

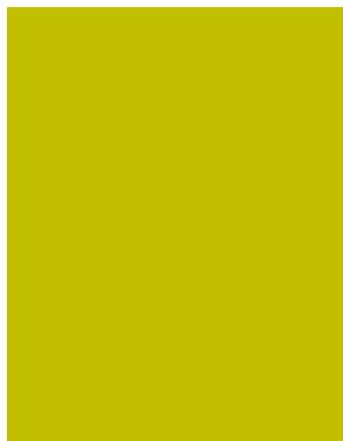
PLATFORMS FOR GROWTH

2019 - 2022

A PROGRAMME FOR TOURISM INVESTMENT

PLATFORM 1: Immersive Heritage and Cultural Attractions

GUIDELINES



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040



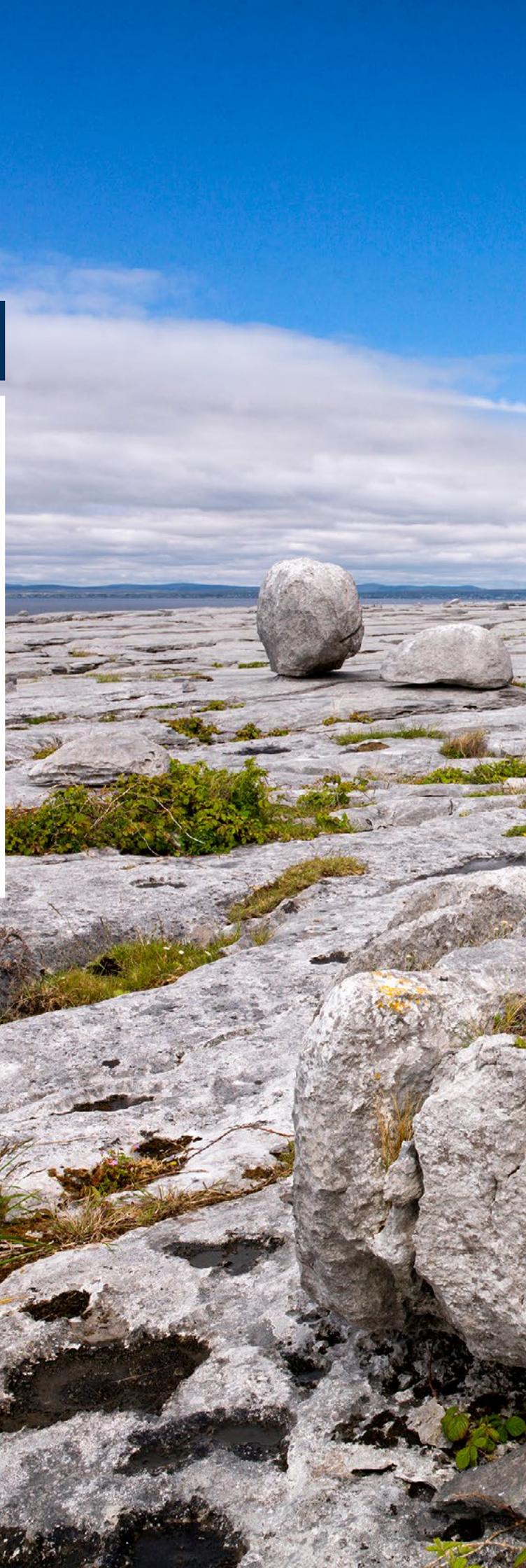
Fáilte Ireland
National Tourism Development Authority

ABOUT FÁILTE IRELAND

Fáilte Ireland was established under the National Tourism Development Authority Act 2003. Our role is to guide and support sustainable growth in tourism earnings and employment. We provide consumer and competitor insights, mentoring, investment and trade supports across the business, event and leisure sectors, to help secure sales growth from targeted overseas and domestic market segments.

Working in partnership with tourism businesses, Local Government, State Agencies and Government Departments, we also seek to foster a competitive and innovative enterprise base, a sensitively managed natural and built environment within tourism communities and a public policy environment to meet the needs of visitors.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?
SEE OUR WEBSITE: WWW.FAILTEIRELAND.IE



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INTRODUCTION



1.1 WHAT IS THIS INVESTMENT PROGRAMME ALL ABOUT?

'Platforms for Growth' is Fáilte Ireland's new four year capital investment programme. It is unlike any previous Fáilte Ireland programme in that it specifically targets product themes and types known as 'platforms', which have the greatest potential to grow tourism in Ireland and support Fáilte Ireland's strategic imperative of **Building Brilliant Visitor Experiences**.

Platforms for Growth is part of the Grants Scheme for Large Tourism Projects 2016 - 2020¹, and it is Fáilte Ireland's intention over the medium term, to base future investments in large scale capital projects on 'platforms'. We will issue future calls for proposals under other platform headings on a rolling basis. The range of future platforms is yet to be finalised, but examples may include a focus on themes such as 'activity tourism' or 'tourism infrastructure'.

The first of these to be launched, and the purpose of these guidelines, is **Immersive Heritage and Cultural Attractions**.

1.2 WHAT IS A PLATFORM?

Tourism is a complex and dynamic industry, and therefore requires a flexible and multi-faceted investment programme to meet the ever-changing needs of modern consumers. Fáilte Ireland's response to this environment is to ensure that we invest in a variety of aspects of the broader tourism experience. These different aspects are essentially 'platforms' upon which we can base our investments to ensure long-term growth.

Platforms should also drive innovation in tourism and ensure Ireland can compete as a compelling destination in the international marketplace. For this reason, a platform must have three essential characteristics:

1. It must be of strategic importance to Irish tourism and be a source of international competitive advantage.
2. It must be able to build on gaps or opportunities in our current tourism offering.
3. It must be grounded in consumer research and satisfy what our overseas visitors want and expect when they travel to Ireland for a holiday or on business.

By focusing development on 'what the visitor wants', through these specific platforms, projects supported by this investment programme have a high potential for success.

In addition to this, and as part of our *Platforms for Growth – a Programme for Tourism Investment 2019-2022*, Fáilte Ireland will work with successful applicants long after the capital investment has been made. This engagement may include direct and indirect business supports to promote and further the realisation of the project.

Full details about this platform are contained in Section 2. In general terms, 'Immersive Heritage and Cultural Attractions' relates to developing new or existing attractions, which serve to bring Ireland's rich heritage, history and culture to life specifically for overseas visitors, in an immersive way.

1. See also Section 8 for more information regarding State Aid.



1.3 HOW WILL GROWTH BE ACHIEVED?

By analysing these platforms, Fáilte Ireland has already identified what types of experiences Ireland needs to develop in order to deliver growth. To do so sustainably, and to spread the economic benefits, Fáilte Ireland's focus, over the medium to long term, must also be on the twin strategic concepts of **regionality** and **seasonality**.

Our **regional experience brands**, the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East, and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, are the key to **regional tourism growth**². By investing in new and improved experiences, which are aligned to the regional experience brands, we can spread tourist traffic more evenly throughout the country and create vital economic activity in rural areas. Therefore, regional priorities/ objectives have been identified within this scheme to drive growth (see Section 2.2).

Secondly, we will be looking for attractions which can stay **open longer in the season**, and where possible, later in the evenings.

Another important means of ensuring strong economic growth is to invest in Immersive Heritage and Cultural Attractions of **scale** that will motivate visitors to travel, either to and/ or within Ireland, but will not displace the existing attractions of a destination. Therefore, this investment programme will seek to deliver projects that can provide additional capacity at existing attractions and projects which create new visitor attractions of scale around the country.

IN SUMMARY, THROUGH THIS SCHEME, OUR INVESTMENT IN BUILDING BRILLIANT VISITOR EXPERIENCES MUST BE TARGETED TO DELIVER GREATER REGIONAL AND SEASONAL SPREAD OF TOURISM, BY DELIVERING ATTRACTIONS OF SCALE, WHILE MAINTAINING THE COMPETITIVENESS WE ALREADY HAVE IN MATURE DESTINATIONS.

POLICY CONTEXT

Underpinning this investment programme is a strong policy framework set out in the Government's People, Place and Policy- Growing Tourism to 2025, and associated Tourism Action Plan 2019- 2021.

More information can be found at www.dttas.ie/tourism

Platforms for Growth is also aligned to Fáilte Ireland's Tourism Development and Innovation: A Strategy for Investment 2016-2022 and our corporate strategy.

More information can be found at www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth

2. The Dublin experience brand is also part of this investment programme albeit not called out here as a driver of tourism growth in rural areas.

PLATFORM: Immersive Heritage and Cultural Attractions

2



2.1 WHY HERITAGE AND CULTURE?

Ireland's heritage and cultural tourism offering is of enormous importance to our industry. In 2018, over 6.6 million (70%) of all overseas tourists visited attractions of historic or cultural interest.

Tourists include all travellers who stay away from home for one or more nights for either a holiday, visiting friends and family, business or other purposes.

When we consider the key subcategory of 'holidaymakers' from our main source markets, the level of visitation to our historical and cultural attractions is significant:



	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
USA	96%	95%	96%	97%	96%
France	88%	91%	92%	94%	93%
Germany	93%	91%	95%	92%	94%
Great Britain	63%	66%	70%	73%	79%

Table 1: Percentage of overseas holidaymakers from Ireland's main source markets who visit sites of historic/cultural interest.

Source: Fáilte Ireland Survey of Overseas Travellers 2014-2018
*2018 data is preliminary.

It should be noted that holidaymakers and business travellers are a key focus of much of Fáilte Ireland's developmental and marketing strategies as their choice of destination can be influenced directly.

In terms of overseas visits to the main categories of heritage and cultural attractions, the level of engagement is very high:

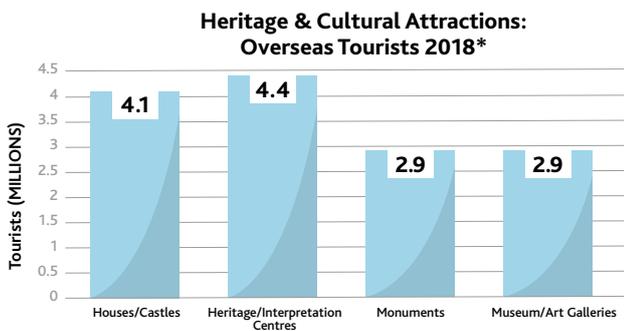


Table 2: Breakdown of heritage/cultural activity (Overseas Tourists).
 Source: Fáilte Ireland SOT 2018. *2018 data is preliminary.

This is also the case for the domestic market (i.e. Irish residents who holiday in Ireland). Fáilte Ireland research shows that visiting houses and castles is the number one activity undertaken by domestic holidaymakers.

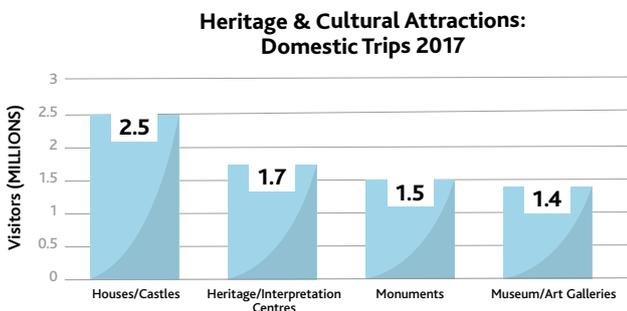


Table 3: Breakdown of heritage/cultural activity (Domestic Trips).
 Source: Fáilte Ireland Domestic Omnibus 2017.

For those holidaymakers whose expectations were exceeded, the main reasons continue to be the Irish people, Ireland's beautiful scenery, **history and culture**, along with our flora, fauna and **nature**.

Ireland's natural heritage is key to building on Ireland's competitive advantage in a crowded marketplace. The top performing activity experiences have Ireland's dramatic landscapes at their core.

These figures demonstrate the strong interdependency that exists between heritage and tourism. In fact, the majority of Ireland's top 10 free and paid admission attractions can be described as 'natural' or 'built heritage' attractions including iconic sites such as the Guinness Storehouse, National Gallery of Ireland, Glendalough, Kylemore Abbey and the Cliffs of Moher.

We define heritage and cultural tourism as the '*full range of experiences visitors can undertake to learn what makes a destination distinctive – its lifestyle, its heritage, its arts, its people – and the business of providing and interpreting that culture to visitors*'. All elements form an integral part of the current and future tourism landscape.

IMMERSION

Although great strides have been taken in recent years to improve how our heritage and culture is presented to the visitor and how we interpret our stories and bring them to life, we still need to do more. Latest international trends indicate that today's international visitors want much more than passive engagement – they want to connect with the destination, its culture and, most of all, with its people. In essence they want to 'live' the experience.

Immersion, therefore, is a critical component of the experience and is essential to drive high-levels of visitor satisfaction:

- Stories are the heart and soul of any visitor experience. Immersion ensures the story of a heritage site is brought to life in an entertaining and authentic way and can make it unforgettable for the visitor by enabling them to feel new emotions and by connecting the past to the present.
- An immersive experience should convert our stories into experiences through engaging the senses and the creation of action, interaction and conversation.

By fusing our rich heritage and cultural product with powerful stories and a truly immersive experience, we create an offering that is truly unique, and a genuine source of competitive advantage for the Irish tourism industry.

Want to know more? see the Toolkit which has been prepared to accompany these guidelines. Available to download from: www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth

2.2 OUTCOMES AND PRIORITIES

2.2.1 NATIONAL OUTCOMES

The 'Platforms for Growth Investment Programme 2019-2022' has been designed as a key lever for Fáilte Ireland to ensure we encourage the development of brilliant visitor experiences and achieve our growth ambitions for Irish tourism.

The national level outcomes that Fáilte Ireland is aiming to achieve from projects assessed within this call for proposals (Immersive Heritage and Cultural Attractions Platform) are as follows:

1. **Drive economic impact:** Grow our stock of large-scale visitor attractions by adding new projects or growing the capacity, quality, opening hours and accessibility of existing attractions. This will result in a significant contribution to economic growth through increased visitor numbers, (particularly overseas visitors), visitor spend and the creation of employment.

Visitor Numbers (2017)	Number of Attractions
Over 1 million visitors	4
500,000 – 999,999	10
350,000 – 499,000	12
200,000 – 349,999	11
100,000 – 199,000	35

2. **Regionality:** Spread the economic benefits of tourism through:
 - **Unlocking regional dispersion** - Creation of new and enhanced heritage and cultural experiences that can disrupt and enhance the traditional visitor migration and travel patterns around Ireland. Simply put, this means encouraging visitors to get off the beaten track in order to spread tourist traffic more evenly throughout the country and create vital economic activity in rural areas.
 - **Increasing dwell time** - Advance the development of clusters* of experiences that will hold visitors in a destination longer and encourage more overnight stays in the local area

*WHAT DO WE MEAN BY EXPERIENCE CLUSTERS?

Having strong clusters of visitor experiences in a destination encourages visitors to stay longer and spend more. This Platform will look to prioritise the creation or strengthening of strong, well-functioning clusters:

- that have one or more 'hero' products or experiences at the core (this is the central attraction(s) or experience(s) that will draw visitors to an area in the first place) and a range of supporting visitor experiences;
- that can maintain a strong level of overnights in an area;
- and which can positively impact visitor numbers at supporting attractions and experiences in the environs.

3. **Seasonality:** Lengthen the tourist season by spreading demand more evenly throughout the year through investing in the development of compelling experiences that will, where possible, capture the imagination of tourists and motivate them to consider a holiday in Ireland in what is currently the shoulder season (April/ May and Sept/Oct), or the off-season (Nov- Mar).
4. **Deliver innovation and new tourism products:** Maximise the opportunity presented by Ireland's unique culture and heritage to encourage original and imaginative experiences which provide a differentiator, based on authentic and captivating stories, for which there is demonstrable visitor demand and which can act as a catalyst for tourism growth.
5. **Drive sustainability in the visitor attraction sector:** Improve the continued growth and commercial viability of heritage and cultural attractions by investing in attractions that are based on robust operational models, good governance and strong financial management. Our funding will support those attractions that are grounded in a strategic approach to reinvestment with the ability to stand on their own commercial merits. In the case of publicly-owned attractions, Fáilte Ireland will prioritise those which can demonstrate long-term sustainability without the need for an operational subvention.
6. **Optimise investment in tourism:** Leverage additional public and private sector investment in tourism from other sources and in addition to Fáilte Ireland's investment. The scheme seeks to encourage applicants to maximise their level of match-funding.

2.2.2 REGIONAL OUTCOMES

Projects in all parts of the country are eligible to apply for this investment programme. The four regional experience brands (Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East, Dublin and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands) are critical to how Ireland is presented as a holiday destination in the international marketplace, as they provide a coherent tourist-centric offering which encourages tourists to move from thinking about visiting Ireland to actually making a booking.

While this scheme presents opportunities for all parts of the country, the four regional experience brands will help to give expression to the particular tourism development priorities that are required in different regions.

Fáilte Ireland will prioritise investment in projects that can make the greatest economic impact regionally i.e. relative to the performance of the existing regional tourism economy.

REGIONAL BRANDS: SPECIFIC PRIORITIES

This investment scheme is open to the entire country, however strategic priorities have been identified for each Region. These are identified here.

 <p>PROPOSITION: <i>Dublin living thrives side by side with the natural outdoors so you can constantly jump between completely unique, different and often unexpected experiences.</i></p> <p>STRATEGIC PRIORITY: To increase the spread of visitors around the greater Dublin area, beyond the core city centre³ in order to continue to grow the contribution of tourism to the economy. For proposals within the core city centre, these must demonstrate that they can significantly increase capacity within existing attractions or through the development of new ones.</p>	 <p>PROPOSITION: <i>Experience this coastal touring route of wild raw beauty carved by the ocean on Ireland's western seaboard, providing a breath-taking backdrop for exploration of untamed land and seascapes.</i></p> <p>STRATEGIC PRIORITY: Provide visitors with more compelling reasons to increase dwell time along the route, explore the region further and grow bed nights. Priority will be afforded to those visitor experiences that attract and retain visitors to the northern half of the Wild Atlantic Way⁴.</p>
 <p>PROPOSITION: <i>Take a personal journey of discovery through 5,000 years of history, and hear the people's stories that bring it to life, in a region of rich green fields and stunning natural beauty.</i></p> <p>STRATEGIC PRIORITY: To support the transformation of Ireland's Ancient East from a transit zone to a touring zone⁵, by creating new and improved visitor experiences of scale (relative to existing visitation numbers) that will encourage dwell time and increase total bednights. Priority will be given to proposals that authentically align with one of the Ireland's Ancient East themes including <i>Ancient Ireland, Tales of Two Worlds, The Sport of Kings, Castles and Conquests, Vikings and Maritime Gateway</i>.</p>	 <p>PROPOSITION: <i>Get active at your own relaxed pace in the natural rural beauty of Ireland's central heartlands, along scenic waterways and walking trails, discovering what this under-explored region and its welcoming rural communities have to offer.</i></p> <p>STRATEGIC PRIORITY: As an emerging destination, the current focus is to invest in 'hero products' and experiences of scale (relative to existing visitation numbers), that will raise awareness of the region, be motivational to visitors to travel to the destination, and around which clusters of supporting experiences can establish and develop over time.</p>

Note: In areas where the brands overlap, applicants are not be required to align to both brands. As part of the application, you will have the opportunity to choose the Regional Experience Brand to which your project is best aligned. See Regional Experience Brand Map in Appendix 1.

3. Defined as Dublin 1 and Dublin 2, (but excluding the Docklands area – See Dublin's Docklands Map in Appendix 1).
 4. Defined as extending from Co.Galway to Co.Donegal but excluding Galway City (as defined by the administrative boundary)
 5. Transit zone refers to visitors travelling through an area rather than overnighing, whereas a touring zone gives visitors a reason to stay in an area and overnight.

HOW THE SCHEME WORKS

3



3.1 WHO CAN APPLY?

Funding applications under the Immersive Heritage and Culture Platform will be accepted from the public, private and voluntary sectors as defined in the following table (Table 4), subject to the exclusion of ineligible entities and applicants as set out in Appendix 2.

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	Bodies established to operate facilities on behalf of the public sector including commercial and non-commercial semi-state bodies and local authorities Exception: Designated Fáilte Ireland Strategic Partners including Coillte, Office of Public Works (OPW), the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Waterways Ireland are not eligible to apply under this scheme.

Note: Any projects that have received funding under Fáilte Ireland's previous "Large Grant" Schemes (e.g. Tourism Capital Investment Programme 2007-2013, Grants Scheme for Large Tourism Projects 2016) must be open a minimum of two years. They must also demonstrate to Fáilte Ireland's satisfaction, that the project proposal will add incremental growth in visitor numbers over and above that which was specified in their previous grant application.

3.2 PROJECT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Fáilte Ireland through this platform will provide funding for a limited number of immersive experiences at new and existing attractions and heritage sites, which are of scale and which are rooted in Ireland's cultural and heritage sector.

The following are the minimum eligibility criteria that will apply to this Platform:

1. Heritage and Culture Criteria

- The proposed project must, in the view of Fáilte Ireland, be an immersive heritage and cultural tourism attraction⁶. For the purposes of this scheme, heritage or cultural sites include historic houses and gardens, stately homes, pre-Christian/Celtic sites, monastic sites, churches and cathedrals, castles and medieval sites, interpretive and heritage centres, museums and art galleries, industrial heritage sites, caves, cliffs, heritage parks etc. This list is not exhaustive.
- Environmental and heritage sustainability: The application must demonstrate that the project and related activities, onsite, offsite and in combination will be developed with regard to best practice in environmental and heritage sustainability, which at minimum will be assessed through compliance with statutory consents.

2. Operational Criteria

- Operating Model and Expertise: All applicants must demonstrate a robust operational model for the project, and evidenced expertise and capability to operate and drive a large-scale tourism business to self-sufficiency based on sound commercial acumen.
- Opening Times (1): All projects must be open to visitors on a minimum of 154 days per year immediately after the opening of the grant-aided project. The requirement includes a minimum of six days per week, including weekends and bank holidays (excluding Christmas), and six months per year.
- Opening Times (2): In addition, projects must plan to expand their opening times in a gradual progressive manner to a minimum of 234 days per year within 5 years of the opening of the grant-aided project. The requirement includes a minimum of six days per week, including weekends and bank holidays (excluding Christmas), and nine months per year.
- Extended Evening Hours: For projects **located in Dublin** it is a requirement of this scheme that the applicant commits to extended evening opening hours (i.e. until at least 7pm) a minimum of two days per week during peak season (1st June – 31st August), upon opening of the project. If attractions are already meeting the above in full there will be no further obligation to offer longer opening hours.

- Multi-Lingual Requirement: All projects must contain foreign language provision to meet the needs of our international visitors - a minimum of four languages (other than English and Irish) must be provided.
- Online Booking: All applicants must implement an online booking system as part of the project, except in cases of existing attractions where an adequate system is already in place (in the view of Fáilte Ireland). There must also be some availability to the public without prior booking.

3. Financial Criteria

- Match funding: Evidence must be provided of match funding. Match funding must be in the form of a financial contribution for a minimum of 25% of total project costs. Your application will be deemed ineligible if this is not clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of Fáilte Ireland. See Section 3.4 for more information.
- Tax Clearance: Your Tax Reference Number will be required during the application process. This number may be checked by Fáilte Ireland before your application is processed. If your Tax Reference Number is invalid, has expired or has been rescinded, Fáilte Ireland will deem your application ineligible. It is your responsibility to ensure that your current Tax Clearance Certificate is provided to Fáilte Ireland throughout the evaluation process and subsequently as required.

4. Legal Criteria

- Right to Undertake the Project: All applicants must (a) provide evidence of site ownership or long-term lease to demonstrate a right to undertake the project at the site and (b) operate the project on the identified site for a minimum of 15 years from date of opening after the completion of the project, subject to satisfying all Fáilte Ireland defined Terms and Conditions. (Note: Operative Period as defined in Appendix 3). Your application will be deemed ineligible if this is not clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of Fáilte Ireland.
- State Aid: Projects will be considered eligible for state aid if Fáilte Ireland is satisfied that the project complies with EU rules with regard to State Aid. The State Aid basis for this scheme is set out in Section 8.

6. An attraction is defined as a permanently established destination, capable of attracting day visitors or tourists, which must be open to the public, without them necessarily having to pre-book. The primary purpose of the attraction should be sightseeing, for which it may be feasible to charge admission. It should also allow access for entertainment, interest, or education rather than being primarily a retail outlet or a venue for sporting, theatrical, or film performances.

- **Security:** Non-public sector applicants will be required to provide adequate security (i.e. security for the total value of the funding sought) by means of a fixed charge on the project's assets and/or in another form that is satisfactory to Fáilte Ireland. Appendix 3 provides further information on security requirements. Your application will be deemed ineligible if this is not clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of Fáilte Ireland.
- **Location:** All projects must be located in the Republic of Ireland.

Fáilte Ireland reserves the right to seek verification of information provided with any application. Non-eligibility can be determined at any stage in the evaluation process.

The following project types are ineligible under this Platform:

- Accommodation and related facilities
- Breweries and distilleries, including associated visitor centres and facilities
- Community and leisure centres
- Conference facilities
- Driving routes

- Festivals and events
- Golf courses
- Marinas
- Motorised and non-motorised transport vehicles (including bicycles, buses, boats, ferries etc). Exceptions may be made, at Fáilte Ireland's discretion, where a vehicle is integral but not the main part of the attraction, has a restricted transport range and is not being used as a means of transport (e.g. transport museum items)
- Pet farms, animal sanctuaries, zoos, aquariums
- Public realm, including public spaces, parks, playgrounds
- Public service blocks, amenity areas and related facilities or signage
- Sporting venues and facilities
- Theatres and cinemas
- Tourism infrastructure including walking or trail developments such as greenways, blueways, outdoor town/village heritage trails, trail heads, trail furniture, and associated orientation/interpretation signage

Please see Appendix 4 for a list of eligible and ineligible expenditure.

3.3 INVESTMENT GRANT AMOUNTS AND INVESTMENT GRANT RATES

The aim of this Platform is to invest in high-impact capital projects of scale that will bring Ireland's history, heritage and culture to life. To be eligible for investment grants under this Platform, the project must have a minimum total cost expenditure of €2.5 million (no upper limit for investment has been set albeit this will be based on Return on Investment) and investment grant awards will be subject to State Aid rules and budget availability. In summary:

- The maximum investment grant rate will not exceed 75% of total project costs
- The investment grant amount offered may be less than that requested by the applicant and is at the full discretion of Fáilte Ireland

Ultimately, the amount of support that can be availed of will depend on the relevant State Aid Rules and whether or not the applicant is an undertaking in respect of the project⁷.

Applicants should also be aware that under state aid (General Block Exemption Regulation, GBER) rules, for investment grant awards over €2 million the projected operating profit over the lifetime of the project will be taken into account when calculating the amount that Fáilte Ireland may invest (see Section 8 for more information on State aid).

The eligible costs and any associated offer of funding will depend on the specific details of the proposed project.

THE AIM OF THIS PLATFORM IS TO INVEST IN HIGH-IMPACT CAPITAL PROJECTS OF SCALE THAT WILL BRING IRELAND'S HISTORY, HERITAGE AND CULTURE TO LIFE

Entities that are not undertakings in respect of the project may be eligible for investment grant assistance of up to 75% of total project costs. Total project costs consist of total eligible costs and such ineligible costs as determined by Fáilte Ireland. More details on what types of expenditure are deemed eligible and ineligible are included in Appendix 4.

⁷ Generally speaking, an undertaking is an entity, however structured from a legal perspective, that engages in an economic activity. It should be noted that Fáilte Ireland intends to treat all applicants under this Scheme as undertakings unless an applicant provides satisfactory evidence that it is not an undertaking.

3.4 MATCH FUNDING

Match funding is required for all projects. The applicant will be required to contribute a minimum of 25% of total project costs as match funding. This can include costs that are ineligible for funding.

'In-kind' match funding (e.g. site value, voluntary labour etc) will not be accepted under the terms of this Programme.

Evidence of match funding is required as part of the application process. This can be provided either by

(i) a letter from your accountant/auditor confirming that you have sufficient match funding from own resources and/or

(ii) a Bank Facility Letter i.e. evidence of the availability of borrowings if you are borrowing to provide match funding. In the case of public sector bodies, a letter from the Financial Controller/Director of Services confirming that the match funding has been ring-fenced, will suffice.

Note for Applicants: Please refer to Appendix 5 for information on how funding from this Platform may be combined with funding from other public funding sources, including the Urban and Rural Regeneration Funds.

3.5 IF SUCCESSFUL, WHAT FUNDING MAY BE OFFERED?

There are five steps in the Platforms for Growth process. Subject to approval by Fáilte Ireland, funding may be offered to both the Development and Delivery phases of those applications that pass Stage 3. The application form requires an applicant to provide detailed costs for both these phases.

It is recommended that a dedicated external project manager is appointed for both the development and delivery phases. The consultancy fees associated with this are eligible for funding under this scheme.

For further information on these phases, please see Section 4.

Appendix 4 provides details on eligible and ineligible costs and investment grant aid can only be provided in accordance with State Aid rules. The level of support during both the development and delivery phases will generally be in line with the rate of grant aid set out here, at the discretion of Fáilte Ireland.

HOW TO APPLY



To be eligible for an investment grant, there are five steps in the Platforms for Growth process; three steps in the Application Phase that need to be successfully completed, and two steps in the Delivery and Development Phase. Applicants must pass through these 'Stages' in order to be eligible to receive an investment grant under this scheme. Before any investment grant is made available to a successful applicant, they must enter into and comply with the Investment Grant Agreement and all pre-investment requirements (see Section 8 for further information).

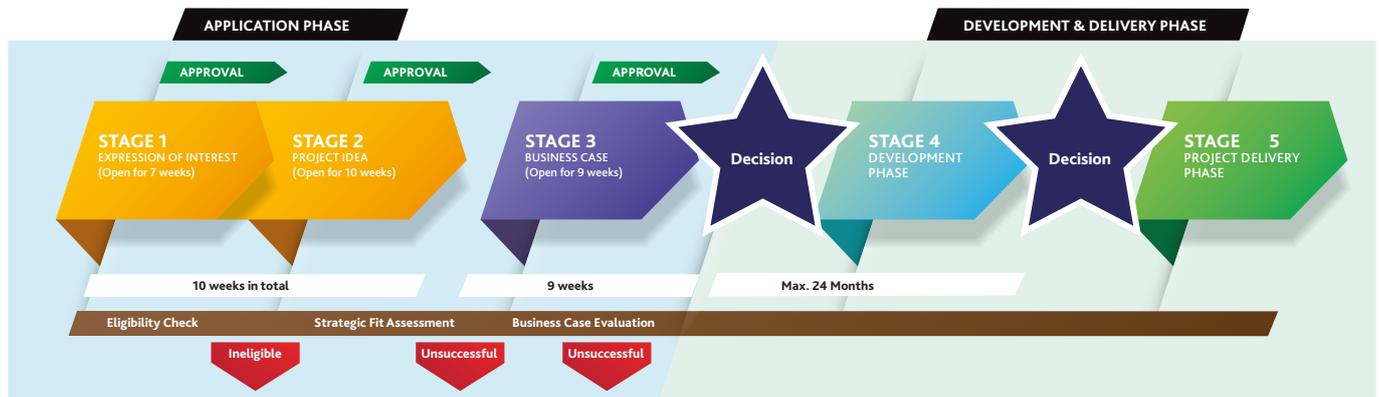
MANDATORY WORKSHOPS!

During the 'Expression of Interest' phase of the Investment Programme (Stage 1 of the Process), Fáilte Ireland will hold a number of workshops across the country. The purpose of the workshops is to provide details on the Platforms for Growth programme for investment and explain the application process in detail. It is a requirement that applicants intending to apply for funding **MUST** register and attend one of these workshops, **before a Stage 2 application can be submitted**. The attendee should be a senior decision-maker with responsibility for the project within the applicant organisation. Times, dates and venues for these will be publicly available on our website: www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth.

Applicants should note that the level of detail and time required increases as you proceed through the process. After a project is approved, there are two further phases – the Development Phase and the Delivery Phase.

The complete process is set out below by Fáilte Ireland. More details on what types of expenditure are deemed eligible and ineligible are included in Appendix 4.

PLATFORMS FOR GROWTH: PROCESS MAP



4.1 STAGE 1: EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The purpose of this Stage is to determine if the project and/or applicant is eligible for consideration based on the information provided.

The first step is to register an Expression of Interest (EOI) in the scheme by filling out a simple questionnaire via the Fáilte Ireland website. See www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth. This questionnaire invites you to submit a short description of your project along with some additional information, which will then be reviewed by Fáilte Ireland to determine eligibility. Applicants should apply promptly so as to maximise their time for developing their proposal.

Expressions of Interest will only be accepted on the online form provided. Fáilte Ireland will endeavour to process the EOI forms as quickly as possible, typically within 5 working days. Any applicant or project that is clearly ineligible for grant funding will be advised of this and will not proceed any further. Applicants have the option of amending and resubmitting their EOI, but Fáilte Ireland will only accept one resubmission for the same project proposal. Fáilte Ireland's decision thereafter is final. Applicants who are resubmitting should at all times be cognisant of the deadline for receipt of applications.

If your project proposal is deemed eligible, information on proceeding to the next stage of the process will be issued to you via email.

Please note that proceeding to Stage 2 does not in itself confirm final eligibility on the project or applicant. Depending on the information provided at subsequent stages, the project or applicant may still be deemed to be ineligible for funding later in the process.

The closing date for submitting or resubmitting any EOI is seven weeks following the opening of the Scheme. Any EOI, including a resubmitted EOI, received by Fáilte Ireland after the deadline for submission will not be considered. Please refer to the Scheme webpage on the Fáilte Ireland website for information on deadlines: www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth.

4.2 STAGE 2: THE PROJECT IDEA

At Stage 2 you will be asked to elaborate more on your project idea with a particular focus on how the experience and story will appeal to our target markets. Applications should also tell us the extent to which their project proposal will contribute to Ireland's tourism strategy and drive the success of one of our four regional brand propositions (refer to Section 2.2.2). In addition, we will require information on how you intend to meet basic compliance requirements, including how the investment grant will be secured, and proof that you have the legal right to undertake the project and operate it for 15 years, from the date of opening.

The Stage 2 Application Form will be available to eligible applicants only, so in order to receive this you must first have successfully completed Stage 1 Expression of Interest. The closing date for receipt of the Form is 10 weeks following the opening of the Scheme. Please refer to the Scheme webpage on the Fáilte Ireland website for information on deadlines, www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth

You must also have attended a workshop in order to be eligible to submit a Stage 2 Application. All applications at Stage 2 must be completed online through the Fáilte Ireland Trade Portal. Only application forms submitted in this way will be accepted and evaluated.

Before you submit your application, please ensure that:

- All sections of the form have been fully completed
- You have uploaded the correct supporting documents and files required

Incomplete applications and applications received after the closing date will not be considered for Stage 2 evaluation. Project proposals at Stage 2 will either be informed (a) they can move forward to Stage 3 or (b) they have been unsuccessful. Unsuccessful applicants at Stage 2 may appeal the decision – see Section 6 on the Appeals Process for more information.

4.3 STAGE 3: THE BUSINESS CASE

At this point in the process, proposals will need to clearly demonstrate to Fáilte Ireland the viability of the project. We will require detailed information on the sustainability of the attraction including capital costs, visitor number projections, financial projections, sales and marketing, operational plans and resources.

Applicants will be given nine weeks to complete and submit their business case to Fáilte Ireland based on strict parameters that must be adhered to.

All applications at Stage 3 must be completed online through the Fáilte Ireland Trade Portal. Only application forms submitted in this way will be accepted and evaluated.

Before you submit your application, please ensure that:

- All sections of the form have been fully completed
- You have uploaded the correct supporting documents and files required

Incomplete applications and applications received after the closing date will not be considered for Stage 3 evaluation.

Unsuccessful applicants at Stage 3 may appeal the decision – see Section 6 on the Appeals Process for more information.

If your project successfully passes Stage 3, development and/or delivery funding will be earmarked for the project. The applicant must enter into and comply with the Delivery Investment Grant Agreement and all pre-investment requirements before investment grant monies are paid. For information on what happens in the process after the project has been approved for funding, please refer to Section 8.

The Investment Grant is at all times reimbursed in arrears based on vouched paid expenditure in proportion to the rate of investment to overall investment of eligible costs.

PLATFORMS FOR GROWTH TOOLKIT - AN AID TO HELP APPLICANTS CREATE AN IMMERSIVE HERITAGE AND CULTURAL ATTRACTION

In order to help you make the best case for your project, we have developed a Toolkit which contains lots of tips, resources and other useful information. We would recommend that all applicants use the Toolkit to assist them through Stages 2 and 3 of the application process.

The Toolkit is available to download from the Fáilte Ireland website: www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth

4.4 STAGE 4: DEVELOPMENT PHASE

Where a project obtains Stage 3 approval, the project moves into the Project Development phase, in line with the Capital Works Management Framework⁸.

An investment grant may be approved to support detailed design, planning, tendering and other essential tasks in the development phase of the project. The applicant must enter into and comply with the Investment Grant Agreement and all pre-investment requirements before

investment grant monies are paid. The Project Development phase must be completed and the Development Phase Completion Form submitted within 24 months of the date of the Stage 3 approval.

4.5 STAGE 5: DELIVERY PHASE

After the Development phase is concluded and tendering is complete, and before contracts are put in place, applicants must submit a Development Phase Completion Form before proceeding through Stage 5.

This is to allow Fáilte Ireland to confirm that the project has been designed in detail, that all statutory consents are in place and that contracts are ready to be awarded. Fáilte Ireland will assess that the project remains consistent with the terms of the Stage 3 approval and that all elements of the Development Phase Investment Grant Agreement have been complied with. An investment grant may then be approved to support the construction and delivery of the project.

The applicant must enter into and comply with the Investment Grant Agreement before investment grant monies are paid. The Investment Grant is at all times reimbursed in arrears based on vouched paid expenditure in proportion to the rate of investment to overall investment of eligible costs.

See Section 7 for more information on the Development and Delivery Phases.

8. See www.constructionprocurement.gov.ie



HOW WILL APPLICATIONS BE EVALUATED?

5



Eligible completed applications will be evaluated on a competitive basis, taking into account the outcomes and priorities of the Immersive Heritage and Cultural Attractions Platform, and in accordance with Fáilte Ireland's strategic priorities. For clarity, applicants should note:

- The six national level outcomes of the Platform are detailed in Section 2.2.1.
- The regional level priorities are detailed in Section 2.2.2

Applicants are reminded to avail of the information contained in the Platforms for Growth Toolkit, and its associated resources, in order to make the best case for their project. The Toolkit is available to download from the Fáilte Ireland website, www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth.

We will use our tourism industry expertise and evaluation tools as required to ensure a fair and robust assessment of applications, which will result in the best return on the Exchequer investment.

At Stage 3, applicants may be requested to present their final proposals to Fáilte Ireland as part of the overall evaluation process.



WHY VISITOR NUMBER PROJECTIONS ARE SO IMPORTANT?

Visitor numbers to a new or improved visitor attraction is a key requirement of this scheme as these numbers will demonstrate the economic impact of the project on the area in which it is located. These projected numbers demonstrate not only the number of visitors to the attraction itself, but also those that are likely to engage in other activities in the area and eat, drink and overnight in the locale. This indirect spend serves to increase dwell time in the area, increase bednights and generate employment, all of which serve to deliver on Fáilte Ireland's strategic objectives.

In assessing the economic impact of a project, Fáilte Ireland will pay particular attention not only to the percentage of overseas visitors projected to visit the attraction but also the projected growth of these overseas visitors. Fáilte Ireland places significant emphasis on the overseas visitor because they not only generate additional spend into the country but also spend significant amounts on food, drink, accommodation and travel. These growth levels will need to align with projected growth levels for the area. As with all other elements of your application at any stage, projected visitor numbers will be the subject of careful scrutiny by Fáilte Ireland.

Fáilte Ireland will also analyse visitor number projections to assess the length of time over which the taxpayer is likely to recoup its investment.

APPEALS PROCESS

6



Depending on the stage in the approval process, the following table (Table 5) sets out the timelines for an appeal:

Stage in the Process	Timeline for Submission of the Appeal	Timeline for an Acknowledgement on the validity of the Appeal	Timeline for a Decision on the Appeal
End of Stage 2	Within 15 working days from the date of the correspondence notifying the applicant that the application was unsuccessful	Within 7 working days of receiving a letter of appeal	Within 15 working days of receiving a valid letter of appeal
End of Stage 3	Within 20 working days from the date of the correspondence notifying the applicant that the application was unsuccessful	Within 10 working days of receiving a letter of appeal	Within 20 working days of receiving a valid letter of appeal
End of Stage 4 (Development Phase)	Within 20 working days from the date of the correspondence notifying the applicant that the application was unsuccessful	Within 10 working days of receiving a letter of appeal	Within 20 working days of receiving a valid letter of appeal

6.1 ENGAGEMENT

Before formally entering the appeals process, unsuccessful applicants should write to Fáilte Ireland via email (capital@failteireland.ie) and seek further information and clarification with regard to their application.

Fáilte Ireland will use reasonable endeavours to provide relevant information by way of reply, subject to data protection, commercial confidentiality and other legal requirements as relevant. It will however, be sufficient in all circumstances for Fáilte Ireland to provide a high level summary of any reason or analysis.

6.2 SUBMITTING AN APPEAL

If, having discussed the outcome of an unsuccessful application with a member of Fáilte Ireland staff, an applicant still wishes to appeal the decision, the applicant must write to the Appeals Officer at Fáilte Ireland within the timeline set out in Table 2 above.

The letter of appeal must state:

- The grounds on which the applicant believes the application was not properly dealt with or assessed;
- Specific reasons or evidence the applicant may have to support the appeal.

Letters of appeal must be sent to the Appeals Officer, National Tourism Development Authority, Áras Fáilte, 88-95 Amiens Street, Dublin 1, D01 WR86.

6.3 VALIDITY OF APPEAL

On receipt, the appeal will be checked to ensure it falls within the scope of this appeals process and that sufficient grounds for the appeal have been provided.

The applicant will receive an acknowledgement from the Appeals Officer or from a person delegated to represent him/her in his/her absence noting the outcome of the validity check within the timeline as set out in Table 5 above. Invalid appeals will be rejected at this stage of the process.

6.4 APPEAL REVIEW PROCESS

In accordance with the timeline set out in Table 5, the appeal will be considered by the Appeals Officer in Fáilte Ireland.

His/her decision will be binding and will not be subject to any further appeals. Their conclusions and recommendations will be communicated to the applicant within seven working days of the Appeals Officer's decision. Where any delay is anticipated the applicant will be informed in writing of the extended timescale.

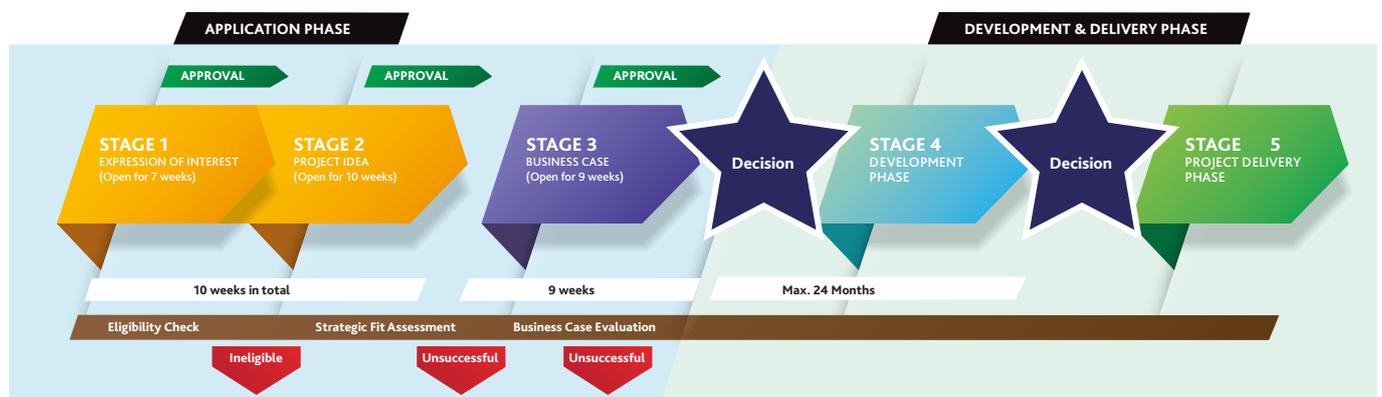
FÁILTE IRELAND WILL USE REASONABLE ENDEAVOURS TO PROVIDE RELEVANT INFORMATION BY WAY OF REPLY, SUBJECT TO DATA PROTECTION, COMMERCIAL CONFIDENTIALITY, AND OTHER LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AS RELEVANT

HOW WILL FÁILTE IRELAND WORK WITH SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

7



PLATFORMS FOR GROWTH: PROCESS MAP



If successful, in accordance with the terms of the Investment Grant Agreement, Fáilte Ireland will work in conjunction with applicants and use its reasonable endeavours throughout the Development and Delivery Phases to help applicants shape the project and achieve the result of a great visitor experience.

DURING THESE PHASES:

1. **Projects should proceed in line with the Capital Works Management Framework.**
2. **EU and National public procurement procedures must be followed with regard to the expenditure proposed in relation to the project.**

The Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF), which has been devised by the Government, sets out a common approach and common language for procurement and project management of capital projects. The CWMF will apply to building works including related services, such as the Design Team consultants. For more information and guidance on the CWMF, see www.constructionprocurement.gov.ie

The Platform for Growth process is aligned with the CWMF and approved projects must adhere to the Framework and all relevant public procurement guidelines through all stages of the development. For more information on Public Procurement, please see <https://ogp.gov.ie/>

7.1 DEVELOPMENT PHASE

A Projects Officer from Fáilte Ireland will be assigned to work with you after your project is approved (after Stage 3) to guide and cultivate the project. By the end of the Development Phase (Stage 4), as well as the Development Phase Completion Form, a number of key milestones must be achieved before a project may advance to Stage 5 including:

- Detailed Interpretation and Experience Plans complete
- Detailed Design complete
- Branding strategy complete, if required
- Detailed sales and marketing plan complete
- Detailed Cost Plan complete
- Updated Project Programme and Execution Plan
- Statutory Approvals in place
- Planning Permission received
- Environmental Assessments (e.g. EIA, AA) completed if required
- Updated management and operations plan
- Detailed information on how the project has changed in scope or deliverables since the Application Stages

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

We would strongly advise applicants who retain external consultants or designers to assist with their applications, to tender out all contracts in relation to the project in line with public procurement rules. Eligible applicants should also consider their procurement strategy early on in the process, and establish the relevant procurement categories (i) Supplies (Goods), (ii) Services, or (iii) Works, and the associated cost estimates with each. By following the public procurement rules at all stages, applicants will avoid any procurement issues affecting the investment grant claim in the Development or Delivery Phases.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT A DEDICATED EXTERNAL PROJECT MANAGER IS APPOINTED FOR BOTH THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY PHASES. THE CONSULTANCY FEES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING UNDER THIS SCHEME.

In order to achieve the best possible outcomes for the project, in addition to a potential development investment grant, Fáilte Ireland may also provide external experts to work with successful applicants, supporting them during this phase (e.g. public procurement).

During the development phase the total project costs will be determined. At this stage, Fáilte Ireland will determine, at its absolute discretion, the amount of the investment grant award in the Delivery Phase and the applicant will be required to respond to all enquiries and information requested by Fáilte Ireland in any such assessment.

The above information must be submitted to Fáilte Ireland for approval prior to the implementation of your project. After the development phase is concluded and tendering is complete, and before contracts are put in place, applicants must submit a Development Phase Completion Form. Fáilte Ireland will assess that the project is consistent with the terms of the Stage 3 approval.

Applicants should note that projects may be declined Delivery Phase funding at this stage if

- there is a significant divergence from the delivery cost, outputs and outcomes of the project described in the Stage 3 Application;
- the length of time between the Stage 3 approval and the submission of the Development Phase Completion Form is more than 24 months;
- funding is no longer available to Fáilte Ireland or is available but is required for other statutory purposes as determined by Fáilte Ireland;
- an applicant or project becomes ineligible for assistance

7.2 DELIVERY PHASE

After the full investment funding is approved, the project moves into the delivery phase. Projects must be completed in line with the Capital Works Management Framework. The Fáilte Ireland Projects Officer will continue to work with you during this phase.

Fáilte Ireland has developed a Pre-Opening Support Programme for projects that receive funding under this Programme. The Pre-Opening Support Programme has been designed to ensure your project can operate to best in class standard and can deliver a return on the investment grant aid.

During the delivery phase, Fáilte Ireland will conduct an audit of your project and identify the set of supports that your business may require to support the future operation and commerciality of the project.

Grantees will then be required to participate in a multi-modular training programme as a condition of the investment grant. Areas of support may include sales and marketing, revenue management, merchandising, food, operations, tour guiding, customer service- and any supports identified. In addition to the training, specialist advice may be provided to individual projects through mentoring as required.



LEGAL, STATE AID, AND TERMS OF INVESTMENT

8



8.1 LEGAL AND STATE AID BASIS

Fáilte Ireland is the grant-aiding Authority for this Scheme. The legal basis of the scheme is Section 8 (1) (e) of the National Tourism Development Authority Act, 2003. Investment grants are provided in accordance with the criteria set out in these Guidelines, subject to EU State aid law. State aid rules apply to this scheme and determine what types of projects are eligible and what support can be provided by Fáilte Ireland. This Scheme is operating under the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) rules.⁹

GBER

GBER¹⁰ is an EU measure that provides exemptions from the State aid rules in certain situations. Fáilte Ireland has identified the exemptions that are relevant to project proposals under this Platform as follows:

- Aid for culture and heritage conservation (Article 53 of the GBER)

This is the primary exemption for this Platform, and in addition to being eligible and meeting the Heritage and Culture Criteria set out in Section 3.2, all projects will have to meet the requirements of this exemption. Therefore, the subject of an application must be a bona fides culture or heritage conservation project.

9. *Platforms for Growth forms part of the Grant Scheme for Large Tourism Projects which was first notified to the European Commission in 2016 and subsequently updated in 2019*

10. *Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Article 107 and 108 of the Treaty. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:02014R0651-20170710>*

Other ancillary elements of eligible Immersive Heritage and Cultural projects may be considered for investment grant aid under the other exemptions below:

- Aid for sport and multifunctional recreational infrastructures (Article 55)
- Investment aid for local infrastructures (Article 56)
- Aid for consultancy in favour of SMEs (Article 18)
- Regional Investment Aid (Article 14)

Applicants should note that the grant aid available under some provisions, such as Culture and Heritage Conservation, may be greater than under others. During the evaluation process, Fáilte Ireland will consider the potential applicability of the exemptions listed.

Applicants should also be mindful of the rules on cumulation, also referred to as 'double-funding'. Those rules are set out in Article 8 of the GBER and concern situations in which aid of different types may be combined. As part of the applications process, applicants will be required to advise at an early stage the basis for other funding for the same project.

To fall within the GBER, its provisions must be complied with in all cases and in all respects in so far as they apply to State aid for a particular project. While Fáilte Ireland has a primary responsibility to comply with those requirements and other State aid rules, compliance also depends on the co-operation of applicants, including their adherence to these guidelines, their candour in making applications to us and ultimately, their compliance with the Investment Grant Agreement, including the requirements under GBER.

Applicants should ensure that they seek their own independent, professional advice regarding State Aid and procurement matters in particular. Fáilte Ireland may call on applicants to provide clarity or confirmation (including by means of professional opinion) in respect of any State Aid related query in relation to the project or the wider funding context. That may include provision of information as to any other forms of public funding or assistance obtained, or in the course of being sought, or that is likely to be applied for.

APPLICANTS WHO ARE NOT UNDERTAKINGS

These State Aid rules only apply to undertakings. An undertaking is an entity, however structured from a legal perspective, that engages in economic activity. Applicants that are not undertakings for the purpose of the project may also apply and must satisfy Fáilte Ireland that they are not undertakings.

LIFETIME OF THE PROGRAMME

Platforms for Growth is a multi-annual investment grant programme which is envisaged to remain in operation until 2022. For updates on the Programme refer to the website www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth.

PUBLIC SPENDING CODE

All public bodies, including Fáilte Ireland, who are in receipt of public funding, are obliged to comply with the requirements of the Public Spending Code to ensure best value is achieved from state resources. Fáilte Ireland and its investment grantees are also subject to the rules of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 13/2014. For more information see www.circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/per/2014/13.pdf.

DISCLAIMER

While this information is provided for information purposes only, no duty of care arises as to whether funding is or is not State aid, is exempted or not, or is otherwise unlawful or not under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Under no circumstances whatsoever should Fáilte Ireland be regarded as representing or warranting (including by way of any implied term) that any particular funding is lawful under the State aid rules. Moreover, Fáilte Ireland does not accept any liability for loss of any kind that is claimed to be suffered by any applicant or any interested party by reason of the treatment of particular funding under State aid law and any attendant processes including recovery or claw-back.

8.2 TERMS OF OUR INVESTMENT

TERMS OF OUR INVESTMENT

In accordance with Section 8 of the National Tourism Development Authority Act 2003, the National Tourism Development Authority ('Fáilte Ireland') has discretion to provide investment in the form of grants to such projects as it considers appropriate. There is no guarantee of funding for applications that achieve the minimum eligibility requirements. At all times during this process, Fáilte Ireland has complete discretion not to award an investment grant. In addition, Fáilte Ireland reserves the right to restrict a funding offer to certain elements of a project proposal only.

INVESTMENT GRANT AGREEMENT

Following approval by Fáilte Ireland, successful applicants will receive an Investment Grant Agreement. This document will form the basis of the contract between Fáilte Ireland and the project promoter. The Investment Grant Agreement will contain all terms and conditions related to the offer of funding. In cases where security is required for the investment, separate and satisfactory security documentation must be entered into before any part of the investment grant is paid.

The standard terms and conditions attaching to an offer of an investment grant are set out in Appendix 3.

It should be noted that the Investment Grant Agreement will identify minimum amounts of project completion required within specified timelines (for both the Development (Stage 4) and Delivery Phase (Stage 5)). If the applicant fails to deliver as specified, Fáilte Ireland reserves the right (at our absolute discretion) to:

- decommit the full project, or
- continue with the project but if the applicant fails to achieve the due date for completion of the project, Fáilte Ireland will reduce the value of our overall investment grant by up to 5% (on the basis of a reduction of 0.5% for every month overdue when Fáilte Ireland deem the reasons for delay not to be satisfactory)¹¹.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

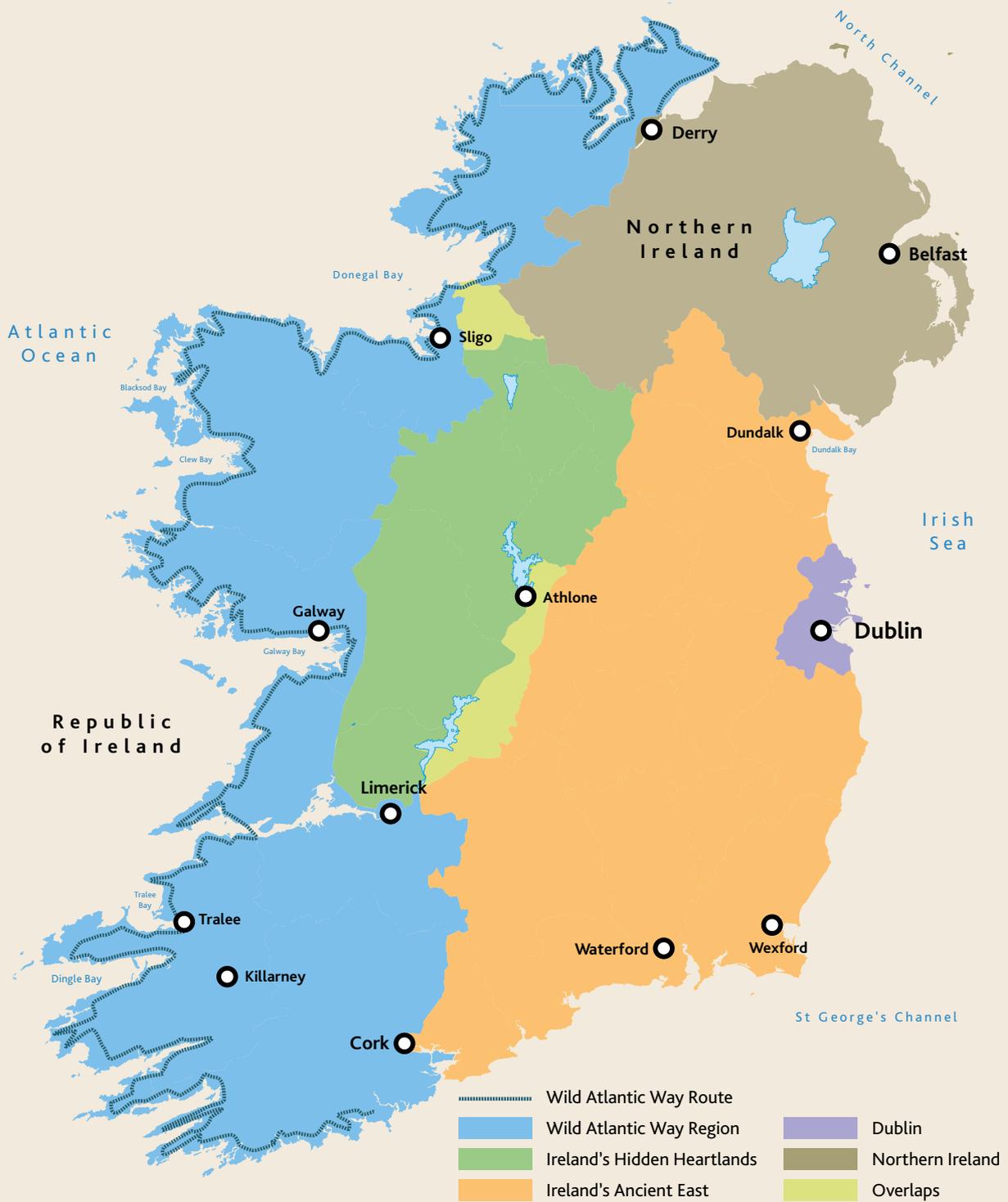
During the course of the Operative Period as defined in Appendix 3, projects that receive an investment grant must deliver on the terms of the investment conditions approved by Fáilte Ireland as set out in Appendix 3.

As a means of rewarding those projects which meet their KPIs Fáilte Ireland has created an incentive fund. Eligibility is subject to the following:

- Applicants must achieve a number of performance KPIs to be set in agreement with Fáilte Ireland
- Examples of KPIs: visitor numbers by origin/sales performance/optimising operational models/cluster enhancement activities/seasonality activities etc
- Two major performance reviews will be undertaken by Fáilte Ireland two years and four years after opening
- If performance is deemed satisfactory (in the view of Fáilte Ireland) an additional award of up to 5% (2.5% at Year 2 and 2.5% at Year 4) of their total capital project costs e.g. up to €125,000 for projects of €2.5m (the minimum total project cost)

¹¹. Applicants are reminded that the Investment Grant is at all times reimbursed in arrears based on vouched paid expenditure in proportion to the rate of investment to overall investment of eligible costs.

REGIONAL EXPERIENCE BRAND MAP



DUBLIN'S DOCKLANDS MAP*



*As defined in the forthcoming Fáilte Ireland Visitor Experience Development Plan for Dublin's Docklands

INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Applicants that have received grant aid from Fáilte Ireland under a previous scheme, but have not yet finalised the grant drawdown process to the satisfaction of Fáilte Ireland
- Aid to undertakings in difficulty, details of which are set out in the GBER
- Aid in favour of an undertaking which is subject to an outstanding recovery order following a previous European Commission decision declaring an aid illegal and incompatible with the internal market;
- Applicants that are not tax compliant are not eligible and applicants will be required to demonstrate evidence of tax compliance;
- Applicants that are not in a position to establish that they either (a) own the project site or (b) have the right to undertake the proposed project on the identified site, and sustain that right throughout the operative period of the project
- Applicants that are not the organisation or individual through which all grant-aided expenditure on the project will be made. (i.e. Entities that are not the grantee of the aid);
- Applicants that have been in breach of a material provision of a previous grant agreement. For these purposes, the applicant shall be deemed to include:
 - (i) any other enterprise so in breach that was previously in receipt of funding and which either as of the date of the previous grant agreement or as of the date of an application under this scheme formed or forms part of 'single undertaking' (within the meaning of Article 2 (2) of Commission Regulation No. 1407/2013) with or in relation to the current applicant; and
 - (ii) any person who is or was a director, officer, shareholder (with a shareholding of at least 10%) or interest holder (being in the nature of any right to at least 10% of any profits) of or in any enterprise that is or was so in breach, or of any other enterprise, which with or in respect of the former, forms part of a 'single enterprise' in accordance with (i) and which was so in breach.

STANDARD INDICATIVE TERMS & CONDITIONS ATTACHING TO THE INVESTMENT GRANT AGREEMENT

A successful applicant will be required to enter in to an Agreement with Fáilte Ireland at both the development (Stage 4) and delivery (Stage 5). The terms and conditions and conditions of both of these agreements are outlined below.

INVESTMENT GRANT AGREEMENT (DEVELOPMENT PHASE)

Successful applicants at the end of Stage 3 will receive a Development Investment Grant Agreement which will form the basis of the Development Phase contract between Fáilte Ireland and the Applicant. This will set out the terms and conditions of the Development Investment Grant and will cover various elements including, but not limited to, the following requirements:

- Grant Purpose
- State Aid Compliance
- Public Procurement
- Commencement Obligations
- Progress Reporting
- Term
- Drawdown of Development Investment Grant
- Retention of Records
- Freedom of Information, Data Protection and other statutory obligations
- Breach of Agreement

INVESTMENT GRANT AGREEMENT (DELIVERY PHASE)

Successful applicants at the end of Stage 4 will receive an Investment Grant Agreement, which will form the basis of the contract between Fáilte Ireland and the grantee. This will set out the terms and conditions of the Delivery Investment Grant and will cover various elements including but not limited to, the following requirements:

- Grant Purpose
- State Aid Compliance
- Commencement of Work
- Project Management Obligations
- Security
- Publicity and Marketing
- Performance Monitoring
- Public Procurement
- Retention of records
- Visitor use
- Termination
- Repayment / Disposal
- Freedom of Information
- Data Protection and GDPR Compliance
- 'Children First' legislation
- Drawdown of the Investment Grant

Fáilte Ireland is not bound to propose an Investment Grant Agreement that reflects, in all respects, these Guidelines.

Applicants should note the following in particular:

VISITOR NUMBERS

If the project is not already measuring visitor numbers, the project must incorporate a new method, compliant with all applicable data protection legislation, for recording visitor numbers and include a methodology for recording the country of origin of overseas visitors.

SECURITY

For projects in private ownership, the grantee will be required to provide adequate security to the satisfaction of Fáilte Ireland to secure the investment grant for the first ten years of the operative period.

This security will be in the form of a fixed charge over an unencumbered asset(s) to the value of the investment grant and the applicant must outline the security they propose to offer. This will be requested as part of the application process. In the event that a fixed charge is not adequate security by itself, the grantee must provide additional security in a form satisfactory to Fáilte Ireland.

COMPLETION OF WORK

The date by which work must be completed, the particular conditions in relation to industry standards and meeting with statutory and local authority requirements, will be specified in the Investment Grant Agreement.

OPERATIVE PERIOD

The Operative Period of the grant-aided project is fifteen years and the project must operate as a visitor attraction for this period, which commences from the date of opening after the Fáilte Ireland funded project is completed.

MONITORING & UPDATES

The grantee must provide monthly updates and year end reports on the progress of the project during the development and delivery stages of the project. The grantee will file annual financial statements with Fáilte Ireland and also, if requested, more frequent management accounts, visitor and facility usage details etc. The grantee must also co-operate with monitoring checks and reviews during the Operative Period. The grantee must comply with on-going requirements of Fáilte Ireland during the development of the project and during the Operative Period.

RETENTION OF RECORDS

Grantees must comply with all conditions in relation to the retention of records, as per the Investment Grant Agreement which extends also to Contractors and Sub-Contractors engaged in the development. All relevant records must be made available upon request for examination by authorised officials of Fáilte Ireland, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, other relevant Government Departments and the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

VISITOR USE

During the Operative Period the Project must be open to the public as follows:

- **Opening Times (1):** All projects must be open to visitors on a minimum of 154 days per year immediately after the opening of the grant-aided project. The requirement includes a minimum of six days per week, including weekends and bank holidays (excluding Christmas), and six months per year.
- **Opening Times (2):** In addition, projects must plan to expand their opening times in a gradual progressive manner to a minimum of 234 days per year within 5 years of the opening of the grant-aided project. The requirement includes a minimum of six days per week, including weekends and bank holidays (excluding Christmas), and nine months per year.
- **Extended Evening Hours:** For projects located in Dublin it is a requirement of this scheme that the applicant commits to extended evening opening hours (i.e. until at least 7pm) a minimum of two days per weeks during peak season (1st June – 31st August), upon opening of the project. If attractions are already meeting the above in full there will be no further obligation to offer longer opening hours.

Fáilte Ireland staff and/or its consultants must have access to the Project at all reasonable times, for the purposes of inspection, during the Operative Period.

REPAYMENT / DISPOSAL

The investment grant is repayable if the project ceases to be operated as agreed during the Operative Period. Fáilte Ireland will require the immediate repayment of the investment grant if any of the conditions of the investment grant agreement are not complied with.

MARKETING

It is essential that the capital development be supported by marketing activity for the project. The relevant 'Experience Brand' logo, message and branding must be included on all marketing collateral including any promotional media and literature, any websites that the grantee operates and on any external signage. Brand guidelines will be issued to approved projects prior to completion.

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

The grantee shall comply with EU and National public procurement law and associated procedures, the core principles of which are that procurement policy and practice should be accountable, competitive, fair and transparent, non-discriminatory, provide for equality of treatment and be conducted with probity and integrity. In particular, the grantee must comply with the "Public Procurement Guidelines - Competitive Process", available at www.etenders.gov.ie and all other applicable regulations, statutory instruments and EU Directives.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Applicants should note that under the Freedom of Information Act, 2014, information provided by them in their application may be liable to be disclosed. Applicants are asked to consider if any of the information supplied by them in their application should not be disclosed because of its confidentiality or commercial sensitivity. If applicants consider that certain information should not be disclosed due to confidentiality or commercial sensitivity, they must clearly identify such information and specify the reasons why it is confidential or commercially sensitive. Any information not identified as confidential or commercially sensitive is liable to be released in response to a Freedom of Information request without further notice to the applicant. Fáilte Ireland will, where possible, consult with applicants about information identified as confidential or commercially sensitive information, before making a decision on a request received under the Freedom of Information Act subject to compliance with its obligations under the Act.

DATA PROTECTION AND GDPR COMPLIANCE

Applicants must comply with their obligations under Data Protection Legislation including the General Data Protection Regulation (EU 2016/679 (GDPR) and the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018) with regard to any personal information supplied as part of their application. For details of how Fáilte Ireland will process personal data (including any sensitive personal data) provided as part of the application for the purpose of the administration of the Programme please see Fáilte Ireland's Privacy Policy available at <http://failteireland.ie/Footer/Privacy-Policy.aspx>

CHILDREN FIRST ACT

Applicants should note that anyone applying for funding from Fáilte Ireland must be compliant with the requirements of the Children First Act, 2015.

ELIGIBLE/INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

Only eligible capital expenditure elements of projects can be grant-aided under this programme.

Expenditure, to be eligible for investment grant assistance, must have the following general characteristics:

- It must be relevant and appropriate to the project being grant-aided
- It must be additional, i.e. it would not have been incurred without the existence of the grant-aided project
- It must be actually incurred and paid, and be evidenced by invoices, payment records, bank statement and other appropriate documentation

Retail, food and beverage expenditure is eligible under this scheme where it is not the main part of the project being funded but rather supports and underpins the overall viability and sustainability of the attraction. In order to do this Fáilte Ireland may cap the percentage of the project for which this is eligible expenditure. The applicant will also be required to demonstrate this will not result in displacement.

INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

The following expenditure is ineligible in all cases:

- Accommodation facilities and related facilities
- Depreciation
- Expenditure derived from estimates or valuations and not supported by actual payment documentation
- Expenditure incurred after the completion date as stated in the Investment Grant Agreement
- Expenditure incurred and / or paid before date of approval by Fáilte Ireland of the project
- Financing costs (including bank interest and charges)
- Fines, penalty payments, legal costs, audit fees, insurances
- Loose fittings, furniture etc., unless deemed necessary and relevant to the visitor experience
- Marketing, including start-up marketing
- Motorised and non-motorised transport vehicles (including bicycles, buses, boats, ferries etc). Exceptions may be made, at Fáilte Ireland's discretion, where a vehicle is integral but not the main part of the attraction, has a restricted transport range and is not being used as a means of transport. (e.g. transport museum items)
- Operational costs
- Purchase of land and buildings
- Recoverable Value Added Tax (VAT)
- Repairs, maintenance and replacement expenses
- Salaries and wages
- Training costs
- Unpaid expenditure

Note:

In addition to the above, a full list of ineligible project types is also included in Section 3.2 of the Guidelines.

MATCH FUNDING FROM OTHER PUBLIC FUNDING SOURCES

Subject to State Aid rules, Fáilte Ireland will accept match funding for eligible projects under this Platform that originates from other public sources or grants schemes, (E.g. the LEADER Programme).

RURAL/URBAN REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

Applicants should note the following caveat in relation to the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) and the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF):

As part of Project 2040, the Government committed to provide an additional €1bn to 2027 to support rural renewal through the RRDF. In addition, €2bn will be provided via the URDF to support compact growth and sustainable development of Ireland's five cities and large urban centres to 2027.

Fáilte Ireland will accept match-funding under this 2019 Platform for Growth from successful applicants to these funds on the following basis only:

1. Projects that have received Category 2 (RRDF) or Category B (URDF) 'further development' approval under either of the 2018 calls. Note that applicants must still provide evidence of match-funding for the full project, both development and delivery phases.
2. Projects that have received Category 1 (RRDF) or Category A (URDF) 'ready to go' approval under either of the forthcoming 2019 calls.

INVESTMENT GRANT CLAIMING PROCESS

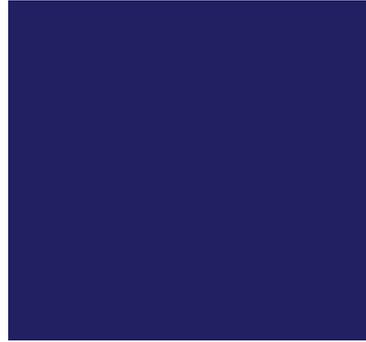
Payments will only be made to the body specified as the grantee in the Investment Grant Agreement and will be based on expenditure incurred and paid by the grantee. The process for claiming drawdown of the investment grant will be set out in the Investment Grant Agreement and will require various documentation to be prepared and submitted. Further details on the process will be made available to successful applicants after funding has been approved.

It is important to note for cashflow purposes that payment is in arrears based on paid certified expenditure.

Expenditure paid by a third party, unless reimbursed by the grantee, will not be grant-aided. Grantees must have current tax clearance from Revenue at the time of any claim and payment. Fáilte Ireland will carry out verification checks on the claim and on the project delivery before passing the claim for payment.

Grantees will be required, at time of investment grant claim, to certify that the project has not been approved for additional grant-aid from any other source, or for accelerated capital allowances under any tax scheme (other than as previously notified to Fáilte Ireland).

The timing of investment grant payments is subject to Fáilte Ireland being in receipt of sufficient Exchequer funding to meet the payments. In the event of any unavailability, reprioritisation (including by Fáilte Ireland) or delays in such funds, there will be no liability on the part of Fáilte Ireland or the Exchequer to make good any shortfall experienced.



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040



Fáilte Ireland
National Tourism Development Authority

For further information on the Platforms for Growth Investment Programme please visit
www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth or email capital@failteireland.ie