

NEW IDEAS IN ANCIENT SPACES

The 2015 Ireland's Ancient East Experience Development Capital Grants Scheme Application Guidelines



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Introduction

About Fáilte Ireland

Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority, was established under the National Tourism Development Authority Act, 2003. We provide strategic and practical support to develop and sustain Ireland as a high-quality and competitive tourist destination.

Our role is to guide and support sustainable tourism growth through the development of a vibrant, internationally competitive tourism industry that is informed and inspired by insights and embraces consumer needs and motivations.

A key strategic objective over the coming years is the development and promotion of world class sustainable tourism experiences. Our emphasis is on strategic partnership, with all the interests in Irish tourism at national, regional and local levels working together towards a common goal. Further information about Fáilte Ireland, its development plans and supports are available at www.failteireland.ie.

About The Ireland's Ancient East Project

To offer visitors a compelling motivation to visit the east of Ireland, Fáilte Ireland has developed a new umbrella destination brand called **Ireland's Ancient East**. The brand is rooted in the rich history and diverse range of cultural heritage experiences that are particularly prevalent in the East and South regions of Ireland. Ireland's Ancient East will become the key emotional pull and the reason that visitors will travel to this part of the country.

The key strategic objectives of the Ireland's Ancient East initiative are:

1. To increase the number of overnights spent by overseas visitors in the region, and to increase the tourism revenue generated and the associated tourism employment numbers, by delivering world class visitor experiences;
2. To move Ireland's Ancient East from a transit zone to a touring zone by increasing visitor dwell time in the region;
3. Disperse visitor traffic across the geography by equally encouraging the exploration of both signature and lesser known sites and experiences.

The target consumer segments for Ireland's Ancient East are the **Culturally Curious** and the **Great Escapers**. A summary of these segments can be found in **Appendix 3**.

The new destination brand has been designed to ensure that the area is presented in a cohesive and unified manner. On a trip through Ireland's Ancient East, stories should connect different places, enhancing the experience for the visitor. The new brand will make good use of stronger attractions to cross sell and promote secondary and tertiary attractions and experiences and help disperse visitors into local towns and villages throughout the east and south regions.

The brand promises:

- ▶ a touring region where it is easy to explore and to trace 5,000 years of history;
- ▶ an experience that is immersive so that the visitor will know it is worth spending holiday time in the region;
- ▶ that these memorable heritage experiences are set against a backdrop of a rich, green, pastoral countryside;
- ▶ a place that tells its story very, very well.

The brand is supported by 4 thematic pillars. These are based on certain themes within Irish history. They are: Ancient Ireland, Early Christian Ireland, Medieval Ireland and Anglo Ireland. They are how the consumer will experience the brand, and they show the variety and diversity that is on offer in the region. For more information on Ireland's Ancient East and on the four thematic pillars please visit: <http://www.failteireland.ie/Ireland-s-Ancient-East.aspx>.

The brand positioning (i.e. what this brand should mean in the mind of the visitor) can be defined as follows:

Ireland's Ancient East offers a personal experience of 5,000 years of Europe's history. Your journey of discovery in this relaxing off-the-beaten track, lush beautiful landscape, that attracted warring settlers for millennia, will be illuminated by stories from the best storytellers in the world.

The value proposition (i.e. the specific offer of value that we are promising to the visitor) is as follows:

For those who love to peel back the layers of time, Ireland's Ancient East is a wonderful opportunity to experience 5000 years of European history in a compact area. Get off the beaten track to see, hear, touch and feel the imprints of the millennia of settlers in this land. Ancient Man, Early Christians, Medieval Lords, Colonial Settlers and their descendants have all been seduced by these most lush, green and fertile lands. Hear for yourself their stories. Take your time to discover it all – the Stone Age art, the monasteries, the castles and fortresses.

There's an engaging authenticity to life in the local, bustling towns and villages. Take in a festival; try local fresh produce or tasty local specialties, many of which trace their roots to ancient times. Drive leafy roads through lush rolling valleys. Explore meandering rivers or the mountains that once protected the original inhabitants.

You will leave not only refreshed but illuminated by these many ancient wonders and the stories of how they came to this rich land and how Irish life today has been shaped by their immensely powerful influence.

1. Purpose of the New Ideas in Ancient Spaces Capital Grants Scheme

The difference we want to make

In 2015, Fáilte Ireland will work with partners in the community, private industry and public sectors to bring the Ireland's Ancient East brand to life and deliver an overall visitor experience on the ground to match the Ireland's Ancient East brand promise.

Fáilte Ireland has launched the **New Ideas in Ancient Spaces Capital Grants Scheme** to encourage the development of new visitor experiences, which contribute towards the overall goal of delivering what the brand promises and what our target overseas visitor is looking for:

- ▶ a destination that is easy and enjoyable to explore;
- ▶ where heritage experiences are memorable because they tell their story so well;
- ▶ where the stories told at individual heritage sites link to other sites across the region and to an overall timeline, building to a unique, fascinating and enriching journey through 5000 years of European history.

This is the first phase of the **New Ideas in Ancient Spaces Capital Grants Scheme**, intended for delivery by June 2016. It is envisaged that further schemes will be available in the future.

What projects will we fund?

Through the **New Ideas in Ancient Spaces Capital Grants Scheme**, Fáilte Ireland will support projects which deliver on the brand promise and reinforce the overall Interpretive themes of Ireland's Ancient East (Ancient, Early Christian, Medieval and Anglo-Irish), by:

- ▶ contributing to increased dwell time of visitors in Ireland's Ancient East;
- ▶ creating memorable, new or improved, heritage tourism experiences in towns, villages and visitor attractions;
- ▶ improving the quality of interpretation at historic sites so they tell their story well and connect better with the visitor;
- ▶ promoting innovation in the delivery of memorable tourism experiences and storytelling;
- ▶ fostering connections with other places and stories within Ireland's Ancient East;
- ▶ improving foreign language provision at attractions and heritage sites;
- ▶ helping visitors explore beyond the busy attractions to discover the hidden gems of Ireland's Ancient East;
- ▶ facilitating access, visitor management and the appropriate generation of revenue to enable the sustainable opening of historic sites to visitors;
- ▶ animating the visitor experience of heritage sites and historic town centres;
- ▶ involving the community with the Ireland's Ancient East tourism initiative.

2. What support is available?

Capital Expenditure

- ▶ Only the capital expenditure element of projects achieving the outcomes outlined above can be grant-aided under this programme. More detail on what elements of expenditure are deemed eligible and ineligible is provided in **Appendix 1**.
- ▶ Up to 100% of the capital expenditure may be eligible.
- ▶ The grant rate offered may be less than 100% and in most cases match funding will be required. This is at the discretion of the evaluation committee.
- ▶ The scheme is open only to projects with eligible capital expenditure of €10,000 or above. The maximum grant is €200,000 subject to requirements in relation to De Minimis Funding as set out below.
- ▶ Grant levels will be generally reduced where a property/owner is separately the beneficiary of tax-based support under Section 482 Taxes Consolidation Act 1997.

De Minimis Funding

Grants provided under this Scheme are classed as de minimis state aid. There is a ceiling of €200,000 for all de minimis aid, regardless of the source, given to any one enterprise by any state agency or public body (including groups) over a 3 year period.

These grants are made on the understanding that the grant combined with any other de minimis aid received in the last 3 years does not exceed the ceiling of €200,000 for all de minimis aid.

If an applicant is unsure whether they have previously received any de minimis funding they should check the letter received when the other funding was awarded as all funding bodies are required to highlight this.

Please note that in order for Fáilte Ireland to maintain de minimis records; all applicants must complete a de minimis declaration which is included within the Application Form.

3. Who can apply?

The scheme is open to prospective applicants from the following sectors:

- ▶ Private Sector: companies and other legal entities and individuals, examples may include commercial companies delivering guided tours, theatre or entertainment companies and visitor attractions or other venues operated by private companies.
- ▶ Voluntary Organisations: not-for-profit bodies, including charities, trusts and companies limited by guarantee.
- ▶ Public Sector bodies directly responsible for the operation of visitor attractions, historic sites, amenities or relevant public spaces.

4. Submitting an application

- ▶ This scheme will open June 12th 2015.
- ▶ Application forms may be requested from ancient.spaces@failteireland.ie.
- ▶ Prospective applicants are encouraged to discuss their proposal with Fáilte Ireland at the earliest possible stage of development before submitting an application. Please forward your details and a brief outline of your project to ancient.spaces@failteireland.ie and a member of the team will contact you.
- ▶ Completed applications must be submitted in soft copy format to ancient.spaces@failteireland.ie **by 12 Noon on Monday July 13th 2015**.
- ▶ Incomplete applications and applications received after the closing date will not be considered for grant assistance.
- ▶ Eligible applications will be evaluated on a competitive basis against the evaluation criteria outlined below.
- ▶ The eligible applications which score best against the evaluation criteria will be funded first and so on until the available funding has been fully allocated.
- ▶ Following the recommendation of the Evaluation Committee, the Fáilte Ireland Authority will make a final decision and correspondence will then issue from Fáilte Ireland.
- ▶ Successful applicants will receive a letter of offer. This letter together with a Deed of Covenant and Undertaking will form the basis of the contract between Fáilte Ireland and the project promoter. The Letter of Offer will contain all terms and conditions of the offer of funding. The standard terms and conditions of Fáilte Ireland capital funding are outlined in Appendix 2 below:

5. How we will evaluate your application

Before you apply please ensure your project will meet the minimum eligibility criteria listed below. Applications which do not meet these conditions will not be considered for funding.

Applicants should note that there is no guarantee of funding. The fund is limited and eligible applications which pass the minimum eligibility criteria will be evaluated on a competitive basis against the evaluation criteria below.

The eligible applications which score best against the evaluation criteria will be funded first and so on until the available funding has been fully allocated.

Minimum Project Eligibility Criteria

- ▶ The scheme is open only to projects designed to achieve some or all of the outcomes outlined in section 1 above.
- ▶ The scheme is open only to projects taking place within Ireland's Ancient East (within the counties of Louth, Cavan, Monaghan, Meath, Westmeath, Longford, Offaly, Laois, Kildare, Wicklow, Tipperary, Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford and Waterford, Cork City and East County Cork).
- ▶ The scheme is open only to projects with eligible capital expenditure of €10,000 or above.
- ▶ Marketing; The proposed development must be promoted to tourists and the application must demonstrate how the promotional activity undertaken will be effective in engaging tourists.
- ▶ The proposed development (or new visitor experience) must be likely to engage a minimum of 5,000 domestic or international tourists per year. In your application you will need to demonstrate how tourist numbers will be quantified.
- ▶ You must demonstrate, in your application, the intention and ability to measure the impact of the proposed development on the quality of the visitor experience.
- ▶ Detailed budgets must be provided for the proposed activity and the application must demonstrate that the activity is cost effective and financially viable as outlined.
- ▶ All proposed activity must be consistent with national and regional tourism policy. Interpretation projects must be consistent with the 'Sharing Our Stories' Interpretation Guidelines, which may be downloaded from www.failteireland.ie.
- ▶ The proposed project must be completed and open to the public by June 2016.
- ▶ All projects must have a benign or beneficial impact only on the environment and historic fabric.
- ▶ All projects must demonstrate that they comply with all relevant planning and environmental legislation as appropriate.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications which meet the minimum eligible criteria will be evaluated on a competitive basis against the following evaluation criteria. The application form will allow you address each of these areas.

1. **Qualitative impact of the proposed development;** The evaluation process will consider whether the proposed development will enhance the experience of a visitor travelling in Ireland's Ancient East?
 - ▶ Will it help visitors to understand and enjoy the heritage by interpreting it well?
 - ▶ Will it use heritage to animate visitor attractions or town centres?
2. **Quantitative impact of the proposed development;** The evaluation process will rank applications according to the anticipated impact of the proposed new development on visitor numbers at the proposed site/location.
3. **Alignment with the destination brand themes;** will the proposed development help reinforce an understanding, among visitors, of the overarching Ireland's Ancient East concept by aligning well with the organising themes of the destination brand (Ancient, Early Christian, Medieval and Anglo-Irish).
4. **Alignment with the target market for Ireland's Ancient East;** The evaluation process will prioritise those projects which are deemed to be a good fit with the desires and needs of the Culturally Curious and Great Escaper consumer segments. A summary of these segments can be found in Appendix 3.
5. **Creating/highlighting linkages across Ireland's Ancient East;** Will the proposed development help reinforce the concept of a single unified destination by highlighting the connecting stories or other links with other places to visit across the Ireland's Ancient East destination?
6. **Dispersing visitor traffic and aiding discovery;** Will it help the visitor to explore beyond the busiest visitor attractions and discover hidden gems?
7. **Foreign Languages;** How well will the proposed development cater for foreign languages.
8. **The personal touch;** Visitors to Ireland expect good interaction with people. Will the proposed activity use human interaction to bring heritage to life (e.g.; tour guides, actors, musicians, demonstrations, costumed tours, re-enactments etc.)?
9. **Innovation;** The evaluation process will consider whether the proposed development is innovative, for example; will it provide a new experience, will it create an opportunity for creative companies to engage with the visitor experience, does it propose an innovative use of new technology, will it demonstrate a new, sustainable business model for tourism experience providers to use in future years?
10. **Publicity Value;** Will the proposed activity help to increase awareness of the new Ireland's Ancient East proposition?
11. **Track record of the project promoters;** The project promoters or their suppliers should have proven ability in managing and delivering the activities outlined in their proposal.
12. **Employment Opportunities;** Is the proposed development likely to increase dwell time and visitor spend or directly improve employment opportunities in Ireland's Ancient East?

6. What we need to know about your project

In your application for funding you must outline:

What the proposed development will cost and how you propose to meet these costs (sections 4 and 5 of the application form).



What outcomes you expect the investment to achieve, for your own business, for visitors and for the tourism economy (section 3 of the application form)



How you will ensure that the proposed investment delivers the proposed outcomes (section 6 of the application form)

7. Further Information

Please direct all queries to: ancient.spaces@failteireland.ie

Appendix 1: What Expenditure is eligible?

Eligible Expenditure

To be eligible for grant assistance, expenditure must be capital in nature and must have the following general characteristics:

- ▶ It must be integral 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 statements and other appropriate documentation.
- ▶ The grant is paid to the body which incurred the expenditure on which the grant is based.
- ▶ Loose fittings, furniture and road vehicles.
- ▶ Restoration and preservation works.
- ▶ Expenditure must be incurred and paid between the date the project is approved and 30th June 2016, unless otherwise advised by Fáilte Ireland.

Consultancy fees and fees related to startup marketing on the project (including architects, quantity surveyors, interpretation planners and designers, translators, IT specialists where appropriate etc,) once they are justified and do not exceed 15% of the eligible costs of the grant-aided project.

Ineligible Expenditure

The following expenditure is ineligible in all cases:

- ▶ Expenditure which forms or will form part of a claim for tax relief (for example under a Section 482 provision);
- ▶ Expenditure on food and beverage facilities, retail and accommodation facilities;
- ▶ Purchase of land and buildings;
- ▶ Financing costs (including bank interest and charges);
- ▶ Any ongoing marketing;
- ▶ Expenditure incurred and/or paid before date of approval of the project;
- ▶ Expenditure incurred and/or paid after 30th June 2016;
- ▶ Expenditure figures based on estimates or valuations and not supported by actual payment documentation;
- ▶ Unpaid expenditure;
- ▶ Fines, penalty payments, legal costs, audit fees, insurances;
- ▶ Recoverable Value Added Tax (VAT);
- ▶ "In-Kind" contributions;

- ▶ Expenditure already grant-aided, sub-vented or assisted by this, or any other EU or Government scheme (including employment and training schemes);
- ▶ Expenditure paid for by a person other than the grantee;
- ▶ Costs of public sector administration, unless it can be shown that the costs are additional, and would not have been incurred but for the grant-aided project;
- ▶ All legal and financial consultancy costs;
- ▶ All planning and tendering fees;
- ▶ Costs incurred by the project applicants or their agents in connection with grant application/grant claims;
- ▶ Salary, wage & overhead costs.

Appendix 2: Conditions attaching to a grant offer

This section outlines the various other requirements that applicants should be aware of.

Successful applicants will receive a letter of offer. This letter will form the basis of the contract between Fáilte Ireland and the promoter. The letter of offer will cover the various requirements including:

- ▶ Purpose;
- ▶ Completion of work;
- ▶ Drawdown of grant;
- ▶ Security;
- ▶ Monitoring;
- ▶ Retention of records;
- ▶ Visitor use;
- ▶ Repayment/Disposal;
- ▶ Marketing;
- ▶ Public Procurement;
- ▶ Freedom of Information;
- ▶ Publicity.

Purpose

This section outlines the purpose of the funding including key performance indicators.

Completion of work

The date by which work must be completed, the particular conditions in relation to industry standards and meeting statutory and local authority requirements, will be specified. The schedule of expenditure, and timing of grant claims, will be targeted to correspond to the programme forecasting and cash drawdown arrangements.

Drawdown of Grant

A timetable for the development, project milestones, and the timing of grant claims, will be agreed before development commences. Any changes to same during the course of the development must be agreed in advance with Fáilte Ireland.

Payments will be made on receipt of a completed grant claim form in the prescribed format incorporating details of vouched expenditure and supporting documentation. An independent auditor's certificate will be required for grants in excess of €20,000.

The grant will be released by way of reimbursement of paid eligible expenditure, pro rata with the expenditure of matching moneys where applicable, subject to Fáilte Ireland being in receipt of sufficient funds to meet the claim. In the event of any delays in such funds, there will be no liability on the part of Fáilte Ireland or the Exchequer to make good any shortfall.

Grantees should note that Fáilte Ireland may itself carry out an audit check, on site, on the component parts of a grant claim before passing it for grant payment.

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

Grant payments will only be made to the body specified as the grantee. Expenditure incurred/paid by a third party, unless reimbursed by the grantee, will not be grant-aided. The final grant instalment will only be released on satisfactory delivery of the full project, and all statutory requirements, in accordance with the grant contract. Certain expenditure, forming part of the project but ineligible for grant under the criteria, will be required to be satisfactorily completed before the final grant instalment is released, if that expenditure is considered by the agency to be essential to the grant-approved project.

The final date for effecting payment of all grants under this scheme is 30 June 2016 or as otherwise advised.

Security

If the project is in private ownership, please note that the grantee will be required to provide security that is satisfactory to Fáilte Ireland.

Monitoring

Grantee may be subject to random monitoring checks to ensure that the project is operating in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant offer.

Retention of records

Grantees must comply with all conditions in relation to the retention of records, which extends also to Contractors and Sub-Contractors engaged on the development.

All relevant records must be made available on request for examination by authorised officials of Fáilte Ireland, the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport, other relevant Government Departments and the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

In addition to the statutory period for retaining records of account under Irish law (generally 6 years), projects will be required to retain records of account related to the funded development, including documentation (as relevant) relating to the tendering procedures, technical specifications, business plans etc., for the full grant period (generally ten years from date of final grant instalment payment) and until notified by Fáilte Ireland that all conditions have been fulfilled.

Visitor use

During the Grant Period the Project must be open to the public at all reasonable times and hours. The times and hours of opening for each element of the project and the fees charged to visitors in respect of the facilities must be agreed with Fáilte Ireland on an annual basis. Fáilte Ireland staff and/or its consultants must have access to the Project at all reasonable times, for the purposes of inspection, during the Grant Period.

Repayment/Disposal

The grant is repayable if the project ceases to be operated as agreed during the Grant Period. Fáilte Ireland will require the immediate repayment of the grant if any of the conditions of the grant offer are not fulfilled.

Marketing

It is essential that the capital investment be complemented by suitable investment in marketing the Project.

Public Procurement

Please note that National Government procurement procedures must be followed where applicable.

The successful Grantee must comply with EU and National public procurement procedures, further guidance is available on the Irish Government's Public Procurement Portal:

www.etenders.gov.ie.

Freedom of Information

Fáilte Ireland wishes to advise applicants that, under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, the information supplied in the application form may be made available on request, subject to Fáilte Ireland's obligations under law.

Appendix 3: Summary of Consumer Segments

Culturally Curious

The Culturally Curious choose their holiday destinations carefully and are independent 'active sightseers' looking to visit new places, and expand their experience by exploring landscapes, history and culture. They are unlikely to return for some time once they have visited a new place, and often travel in a couple or as individuals and rarely in a family group.

Follow the link to find out more [Consumer Segmentation – Culturally Curious](#)

Great Escapers

The Great Escapers are often couples, some with babies or quite young children. Most are in serious need of time out from busy lives and careers. They are specifically interested in rural holidays and travel very much as a couple or family. Great Escapers are on holiday for a break, to get physical with nature, and to reconnect with their partner. They are more likely to take part in slightly more strenuous, but not extreme, exploration. More interested than other segments in getting connected to nature especially the more remote and exciting places.

Follow the link to find out more [Consumer Segmentation – Great Escapers](#)



IRELAND'S
ANCIENT EAST