



Business Events Growth Programme

International Delegate Growth

Guidelines 2025-2026

www.visitbritain.org/business-events



Introduction

VisitBritain promotes business events 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 through encouraging greater international trade and investment potential.

Financial support

Financial support is available to new or recurring business events that are held in Britain, up to the value of £20,000 gross per event.

Please note: the amount of approved funding takes into consideration the size of the event, plus specific details on the proposed activities and associated costs in generating an uplift in delegate numbers.

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

- Content creation to increase interest and awareness in your event
- Communications and digital activity, including support towards website, film, podcast, webinar, e-newsletters
- International delegate marketing campaign through digital or trade media channels
- PR activity, digital / editorial coverage, international media buy
- Activations in markets to drive conversion or attract more delegates
- Targeted international delegate acquisition

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)
- On going promotional activities and marketing that are already in existence
- 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

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 on a competitive basis.

If the answer is 'yes' to all the questions, then the event is eligible to apply for funding but there is no guarantee that all events or activity suggested will be deemed appropriate or offered grant funding.

1. **Will all the proposed grant funded activities occur in the financial year 2025/26?** All items of expenditure must be concluded and claimed in arrears within the financial year ending on 31 March 2026. 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 B2B tradeshows/exhibitions, association conferences and congresses. Consumer/B2C events, festivals, sport and other events are ineligible to apply.
3. **Will the proposed business event be live / in-person?** 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?** Smaller size events will not be considered for this funding programme.
6. **Will the event have at least 30% of international delegates?** Events with a smaller international audience are not eligible for financial support from this programme.
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, such as 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.
8. **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.
9. **Does the event have trade and investment potential?** This can be both during the event (international delegates attending) and the potential for future trade and investment post-event.
10. **Is the applicant based or has an office in Great Britain?** Applicants can include **Convention** Bureaus (CVBs), Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), Professional Conference Organiser (PCOs), convention centres, universities, associations and corporate organisations.
11. **Does this funding application support new, additional activities to grow international delegates at your event?** There are 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 cost, deposits, 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 is not new and does not aim to grow delegates, the application will not be accepted.

12. **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.
13. **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 years.

Who can apply

We welcome applications from professional congress organisers, convention bureaus / destination management organisations, universities, associations, trade show and B2B organisers.

If you are delivering the event in partnership, please make this clear in your application. We encourage all applications to work in partnership with the relevant city convention bureau.

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.
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**. You will need to set out what activities will be delivered and by when, highlighting key delivery milestones and resource/budget allocation.
4. **Take note of the stages and time required** before signing a Grant Funding Agreement and ensure that fits with your application. It can take up to **6 weeks** after application, before signing a Grant Funding Agreement - bear this in mind when considering your activity!

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.

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

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, VAT registration number and recovery status, detailed evaluation plan) to complete a **Due Diligence & Fraud Risk Assessment**.

During the assessment process, VisitBritain may require additional information and will communicate directly with applicants to obtain details as required.

Branding

VisitBritain provides a high quality, well-recognised and consistent platform to target specific audiences overseas. That is why one of the conditions of funding from the Business Events Growth Programme Fund is for you to use the VisitBritain brand to communicate and promote your project.

It is a requirement of this fund that **all creative collateral** (posters, digital assets, brochures etc.) related to your project as well as the event website, if available, **must include the VisitBritain brand** unless there are exceptions noted in the conditions of the grant. This is not just a badging exercise. Using VisitBritain branding gives your project the opportunity to use a brand that is recognised and proven to influence overseas audiences.

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. **Please note: all invoices must be dated after the application date as the fund only supports new activities for the event. Previous expenses will not be accepted.**

Find out more

For more information on the International Delegate Growth, please visit [VisitBritain Business Events Growth Programme](#)

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