



Business Events Growth Programme

## Candidate City Bid Support

Guidelines 2025-2026

[www.visitbritain.org/business-events](https://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 **Candidate City Bid Support** strand of the programme specifically supports the bidding process for international business events in key sector priorities in Britain, to assist with site visit and bid pitching and to help boost the city winning potential.

The objective of this strand is to secure new international business events in the coming years, boosting the country's winning potential through financial support.

## Financial support

Financial support is available to support cities and venues in bidding for international business events, 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.**

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

- Site visits, including contribution towards accommodation and flight costs (not business class)
- Bid pitch, including costs for support and production of the pitch
- Production of bid booklet to distribute
- Translation costs of a bid
- Communications and digital activity, website, film or other content to support the bid
- Media/social media activity in support of the bid, such as industry/sector channels and networks relating specifically to the sector of the event being bid for

These serve as examples, further ideas to secure new international business event through this fund are welcome.

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

## 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 eligibility criteria.

If the answer is 'yes' to all the questions, then the event is eligible to apply 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. **Is the bid for a business event to be hosted in Great Britain?** This includes England, Scotland and Wales.
5. **To the best of your knowledge, are you the sole Britain bidder for the event?** Applications will be considered when the applicant is the sole Britain candidate for the event. Should there be more than one British destination/venue looking to bid for this event, we must either offer funding to all bidders or refuse any applications.
6. **Will the event attract 250 or more delegates?** Smaller size events will not be considered for this funding programme.
7. **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.
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. **Does this funding application support bid activities to potentially win international events?** There are expenditure items that do not qualify for support from the fund, including '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.
11. **Is the applicant a Convention Bureau (CVB), Destination Management Organisation (DMO) or a Professional Conference Organiser (PCO)?** Venues who are partnering with CVBs/DMOs or PCOs are also eligible to apply.
12. **If successful, will bid 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 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)<sup>1</sup> 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 Convention Bureaus (CVBs) / Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), as well as venues and Professional Congress Organisers (PCOs) who are partnering with CVBs/DMOs.

## 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.

## 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

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

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 that **VisitBritain must be included in all communications related to your bid**. If support is provided before your bid proposal submission, please include VisitBritain branding into your bid document. If support is provided after your bid proposal submission (including shortlisting and site visits), please include VisitBritain as bid supporter in all future communications.

In case of an event win, it is mandatory to **include VisitBritain branding in all announcements and communications** – this also includes a mention in press releases.

## 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 [VisitBritain Business Events Growth Programme](#)

For enquiries about the programme, please email [grants@visitbritain.org](mailto:grants@visitbritain.org)