



GREAT Gateway Innovation Fund 2024

Grant Scheme Guidance for Applicants
September 2024

Introduction

With the support of the GREAT Britain and Northern Ireland Campaign, the Fund aims to provide financial assistance to UK-accredited DDPs (England only), LVEPs (England only) or DMOs (only in Scotland and Wales) to deliver marketing activity in either France or Germany and the United States. The Fund seeks to drive marketing innovation by focusing on a specific inbound gateway or region in Great Britain which has a direct port of passenger entry, whether an airport, a seaport or fixed rail link, from one of the three stated key GREAT markets.

The DDP, LVEP or DMO is required to inspire and rally the local industry and partner with an airline, ferry or train service to unlock matched investment, to extend the marketing campaign and reach a bigger audience. Working in collaboration with this partner and other wider industry partners, applicants will need to develop an international consumer marketing campaign that showcases the very best of that region to an experience seeker audience motivating them to travel to Great Britain in 2024/25.

The aim is for the funded campaigns to be live in market between December 2024 and March 2025 encouraging travel in the shoulder season to support seasonal objectives.

The target audience are 'Experience Seekers', who are the best prospect segment and who want to squeeze the most out of every second whilst on holiday. Willing to spend on travel and experiences, they are passionate about travel, they love discovering new, unique, exciting experiences that they can share with others. They want to get ahead of the curve and be seen as a trailblazer, seeking out immersive experiences that allow them to see, taste and discover unique activities, places and people

Full details on the Experience-Seekers can be found <https://www.visitbritain.org/our-marketing-and-campaigns>

What is the scope and purpose of the Fund?

Following the success of the earlier pilot programme in 2022/23, this Fund aims to continue this activity and support industry in promoting inbound tourism to a specific British gateway destination or region for international visitors from any of the three stated GREAT markets.

VisitBritain is looking to support either a DDP, LVEP or DMO to;

- Promote and market your gateway/region experiences to an international consumer audience in any of the three stated GREAT markets.
- Deliver a fully integrated consumer facing marketing campaign (this could include third-party media buy, influencer programme etc.) to promote the relevant gateway/region to consumers in one of the three GREAT markets stated above.
- The applicant must inspire and rally local industry to get involved, plan and deliver this campaign on behalf of the gateway destination or region;
- Augment the gateway/region marketing campaign budget with additional cash co-financing contributions and monetised in kind financial contributions. For every £1 in grant funds, prospective applicants will be required to secure a further minimum of £2 made up of a minimum 50 pence in cash co-financing contributions and an additional 150 pence in the value of monetised in-kind contributions from participating from campaign

partners. Cash co-financing contributions should be sourced from either private sector companies and/or local authorities but not from central government departments' schemes.

- The primary commercial booking partner must be either a transport carrier (airline, ferry or train operator) or an airport. If an airport, either the destination and/or the airport must be the lead party in terms of the campaign creative and messaging. For creative reasons, multiple airlines flying to the same destination cannot be featured in the campaign. Supporting partners can be made up of industry of your choice.
- Provide post-campaign quantitative evaluation results from the executed marketing activities, showing the actual value (monetary GBP equivalent) and volume (number) of consumer bookings generated from incremental visitors to the gateway destination or region in 2024/25.

What is the budget of this Fund?

The Fund is a competitive grant scheme and will operate from September 2024 to March 2025, with a total budget allocation of up to £450,000. The expectation is that successful applicants will deliver marketing activities during the key consumer booking period between December 2024 and March 2025. The assumption is that £300,000 will be awarded for a US-targeted campaign and £150,000 for a campaign in either France or Germany.

Who can apply?

The Fund is open to the following types of businesses, defined as follows:

- An English **destination development partnership (DDP)**
- An English **local visitor economy partnership (LVEP)**
- A regional **destination management organisation (DMO)** based in either Scotland or Wales.
- Applicants must have a permanent place of business in either England, Scotland or Wales (i.e. a registered office in either of these jurisdictions at Companies House). Please note that the home offices of individual employees would not be considered valid business addresses and therefore would be ineligible to apply.

For the sake of clarity, the following types of companies and organisations are ineligible for financial support from this Fund and so cannot apply¹:

- Destination Management Organisations in England not accredited as Local Visitor Economy Partnerships.
- National UK Tourist Boards

¹ If any applications are in fact received from this ineligible set, they will be identified at the initial checks stage and will not go forward for assessment and scoring.

- Overseas-based Travel Agent Consortia
- Sole traders
- Industry bodies
- Membership organisations representing solely a sectional interest-group within the tourism and hospitality industries, such as hotelier associations and attraction groupings.

What type of funding is available? How much can organisations apply for?

Eligible applicants can apply for a cash grant as a part-contribution towards the cost of delivering an inbound gateway tourism marketing campaign targeting consumers in one of the three GREAT overseas markets in 2024/25.

Applicants must secure the commitment from one (1) booking partner that sells travel to Britain, this should be an airline, ferry, train company or airport, and a minimum of one (1) supporting partner from local industry.

The grant funding must support a detailed marketing plan for the promotion of the gateway/region that involves marketing activity taking place between December 2024 and March 2025.

DDPs LVEPs and DMOs, which meet the qualifying eligibility criteria can apply for a cash grant ranging from £150,000 to £300,000. The final campaign budget will be higher when partners' cash co-financing contributions and monetised marketing in-kind contributions are included.

VisitBritain expects to make two grant awards. Competition for funding is likely to be high as this grant scheme is open to eligible applicants across the three 'home' nations of Great Britain. In the event of the Fund being over-subscribed, we reserve the right to award a lower amount than that requested by the applicant, but with a minimum floor of £150,000.

What are the eligibility criteria?

Applicants must meet **all** of the following eligibility criteria:

1. Must be either an English DDP or LVEP or Scottish or Welsh DMO. Applicants must have a permanent place of business in Great Britain (i.e. registered office address with Companies House). Please note that the home offices of individual employees would not be considered a valid business address in Britain.
2. Be legally incorporated as a company limited by shares or guarantee (unless the applicant is a local authority or public sector body).
3. The eligible applicant must market/promote/sell the specified gateway/region and must demonstrate recent experience (namely, over the period from 2023-2024) of working in any overseas markets, as evidenced by previous marketing plans.

4. Applicants must demonstrate that they will be able to secure cash co-financing contributions from industry partners to increase the overall campaign budget as well as monetised marketing-in-kind contributions in the form of consumer channels to reach the target audience. The cash co-financing contributions should be paid into the campaign budget held by the applicant. The sought-after ratio is 2 (partners): 1 (VisitBritain). To help explain the point, here is an example. If VisitBritain were to provide a cash grant of £100,000, then the grant recipient (lead partner) would need to 'match' that amount with at least one-quarter in additional cash (i.e. £50,000) and three-quarters in the value of marketing in-kind contributions (i.e. £150,000).

Marketing in kind refers to any channels you can access for 'free' that will reach the experience-seeker audience. Such examples might include advertising space on partner websites, emails to targeted databases, out of home advertising in key locations, access to partner media channels etc. Applicants will be required to state what the expected reach and value is. VisitBritain reserve the right to review this with a media agency to assess value.

5. Additional weighting will be given to those applicants who can exceed 2:1 'match' ratio described above in Point 4.
6. Must align to VisitBritain marketing strategy, including;
 - a. Target experience- seeker audience <https://www.visitbritain.org/our-marketing-and-campaigns>
 - b. Must align with the VB Great Britain brand story (modern, dynamic, diverse Britain) and use of GREAT logo.
 - c. Must feature product aligned to the priority buckets within the Brand /Experience guidelines
 - d. VisitBritain have a focus on TV/FILM which will launch in January 2025. We would ask that within your activity plans you include a selection of product/experiences/content that links back to this theme. Your Call to Action should include 'Visit the Star of the Show'.
7. Applicants must be able to show that it has the available people resources to deliver the activity funded by the grant. The grant cannot be used to support staff salaries, contractors' fees or business overheads and consequently it must be wholly spent on buying campaign media.
8. The applicant organisation must be able to show that it has the financial reserves to call upon and is not at risk of business failure and closure.
9. The Applicant must have a demonstrable track record of working with an international partner. Your application will need to be accompanied by (a) letter(s) of commitment from the industry partners to the proposed marketing activity, along with confirmation of the matched value should your application be successful.
10. Applicants must commit to working with the VisitBritain local teams in relevant markets to ensure that their actual marketing plans can complement the wider Britain marketing message in 2024/25.

11. All applications must have a UK bank account in the name of the applicant which must be a corporate legal entity. A bank account in the name of an individual will not be acceptable.
12. Confirmation that the business was NOT in financial difficulty before 31 December 2019. Please see the Subsidy Control section in this guidance document for further information about the legal basis on which this grant-funding is being offered.

What types of marketing activity will Fund cover?

Eligible applicants can apply for grant-funding to support the cost of marketing tourism activities in the target markets of France, Germany and The United States as a means of driving tourism 2024/25.

The Fund will support sales and marketing activities and include activities, such as:

- Media buy with a third-party media owner (you will need access to a media agency).
- Development and delivery of an influencer trip or activation from relevant market
- B2B2C communication activities through third party tour operators and travel agencies.
- Other third-party marketing costs may be considered at the discretion of VisitBritain (i.e. third-party bespoke email development or targeted data purchase) but approval must be obtained prior to making expenditure commitments with the third party.
- PR, social media or any agency fees, production of new content/assets etc or any other added costs should not exceed 30% of the total cash budget.

Ineligible activities that the Fund cannot support, include *inter alia*:

- Business or product development such as business memberships, feasibility studies, research or business engagement activities.
- Business or product development activity business to business, i.e. events, trade shows, sales missions / calls.
- B2B familiarisation trips (B2C trips are allowed, for e.g. Influencer trips)
- New App development.
- Website development and/or upgrades.
- Capital costs and fixed business overheads, i.e. office and core staff costs, equipment, motor vehicle leasing contracts.
- Some B2B options may be considered if this value sits within your MIK proposal and does not exceed £50,000. This eligibility will be reviewed as part of the evaluation process.

Payments to any partners to promote the itineraries or content on their own channels (i.e. website, social media, email etc.) are also ineligible areas of expenditure.

If you have any queries about the potential eligibility of expenditure items within your budget when completing your application form, then please email

InnovationGatewayFund@visitbritain.org

What should an applicant's detailed marketing plan include?

The primary objective of this activity is to **drive incremental consideration and international spend to your proposed gateway/region**. Applicants must demonstrate in their application how their proposed plan will meet this objective if the application is successful. Your draft marketing plan, outlined in your application, must include the following information:

- Plan objective – how will this activity drive incremental consideration to visit?
- Description of proposed activity and associated plans, including example imagery and key messages, with the inclusion of Film/TV theme.
- Product content (i.e. accommodation, attractions, experiences, itineraries)
- Industry partners and the roles they play
- Targeting – geographical (do you have specific ports of entry from your proposed overseas market/s?)
- Marketing activity channels (i.e. proposed media partners, social media, PR etc.)
- Full breakdown of the total project budget in terms of the amount of the cash grant requested, industry partners' cash co-financing contributions and monetised in-kind contribution ("income side") along with a corresponding breakdown as to how this budget will be spent on eligible project activities ("expenditure side").
- Details on how you will report back on campaign performance; mandatories including partners' sales/bookings (value and volume)

Assessment Criteria

Applicants will be expected to develop and deliver an appropriate inbound gateway marketing plan to be implemented in market with relevant industry partners. You are advised to pay close attention to the scoring framework and weighting for each individual assessment criterion as this directly relates to how your application will be assessed. The successful applications will be selected via this standardised points-based system.

Assessment Criteria	Max. Points
A. Market Alignment	25 points

The aim of the marketing campaign is to increase consideration of relevant gateway destination or region within Britain in the chosen GREAT overseas market and drive consumer bookings.

- Please detail the current transport routes, whether by air, sea or fixed rail, and current/future capacity levels from those routes into your gateway/ region from your chosen GREAT market.
- Please detail known capacity levels for relevant accommodation product for your gateway destination / region.
- Please detail how your gateway/region fulfils the needs and aspirations of the Experience-Seeker audience in that market.

Assessment Criteria	Max. Points
B. Industry Partnerships	25 points

- Please detail the industry partners with whom you propose to work, why they are relevant for the proposed marketing activity and what additional value and expertise they can bring to the campaign. This could include their reach to the audience, alignment to the brand, range of product/experiences they offer etc.
- Additional weighting will be given to those who stretch UK destination focus beyond immediate boundaries e.g. stretching across county/country borders if there is consumer appetite to position a trip in that way.
- Please demonstrate the commitment you have secured from those partners. You need to detail the split of third party cash and MIK value (including what that MIK looks like e.g. EDM's, outdoor ad space, accommodation/experiences for influencer travel etc) and how this will be used within your marketing plans.
- Additional weighing will be given to those who exceed 2:1 'match' ratio whether via cash additional co-financing contributions and/or monetised in-kind contributions (MIK) and secure the involvement of two or more industry partners.

Assessment Criteria	Max. Points
C. Marketing Plans, Creative and Content	25 points

- Please outline your proposed marketing plan demonstrating how your gateway/region will be promoted by a mix of different activities, such as paid media, influencer trips etc. Your marketing plan should demonstrate how the target audience will be reached effectively. We would like to see the use of new and innovative media partners, consumer channels or creative delivery
- VisitBritain's are aiming to change perceptions to have people see Britain as a welcoming, dynamic and diverse destination, alive with spirit that needs to be enjoyed today, not "one day" as part of the Government's GREAT Britain campaign, which invites consumers to "*See things differently*".
- Please detail how you would align your creative and messaging with the VB brand guidelines and experience buckets.
 - Please detail how you would position your content/product to have a nod to Film/TV.

Assessment Criteria	Max. Points
D. Objectives and Measurement	20 points

VisitBritain measures return on investment (ROI) via our brand tracker with a target ratio of 12:1. This means for every £1 invested in this campaign, we are looking to generate £12 back into the UK economy. VisitBritain will be responsible for managing this evaluation process.

In addition, your application should include reasonable forecasts for the following campaign metrics:

- Number of searches per partner within campaign period (plus two months following the end of campaign). Please detail expected results
- Number of bookings per partner within campaign period (plus two months following the end of campaign). Please detail expected results
- Year-on-year comparison for bookings within campaign period, based on last normal trading year pre-pandemic (plus two months following the end of campaign)
- Average of length of stay of bookers within campaign period if this applies (plus two months following the end of campaign)
- Media performance on campaign activity
- Measurement via VB Brand-Tracker will be required and managed via VisitBritain

Assessment Criteria	Max. Points
E. Resourcing and Expertise	10 points

- Please describe how you will mobilise this proposal if your application is successful and the staff resources you have available.

Timeline for Call for Applications

Eligible applicants should complete an application form available to download and send it along with the supporting documentation to InnovationGatewayFund@visitbritain.org

The indicative timeline for this call for applications is set out below:

Key Stage	Date
Launch date of the call for applications to the GREAT Gateway Innovation Fund 2024	30 September 2024
Deadline for completed applications with supporting letters of commitment	Mid-day 12PM (UK time) on 25 October 2024
Indicative date when applicants will be informed about the decision reached by the Awards Panel	w/c 11 November 2024
Grant award set-up and contracting meeting held by video call (up to 45 minutes) with each successful applicant.	w/c 11 November 2024
Details of the proposed grant awards will be posted on the UK Subsidies Database ² and then subject to a 30-day period when a third party may launch a challenge. Campaign planning can	w/c 11 November to w/c 9 December 2024

² See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/view-subsidies-awarded-by-uk-government>

continue during this period but the grant award will remain provisional.	
Grant funding agreement issued for e-signing and exchange	End of w/c 9 December 2024
Grant instalments can be paid when Grant Claim Forms evidencing and seeking reimbursement of actual, eligible expenditure incurred on the project are produced. These are the dates claims can be made: The final grant claim must be made by:	18 December 2024 31 January 2025 28 February 2025 31 March 2025
Interim post-completion report evidencing the marketing enquiries evaluation	30 April 2025
Final post-completion report detailing the actual number and value (£) of bookings made	31 May 2025

Completed applications must be emailed to InnovationGatewayFund@visitbritain.org by the deadline of **Mid-day 12PM (UK time) on 25 October 2024**. Any applications received after this time will be disregarded. Applications will not be assessed on a first come first served basis but rather against the eligibility and scoring assessment criteria.

If the Fund is over-subscribed by applications that meet both the eligibility and the assessment criteria, those applications will be ranked by VisitBritain and the applications achieving the highest overall scores will be awarded funding. Consequently, we advise applicants to pay close attention to the scoring framework indicating those questions which are scored and the maximum number of points available under each of them.

Decisions on which applications to fund will be made by an Awards Panel, subject to the outcome of appropriate due diligence checks into the prospective grant recipients.

Accessibility, Freedom of Information, and Terms and Conditions

Successful grant applicants will receive a draft Grant Funding Agreement to review prior to the grant set-up and contracting meeting that will last about 45 minutes held by video call. This is your opportunity to meet members of the Commercial Partnerships and Grants Management Teams and ask any questions you may have. After this meeting, you will then receive from the Procurement Team a finalised version of the Grant Funding Agreement for e-signing by DocuSign.

If you receive grant funding from this Fund and it is subsequently determined that you have provided false or inaccurate information as part of your application, or fail to meet the reporting requirements detailed in your Grant Funding Agreement, VisitBritain will seek to recover, with costs, all sums awarded to you from this Fund.

British Tourist Authority trading as VisitBritain is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and may be obliged to release information about your grant information or grant award in response to any questions received. Information on all grant awards will be uploaded to the Government Grants Information System, a database managed by Cabinet Office which is published annually to aid openness and transparency.

Code of Conduct for Grant Recipients

Grant making is an essential component in the tools available to VisitBritain to deliver our policy objectives. Grants are awarded to external organisations to assist us with the development of the British tourism industry, thereby supporting local economic development and helping UK tourism exports. This is why it is essential to ensure that grants are administered efficiently and effectively providing value for the UK tax-payer.

Prospective applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with the '*Code of Conduct for Recipients of Government General Grants*' (Cabinet Office, November 2018)³ which sets out publicly the expectations placed on grant recipients, in terms of ethical and professional behaviour.

Data Protection

VisitBritain will use the data provided by You in the application form and supporting documentation to assess your application for grant funding, contact you regarding your application and for grant management purposes. Information provided by applicants as part of the process and/or the supporting documentation may be verified against other information sources held by other public sector bodies for verification purposes and reporting. For further information, please see <https://www.visitbritain.org/privacy-policy-terms-use-cookies-and-foi>

Subsidy Control

BTA is managing this Fund as a subsidy scheme. In line with Section 33 of the Subsidy Control Act 2022, subsidy awards under published schemes exceeding £100,000 must be uploaded to the UK Subsidies Database to aid transparency and this is the approach that BTA intends to follow. If no third party successfully challenges the proposed grant award during the 30-day standstill period, or seeks further information on the award, then it will become unconditional after this period. This Fund forms

Further Information and Queries

If you have any queries about this grant-funding opportunity, please send an email to InnovationGatewayFund@visitbritain.org and a member of the Commercial Partnerships Team will contact you.

³ See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/771152/2019-01-15_Code_of_Conduct_for_Grant_Recipients_v.1.01.pdf