

Frequently Asked Questions

Dublin's Surprising Stories – A Grants Scheme for Improving Interpretation and the Visitor Experience at Operating Visitor Attractions

1. **What funding is available through the Dublin's Surprising Stories Grant's Scheme?** Funding is available to develop and enhance the interpretation and visitor experience at operating visitor attractions in Dublin, in line with the Dublin's Surprising Stories Toolkit <http://www.failteireland.ie> and guidelines.
2. **What project elements are eligible for funding?** Only eligible capital expenditure elements of projects can be grant-aided under this scheme. Eligible costs associated with the upgrade of the interpretation at a visitor attraction, may include, but are not limited to, provision of interpretation media (e.g. panels, audio guides, interactive technology etc. Please see the Scheme Guidelines for more detailed information. Applicants should note that the emphasis is on world-class interpretation, innovative visitor engagement and excellent visitor management.
3. **What do you mean by "Interpretation"?** Interpretation is simply a communication process that translates factual information into a form that's more understandable, meaningful and engaging. It helps develop a story into an experience. Interpretation should be focused on the visitor and rooted in the authentic first-hand experience of a place. It creates powerful encounters and leaves memories that last a lifetime. For many people, the best interpretation is a friendly, well-trained and knowledgeable guide but interpretation can use many other media – print, panels, audio, video, technology etc. See our Dublin's Surprising Stories Toolkit for lots more information on how to plan and use interpretation effectively.
4. **What's the total budget available for this Scheme?** €1 million in total is being made available for the Scheme
5. **What are the opening and closing dates?** Dublin's Surprising Stories will open on Wednesday 3rd October 2018 and will close at 12:00 noon, on November 15th 2018.
6. **Who can apply for funding?**
 - a. Private sector: companies and other legal entities and individuals
 - b. Voluntary Organisations: not-for-profit bodies, including companies limited by guarantee.
 - c. Public sector: semi-state organisations and local authorities (with the exception of those semi-state bodies that are in Strategic Partnership agreements with Fáilte Ireland)

Note: Fáilte Ireland Strategic Partners including Coillte, Office of Public Works (OPW), National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Waterways Ireland are not eligible to apply under this scheme.

7. **What are the maximum and minimum grant amounts under the Scheme?** Minimum grant amount available is €50,000. The maximum grant amount available is €200,000.

8. **What are the grant aid rates?** The maximum grant rate is 75% of eligible capital expenditure. Note that the grant rate offered may be less than what is requested by the applicant, and is at the full discretion of Fáilte Ireland.
9. **Is there a minimum or maximum visitor number threshold?** The project must have a minimum of 25,000 visitors or maximum of 600,000 visitors per annum with 20% overseas (clearly demonstrated in the application).
10. **Do I need to have match funding?** Yes – applicants must be able to provide at least 25% of the eligible capital cost. Match funding must be fully in place prior to full approval of the project for grant assistance. You must provide evidence of match funding with your application. Note that in kind match funding is not acceptable under this Scheme.
11. **If I have received funding under previous Fáilte Ireland capital grants schemes, can I apply for funding under this programme?** Yes – with the exception of those projects who have received a “Stage 1 Pass” under the Grants Scheme for Large Tourism Projects, 2016 – 2020. Note: the Dublin’s Surprising Stories Grants Scheme is operating under the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) rules and the De Minimis Regulation. There is a ceiling of €200,000 for all De Minimis aid, regardless of the source, given to any one project (including groups) over a 3 year period. Grants under this Scheme are made on the understanding that the grant combined with any other De Minimis aid (from a public source) received in the last 3 years does not exceed the ceiling of €200,000 for all De Minimis aid.
12. **How will I know if the grant I previously received is De Minimis?** If an applicant is unsure whether they have previously received any De Minimis funding they should check the letter received when the other funding was awarded as all funding bodies are required to highlight this. Please note that in order for Fáilte Ireland to maintain De Minimis records; all applicants must complete a De Minimis declaration which is included within the Application Form.
13. **Can funding be awarded in advance or up front?** No – claims should be made following completion of the project. Only expenditure incurred after the grant is approved can be reimbursed. Funding cannot be awarded retrospectively.
14. **What do I do if my project requires planning permission?** It is not necessary at the time of application to have planning approval in place. As part of the application process however, you will be asked if planning permission or other statutory consents are required for your project and if they have been granted. If your project is then approved in principle for funding, you will need to confirm as to whether planning permission and relevant environmental assessments are required or not. Planning permission does not have to be in place for a Letter of Offer to be issued. A planning application can be made after your project has received confirmation of funding.
15. **How do I apply?** Any interested applicants can submit an Expression of Interest containing an outline of their proposal via the website, www.failteireland.ie/Dublinssurprisingstories. This will be reviewed by the Dublin team. If your proposal passes the initial review you will be invited to formally

apply. The main application must be made online through Fáilte Ireland's Trade Portal.

16. **Where do I find the application form on the website?** The online application forms are available through the Failte Ireland Trade Portal at the following link: <https://tradeportal.failteireland.ie>. The form will only be available to those applicants that have been formally invited to submit an online application.
17. **I received an invitation to apply but I am having problems with the Application Form, is there help available?** Both the Toolkit and the Scheme Guidelines contain some advice on completing the Application Form. For any technical queries in relation to the Form, please call our Customer Service Team on 1800 242473.
18. **How long will it take for my application to be evaluated and approved?** The length of the evaluation process will be determined by the volume of applications received. The process is a competitive one and all applications are will be fully appraised by Failte Ireland. It is envisaged that the evaluation and approval process will take approximately 4 months from the date the Scheme closes.
19. **What documents are required to be submitted at the time of application?**
Two documents are mandatory:
 - You must provide evidence that you have a right to undertake the project at the site.
 - Letter from bank, accountant or registered auditor confirming available match funds.
20. **Will there be further calls for applications?** Failte Ireland's Tourism Investment Strategy envisages a suite of capital funding programmes over the period 2016-2022. There will be further opportunities to apply for funding, although such further calls for proposals are not scheduled to occur until 2019 or later and are dependent on budget availability. However, the criteria and minimum eligibility requirements for the future Large Tourism Projects have not yet been finalised and may be limited to particular projects.
21. **Where can I get a printed version of the Guidelines?** The Guidelines are available for download only, at the following link: www.failteireland.ie/dublinssurprisingstories
22. **Who can I contact to discuss my proposal?** Please email dublinssurprisingstories@failteireland.ie and a member of the Dublin team will get back in touch with you.
23. **What about GDPR?** The new EU General Data Protection Regulations relating to the protection of personal data are in effect from 25th May 2018. Before completing the application form on the Fáilte Ireland Trade Portal, applicants will be asked to sign up to Fáilte Ireland Privacy Policy which gives Fáilte Ireland the right to communicate with applicants and retain appropriate data.