

## COVID-19 Marine and Outdoor Tourism Restart Fund

### Guidance for applicants (\*\*Updated 29 January 2021 - change showing in red\*\*)

#### Background

In December 2020, the Scottish Government announced a range of support packages to help the tourism industry to survive the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This resulted in the creation of the COVID-19 Marine and Outdoor Tourism Restart Fund (the “Fund”). The Fund outlined in this document is intended to provide support to Marine and Outdoor Tourism Businesses who have been significantly affected by COVID-19 and are faced with seasonal re-commissioning and re-start costs ahead of the 2021 season.

Businesses can only be successful and receive a grant award from one of the funds announced by the Scottish Government on or since 15 December 2020 to help the tourism and events industries to survive the impacts of COVID-19, regardless of the body who is administering the fund. The tourism announcement was made by the Scottish Government on 21 December 2020. This does not mean that businesses cannot apply to multiple funds if they meet the relevant eligibility requirements. However, you must withdraw your application from all other funds and reject any other grant offers if you have accepted a grant award. After 31 March 2021, some applications may be chosen at random to be audited. Any applicants who have been found to have provided incorrect information or received multiple awards will be expected to return their awarded grant.

VisitScotland will be supported in this process by Sail Scotland and Wild Scotland.

#### The Fund

This Fund is aimed at responsible tourism operators who provide a sustainable outdoor related activity to visitors on land and in the marine environment. This will encompass a broad span of activity types from wildlife watching to charter, day boat trips, sailing holidays, bushcraft and survival, and activities such as canoeing and mountaineering. The Fund is intended to provide support to Marine and Outdoor Tourism Businesses who have been significantly affected by COVID-19 and are faced with seasonal re-commissioning and re-start costs ahead of the 2021 season.

Due to the complexity and breadth of businesses within the sector a two-strand approach to grant funding is necessary to meet the needs of the sector. Businesses may only apply to one strand. The two strands are:

- 1. Marine & Boating Tourism Operators.**
- 2. Outdoor Wildlife, Adventure & Activity Sector Tourism Businesses.**

## What is the value of this Fund?

The total value of this fund is £2,500,000. The Fund is being delivered by VisitScotland, together with Sail Scotland and Wild Scotland, on behalf of the Scottish Government. VisitScotland is the awarding body for this Fund.

## How much funding can successful applicants expect to receive?

Due to the limited amount of funding available, and in the interest of fairness, the final amount awarded to a successful applicant will be determined once all applications are received and vetted. We expect a range of award amounts to be awarded under this Fund, up to a maximum of £15,000 per company, and applications will be limited to one per company. We expect that this Fund may be oversubscribed - please note that any award amount indications set out in this document are for guidance only, are expressed as “up to” a certain amount, and are dependent on the number of successful applications to this Fund. We reserve the right to award an amount significantly lower than the indications provided in this document.

## Strand 1 - Marine & Boating Tourism Operators

### Eligible Business Types

This strand applies to businesses operating or intending to re-commission and operate a vessel for commercial tourism use or charter. The vessel will need to be prepared and equipped to conform with the MCA/Council certification or the Boat Safety Scheme for inland waters. In addition, this strand will support the recommissioning of seasonal visitor moorings and visitor pontoons. Businesses in this sector include:

- **Bareboat Charter:** Customer hires a vessel and undertakes a fully self-guided trip.
- **Skippered charter or sail/cruise holidays:**
  - Customer engages the services of a skipper to guide and provide sailing expertise during the trip with customer and skipper sharing sailing and domestic duties.
  - Customer engages skipper and host to provide a fully serviced sailing holiday aboard a larger sailing or motor vessel.
  - Customer engages services of a skipper to undertake a specific syllabus within RYA qualifications structure.
- **Day boat trips:**
  - Skippered short-day trip voyages undertaken to visit destinations, wildlife watching, diving and snorkelling operated from the vessel.
- **Visitor moorings and pontoons:**
  - Visitor moorings and visitor pontoons established for daytime or overnight leisure use.

This scheme **does not** apply to:

- Workboats.
- Pilot boats.
- Supply or safety boats.
- Survey Boats.
- Water Taxi or Ferry.
- Moored Hotel or House Boat.
- Moorings and pontoons let for residential, seasonally let or longer stays.

### Eligibility Criteria – Strand 1

Organisations seeking to apply for the support must be able to meet and evidence the following eligibility criteria:

1. Must meet one of the business types defined in the eligible business types details above;
2. Must be able to provide a valid Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) letter of authority or certificate that is appropriate to the waters and carrying capacities within which they operate; or valid Boat Safety Scheme certificate, Local Authority Licence or MCA certification by approved certifying authority on behalf of MCA (MECAL, RINA, ABYA etc). Said document(s) must show validity at a date between 1st October 2019 to date of application to this Fund.
3. For owned Vessels – provide a Vessel ownership registration document showing per vessel at 64/64 or bill of sale in name of applicant company;
4. Confirmation that 75% of your annual turnover can be accounted for from Marine and Boating tourism activities and this being undertaken and delivered within Scotland and Scottish waters;
5. Must have a current valid annual insurance document to cover third party liability and/or employee liability insurance;
6. Must intend to operate your business in 2021;
7. Your business must not have been in financial difficulty as at 31 December 2019 if you are a SME or Large organisation – please see the Subsidy Control section in the Guidance for more information.

### Additional Information/Supporting Documentation – Strand 1 (Marine sector)

- Must be able to provide a valid Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) letter of authority or certificate that is appropriate to the waters and carrying capacities within which they operate; or valid Boat Safety Scheme certificate, Local Authority Licence or MCA certification by approved certifying authority on behalf of MCA (MECAL, RINA, ABYA etc). Said document(s) must show validity at a date between 1st October 2019 to date of application to this Fund.
- Valid annual insurance document to cover third party liability and/or employee liability insurance for the year ending in 2020/21 tax year;

- Vessel ownership registration document showing per vessel at 64/64 or bill of sale in name of applicant company (not required for Managed Vessels).
- Operators providing visitor moorings and visitor pontoons must provide current marketing or promotional materials that clearly state the number of visitor moorings or pontoons.
- Bank statement for December 2020.
- Annual Accounts for 2019/20 year which have been audited/verified by an accountant or copy of filed tax return for the 2019/20 year. Note: this must clearly state the turnover for the business.

## Assessment Process – Strand 1

All applications will be assessed against the above criteria. In order for applications to be successful, businesses need to meet **all** of the criteria.

The approach VisitScotland/Sail Scotland will take to calculate the grant award is based around industry researched (**Standard**) recommissioning costs set against the number and size of vessels managed by an operator or the number of visitor moorings and visitor pontoons managed by a shore-based operator. This **Standard** has been gathered from an industry survey and held confidentially by Sail Scotland.

If your business meets **all** of the required criteria, we will assess your business based on the size/number of vessels/pontoons and whether the vessels are commercially-Owned vessels and privately-owned Managed Vessels (see below) and an award will be calculated subject to the intervention rates as detailed below.

**The Standard** has been identified as follows:

### Standard re-commissioning costs by size of Vessel (see definitions below)

- 20' - 35' – £3,000
- 36' - 39' – £7,000
- 40' - 49' – £10,000
- 50'+ – £15,000

### Standard re-commissioning costs of Moorings and Pontoons (see definitions below)

- Visitor Mooring – £350 by number of pontoons
- Visitor Pontoon – £300 by number of berths

## Ownership – Owned and Managed Vessels

Within the marine sector charter vessels can be wholly owned by the operating business (**Owned**) or as in many cases are not owned by the operating business but are managed on behalf of a private owner. Such vessels are made available by the private owner for periods of the year to undertake commercial chartering services. This is referred to as a managed/private owner vessel (**Managed**).

An award will be made subject to a percentage rate (as set out below) being applied across the total number of Vessels with any total payment up to and capped at **£15,000 per business**.

- Owned Vessels up to 100% of the Standard
- Managed vessels up to 25% of the Standard

Visitor Moorings must be **wholly owned and managed** by the operators with no third-party interest. Applicants will be asked to record the number of seasonal Visitor Moorings under their management.

Visitor Pontoons must be **wholly owned and managed** by the operators with no third-party interest. Applicants will be asked to record the number of seasonal Visitor Pontoons under their management.

Moorings and pontoons let on longer term or seasonal resident terms are not eligible.

Moorings and pontoons grant payments will be made subject to a percentage rate (as set out below) being applied across the total number of Visitor Moorings / Visitor Pontoons up to and capped at **£7,500 per business**.

- Visitor Moorings up to 100% of the Standard
- Visitor Pontoons up to 50% of the Standard

## Marine Sector - Definitions

### Vessels:

- Measurements of length overall (LOA) excludes bowsprits.
- Vessel has an internal fixed engine or permanently fixed outboard engine.

### Visitor Moorings/Pontoons:

- A visitor pontoon is classed as a single finger or units of 45' on any breakwater/long pontoon.
- Applicants will complete a declaration that will record the number of dedicated visitor moorings and visitor pontoons under their management normally available for at least six months of the year.

## Strand 2 - Wildlife, Adventure & Activity Sector Tourism Businesses

### Eligible Business Types

On-land and non-motorised water activities operators, activity providers and sole traders who deliver one of the following guided activities for tourism in Scotland:

- **Wildlife Watching and Nature Based Activity**
  - Guided nature and wildlife watching experiences and holidays

- **Walking and Mountaineering**
  - Guided short and long-distance rural walking day trips or holidays using qualified guides
  - Guided mountaineering / outdoor climbing guided day trips or holiday using qualified guides
- **Cycling and mountain biking**
  - Guided short and long-distance **rural** mountain bike and cycling trips/experiences and holidays including e-bikes using qualified guides.
- **Pony trekking**
  - Guided pony treks and holidays as a tourism activity.
- **Non-motorised Guided Water & Coastal Activities**
  - Guided kayaking/ sea kayaking/ canoeing
  - Guided stand-up paddleboarding
  - Guided canyoning/ gorge walking
  - Guided river tubing
  - Guided coasteering
  - Guided wild swimming
  - Guided snorkelling and diving
  - Guided white water rafting
  - Guided kite surfing /surfing
  - Guided land yachting
  - Guided dinghy sailing and windsurfing holidays and experiences
- **Other Outdoor Activities**

Operators who deliver one or more of the following **guided** outdoor activities for tourism in Scotland:

  - Guided 4x4 off-road driving and quad biking activities
  - Guided Bushcraft & Survival
  - Guided Caving
  - Guided Tree Climbing
  - Bungee Jumping
  - Zip Wire
  - Guided Snowsports Experiences and activities
  - Guided rural running/trail running holidays

This strand **does not** apply to:

- Retail outlets
- Equipment/hire rental
- Outdoor education centres

- Self Employed/freelance guides who work for a number of businesses
- Riding schools for lessons
- Field/Country Sports
- Domestic and Farm Animal/agri-tourism experiences
- Urban walking tours
- Urban cycle tours
- Indoor and outdoor sports activities, e.g. football, golf, tennis, netball etc.
- Tour operators that do not directly deliver activities
- Outdoor/ indoor activity/ sports clubs, leisure and training centres
- Dry ski slopes
- Karting centres

## **Eligibility Criteria – Strand 2**

Organisations seeking to apply for the support must be able to meet and evidence the following eligibility criteria:

1. Must meet one of the business types defined in the eligible business types details above;
2. Must have a turnover of over £10,000;
3. Confirmation that 75% of your annual turnover can be accounted for from Outdoor Wildlife, Adventure and Activity Sector tourism activities and this being undertaken and delivered within Scotland and Scottish waters;
4. Must have a current valid annual insurance document to cover third party liability and/or employee liability insurance;
5. Must intend to operate your business in 2021;
6. Your business must not have been in financial difficulty as at 31 December 2019 if you are a SME or Large organisation – please see the Subsidy Control section in the Guidance for more information.

## **Additional Information/Supporting Documentation – Strand 2 (Outdoor sector)**

- Summary of business activity including the main outdoor tourism activities delivered
- Annual Accounts for 2019/20 year which have been audited/verified by an accountant or copy of filed tax return for the 2019/20 year. Note: this must clearly state the turnover for the business.
- Current valid annual insurance document to cover third party liability and/or employee liability insurance
- Bank statement for December 2020

## Assessment Process – Strand 2

All applications will be assessed against the above criteria. For applications to be approved, the business needs to meet **all** of the criteria.

The grant award for the Wildlife, Adventure and Activity Tourism sector will be based on turnover. There are 4 grant levels and final awards will be determined on applications received:

- Businesses with a Turnover between £10,001 and £85,000 – Grant up to £3,000
- Businesses with a Turnover between £85,001 and £250,000 – Grant up to £5,000
- Businesses with a Turnover between £250,001 and £450,001 – Grant up to £10,000
- Businesses with a Turnover in excess of £450,001 – Grant up to £15,000.

## Application Process and Timelines – for both strands of the Fund

The Fund is being launched on a phased approach, with the guidance document available from 27 January 2021. **The Fund will open for applications at midday on 2 February 2021**, and applications should be completed on <https://www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/funding/marine-outdoor-restart-fund/apply>. Any applications received before or after this period will be automatically rejected.

Due to the limited amount of funding available, and in the interest of fairness, the final amount awarded to a successful applicant will be determined once all applications are received and vetted.

Application forms will be reviewed by VisitScotland. Information provided by applicants as part of the application process and/or the supporting documentation will be verified against other information sources held by the relevant local authorities and/or other Scottish public sector bodies.

We expect that this Fund may be oversubscribed - please note that any award amount indications set out in this document are for guidance only, are expressed as “up to” a certain amount, and are dependent on the number of successful applications to this Fund. We reserve the right to award an amount significantly lower than the indications provided in this document.

The Fund will close for applications at **5pm on 9 February 2021**.

If your application is rejected, you can appeal this decision. Any appeals should be submitted in writing to [Marine&OutdoorFundAppeals@visitscotland.com](mailto:Marine&OutdoorFundAppeals@visitscotland.com) together with a justification for the appeal. Appeals will be reviewed by VisitScotland and a representative from Sail Scotland or Wild Scotland as applicable.

## Accessibility, Terms and 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 a report within 6 months of the grant award being made to assess the value of the grant and the impact of the funding on their organisation. 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 EOI or 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 in the UK subsidy control transparency database and will be made available to other Scottish public sector bodies.

If you require forms to be made available to you in another format for accessibility reasons, please contact [Marine&OutdoorFundEnquiries@visitscotland.com](mailto:Marine&OutdoorFundEnquiries@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 and contact you regarding your application. Your data will be shared with the Scottish Government, relevant local authorities and/or other Scottish public sector bodies for verification and reporting purposes and with Chiene + Tait Chartered Accountants (an accountancy firm procured by VisitScotland) to complete finance checks and in case of appeals, with Sail Scotland or Wild Scotland (depending on the strand) who will form part of the appeals panel. If you want to find out more about what we do with your data, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

## What information needs to be provided in the full application?

Please note the online form will not be available until midday on 2 February 2021. Additional supporting evidence will be required to be submitted to complete your application. Once you start the application form, you will not be able to save it and return to it later. Please have all information and supporting documentation ready so you can complete and submit the form in one sitting.

To give businesses time to prepare for the Fund opening, a list of the information and supporting documentation you will be required to provide in the application form is set out below:

- Name of applicant organisation
- Trading name if different
- Address (inc. postcode)
- Local authority
- One of the following:
  - National VAT Number
  - Company Registration Number
  - Charity Registration Number
  - HMRC Unique Tax Reference Number
- Size of organisation
- NACE Code

- Membership of a sector body and/or national governing body and professional qualifications relating to your activity
- Name of person completing application form
- Position within organisation
- Email address
- Mobile contact number
- Organisation website/web presence
- Confirmation that you meet the eligibility criteria set out earlier in this guidance document
- Name of bank
- Name on bank account
- Sort Code
- Account Number
- Bank Statement for December 2020
- Confirmation of any aid already approved/received under the Temporary Framework in 2020.
- Confirmation of whether you intend to apply for any of the other COVID-19 funding support announced by the Scottish Government since 21 December 2020
- Current valid annual insurance document to cover third party liability and/or employee liability insurance
- Annual Accounts for 2019/20 year which have been audited/verified by an accountant or copy of filed tax return for the 2019/20 year. Note: this must clearly state the turnover for the business.

### **Complete the digital forms**

Please ensure that you have all information and supporting documentation ready so you can complete and submit the relevant form in one sitting as, once you start to complete either form, you will be unable to save it and return to it later. Supporting documentation must be submitted in pdf, word, excel, png or jpeg formats. The maximum file size for each document is 10MB.

All the mandatory fields within the form must be completed before the form can be submitted. Should you miss any mandatory information or enter any information incorrectly, you will not be able to submit the form. The field(s) requiring attention will be highlighted and you will be required to complete / correct these before you are able to submit. You will also be required to upload your supporting documentation to the form again.

Supported browsers for these forms are up to date versions of Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Edge, and Internet Explorer 11. We cannot guarantee successful operation / submission on older browser versions. You may also find it easier to complete from a device with a larger screen, such as a desktop computer or laptop, rather than a mobile device. If you still have issues or require a different format for accessibility reasons, please contact [Marine&OutdoorFundEnquiries@visitscotland.com](mailto:Marine&OutdoorFundEnquiries@visitscotland.com)

## Subsidy Control

### Confirmation of subsidies received and Undertaking in Difficulty Status

Following the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020, a new Subsidy Control regime came into effect in the UK at 11pm on 31 December. The Temporary Framework under which COVID-19 related funding was issued in 2020 no longer applies. VisitScotland is currently awaiting guidance from the Scottish Government as to the basis under which the funding under this Fund will be awarded. It is intended that 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.

In your application you are required to declare any aid already approved/received under the Temporary Framework in 2020.

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 or the European Commission.

A subsidy may be granted to undertakings (SME / Large undertakings) 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 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).

- A micro or small organisation is an undertaking that has less than 50 employees and less than 10 million euros of annual turnover and/or balance sheet.
- A SME organisation is an undertaking that has 50 or more employees and 10 million euros or more of annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet.
- A large organisation is 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.

## Undertakings in Difficulty Assessment

In your application 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.