

EU Just Transition Fund Regenerative Tourism & Placemaking Scheme for Ireland's Midlands 2023-2026



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What is the EU Just Transition Fund?

- The European Union's Just Transition Fund (EU JTF) is a fund created under the 2021-2027 programming round. It operates under Regulation (EU) 2021/1056 within the framework of the EU Cohesion policy.
- The Fund's single specific objective is to support the regions and communities in Europe that are most negatively affected by the transition to climate neutrality, ensuring that no one is left behind.
- In Ireland's case, the territory supported by the Fund will focus on the regions where there have been **direct impacts from the move away from peat** production and electricity generation from peat.
- Ireland will receive up to €84.5 million from the EU Just Transition Fund over the period to 2027. With the Government of Ireland's match funding using Exchequer resources, **up to €169 million** will be available.
- **€68 million** awarded to Fáilte Ireland to deliver a **Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme**



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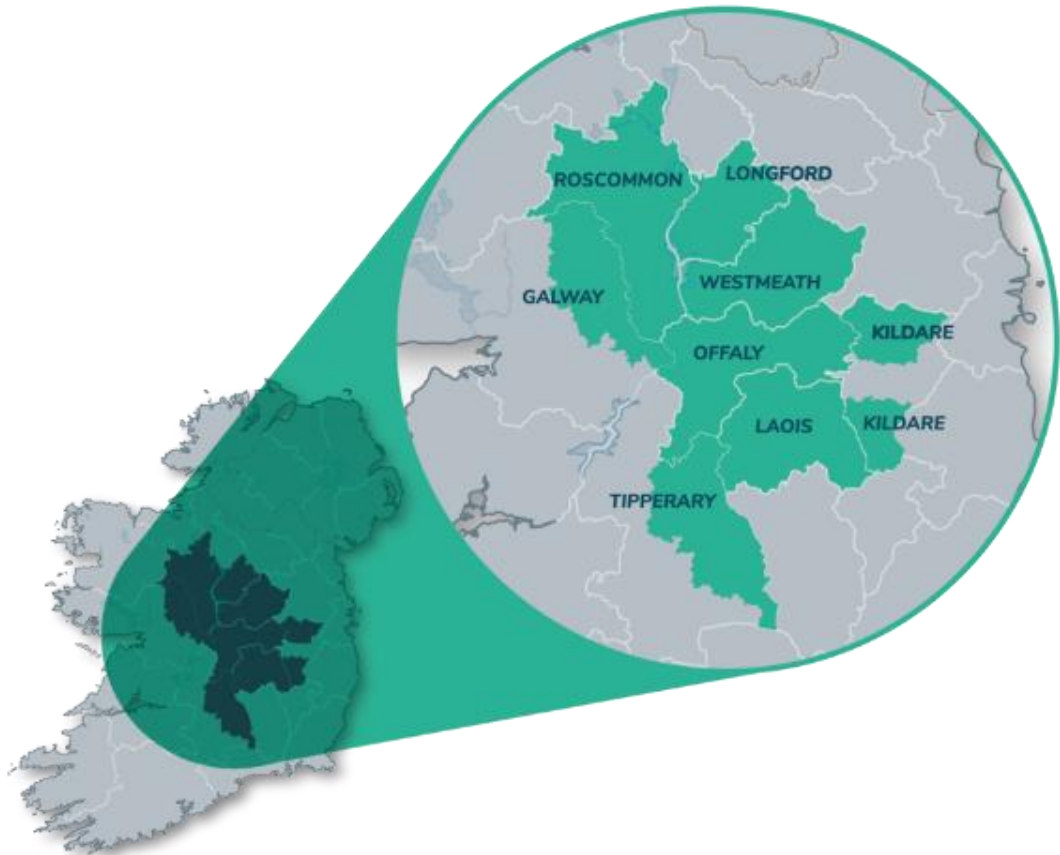


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EU JTF Territory



County	MD covered
Laois	All
Westmeath	All
Offaly	All
Longford	All
Roscommon	All
Galway	G2 Ballinasloe
Tipperary	T2 Carrick on Suir T5 Thurles
Kildare	K1 Athy K4 Clane - Maynooth



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Breakdown of Approved Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme



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EU Just Transition Fund Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme					
EUJTF Action 2.3 <i>Network of Trails</i>	EUJTF Action 1.1 <i>Economic Diversification</i>				
A. Trail Network Development Scheme (With Bord na Mona)	B. <i>Investment Grant-Aid Scheme for Private & Community SMEs</i>	C. Strategic Partnership Scheme (5 State Agencies)	D. Strategic Partnership Scheme (8 Local Authorities)	E. Tourism Activators Scheme (With Local Authorities)	F. Tourism Learning Networks (All Industry)

Investment Grant- Aid for Private & Community SMEs



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Guidelines for Application



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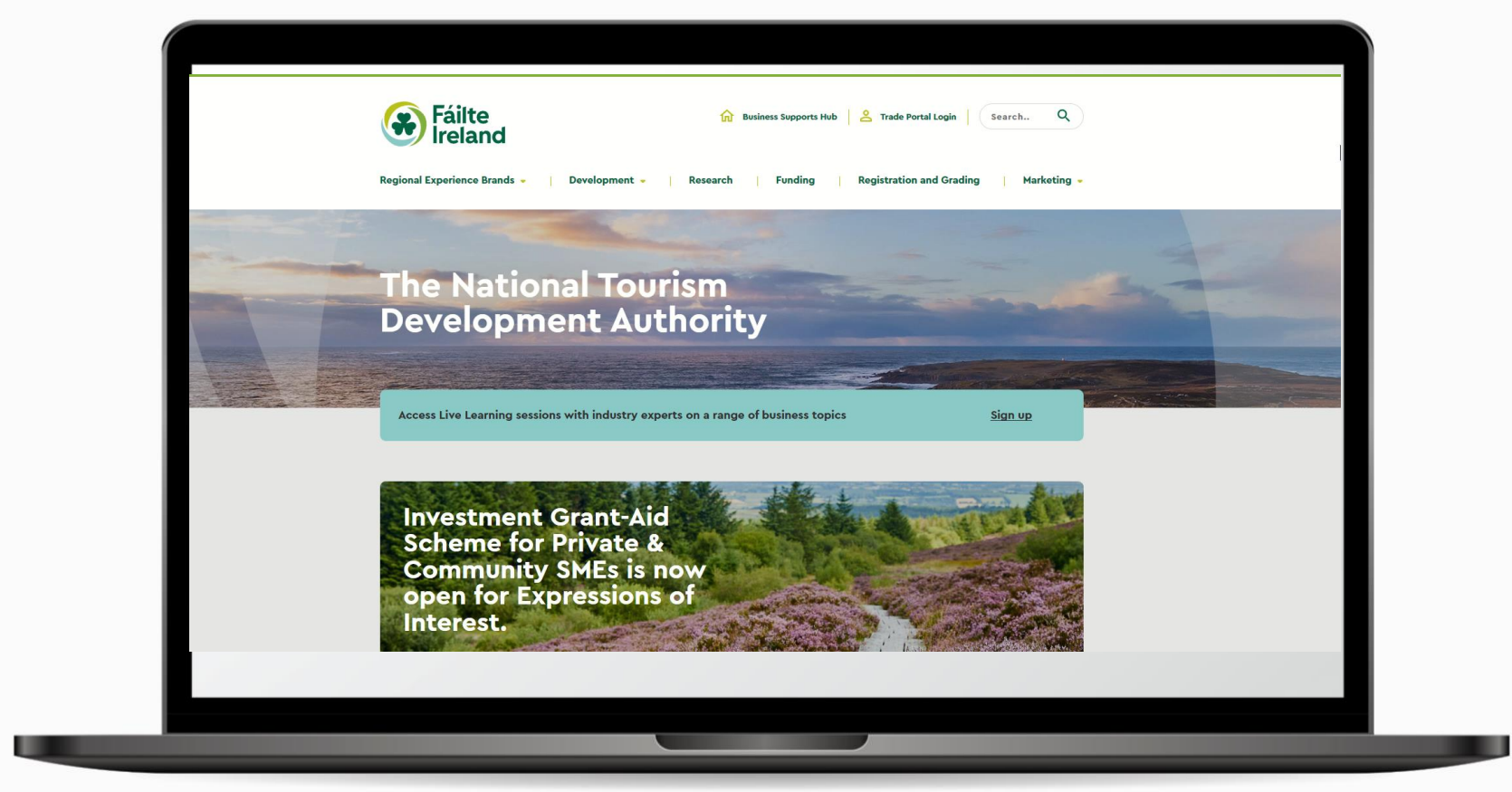
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Investment Grant-Aid Scheme for Private & Community SMEs

Under this scheme there are five project categories that will be considered for funding:

- 1) Development or Enhancement of Sustainable Visitor Experiences
- 2) Development of Sustainable/Low Carbon Tourist Accommodation
- 3) Capital Project Planning & Design
- 4) Digital Transformation
- 5) Accessibility enhancements to provide a more inclusive visitor experience.



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1: Development or Enhancement of Sustainable Visitor Experiences

This includes the development of new or enhancement of existing

- Visitor Attractions (including those offering Heritage, Culture, Nature or provision of Outdoor Activity/ Outdoor Recreation).
- Outdoor Activities and Experiences.
- ‘Stand-out’ features to enhance walking, cycling and water-based trails.
- Infrastructure supporting access to water and visitor use of new or existing walking, cycling and water-based trails.
- Start-up or expansion of tourism SMEs in the JTF Territory.



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2: Development of Sustainable/Low Carbon Tourist Accommodation

Support for the development of small-scale sustainable Tourist Accommodation which;

Sustainable Rural Tourist Accommodation

- Development of bespoke alternative sustainable accommodation experiences in rural areas where visitors will be able to reconnect with nature. Examples of the type of accommodation may include but are not limited to;
 - Bespoke modular accommodation units (e.g. cabins, eco pods, yurts etc.)
 - Additional accommodation capacity in existing registered caravan /camping and glamping National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) sites

Sustainable Town Centre Tourist Accommodation in Heritage Buildings

- The focus is on increasing the tourism accommodation supply while at the same time improving the visitor experience of town or village centres through the repurposing of buildings of significant heritage value.
- The proposed building must be in a village or town centre and must be listed on the Local Authority's Record of Protected Structures (RPS) or be of significant value to the appearance of the town centre.
- One of the accommodation units (or 10% of all units whichever is greater) must be universally accessible.
- Projects that are eligible for the vacant property refurbishment grant will not be eligible



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3: Capital Project Planning & Design

Support towards the cost of the planning and design stages, of a limited number of Tourism Capital Developments that have not yet secured planning approval and/ or may not be delivered before August 2026.

Costs that may be supported under Category 3 will include professional fees involved in;

- Concept Development
- Feasibility Study
- Design Fees
- Quantity Surveyor fees and costing
- High level / Outline Business Plan/ Commercialisation Plan
- Project Management
- Environmental Screening & Impact Assessment



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4: Digital Transformation

Support a range of digital transformation activities.

Supports to be delivered will be determined via a digital maturity audit of eligible applicants, which will recommend a number of suitable digital workstreams for each business to participate in;

- Booking Systems
- Website
- Digital Marketing
- Data

The Digital Transformation programme is open to visitor experiences, accommodation providers, golf courses and destination marketing organisations



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5: Accessibility enhancements to provide a more inclusive visitor experience

Support tourism and hospitality businesses (accommodation, visitor experiences, attractions, activity providers and day tours, full-service restaurants, hotel restaurants and gastropubs) to ensure a more inclusive visitor experience by:

- Improving the physical accessibility of indoor and outdoor visitor experiences and the accessibility of visitor services, including transportation, dining, activities, entertainment and accommodation;
- Improving the provision of access information, including online and offline access information guides and trip planning tools;
- Providing accessible booking and payment systems and web accessibility in accordance with WCAG 2.2. (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines);
- Provision of accessible toilets, changing places, sensory rooms, quiet spaces etc.

Applicants will be required to undertake an accessibility audit of their business. The accessibility audit will specify the accessibility and inclusivity improvements that will be required. The costs of the accessibility audit will be covered under this scheme



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Eligibility



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Who is Eligible?

- This scheme is open to private and community sector applicants only.
- Applicants may be commercial, not-for-profit or charitable enterprises.
- This scheme is open to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Micro Enterprises only (<250 employees).
- Open to Existing Enterprises & Start-ups/ New Enterprises.
- Must be an Eligible Project Type (Full details in guidelines).
- Must align with the objectives of The Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme.
- Contribute to the achievement of environmentally sustainability goals.
- Project must be completed by end of August 2026 and funding drawn down by October 2026.
- Must operate in the JTF Territory.
- Must commit to improving accessibility.
- Must remain in operation/ in place for a minimum of 5 years following the payment of final funds.
- Only projects which, are not subject to planning approval and statutory consents, or which have already secured all required planning permission and statutory consents are eligible to apply under Category 1 & 2.

In addition, applications must meet the criteria specific to the project category under which they are applying.



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Ineligible project types



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- Trails
- Golf Courses
- Indoor leisure centres
- Swimming pools (with the exception of outdoor lidos that are open to the public)
- Indoor and outdoor sports facilities and sports club facilities, sporting venues and tracks
- Community playgrounds
- Theatres & cinemas
- Festivals
- Arts/Performances Spaces
- Conference centres
- Community centres
- Educational institutions
- Language schools
- Wedding venues
- New cafes, restaurants, pubs and bars (except as part of a visitor experience grant-aided under Category 1 or an accessibility grant under Category 5, or where it can offer a service that doesn't currently exist on a particular stretch of Greenway or walking/cycling trail);
- Retail facilities (except as part of a visitor experience investment grant-aided under Category 1 & 5 above)
- Breweries and Distilleries (except costs association with the visitor experience element, which may be eligible under Category 1& 5 above)
- Horseracing and horseracing clubs
- Greyhound racing clubs and events
- Non-fixed/ transient entertainment, e.g., circuses and funfairs

Ineligible project types



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Purchase of:

- Motorised Transport (with the exception of visitor boats for sightseeing or vehicles required by Outdoor Activity Operators or Outdoor Activity Attractions)
- Cruise hire boats for overnight stays
- Coaches and tour buses
- Land or buildings

- In addition, any applications that do not meet the overarching eligibility criteria, the criteria defining eligible applicants, or the category specific criteria identified per project category in Appendix 1 are ineligible for this grants scheme.

Eligible costs



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To be eligible for grant assistance, costs must have the following general characteristics:

- Must be integral to the project being investment grant-aided
 - Must be such that the expenditure would not happen but for the investment grant aid
 - Must be incurred by the body to whom the grant has been awarded
 - Must be incurred after the grant has been awarded
- Must be incurred in line with Public Procurement Guidelines to demonstrate that all goods and services are procured in a fair and transparent manner.
 - Please see Appendix 1 of the Guidelines for a specific list of expenditure that is eligible under each Project category.

Ineligible costs



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The following costs are ineligible in all cases:

- Purchase of land and buildings
- Repairs, maintenance and replacement expenses other than restoration/conservation expenses that have been specifically agreed in writing
- Financing costs (including bank interest and charges)
- Overheads
- Any ongoing marketing costs
- Fines, penalty payments, legal costs, audit fees, ongoing insurances
- Recoverable Value added tax (VAT)
- “In-kind” contributions
- Costs which form or will form part of a claim for tax relief (for example under a section 482 provision)

- Costs incurred and/or paid before date of approval of the project
- Costs based on estimates or valuations and not supported by actual payment documentation.
- Unpaid costs
- Costs already grant-aided, sub-vented or assisted by this, or any other EU or Government scheme (including employment and training schemes). Note: while co-funding of projects with other sources of public funding is permitted, double funding is not.
- Costs paid for by a person/organisation other than the grantee.

Ineligible costs



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- Loose fittings, furniture, road vehicles and boats except where integral to the activity specifically grant-aided in the letter of offer. r

Please check Appendix 1 for further detail on expenditure that is ineligible under the specific Category you are applying for.

Grant Aid Bands

- Micro investment grants can be offered up to a value of €10,000 - grant-aid rate of 100% of total project costs
- Investment grants of between €10,001 and €275,000 - at a maximum grant-aid rate of 80% of total project
- Investment grants of between €275,001 and €2,000,000 - at a maximum grant-aid rate of 80% of total project costs
- Awards of investment grants greater than €2,000,000 may be considered, (discretion of Fáilte Ireland)
- Grants awarded under Category 4 (Digital Transformation) will be offered at a rate of up to 100% of eligible project costs where EU State Aid rules allow.
- Under Category 2 (Development of Sustainable/Low Carbon Tourist Accommodation) & Category 3 (Capital Project Planning & Design), the maximum grant that can be awarded is the De Minimis limit.
- **Please note that all funding is claimed retrospectively from Fáilte Ireland.**
- **First come first served in terms of applications for funding.**



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Match funding

- Match funding is required for all Investment Grants above €10,000, with the exception of Investment Grants awarded under Category 4 (Digital Transformation).
- The applicant will be required to contribute a minimum of 20% of total project costs as match funding. This can include costs that are ineligible for funding.
- Match funding may consist of the applicant's own funds, investor funds, borrowings or other sources of public funding subject to state aid rules.
- In-kind' match funding (e.g., site value, voluntary labour etc) will not be accepted under the terms of this Programme.
- You will be required to submit evidence of match funding with your Application Form. Your application will be deemed ineligible if this is not clearly evidenced to the satisfaction of Fáilte Ireland.
- Please see the Guidelines for details on the type of evidence of match funding that needs to be provided.



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Process



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How your application will be evaluated

- Projects will be evaluated on their individual merit to ensure sufficient impact proportional to the funding ask of the application.
- Grant requests below the De Minimis threshold will be assessed using:
 - (1). the overarching eligibility criteria;
 - (2). the category specific eligibility criteria;
 - (3). value for money.
- Grant requests above the De Minimis threshold will be assessed against the following evaluation criteria, in addition to the eligibility criteria:
 - (1). Meet the aims of the JTF Programme;
 - (2). Grow Economic Benefit through employment or tourism spend in the JTF territory;
 - (3). Represent Value for Money;
 - (4). Sustainability and Regenerative Tourism.



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Key dates and contact information

- Closing date for EOIs for Categories 1,2,3&5: **30th June 2024**
- Closing date for applications for Categories 1,2,3&5: **31st December 2024**
- Closing date for EOIs/Applications for Category 4 (Digital Transformation): **30th November 2023**
- Just Transition Tourism Learning Programme (Scheme F) opens to Applications in **October 2023**
- Customer Services team
- Telephone: 0818 888800 or 015741990
- Email: CustomerSupport@Failteireland.ie



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Upcoming Scheme: Tourism Learning Programme

Launching October 2023



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EU Just Transition Tourism Learning Programme

Objectives



COLLABORATION

Create a collaborative learning space for regenerative tourism in the EU Just Transition area



GROWTH

Grow businesses, visitor numbers, jobs and the local economy



SUSTAINABILITY

Guide sustainable tourism for a greener future, benefiting the environment and communities.



CAPABILITY

Build competency, inform experience development, improve environmentally responsible practices, enhance digital and commercial performance



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more



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Website

- www.Fáilteireland.ie/justtransition
- Guidelines
- FAQ's
- Regenerative Tourism Toolkit
- Accessibility toolkit
- Link to EOI - Webinar
- State Aid Handbook



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Up next:
Derek Walshe
Completing
your Expression
of Interest Form



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Follow-up



Answers to common questions submitted during today's session will be addressed in our FAQ.



For specific questions relating to your particular business, please contact our Customer Service support team on CustomerSupport@failteireland.ie



The recording and FAQ will be shared to everyone via a follow-up email in due course.



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Thank you



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