

# COVID-19 Marine and Outdoor Tourism Restart Fund – Round Two

## Guidance for applicants

### Background

On 21 December 2020, the Scottish Government announced a funding package to help businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector to survive the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

This resulted in the creation of the Marine and Outdoor Tourism Restart Fund (the ‘Fund’) to specifically support Scottish based businesses in marine and outdoor tourism that were facing hardship due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fund would help keep them in business while restrictions on travel were in place, and supporting them to prepare for recommencing operations when restrictions were lifted.

Round One of the Fund was open for applications between 2 February – 9 February 2021 to operators in Scotland whose turnover in 2019/20 from tourism activity was more than 75% of their total turnover.

Following feedback from industry and recognising a funding gap for marine and outdoor operators, Round Two has been created to support marine and outdoor tourism operators in Scotland who meet the new eligibility criteria set out in this guidance document.

If you applied for and were successful from Round One of this Fund, you will **not** be eligible for additional funding under Round Two.

Businesses who applied to Round One but were rejected because they did not meet the eligibility criteria for Round One can apply for Round Two if they meet the eligibility criteria set out in this guidance. These businesses will need to submit a new application to be considered for Round Two.

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 industry 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 | What is the purpose of this Fund?**

This Fund is aimed at responsible tourism operators in Scotland who provide a sustainable outdoor related activity to visitors on land, in the air 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, mountaineering, hot air ballooning and paragliding.

The Fund is intended to provide support to marine and outdoor tourism businesses who have been significantly affected by COVID-19. Round Two is to specifically support Scottish based businesses in the marine and outdoor tourism sector that have faced hardship due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to help keep them in business as they recommence operations.

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 Round Two of this Fund?**

The total budget for Round Two is £800,000. The Fund is being delivered by VisitScotland, with development input from Sail Scotland and Wild Scotland, on behalf of the Scottish Government. VisitScotland is the awarding body for this Fund.

## **What is the process and timeline for Round Two of the Fund?**

1. Businesses which meet all the eligibility criteria will be able to submit an application form from midday on 8 September 2021 to 5pm on 29 September 2021 via the form available on <https://www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/funding/marine-outdoor-restart-fund>
2. Any applications received after this period will not be considered. Applications will not be assessed on a first come, first served basis.
3. Following the assessment of all applications, a panel consisting of VisitScotland staff will make the final decisions on the funding to be awarded.
4. 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 staff not involved in the original assessment and a representative from Sail Scotland or Wild Scotland as applicable.

## Strand one - 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.

The following business / organisation types are **not eligible** to apply to this Fund:

- 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.
- Marine and boating tourism operators who were successful from Round One of the Fund.

## Eligibility criteria – Strand one (Marine sector)

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

1. Must meet one of the business types defined in the eligible business types detailed in this document.
2. Confirm that the business operates in Scotland and had a place of business in Scotland (registered business address or business premises)
3. 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 1 October 2019 to date of application to this Fund.
4. For owned Vessels – provide a Vessel ownership registration document showing per vessel at 64/64 or bill of sale in name of applicant company
5. Confirmation that a minimum of 40% of annual turnover can be accounted for from Marine and Boating tourism activities and these activities are undertaken in Scotland
6. Must be operating or 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 one (marine sector)

As part of the application, businesses will be asked to provide the following evidence:

- 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 1 October 2019 to date of application to this Fund.
- 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.
- Published annual accounts filed in the 2019/20 year (which represent pre-COVID-19 activity) 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. Those businesses with a year end after 31 December 2019 can submit the previous year if this is their latest published accounts. If you are a newer business and have not yet filed a set of annual accounts, you may provide your management accounts to 31 March 2020 (as verified by an accountant).
- Copy of current annual insurance document to cover third party liability and / or commercial liability insurance and/or employers' liability insurance or other suitable evidence of business trading.

## Assessment process – Strand one

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 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 (more detail in this document) 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 (within this section) 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 two – Wildlife, Adventure & Activity Sector Tourism Businesses**

### **Eligible business types**

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

- **Guided / Supported Wildlife Watching and Nature Based Activity**
  - Nature and wildlife watching experiences and holidays
- **Guided / Supported Walking and Mountaineering**
  - Short and long-distance rural walking day trips or holidays using qualified guides
  - Mountaineering / outdoor climbing guided day trips or holiday using qualified guides
- **Guided / Supported Cycling and Mountain Biking**
  - Short and long-distance rural mountain bike and cycling trips/experiences and holidays including e-bikes using qualified guides.
- **Guided / Supported Pony trekking**
  - Pony treks and holidays as a tourism activity.

- **Non-motorised Guided / Supported Water & Coastal Activities**

- Kayaking / sea kayaking / canoeing
- Stand-up paddle boarding
- Canyoning / gorge walking
- River tubing
- Coasteering
- Wild swimming
- Snorkelling and diving
- White water rafting
- Kite surfing / surfing
- Land yachting
- Dinghy sailing and windsurfing holidays and experiences

- **Other Outdoor Activities**

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

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

- **Aerial / Airborne Activities**

Operators who deliver one or more of the following guided or supported aerial/airborne activities:

- Paragliding / Hang Gliding
- Hot Air Ballooning
- Gliding
- Parachuting / Skydiving

- The following business / organisation types are **not eligible** to apply to this Fund:

- 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
- Light aircraft and microlight flight training schools
- Wildlife, Adventure & Activity Sector Tourism businesses who were successful under Round One of this Fund.

## Eligibility criteria – Strand two (Outdoor Sector)

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

1. Must meet one of the business types defined in the eligible business types section;
2. Must have a turnover of over £10,000;
3. Confirm that the business operates in Scotland and has a place of business in Scotland (registered business address or business premises)
4. Confirmation that a minimum of 40% of annual turnover can be accounted for from Outdoor, Wildlife, Adventure sector tourism activities and these activities are undertaken in Scotland
5. Must be operating or 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 two (Outdoor sector)

As part of the application, businesses will be asked to provide the following evidence:

- Summary of business activity including the main outdoor tourism activities delivered
- Published annual accounts filed in the 2019/20 year (which represent pre-COVID-19 activity) 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. Those businesses with a year end after 31 December 2019 can submit the previous year if this is their latest published accounts. If you are a newer business and have not yet filed a set of annual accounts, you may provide your management accounts to 31 March 2020 (as verified by an accountant).
- Bank statement for December 2020
- Copy of current annual insurance document to cover third party liability and / or commercial liability insurance and / or employers' liability insurance or other suitable evidence of business trading.

## Assessment process – Strand two (Outdoor sector)

All applications for Strand two will be assessed against the criteria within this document. 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 as evidenced in the supporting documentation requested within this document. There are four 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

## How much can organisations expect to receive under Round two of this Fund?

The Scottish Government has allocated a set amount for this Fund and it is anticipated that demand will be high across the industry. In determining the grant support payable to each eligible applicant, regard will be given to the criteria within this document and the supporting information provided.

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 that a range of awards (as detailed more specifically under each strand) will be made under this Fund, up to a maximum of £15,000 per company and will be limited to one application per company.

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.

We expect this Fund to be oversubscribed but, in the event there are unallocated funds within the Fund budget once all applications have been received and assessed, this will be awarded pro rata across all successful applicants. Awards granted under Round Two will not be more than the amount awarded to successful businesses under Round One.

## 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 six 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 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 in the UK subsidy control transparency database (as required) 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 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?

In addition to the eligibility criteria, businesses will be asked to provide the following additional information supporting documentation in their application:

- Name of applicant organisation
- Trading name if different
- Address in Scotland (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
- Membership of a sector body and / or national governing body and professional qualifications relating to your activity
- Confirmation of any aid already approved / received under the Temporary Framework in 2020.
- Confirmation of whether you intend to apply, have applied for, or have received any of the other COVID-19 funding support announced by the Scottish Government since 15 December 2020
- 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

## Completing 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 us at [Marine&OutdoorFundEnquiries@visitscotland.com](mailto:Marine&OutdoorFundEnquiries@visitscotland.com)

## 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 Trade and Cooperation Agreement (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 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.