# FÁILTE IRELAND STRATEGIC TOURISM FESTIVAL INVESTMENT SCHEME 2026 TO 2028



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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority has long supported festivals to boost tourism by highlighting unique and distinctly Irish elements to their destination. These Festivals and participative events are key to the Irish tourism offering allowing visitors to engage with our culture, heritage, people, and places, thus enhancing their experience of Ireland. They motivate both domestic and international visitors to 'visit now! When held outside of the main season and traditional tourist hotspots, they help distribute tourism revenue across the country and throughout the year, supporting a more sustainable tourism industry and generating economic impact across various business sectors.

Fáilte Ireland has reviewed the current funding model for Irish Tourism Festivals as part of a new Strategic Festivals Investment Scheme for 2026–2028 ("the Scheme"). Our goal is to develop a diverse portfolio of uniquely Irish cultural and heritage festivals that attract both domestic and international visitors. Through these festivals, we aim to boost tourism, extend visitor stays, and generate significant economic benefits, especially in regional areas and outside of the peak tourism season. Festival-related tourism diversifies local economies, supports the tourism and hospitality industry, creates jobs, and increases tax revenue, delivering substantial returns on investment.

Our new portfolio of festivals needs to deliver on our corporate objectives and on the visions and objectives set out in our four Regional Tourism Development Strategies. This portfolio will deliver a greater tourism impact by:

- Ensuring a strong tourism return on our investment.
- Supporting festivals that maximise on our regionality and seasonality objectives.
- Supporting festivals that have the greatest potential to deliver incremental economic impact in an off-peak time of the year.
- Aligning with our strategic vision of developing Ireland as an accessible and inclusive destination, Fáilte Ireland is committed to supporting festivals to deliver an accessible and inclusive experience for all visitors.

#### PLEASE NOTE:

Incomplete EOI & application forms will be deemed as ineligible and will not be considered further

Scheme Stage	Opening Date	Closing date
Stage 1: Expression of Interest (EOI)	12 noon, Monday 24th March 2025	12 noon, Monday 7th April 2025
Stage 2: Scheme application	Application form will be issued to successful applicants following EOI stage	12 noon, Tuesday 6th May 2025

# **2. SCHEME OUTLINE**

Fáilte Ireland is launching a new competitive Strategic Tourism Festival Investment Scheme for 2026 -2028. We invite festivals to apply for the EOI stage on 24th March. This stage will close on 7th April. Successful applicants from the first phase will advance to the second phase, where they will complete a detailed application form by the closing date of 6th May 2025 in addition to providing Sustainability, Accessibility, Domestic and International Sales and Marketing plans with their application.

As the National Tourism Development Authority, Fáilte Ireland aims to support the survival and growth of the tourism sector to maximise the sustainable economic, cultural, and social contribution to Ireland. The Fáilte Ireland Festivals and Events team provides funding, and development supports to tourism-led festivals with the aim of driving domestic and international visitors. Through this three-year investment Scheme, we will invest in the development of cultural and heritage tourism-led festivals, that will extend visitor stays and generate significant economic benefits, especially in regional areas and beyond the peak season; creating jobs and sustaining communities.

# Ineligible festival types:

Applicants, whom in the view of Fáilte Ireland, meet one or more of the criteria set out below, are **ineligible** to apply for the Scheme.

- Agricultural shows
- Amusement parks (both mobile and fixed)
- Business events such as exhibitions and conferences
- Charitable events
- Christmas markets and ice rinks

Dedicated markets e.g. food, craft markets

Community events such as fairs

- Once off events
- Sporting matches such as rugby, football, GAA matches etc.
- Symposiums
- Trade shows

Circuses

The above list is not exhaustive, Scheme eligibility is always at the sole discretion of Fáilte Ireland.

# **Eligible Festivals:**

#### There are two types of festivals eligible for this Scheme outlined as follows:

#### Tourism Festival:

• A themed programme of individual events that represents the destination, culture, and heritage, running over a minimum of two consecutive days. A tourism festival can create a substantial economic boost for the region, increasing both dwell time and spend in the destination.

- The tourism festival must provide a return of investment to the wider community and be able to deliver against agreed Fáilte Ireland key performance indicators to identify growth as part of its funding requirements.
- The festival programme, promotion and sales plan must be designed to attract domestic and international visitors, in addition to local attendees, therefore having the capacity and ambition to grow tourism.

#### **Participative Tourism Festival**

• Organised events with a minimum of two consecutive days that bring people together for the primary purpose of participating in or supporting participants in a recreational outdoor activity. For example, trail running, swimming festivals.

If successful, the investment grant funding will be awarded to specifically 'festivalise' their event, by extending programming and adding festival animation and activation (e.g. live entertainment, concessions, market stalls etc). This will encourage participants and their supporters to stay longer in the destination. Additionally, they must engage with the local community to ensure a festival atmosphere and community involvement.

The investment from Fáilte Ireland is exclusively for adding festival animation and is not to be used for covering the costs of the actual recreational outdoor activities, such as licensing, stewarding, and health and safety etc.



#### PLEASE NOTE:

Operational costs of running the event are not included in this investment grant funding scheme.

# The objectives that Fáilte Ireland aims to achieve from festivals funded under this Scheme:

# All investment grant funding by Fáilte Ireland must be strategically aligned:

- To Fáilte Ireland Strategic Objectives to 2026
- With the Fáilte Ireland Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027
- To the Fáilte Ireland VICE (Visitors, Industry, Community & Environment) tourism development model, to actively engage with local community and volunteer groups creating a baseline to measure social impact

#### Economic impact and return on exchequer investment:

- To motivate domestic and international visitors 'to visit now'
- To drive increased domestic and international tourism numbers
- To increase both spend and dwell time in the local area
- To support regionality and seasonality

#### **Accessible and Inclusive Festivals:**

• Commit to enhancing accessible and inclusive experiences for all

#### Seasonality:

A key priority of this Scheme is to support festivals and participative events that take place outside of the tourism peak season motivating international and domestic visitors to travel around Ireland at alternative times of the year.



#### **Regionality:**

• This Scheme aims to aid regional spread by encouraging the development of festivals and participative events outside traditional tourist hotspots dispersing tourists to alternative locations around the country.

#### **Driving Climate Action:**

• Commit to driving climate action through incorporating climate action initiatives into the festival delivery

#### Developing the visitor experience:

- Animation of our regions by making them more attractive and compelling places to visit
- Driving seasonality in tourism destinations with capacity
- Support and develop a diverse and compelling portfolio of uniquely Irish, tourism focused festivals that motivate both domestic and international visitor profile

#### **Audience Definition:**

Attendees at a festival can be grouped into 3 types, defined below. All are key for the success of a festival; however, as a tourism agency, Fáilte Ireland is most focused on domestic and international visitors.

**Local visitors:** Visitors who reside within the county where the festival or event is taking place. Local visitors are assumed to undertake day trips to attend the festival i.e., they would stay at home and travel to the festival on one or more days.

**Domestic visitors:** Visitors who reside within Ireland, but outside of the host county i.e., the host region will be outside of their home area. Domestic visitors could be day-trippers or could be staying overnight in and around the host region to attend the festival.

**International visitors:** Visitors who travel to Ireland (including visitors from Northern Ireland) and attend the festival during their trip. International visitors may spend up to 5–7 days in the host region and attend the festival.

# Who can apply:



# 3. FESTIVAL INVESTMENT GRANTAWARDS

This is a competitive multi annual funding Scheme.

The funding amounts awarded to each festival will be reviewed and evaluated annually and investment grant amounts confirmed in advance of the following years festival.

Festival funding awarded over the three years may vary.

A festival can apply for investment grant funding from €20k up to a maximum of €200k per annum subject to compliance with the permitted percentage funding under Art 53 of General Block Exemption Regulation for state aid.

Funding will be awarded for the following three eligible funding areas: -

- (1) Tourism Focused International and Domestic Sales & Marketing Activity
- (2) Festival Programme Extension
- (3) Festival Programme Development
  - \*(1) is obligatory, festivals may select a combination of (2) and/or (3).

In addition, applicants should therefore note that all eligible costs incurred above the maximum investment grant sum offered by Fáilte Ireland and all ineligible project costs, will be the responsibility of the Grantee.

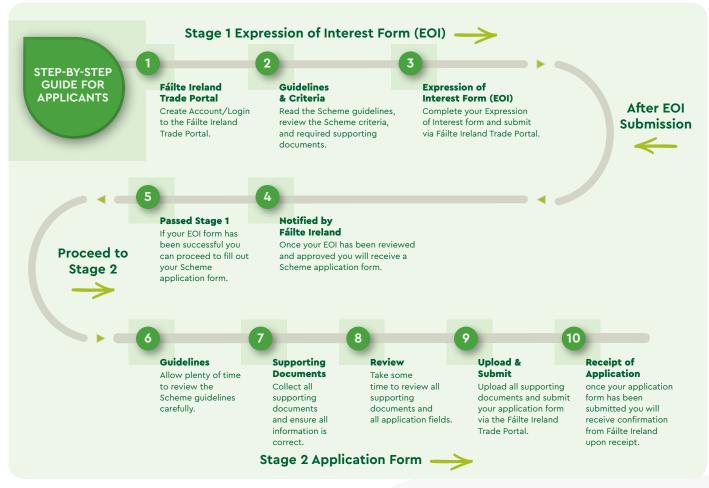


# 4. SCHEME PROCESS AND KEY DATES

Please see the below Scheme cycle and step by step guide:

#### Scheme cycle:





#### Scheme key dates:

Scheme Stage	Opening Date	Closing date
Stage 1: Expression of Interest	12 noon, Monday 24th March 2025	12 noon, Monday 7th April 2025
Stage 2: Scheme application	Application form will be issued to successful applicants following EOI stage	12 noon, Tuesday 6th May 2025

All completed **Expression of Interest** and **Scheme application forms** must be submitted via the **Fáilte Ireland Trade Portal** by the closing date.

We strongly advise applicants not to wait until the deadline day to submit applications to avoid potential IT related issues. Applications cannot be accepted after the closing date and time.

Fáilte Ireland will endeavour to evaluate applications in a timely manner, depending on the volume and quality of applications received. We will keep all applicants informed throughout the application process of anticipated timelines for completion.

Only fully completed application forms will be evaluated. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that their application is completed correctly and fully to expedite the evaluation. Incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible for the Scheme.



#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

Fáilte Ireland may contact applicants to request additional information during the evaluation phase.

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#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

The eligibility of an applicant and the determination of the investment grant funding amount are at the discretion of Fáilte Ireland whose decision is final.



# 5. STAGE 1 EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

#### Stage 1 – Expression of Interest

The purpose of the Expression of Interest Form is to allow applicants to demonstrate that they meet the eligibility criteria to apply to the Scheme and that the proposed festival is eligible and in accordance with the aims, objectives, and priorities of the Scheme (Section 2).

The Expression of Interest Form is the primary document that will be assessed to determine the proposed project's eligibility to progress to Stage 2 of the application process, i.e., the formal application form.

#### Please note that the receipt of an Expression of Interest Form does not in itself confer eligibility of the applicant and/or the proposed tourism festival.

Depending on the information provided in the Expression of Interest Form, the applicant will be deemed to be ineligible to progress to Stage 2 of the application process if the eligibility criteria are not met.

Fully completed Expression of Interest Forms, must be submitted via the **Failte Ireland Trade Portal** by the due deadline as set out on the Scheme's website.

# Deadline for submissions of Expression of Interest is 12 noon, Monday 7th April 2025

#### Fáilte Ireland Trade Portal

All applicants will be required to submit their Expression of Interest & application form (and all supporting materials) via the **Fáilte Ireland Trade Portal** by the due deadline as set out on the agency's website.

If you do not have a trade portal account, please click on **Fáilte Ireland Login** to create an account. If you have any technical issues, please contact our customer service team on:

#### **Customer support team:**

Tel: 0818 888800 or +353 (0)1-5741990

#### Email: Customer Support

Applicants should read the eligibility criteria set out below to ensure they meet the criteria and qualify for the Scheme **before submitting an Expression of Interest**. Eligibility to apply to the Scheme does not mean an entitlement to funding; rather, it solely qualifies an applicant to apply. All investment grant funding allocated under the Scheme is at the sole discretion of Fáilte Ireland.



# An applicant must meet all the following criteria:

#### 1. Festival category:

Applicants must satisfy the conditions of one of the below categories of tourism festivals that have been identified as eligible for support under the Scheme.

It is essential that all applicants check the **tourism festival classification and eligibility criteria** outlined in Section 2 specified for each category of festival before applying.

All applicants will be asked to identify as either category A or B. An applicant can only submit a single application per Festival. They are also required to supply evidence as part of your Stage 2 Application Form.

- Category A: Tourism festival
- Category B: Participative tourism festival

#### 2. Dedicated festival website and digital channels:

Applicants must demonstrate that they have a dedicated website and digital channels for their festival.

#### 3. Number of years currently in operation:

Please confirm that your festival has operated for a minimum of three years from 1st January 2022 to 24th March 2025 inclusive.

#### 4. Duration of programme:

Must have a minimum of two consecutive days festival programming.

#### 5. Company registration:

Must be a registered company or charitable organisation.

#### 6. Turnover:

Revenue is defined as the income generated by the Festival or Event from commercial activities and will include festival ticket income, sponsorship and other income streams. Turnover includes revenue but also payments and grants made in relation to the delivery of the festival including public funds from other state bodies and agencies.

Successful applicants must present income and expenditure accounts or Profit and Loss Accounts, or Management Accounts, for the previous 3 years of the festival and proof of a minimum revenue of €15,000 in the previous year of the festival:

#### Deadline for Stage 1 Expression of Interest is 12 noon, Monday 7th April 2025.



#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

This Scheme is a competitive process, all decisions regarding Stage 1 Expression of Interest forms will be final and there is no appeals process for Stage 1.

# 6. STAGE 2 SCHEME APPLICATION FORM

# Stage 2 – Application Form

The final stage requires applicants to submit an application form via the **Fáilte Ireland Trade Portal**.

Should your Expression of Interest form satisfy the **Stage 1** requirements in full, you will be notified by Fáilte Ireland that you have been successful in **Stage 1**.

You will be invited to progress to **Stage 2** and submit a final application form with the following documents:

# The festival will be asked to demonstrate how they would meet the following Scheme objectives: -

- Drive increased domestic and international tourism numbers
- Motivate domestic and international visitors 'to visit now'.
- Increase both spend and dwell time in the local area.
- Drive regionality in areas with capacity.
- Animation of our Regions by making them more attractive and compelling places to visit.
- Support seasonality in tourism areas with capacity.
- Demonstrate a commitment to driving climate action through a sustainable development plan. (Development Plan template will be supplied at application stage).
- Support accessibility and inclusivity in the delivery of the festival (Accessibility Plan template will be supplied at application stage).
- Demonstrate a commitment to provide an accessible and inclusive experience to all in the delivery of the festival (Accessibility Plan template will be supplied at application stage).



#### PLEASE NOTE:

This is a competitive application process; the receipt of a **Stage 2 Application Form** does not in itself confer eligibility on the tourism festival or the applicant. Depending on the information provided in the application form, the tourism festival or applicant may still be deemed to be unsuccessful for investment grant funding.



# 7. WHAT DO I NEED TO APPLY?

#### Stage 1 Expression of Interest

• All applicants will require a Fáilte Ireland trade portal account to access the Stage 1 Expression of Interest form and Stage 2 Scheme application form

Please click on **Fáilte Ireland Login** to login or to create an account.

# Stage 2 Application Form checklist:

As part of this application process, applicants are required to provide the following information. Please ensure this information is accurate to reduce any delay in the evaluation process. An application toolkit can be found in the appendix to assist this process.

#### • Income and expenditure accounts for 2022-2024:

Most recent Income & expenditure accounts, Profit & Loss Accounts or Management Accounts for the previous 3 years of the festival (2022–2024). These do not need to have been prepared by an accountant; however, please ensure that they are as accurate as possible as this Scheme will be subject to future audits.

Accounts need to identify the following revenue lines:

- Financial breakdown of all festival income streams
- A breakdown of the turnover and the total value of grants from public bodies or other sources of public funding received.

If the Management Accounts for the festival do not clearly identify all of these (relevant) revenues, the applicant business must submit a **signed letter from their Accountant** confirming each of the individual revenue lines.

#### • Number of years currently in operation:

Evidence that the festival must have been in operation for a minimum of three years from 2022 to 2024 (inclusive).

Evidence can include:

- Festival programme material for three years
- Social media posts from three years
- Festival reviews
- Online media coverage

#### • Duration of programme:

Evidence that the festival programme is at least two consecutive days

#### • Company registration:

Must provide evidence of Tax Reference Number (TRN), or Companies Registration Office number (CRO) as appropriate.

#### • Festival attendance figures:

Must provide attendance numbers for last 3 years of operation.

Must illustrate the number of **ticketed** and **non-ticketed** attendees and the method used to calculate non-ticketed attendance (please see appendix for **acceptable crowd counting methods**).

Must provide an estimated percentage of local, domestic, and international festival attendees for last 3 years of operation.

#### Resources:

Must provide a management team overview which illustrates the number of fulltime and temporary staff employed including their roles and responsibilities.

#### Governance

Organisers must provide evidence of Governance in the organisation and compliance with all statutory requirements including but not Limited to taxation and employment. In the case of participative events, organisers must include a health and safety plan. Proof at letter of offer stage will be required to show that the relevant checks are in place to deliver these requirements.

#### Stage 2 Supporting Documents checklist

The following supporting documents will be required as part of your Stage 2 application form:

- Outline of Marketing and sales plan for 2026\*
- Festival Sustainability development plan 2026\*
- Festival Accessibility development plan 2026\*
- Draft Community Festival Engagement plan 2026\*
- Draft of your 2025 festival programme, including all ticketed events.

\*Templates will be made available with the Stage 2 Application Form. If the above is not submitted the application will be deemed incomplete.

#### **Review all materials**

Prior to submitting a Stage 2 application, applicants will be required to ensure that:

- 1. All sections of the form have been fully and accurately completed.
- 2. All supporting documents have been submitted.



#### PLEASE NOTE:

Incomplete application forms and/or applications received after the closing date will not be considered for evaluation.

All completed Stage 2 application forms must be submitted via the Fáilte Ireland Trade Portal.

We strongly advise applicants not to wait until the last day to submit applications in case you experience IT related issues. Applications cannot be accepted after the closing date and time.

Fáilte Ireland will endeavour to process applications as quickly as possible. However, due to the anticipated high volume of applications, applicants should be aware that during peaks in the receipt of applications, this may take a matter of weeks. We will keep all applicants informed throughout the application process of anticipated timelines for completion.



#### PLEASE NOTE:

Fáilte Ireland may contact applicants to request additional information during the evaluation phase.

The eligibility of an applicant and the determination of the investment grant amount is at the discretion of Fáilte Ireland.



#### PLEASE NOTE:

Incomplete EOI & application forms will be deemed as ineligible and will not be considered further.

# **Additional information**

Fáilte Ireland reserves the right to request further evidence of turnover from applicants. Failure to complete the application requirements and submit the supplementary documentation to Fáilte Ireland's satisfaction will result in the application being deemed ineligible.

#### **NOTE: Scheme audit**

Applicants in receipt of funding under this Scheme may be subject to audit to ensure compliance by successful applicants with the terms and conditions of the Scheme, for a period of 10 years. Applicants must keep and make records available to Fáilte Ireland or our nominated representatives as requested.



# 8. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF GRANT FUNDING

# Festival attendance figure

The Grantee will be required to submit attendee numbers with their post event report for both ticketed and non-ticketed events. This should be broken down into Local, Domestic and International visitors. Evidence of how these figures are calculated will also be required.

#### 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 **click here.** 

#### **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 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 funding under State aid law and any attendant processes including recovery or claw-back.

#### Terms of investment:

In accordance with Section 8 of the National Tourism Development Authority Act 2003, 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.

#### **Retention of records:**

The Grantee is required to maintain a claim file, including all invoices and bank statements, for a minimum of seven years and six months from final claim payment.

Fáilte Ireland, The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport or any other nominated individual may request, at any time up to seven years and six months from the date of payment of the final claim to see claim file. If the Grantee fails to provide material requested during this period, the Grantee may be required to repay the Investment Grant Funding in full.



#### **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.

#### **Children First Act**

The successful grantee festival must be compliant with the requirements of the Children First Act, 2015.

#### **Accessibility and Inclusion**

All festivals and events should aim to be universally accessible and create barrier-free experiences, this means ensuring destinations, venues, products and services are accessible to all people, regardless of their physical limitations, disabilities or age. This funding Scheme aims to enhance accessible and inclusive experiences across Irish festivals and events. All projects must be designed and implemented in accordance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Accessibility Act (EAA). The EAA introduces accessibility requirements for different products and services and will apply from 28th June 2025.



**PLEASE NOTE:** Fáilte Ireland reserves the right to amend the terms and conditions of the Scheme



# 9. EU STATE AID AND UNDERTAKINGS IN DIFFICULTY

#### 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.

General Block Exemption Regulations (GBER) 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 Scheme as follows:

Aid for culture and heritage conservation (Article 53 of the GBER) This is the primary exemption for this Scheme and in addition to being eligible and meeting the Heritage and Culture Criteria set out in Article 53, 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.

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.





A State Aid test will be undertaken on a project-by-project basis as set out in the Fáilte Ireland State Aid Handbook. Please note this Scheme is only funded through GBER Article 53. **Click here** for more information.

#### **Undertakings in Difficulty**

An undertaking in difficulty is defined as follows and will be ineligible:

In the case of a limited liability company (other than an SME that has been in existence for less than 3 years or, for the purposes of eligibility for risk finance aid, an SME which has been operating in the market for either (i) less than 10 years following their registration or (ii) less than 7 years from its first commercial sale[1] and qualifies for risk finance investments following due diligence by the selected financial intermediary), where more than half of its subscribed share capital has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses. This is the case when deduction of accumulated losses from reserves (and all other elements generally considered as part of the own funds of the company) leads to a negative cumulative amount that exceeds half of the subscribed share capital. For the purposes of this provision, 'limited liability company' refers in particular to the types of company mentioned in Annex I of Directive 2013/34/EU and 'share capital' includes, where relevant, any share premium.

In the case of a company where at least some members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company (other than an SME that has been in existence for less than 3 years or, for the purposes of eligibility for risk finance aid, an SME which has been operating in the market for either (i) less than 10 years following their registration or (ii) less than 7 years from its first commercial sale and or less than 10 years following their registration and qualifies for risk finance investments following due diligence by the selected financial intermediary), where more than half of its capital as shown in the company accounts has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses. For the purposes of this provision, 'a company where at least some members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company' refers in particular to the types of company mentioned in Annex II of Directive 2013/34/EU.

Where the undertaking is subject to collective insolvency proceedings or fulfils the criteria under its domestic law for being placed in collective insolvency proceedings at the request of its creditors.

Where the undertaking has received rescue aid and has not yet reimbursed the loan or terminated the guarantee or has received restructuring aid and is still subject to a restructuring plan.

In the case of an undertaking that is not an SME, where, for the past two years: the undertaking's book debt to equity ratio has been greater than 7.5 and the undertakings EBITDA interest coverage ratio has been below 1.0.

#### 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.



# 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.

# 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 **click here**.



# **10. DATA PROTECTION**

Both the applicant and Fáilte Ireland shall have regard to their statutory obligations under the GDPR (2016/670) and the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018. In this regard, in so far as the applicant processes personal data for the purpose of this application it shall comply with its obligations as a "data controller" under the GDPR. Personal data supplied to Fáilte Ireland in relation to the Scheme and the applicant may be processed by Fáilte Ireland for the purposes of the administration of the Scheme. Fáilte Ireland will be sharing information provided in the application form or pursuant to the Scheme with Government Departments, and/or Government Agencies, if information is required by those organisations to ensure compliance with EU, State aid and national legislation requirements including reporting requirements. Our lawful basis for processing your personal data is 'Legal Obligation' as public funding may be provided, and we must adhere to EU State Aid and other applicable Law.

We are also using the lawful basis of 'Purpose of a Contract' because the successful applicants will be issued with an investment grant agreement. In addition, Fáilte Ireland's statutory purpose, under the National Tourism Development Authority Act, 2003 is to develop and promote Ireland's tourism industry, which includes helping to develop and promote tourism businesses and experiences. This means that the lawful basis we use to process your personal data is our 'Legislative Mandate'. Should your application be successful we will retain it for 10 years from the payment of the last instalment of the grant.

Please note that you will be required to submit photos/videos of the Festival and Fáilte Ireland & Tourism Ireland will use them to market future festivals and verify that the event has taken place. We have provided a link to the Imagery Forms, in section 14 Scheme Toolkit.

If you have any data protection related queries, please contact dataprotection@failteireland.ie

# **11. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

Fáilte Ireland is subject to the requirements and the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (the "FOI Act") and the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 to 2018 (the "**AIE**") (as each is amended from time to time).

It may be necessary for Fáilte Ireland to disclose, in connection with the **Fáilte Ireland Strategic Tourism Festival Scheme** (a) any information supplied by the applicant to Fáilte Ireland and (b) any relevant data and records accumulated by Fáilte Ireland in administering the **Fáilte Ireland Strategic Tourism Festival Scheme** under this FOI and AIE legislation.

Where the information is commercially sensitive, Fáilte Ireland may contact the applicant in this regard in advance; however, Fáilte Ireland may still be required to release this information. The final decision on disclosure rests with the Office of the Information Commissioner, and ultimately, the Courts.

Applicants should also note that Fáilte Ireland may publish details of the Scheme including, but not limited to, names of applicants that receive funding and the amounts paid to each. Fáilte Ireland at its sole discretion may decide to publish only details of recipients above a certain threshold, the total amount of funding paid under the **Fáilte Ireland Strategic Tourism Festival Scheme**, the average investment grant figure or the minimum and maximum investment grant amounts paid.

If you have any freedom of information related queries, please contact foi@failteireland.ie





# **12. APPEALS PROCESS**

In certain circumstances an unsuccessful Stage 2 applicant may appeal the decision to Fáilte Ireland. There is no appeal process for Stage 1.

#### Submitting an appeal

Before formally entering the appeals process, unsuccessful applicants should engage with Fáilte Ireland to seek further information and clarification with regards 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.

If having discussed the outcome of an unsuccessful application with a member of staff from Fáilte Ireland, an applicant still wishes to appeal the decision, the applicant must write to the Appeals Officer within fifteen working days from the date of the letter notifying the applicant that the application was unsuccessful.

**The letter of appeal must state:** The grounds on which the applicant believes the application was not properly dealt with or assessed, and Specific reasons or evidence the applicant may have to support the appeal. Full details on how and where to submit an appeal will be notified to unsuccessful applicants.

# 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 7 working days. Invalid appeals will be rejected at this stage of the process.

#### **Appeal review process**

The appeal will be considered by the appeals officer in Fáilte Ireland. The decision of the Appeals Officer will be binding and will not be subject to any further appeals. Their conclusions and recommendations will be communicated to the applicant within fifteen working days of the Appeals Officer's decision. Where any delay is anticipated, the applicant will be informed in writing of the extended timescale. All reasonable endeavours will be used to provide relevant information by way of reply, subject to data protection, commercial confidentiality, and other legal requirements, as relevant. The following table sets out the timelines for an appeal:



# **13. APPENDIX**

# Supporting sustainability

It has never been more important that the safeguarding and successful growth of Ireland's tourism sector is based on a sustainable and balanced approach. Environmental protection, economic competitiveness, community and visitor awareness and involvement, all play a part in successfully achieving and benefiting from this approach. Driving this sustainable agenda at an international and national level are the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) where promoting and achieving a sustainable tourism industry form important targets in successfully achieving these goals. In line with achieving international and national goals and principles the tourism sector (authorities, agencies, the industry and all other key stakeholders) should adopt the VICE (Visitor, Industry, Community and Environment) Model for Sustainable Tourism in all our activities and outputs at all levels.

A key pillar of Fáilte Ireland's Operational plan is "Driving Climate Action" and the festival divisional activity under this pillar is to facilitate access and the commitment of Fáilte Ireland supported festivals to the sustainability programme.

A critical element of developing tourism festivals is a commitment towards operating sustainably.

Please find the below guidelines for your review to identify how sustainable your festival is: Fáilte Ireland Sustainable Festivals Guidelines.

# **Definitions:**

**Events only definition:** Organised gatherings or activities of limited duration that bring people together for the primary purpose of participating in a community, cultural, commemorative, recreational, art or entertainment experience.

Festival attendance figure: the number of attendees at an event.

Ticketed events: events that require a ticket to enter an area.

Non-ticketed: events that are free entry and do not require a ticket.

Acceptable crowd counting methods: Ticketmaster or similar ticketing system.

# Acceptable non ticketed crowd counting methods:

Garda estimates

#### Counting clickers

Jacob's method: which involves dividing the area occupied by event attendees into sections, determining the average number of people in each section and multiplying by the number of occupied sections with similar crowd density and then summing the total across different densities. For a more accurate assessment it is preferable to use aerial still images of the crowd.



# **14. SCHEME RESOURCES**

Fáilte Ireland Strategic Tourism Festival Investment Scheme Resources

Please find the below resources to assist you with your application

- 1. Fáilte Ireland Trade Portal
- 2. Fáilte Ireland Festivals and Events business supports
- 3. Fáilte Ireland Festivals and Events Sustainability Guidelines
- 4. Fáilte Ireland Accessible Tourism information and resources









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