

Frequently Asked Questions

New Horizons on the Wild Atlantic Way 2018 A Grants Scheme to Develop and Improve Visitor Experiences at New and Operating Visitor Attractions in Skellig Coast, Co. Kerry and The Connemara Coast & Aran Islands, Co. Galway

ELIGIBILITY AND FUNDING

- **What funding is available under the Scheme?**

Funding is available to develop and enhance the visitor experience at new and operating attractions.

- **What is the total budget available for this Scheme?**

Approximately €1 million in total is available for the Scheme.

- **Where must the project be located?**

The project must be located within the Wild Atlantic Way brand area, specifically within Skellig Coast and/or the Connemara Coast & Aran Islands as defined in the Visitor Experience Development Plans for those areas. Details of the geographical boundaries for these areas are identified in the relevant maps which can be found on www.Faillteireland.ie/Wild-Atlantic-Way/New-Horizons-Grants-Scheme

- **Will there be more grants schemes for those located outside of these areas?**

Fáilte 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. It is envisaged that future grant schemes for the Wild Atlantic Way will be open to areas which have undergone the process of developing a Visitor Experience Development Plan.

- **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 development and/or upgrade of the visitor experience at an attraction may include provision of interpretation media (e.g. panels, audio guides, interactive technology, installation and associated building costs). As facilities (e.g. toilets, parking, signage etc) are a driver of overall customer satisfaction and have potential to increase the capacity of the attraction, they are eligible for funding. However applicants should note that the emphasis is on world-class interpretation, innovative visitor engagement and excellent visitor management.

○ **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. Storytelling interpretation focuses on the visitor and is 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 Storytelling Toolkits on www.Failteireland.ie for more information on how to plan and use interpretation effectively.

○ **Who can apply for funding?**

The following sectors can apply under the scheme:

- Private Sector: companies and other legal entities and individuals
- Voluntary Organisations: not-for-profit bodies, including charities, trusts and companies limited by guarantee
- Public Sector bodies: semi-state organisations and local authorities

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.

○ **Is this scheme open to activity providers?**

No, this scheme is only open to new and operating visitor attractions. A funding scheme for activity providers is also being developed by Fáilte Ireland.

For further information, please contact Mary Stack, Activities Team, mary.stack@Failteireland.ie

○ **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 finding with your application. Note that in-kind match funding is not acceptable under this Scheme.

Note: Match funding cannot take the form of state aid (e.g Leader funding) as state aid rules apply.

○ **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 New Horizons 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.

- **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.

Note: 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.

- **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.

- **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 issue. A planning application can be made after your project has received confirmation of funding.

PROCESS

- **How do I apply?**

Any interested applicants can submit an Expression of Interest containing an outline of their proposal via www.Failteireland.ie/New-Horizons-Grants-Scheme. This will be reviewed by the local Wild Atlantic Way 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.

It is important to read the Guidelines in detail, particularly Section 6 about the application process. A key element of the application is the identification of gaps in your current/proposed offering and this will form the basis of your proposal.

- **Who can I contact to discuss my proposal?**

Please email new.horizons@Fáilteireland.ie and a member of the Wild Atlantic Way team will get back in touch with you.

○ **Where do I find the application form on the website?**

The online application forms are available through the Fáilte Ireland Trade Portal at the following link: <https://tradeportal.Fáilteireland.ie/>. The form will only be available to those applicants that have been formally invited to submit an online application.

○ **I received an invitation to apply but I am having problems with the Application Form. Is there help available?**

The Scheme Guidelines contains 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.

○ **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 Fáilte Ireland. It is envisaged that the evaluation and approval process will take a minimum of 3 months from the date the Scheme closes.

○ **What documents are required to be submitted at the time of application?**

Two documents are mandatory:

1. You must provide evidence that you have a right to undertake the project at the site.
2. Letter from bank, accountant or registered auditor confirming available match funds.

○ **Where can I get a printed version of the Guidelines?**

The Guidelines are available for download only, at the following link: www.Fáilteireland.ie/Wild-Atlantic-Way/New-Horizons-Grants-Scheme

○ **What are the opening and closing dates of the Scheme?**

Please refer to the website for timelines: www.Fáilteireland.ie/Wild-Atlantic-Way/New-Horizons-Grants-Scheme

○ **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.

LEGAL

- **Who is the granting authority and what is the legal basis for the Scheme?**
Fáilte Ireland is the granting authority. The legal basis of the scheme is the National Tourism Development Authority Act, 2003.
- **What is the lifetime of the Scheme?**
It is envisaged that all projects will be completed by the end of 2019 and all grant claims completed by the 31st December 2020.