this decision. Any appeals should be submitted in writing to Destination&SectorMarketingFundAppeals@visitscotland.com together with a justification for the appeal.
10. Organisations can only submit one application to the fund across all three Tiers. I.E. you cannot submit an application into Tier 1 and Tier 2 – you must choose one Tier to apply to. Please note, if you submit an application into the wrong Tier for your Destination or Sector group, we may consider it against the criteria for the correct Tier for your group. If you submit multiple applications to different Tiers, all of your applications will be rejected.

Assessment Criteria

Successful applicants will be expected to develop and deliver a strong visitor proposition, or unique selling point. This could be a seasonal proposition or a campaign to promote a particular theme or a unique collection of product experiences within the destination or sector, accompanied with an effective promotional plan that is able to demonstrate the following assessment criteria. Please also note weighting attached to each assessment criteria - this relates to how your application will be assessed:

Assessment Criteria	Assessment Weighting
1. Strategic Alignment and Collaboration	25%
<p>Visitor propositions must demonstrate strategic alignment to Scotland Outlook 2030 strategy: https://scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Scotland-Outlook-2030 setting out how their proposed activity will promote experiences that meet visitor needs and expectations, whilst ensuring sustainable recovery within the local community. Successful applications will meet the following Scotland Outlook 2030 priorities:</p> <p>Thriving Places - create & develop a sustainable destination; bringing community, industry and visitor needs and vision together.</p>	

- Demonstrate consultation with and support from the community for the marketing campaign, specifying how the project will benefit the community.
- Promoting messaging for visitors to support local businesses (shop local, buy local produce etc) is particularly encouraged to show the contribution to local community and the economy.

Memorable Experiences - provide authentic & memorable experiences.

- Demonstrate that the product and experiences being promoted are appropriate for recovery marketing activity and aligned to consumer insights.
- Emphasise the unique and compelling reasons to visit the destination.

Applications must also demonstrate collaboration and strategic alignment at a regional level as well as alignment with any regional plans or strategies where relevant.

2. Responsible Tourism Focus	25%
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Applicants must ensure that visitor propositions are reflective of the below principals of responsible tourism and demonstrate how their experiences will contribute towards creating a sustainable future for tourism.

- Listening to and working with communities, generating greater economic benefits for local people, and minimising negative environmental, economic and social impacts.
- Protecting our natural and cultural heritage and encouraging their responsible enjoyment.
- Providing more enjoyable experiences for visitors which will allow for more meaningful connections with local people.
- Ensuring Scotland is a place for everyone by providing equal access to all. This could include people with disabilities, families, or senior travellers.
- Providing visitor experiences that are culturally sensitive, engender respect between tourists and hosts, and build local pride.

For more information on VisitScotland's Responsible Tourism Priorities visit;

<https://www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/quality-customer-experience/responsible-tourism>.

3. Insight Driven	25%
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Applicants should ensure that visitor propositions are reflective of new and different consumer behaviours and expectations that have developed post-Covid. For more information on post-Covid Consumer Trends and how they can translate into visitor experiences visit www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/funding/destination-sector-marketing-fund.

4. Objectives & Measurement	15%
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Applicants should focus objectives on stimulating demand and promoting specific experiences as opposed to general awareness campaigns. They should also demonstrate SMART objectives for the campaign along with achievable and measurable targets, to properly evaluate success.

5. Viability	10%
Evidence that there will be sufficient resource to undertake all aspects of the project within your organisation.	

Supporting Evidence Required

All Applicants should submit the following supporting documentation:

- Copy of a bank statement – Applicants will be requested to provide a copy of a redacted bank statement to confirm Account Name, Account Number, Sort-Code and bank address.
- Audited Accounts for the year 2019/2020. For organisations unable to provide accounts for the 2019/2020 financial year please submit bank statement dated from 01 April 2021 accompanied by a cashflow document that demonstrates operational viability for the next 12 months. We may request this cashflow to be verified by an accountant or request additional financial information upon receipt of application to allow financial checks to be carried out.
- Copy of Articles of Association or Group Constitution.
- Local Authority Applicants please provide contact details for finance team in relevant section of application form.
- Completed Activity Plan (included in application form) that demonstrates clearly how awarded funds will be spent. Include detailed budget on how visitor propositions will be promoted through a range of activities, including paid media, PR, optimising and leveraging owned channels and amplifying reach through collaboration. **Generic awareness campaigns will not be considered.**
The recovery marketing campaign activity must be delivered in accordance with the relevant Scottish Government guidelines and be flexible and agile enough to respond to any changes in guidelines.

Demand is expected to be high and, given the available level of support, this will not allow every application to be fully supported. Please note that not all businesses who apply may be successful in receiving a grant award, and those who are successful may not receive the full amount requested.

Accessibility, Terms & Conditions and Freedom of Information

If you are successful, you must sign and return the grant award letter and accept the terms and conditions before the funds will be paid into the organisation's bank account. Successful applicants will be required to provide an initial report within 6 months of the grant award being made to assess the progress of the project. This will be followed by a full project and campaign evaluation report on completion of the project. If you receive grant funding from this Fund and it is subsequently determined that you have provided false or inaccurate information as part of your application, VisitScotland will seek to recover, with costs, all sums awarded to you from this Fund.

VisitScotland is subject to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and may be obliged to release information about your application or grant award in response to any requests received. Information on all grant awards will be published on VisitScotland.org and/or the UK subsidy control transparency database (if applicable).

If you require the forms to be made available to you in another format for accessibility reasons, please contact; Destination&SectorMarketingFund@visitscotland.com.

Data protection

We will use the data provided by you in the application form and supporting documentation to assess your application for grant funding, contact you regarding your application and for grant management purposes (for example, managing the fund beyond the grant award stage). Information provided by applicants as part of the process and/or the supporting documentation may be verified against other information sources held by relevant local authorities and/or other Scottish public sector bodies, industry representatives from the Scottish Tourism Alliance (who will form part of the decision and appeal panels), relevant local authorities, the Scottish Government, and/or other Scottish public sector bodies for verification purposes and reporting. If you want to find out more about what we do with your data, please see our Privacy Policy - <https://www.visitscotland.org/about-us/privacy-and-policies/privacy>.

Subsidy Control

Confirmation of subsidies received and Undertaking in Difficulty Status

This Fund forms part of the COVID-19 recovery programme announced by the Scottish Government at the end of March 2021. Any grant under this Fund will be made subject to the subsidy control rules. The subsidy is granted under Title XI, Article 3.2 of the TCA, to respond to a national or global economic emergency. The award will be made under similar terms to COVID-19 schemes in operation before the 1 January 2021 and additional information will be provided to successful applicants in the award letter and terms and conditions.

You may need to declare any amount received under this Fund to any other aid awarding body who requests information from you on how much aid you have received. You must retain the award letter for four years from the date of the letter and produce it on any request from the UK public authorities.

A subsidy may be granted to undertakings (SME undertaking (i.e. an undertaking with 50 or more employees and 10 million euros or more of annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet) / Large undertaking (i.e. an undertaking that has 250 or more employees and 50 million euros or more of annual turnover and/or 43 million euro annual balance sheet) that were not in difficulty, but that faced difficulties or entered in difficulty thereafter as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The subsidy is in addition to any aid that you may have received under the De Minimis regulation allowing aid of up to €200,000 to any one organisation over a three fiscal year period (i.e. your current fiscal year and previous two fiscal years). If you are a micro or small undertaking (i.e. an undertaking with less than 50 employees and less than €10m of annual turnover and/or balance sheet) you may be granted aid even if you would fall under the category of undertaking in financial difficulty on 31 December 2019, provided that you are not subject to collective insolvency procedure under national law and that you have not received rescue aid (which has not been repaid) or restructuring aid (and are still subject to a restricting plan).

Undertakings in Difficulty Assessment

In your application, if you are an SME or Large undertaking, as defined above, you will be asked to declare that on 31 December 2019, you did not meet any of the criteria to be considered an undertaking in difficulty.

‘undertaking in difficulty’ is defined for the purposes of this scheme as an undertaking in respect of which at least one of the following circumstances occurs:

(a) In the case of a limited liability company (other than an SME that has been in existence for less than three years or, for the purposes of eligibility for risk finance aid, an SME within 7 years from its first commercial sale that qualifies for risk finance investments following due diligence by the selected financial intermediary), where more than half of its subscribed share capital has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses. This is the case when deduction of accumulated losses from reserves (and all other elements generally considered as part of the own funds of the company) leads to a negative cumulative amount that exceeds half of the subscribed share capital.

or

(b) In the case of a company where at least some members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company (other than an SME that has been in existence for less than three years or, for the purposes of eligibility for risk finance aid, an SME within 7 years from its first commercial sale that qualifies for risk finance investments following due diligence by the selected financial intermediary), where more than half of its capital as shown in the company accounts has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses.

and

(c) Where the undertaking is subject to collective insolvency proceedings or fulfils the criteria under its domestic law for being placed in collective insolvency proceedings at the request of its creditors.

and

(d) Where the undertaking has received rescue aid and has not yet reimbursed the loan or terminated the guarantee or has received restructuring aid and is still subject to a restructuring plan.