



Business Events Growth Programme

International Delegate Growth

Guidelines 2023 -2024

www.visitbritain.org/business-events



Introduction

VisitBritain promotes business event tourism through the establishment of the **Business Events Growth Programme (BEGP)**. In operation since 2016, BEGP forms part of our commitment to build, develop and boost the business events sector, supporting the attraction, creation and growth of international business events which align with the Government's priority industry sectors.

The **International Delegate Growth** strand of the programme specifically supports the creation, growth and internationalisation of business events in Great Britain. This includes support towards conferences, congresses, exhibitions and tradeshow taking place in England, Scotland and Wales.

The aim of this strand is to increase international attendance, long lasting impacts and economic benefits through additional international visitor spend, and also through encouraging greater international trade and investment potential for the UK.

Financial support

Financial support is available to new or recurring business events that are held in the UK, up to the value of £20,000 gross per event. Exceptional proposals requiring more than £20,000 per event, backed by a strong business case may be considered on a case by case basis (subject to available funds).

Funds could be used to support the following, indicative activities:

- International delegate marketing campaign through digital or trade media channels
- Communications and digital activity, website, film, webinar, e-newsletters or other content to increase interest and awareness in your event
- PR activity that secures editorial coverage or an international media buy
- Activations in markets to drive conversion or attract more delegates
- Sustainability initiatives and legacy projects to demonstrate the event positive impact
- Attraction of high-profile speakers
- Targeted international delegates acquisition
- Satellite events, opening/closing ceremonies, educational sessions

These serve as examples and VisitBritain welcomes suggestions from applicants on further ideas to attract international delegates.

The following types of activities will not be supported:

- Business as usual costs (e.g. office rent, utilities)
- Subsidy for event costs (e.g. venue cost, deposits)
- Compensation payments to employees for loss of office
- Payments that support activity intended to influence or attempt to influence Parliament, Government or political parties, or attempting to influence the awarding or renewal of contracts and grants, or attempting to influence legislative or regulatory action

You will need to set out what activities will be delivered, and by when, in your application, as well as a project plan that highlights key delivery milestones and resource/budget allocation.

Mandatory eligibility criteria

Support from the Business Events Growth Programme (BEGP) is determined via a submission and assessment process.

All applications will be assessed against the following criteria. If the answer is 'yes' to all of the questions, then the event is eligible to apply. Before submitting your application, please ensure you have reviewed and addressed the following:

1. **Will all the proposed grant funded activities occur in the financial year 2023/24?**
All items of expenditure must be concluded and claimed in arrears within the financial year ending on 31 March 2024. No pre-payments for activities being delivered in future financial years are permitted, but the event can take place a future financial year.
2. **Is it a 'business event' for a professional, trade, B2B or academic audience?**
This includes tradeshow/exhibitions and conferences/congresses. Consumer/ B2C events, festivals, sport and other events are ineligible to apply.
3. **Will the proposed business event be live or hybrid?** Virtual events are ineligible to apply.
4. **Will the proposed business event only be held in Great Britain?** This includes England, Scotland and Wales.
5. **Do more than 250 delegates attend the event?** VisitBritain will consider events of a smaller size if the event is clearly for a very senior audience, i.e. CEO-level or equivalent.
6. **Will the event include any sustainability initiatives and/or legacy projects?**
Events that do not have any intellectual, social, financial or environmental impact will not be supported.
7. Does the funding proposal **seek to create or grow the international profile and attendance of your business event?** To be eligible for support an increase of delegate attendance should be achieved from an international audience (VisitBritain considers an **'international' event as one where at least 40% of total delegates/visitors are international**. Events that currently do not meet this benchmark must demonstrate how they intend to reach it through activity supported by the funds. Events that already meet this benchmark must indicate how this can be exceeded, and to what extent.
8. Does the proposal **seek to grow international visitor/delegate and/or press audiences?** This includes visitors/trade visitors, international buyer delegations / 'hosted' buyers, conference delegates and international press. Proposals that seek to grow exhibitors or sponsors will not be considered.
9. Does the event have **large trade and investment potential; both during the event (international delegates attending) and also the potential for future trade and investment post-event?**

10. Does this funding application **support new, additional activities to grow international delegates at your event?** The following expenditure items do not qualify for support from the fund, including activity already confirmed to take place, 'business as usual' costs, such as, but not limited to venue rent, business overheads, salaries for existing or new positions within your organisation and capital expenditure/replacing equipment or in retrospect of expenditure already made. If the activity suggested does not aim to grow delegates, the application will not be accepted.
11. If successful, will event **marketing activity incorporate approved VisitBritain branding?** Any marketing activity funded by this programme will require the inclusion of approved **VisitBritain** branding, showcasing the best of what the country has to offer, to inspire the world and encourage people to visit, do business, invest and study in the Great Britain. Any activities that could bring VisitBritain into disrepute do not qualify for support from the Programme.
12. **Has your organisation received less than £315,000 of Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA)¹ over any period of three fiscal years?** If your answer is NO to this question, we regret that you cannot proceed with an application. The Grant is awarded as in accordance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 which enables the Grant Recipient to receive up to a maximum level of subsidy. The current threshold is £315,000 over any period of three fiscal years².

If you are in doubt as to whether your application meets the Business Events Growth Programme criteria, please do not hesitate to contact VisitBritain at EventSupport@visitbritain.org for further assistance.

Who can apply

We welcome applications from all organisations, including but not limited to; event organisers, convention bureau/ destination management organisations, universities or associations. If you are delivering the event in partnership, please make this clear in your application.

Preference will be given to grant applications from SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises), those organisations who have less ability to access financing to support such growth activities or events which have potential for a high economic impact and increase in visitors.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/subsidy-control-regime>

² It also includes any aid given under the EU state aid de minimis regulations and subsidies given as small amounts of financial assistance under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement after 31 December 2020.

How to apply

1. Read the guidelines to familiarise yourself prior to completing your application for support. It describes where, when and how VisitBritain will consider offering financial support and the criteria that must be satisfied before this support will be offered.
2. Read the mandatory eligibility criteria, to understand the key requirements for any event seeking support through the Business Events Growth Programme
3. If you fulfil the mandatory eligibility criteria, complete the application form and the following supporting documentation:
 - **Annex B: Subsidy Control declaration** – confirming the Minimal Financial Assistance received over the last three financial years
 - **BTA New Supplier request form** – only applicable if your organisation has not received direct grant payments from VisitBritain before.
4. Take note of the stages and the time required before signing a Grant Funding Agreement and ensure that fits with your application. *During the assessment process, VisitBritain may require additional information and will communicate directly with applicants to obtain details as required*
5. Once you have completed your application, please email it with the supporting documentation (Annex B and Supplier form) to EventSupport@visitbritain.org, with the following reference in the subject line: **IDG/Event name**.

Be aware that submitting a request for support, regardless of whether the criteria is satisfied, does not ensure that the support will be made available under this or any other initiative. There is no guarantee that all events or activity will be deemed appropriate or offered grant funding. VisitBritain, at its discretion, will determine where, when and how support will be offered and provided.

Assessment

Applications will be considered by a Panel of industry experts, to determine successful applicants.

If successful, we will conduct a credit check on your organization and you will be requested to provide us mandatory information (i.e. Corporate Information and Organization Details including VAT registration number and recovery status, detailed Evaluation Plan) in order to complete a **Due Diligence & Fraud Risk Assessment**.

Please note, the assessment is a two-way process that can take up to **6 weeks** after application. Bear this in mind when considering your activity.

Once the above documents are received and approved, we will draw up and sign a Grant Funding Agreement.

Please note

- This grant funding opportunity is being operated by VisitBritain as a '**Minimal Financial Assistance**'. The Grant is awarded as in accordance with Section 36 of the Subsidy Control Act which enables the Grant Recipient to receive up to a maximum level of subsidy without engaging the subsidy control requirements (with the exception of the transparency requirements for subsidies over £100,000) under the Act ("Minimal Financial Assistance"). The current threshold is £315,000 to a single enterprise over the elapsed part of the current financial year and the two preceding financial years ("the Applicable Period").
- The award of this Grant will be conditional upon the Grant Recipient providing the Authority with the Minimal Financial Assistance declaration form confirming how much Exempt Subsidy if any, it has received in the Applicable Period.
- Grants will be paid in arrears on the basis of the actual **reimbursement of eligible project costs**. If successful, you will need to provide completed grant claims to draw down funding, which must include copies of invoices and receipts as evidence of payment, and a project monitoring report alongside each grant claim.

Find out more

For more information on the International Delegate Growth, please visit:

<https://www.visitbritain.org/business-events>

For enquiries about the programme, please email EventSupport@visitbritain.org