

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Platforms for Growth - Programme for Investment 2019-2022**

#### **What is the Platforms for Growth Investment Programme?**

'Platforms for Growth' is Fáilte Ireland's new four-year capital investment programme. 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.

#### **What is a Platform?**

This programme specifically targets 'platforms' or projects that have the greatest potential to grow tourism across Ireland, and fill gaps in the Irish tourism offering in order to meet changing visitor preferences. Platforms should drive innovation in tourism and ensure Ireland can compete as a compelling destination in the international marketplace. 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.

#### **Why *Immersive Heritage and Cultural Attractions* as the first platform?**

Overseas visitors are increasingly seeking out more hands-on experiences which bring local culture and heritage to life, and this platform will invest in projects that deliver innovative and interactive experiences for the visitor to 'immerse' themselves in. We also know that nearly 70% of our overseas visitors visit a heritage or cultural attraction when in Ireland so these experiences are already in high demand with our visitors.

#### **What is the total budget?**

Platforms for Growth is a €150million investment programme that runs to 2022.

#### **What funding is available through the Platforms for Growth Programme for Investment ?**

For the first platform launched in May 2019 called Immersive Heritage and Cultural Attractions, Fáilte Ireland is looking for projects of scale that can have a real impact on Ireland's economy. Platforms for Growth will invest in projects with a minimum total project cost of €2.5 million. Investment grant awards will be subject to; ROI, State Aid rules and budget availability.

#### **Do I need to have match funding?**

Yes – applicants must be able to provide at least 25% of total project costs as match funding.

#### **What are the grant aid rates?**

The maximum investment grant rate will not exceed 75% of total project costs.

#### **What project elements are eligible for funding?**

Only eligible capital expenditure elements of projects can be grant-aided under this scheme as outlined in the Guidelines: [www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth](http://www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth)

### **What type of projects will be funded?**

The project must be an immersive heritage and cultural tourism attraction. For the purposes of this scheme, heritage or cultural sites may 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.

Projects must also demonstrate how they are immersive and will bring Ireland's history, heritage and culture to life for visitors.

The guidelines and criteria available on [www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth](http://www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth) and should be reviewed prior to submitting an Expression of Interest to see if your project is eligible to apply. A list of ineligible projects types is also available under Section 3.2 of the guidelines.

### **What are the opening and closing dates for this call?**

The scheme opens on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2019 for Expressions of Interest and will be open for seven weeks closing on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Please refer to [www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth](http://www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth) for full details on the timelines associated with this call.

### **Who can apply for funding?**

- Private Sector: Companies and other legal entities and individuals Voluntary Organisations
- 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

*Fáilte Ireland's 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.*

*Any projects that have received funding under Fáilte Ireland's previous "Large Grant" Schemes 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.*

### **How to Apply?**

There are five stages in the Platforms for Growth process, the first of which is to complete an Expression of Interest form. You can do this by logging on to [www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth](http://www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth) where full details are available on the entire process and how to apply.

Please note that in order to proceed from Stage 1 to Stage 2 it is a requirement that applicants intending to apply for funding MUST register and attend a workshop. These workshops will be held from 13<sup>th</sup> June to 20<sup>th</sup> June. Further details of the workshop locations can be found on [www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth](http://www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth).

In addition to this we have also prepared a concise toolkit to help applicants create an immersive heritage and cultural attraction, and this is also available to download at [www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth](http://www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth)

**If I have received funding under previous Fáilte Ireland capital schemes, can I apply for funding under this programme?**

Yes but 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, and be able to demonstrate incremental growth in visitor numbers over and beyond that which was specified in the previous grant amount.

**What is State Aid?**

State aid rules apply to this scheme and determine what types of projects are eligible and what investment support can be provided by a Government agency including Fáilte Ireland. This Scheme is operating under the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) rules.

**What is the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)?**

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

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

**Can funding be awarded in advance or up front?**

No – claims should be made following completion of the project. Only expenditure incurred after the grant is approved can be reimbursed. Funding cannot be awarded retrospectively.

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

**I am having problems with the Application Form, is there help available?**

For any technical queries in relation to the Form, please call our Customer Service Team on 1800 242473.

**How long will it take for my application to be evaluated and approved?**

All details on the process and timelines associated with each stage are contained within the guidelines available at [www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth](http://www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth)

**Where can I get further information?**

The Guidelines are available on [www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth](http://www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth)

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

The Guidelines are available for download only, at the following link: [www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth](http://www.failteireland.ie/platformsforgrowth)

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

Please email [capital@failteireland.ie](mailto:capital@failteireland.ie) and a representative from Fáilte Ireland will get back in touch with you.

### **Will there be more schemes like this?**

*Platforms for Growth* builds on the *Grants Scheme for Large Tourism Projects 2016 - 2020*, 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'. There will be further opportunities to apply for funding, please check [www.FailteIreland.ie/platformsforgrowth](http://www.FailteIreland.ie/platformsforgrowth) for future grant schemes.

### **What about GDPR?**

The new EU General Data Protection Regulations relating to the protection of personal data are in effect from 25th May 2018. Before completing the application form on the Fáilte Ireland Trade Portal, applicants will be asked to sign up to Fáilte Ireland Privacy Policy which gives Fáilte Ireland the right to communicate with applicants and retain appropriate data.