



Connected Destinations (England) Fund 2026-2029

Year 1 Guidance for Applicants

September 2026

Introduction

England's regional visitor economy has the power to drive economic growth, support local businesses and create lasting benefits for communities across the country. While England boasts an exceptional range of cultural, heritage, coastal, rural and visitor attractions, there is an opportunity to inspire more visitors to explore a wider range of destinations and experiences across the country. This is particularly important as visitors increasingly seek authentic, multi-destination experiences that encourage wider exploration and deeper engagement with places and communities across England.

VisitBritain/VisitEngland's recent international and domestic audience insight work shows that visitors are motivated by specific experiences and itineraries rather than regional and national identities, however they can face challenges in identifying and planning connected regional journeys beyond traditional gateway destinations.

The *Connected Destinations Fund* has been established by DCMS to support ambitious cross-regional partnerships led by accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs). Working in partnership with neighbouring destinations, Mayoral Strategic Authorities, transport providers and tourism businesses, funded projects will bring together existing tourism assets into compelling cross-regional stories and new itineraries that connect visitor experiences. These scalable propositions will be embedded commercially and sold through the travel trade, delivering a lasting legacy regionally and locally through continued partnership and support from VisitBritain/VisitEngland, to drive sustainable visitor economy growth in the regions of England.

How much funding is available?

The *Connected Destinations Fund* is a competitive grant programme with an overall budget of £3.38 million over the financial period 2026-2029.

It is anticipated that there will be circa **four Year 1 projects** focused on building cross regional partnerships and product propositions for international and domestic visitors. The delivery period in Year 1 is 1 November 2026 to 31 March 2027¹.

The budget for Year 1 (2026/27) is circa £800,000. Each of the circa four successful projects will receive grant-funding based on an indicative budget of up to £200,000. Applicants should be realistic about what can be delivered and therefore spent in Year 1.

The lessons, partnerships and evidence generated in Year 1 should inform and develop these propositions for larger-scale multi-year investment in the subsequent second and third years (2027-2029). We reserve the right to call for further projects for Years 2 and 3.

Additional funding from third parties, including cash co-financing and/or monetised in-kind contributions, is encouraged but will not be a requirement in Year 1. Match funding will be required to secure multi-annual funding to expand, develop and promote product propositions in Years 2 (2027/28) and 3 (2028/29). It is anticipated there will be a 50% match requirement in

¹ In 2027, Good Friday is on 26 March and Easter Monday on 29 March creating a four-day bank holiday weekend coinciding with the end of the financial year

Years 2/3 which can be a mixture of public and private sector cash and also in-kind contributions. Further details on Years 2/3 will be shared with successful projects.

Please note that continuation funding beyond Year 1 is not guaranteed. Any decision to support projects in Years 2 and 3 will be subject to the outcomes achieved in Year 1, plus the process and criteria set, which will include meeting match funding requirements.

Who can apply?

The *Connected Destinations Fund* is open only to VisitEngland accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs).

Projects must be led by a cross-regional partnership of LVEPs working in partnership with their Mayoral Strategic Authorities (where they exist) and other important project partners such as transport gateways, with one LVEP taking on the role of lead accountable body. The scale of these partnerships should reflect the ambition set out for the fund and the resulting product propositions and include at least three LVEPs.

The lead LVEP applicant must have a permanent place of business in Great Britain (e.g. registered office address with Companies House).

Please note that the following types of companies and organisations cannot apply²:

- Destination Management Organisations in England not accredited as Local Visitor Economy Partnerships.
- Overseas-based Travel Agent Consortia
- Sole traders
- Industry bodies
- Membership organisations representing solely a sectional interest-group within the tourism and hospitality industries, such as hotelier associations and attraction groupings.

Applicants must have the available people resources to deliver the activity funded by the grant. To support this, a maximum 50% of the grant up to £100,000 can be used for project management support, including staff salaries.

The applicant LVEP must be able to show that it is a going concern and is not at risk of business failure and closure.

Please see the Subsidy Control section for further information about the legal basis on which this grant-funding is being offered.

² If any applications are received from this ineligible set, they will be identified at the initial checks stage and will not go forward for assessment and scoring.

Year 1 Project Criteria

The criteria and scoring framework that will be used to assess and support decision-making on successful projects is set out below.

Thematic Area	Max. Points
Partnership and Delivery	30 points

Projects must be led by a cross-regional partnership of LVEPs, with one taking on the role of lead accountable body. The scale of these partnerships should reflect the ambition set out for the fund – strong visitor propositions that encourage multi-destination and cross-regional exploration.

Partners should include Mayoral Strategic Authorities where they are established. They could also include local authorities, transport gateways and providers, cultural organisations, natural landscapes and tourism businesses and commercial partners.

Partnerships in Year 1 can be further developed to build into Years 2 and 3 and applicants are encouraged to consider this through demonstrating what a partner will contribute and the role it would play in future years. This could also include the incorporation of additional LVEPs to expand the project, building a domestic product into the international market, or building on Year 1 product propositions to incorporate new themes or products.

Applicants should demonstrate:

- Effective partnership governance and decision-making between delivery partners, including clear roles, responsibilities and accountability
- Knowledge and expertise of delivery partners
- Ability to commit/spend funding within the financial year
- Demonstrable commitment from strategic public and private-sector partners, with evidence of the contribution each partner will make to the project and its future growth, support from regional and local leaders. This could be an MOU, Letter of intent or a contract with cash match secured for future years. The tight application timeframe is appreciated, and this can therefore be submitted post application, but in time for the Awards Panel, which is expected to take place by the end of October 2026.

A clear and realistic delivery plan including key activities (designating responsible partners) and milestones should be provided.

Risks to delivery and long-term project sustainability should also be identified within a risk register, along with information on how these will be mitigated. Applicants are encouraged to consider financial, reputational, delivery and management risks.

Thematic Area	Max. Points
Visitor Proposition and Market Appeal	40 points

Projects should set out the cross-regional product proposition, the target market and audience, the visitor need or motivation being met, and how the proposition creates a compelling reason to visit multiple and connected destinations in England.

International and domestic insights show that visitors are motivated to explore further and stay longer when there is a compelling story, passion point or itinerary that clearly explains why a place is worth visiting. Strong storytelling, distinctive product propositions and clear packaging are therefore essential, helping visitors understand what makes each destination unique and how it fits into their wider trip.

Projects are encouraged to develop distinctive, authentic experiences rooted in the character of the destination. These might draw on local culture, food, heritage, nature, wellbeing or everyday life, and should have the potential to encourage longer stays and wider exploration. Projects may also consider how individual experiences can connect with others to create compelling, easy-to-follow multi-day itineraries.

Product propositions should:

- Start with a compelling visitor motivation
- Be rooted in a distinctive English experience
- Connect multiple destinations cross-region with coherent visitor journeys
- Include clear hero products
- Encourage longer stays and wider exploration
- Demonstrate a credible pathway to becoming commercially viable and bookable, with identifiable routes to market and potential distribution partners (see criteria section below).

Annex 1 contains some suggested product proposition territories. These are designed to give ideas to LVEPs to build connected, bookable visitor journeys rooted in the opportunities identified through international audience and product/market fit research (e.g. Project Mosaic), domestic market segmentation and travel trends. The detailed insight that has informed these will be shared.

Thematic Area	Max. Points
Transport Connectivity	20 points

Projects should describe how existing transport infrastructure and networks will be embedded to improve connectivity and make it easier for visitors to explore multiple destinations, including:

- Integration between transport gateways (such as airports, ferry terminals and rail hubs) and surrounding destinations
- How existing transport infrastructure and networks will be used to improve visitor dispersal
- Evidence that relevant transport and gateway partners are actively engaged in proposition development and, where appropriate, have potential to support future distribution, packaging, promotion, data sharing or investment.
- Adoption of a public transport-first approach where appropriate.
- Consideration of final mile to ensure products/experience are easily accessible.

Thematic Area	Max. Points
Commercial Capability of Product and Routes to Market	50 points

Project applicants should highlight the commercial capability of the product and routes to market, including how this will contribute to a sustainable model at the end of the funding period (31 March 2029).

Year 1 activity should focus on strengthening the quality, coherence and market potential of visitor experiences. Projects should help tourism businesses better understand and engage with domestic and international travel trade requirements, supporting the development of products with strong market potential that are well positioned for future route to market activity.

The following pathway is provided to help applicants consider how they will develop their commercial approach over the lifetime of the fund:

Year 1: Develop – validate – package – test commercial readiness

The following areas should be considered, including but not limited to:

- 1) Pricing and packaging potential
- 2) Capacity and availability
- 3) Bookability through the travel trade
- 4) Ability of participating businesses to meet relevant travel trade and distribution requirements
- 5) Potential routes to market and distribution partners

Projects should also use market insight and demand validation to identify opportunities and address gaps relating to:

- 1) Evidence of customer demand
- 2) Product or experience gaps
- 3) Capacity or availability constraints
- 4) Business or product development needs
- 5) Priority target markets and audiences
- 6) Opportunities for experience development

Year 2: Secure partners – distribution – activation – market

Year 3: Scale – leverage investment – optimise – expand

Applicants should describe how the proposition will reach its target audiences in Years 2 and 3 which could include:

- Potential commercial partners
- Route-to-market channels and promotional activity
- Partner contributions
- Future funding/investment beyond grant funding
- Intended long-term ownership model

This can be worked up more fully in Year 1, leading into Years 2 and 3 projects and investment, however should applicants wish to engage with tour operators and DMCs in advance of submitting their applications, a list of them is available via UKinbound:

<https://www.ukinbound.org/members/member-directory/>

Thematic Area	Max. Points
Evidence of Growth Potential	40 points

Projects should be built on evidence, including the relevant visitor, market, transport, economic and audience data and insight, to support why the product proposition and visitor geography has the potential for growth.

Applications should clearly demonstrate how the project will:

- Increase visitor dwell time, overnight stays and drive incremental visitor spend
- Distribute the benefits of tourism more widely across local communities
- Create the conditions for sustainable visitor economy growth, including the potential to stimulate private-sector investment and commercially sustainable opportunities for tourism businesses.

Projects should align with UK Government's ambition to celebrate the stories, communities and places that make England's regions distinctive and local and national growth strategies, such as:

- Local Growth Plans and/or Mayoral priorities
- Destination Management Plans
- Relevant Industrial Strategy sector plans
- The High Streets Strategy
- The Northern Growth Strategy (where applicable)

Applicants should explain how regenerative, accessible and inclusive principles have been embedded within the design and delivery of the proposition, including visitor experiences, content and transport considerations.

Thematic Area		Max. Points
Proposed Evaluation Methodology		10 points

Grant funded activities should lead to meaningful, measurable changes, conditions, behaviours and long-term impacts. Annex 2 shows VisitEngland's standard evaluation framework for grant schemes, detailing steps from inputs to long-term impacts. Applicants will be required to use this to give an initial overview of how they would monitor and measure progress and impact.

VisitEngland will be appointing an evaluator to work with successful projects in Year 1.

Thematic Area		Max. Points
Budget and Value for Money		10 points

Applicants will be required to provide a full breakdown of the budget for their project and to be able to demonstrate value for money through robust budget and activity planning and use of the lead LVEP's procurement processes.

Assessment will consider:

- Breakdown of spending on project activity
- Value for public investment derived from robust project management and procurement
- The potential to leverage additional public and private investment over the course of the project, including cash and evidenced value-in-kind
- Legacy and sustainability

What types of activity will the Fund cover in Year 1?

Year 1 funding is intended to support product and market development. However, as mentioned applicants are encouraged to clearly articulate target audiences and how the product could be further developed and taken to market in Years 2 and 3, should the project continue as a multi-year investment/product proposition.

Year 1 can support the following types of activity:

- Proposition testing with consumers and travel trade
- Product audits to support development and assess gaps and opportunities
- Creation of thematic narratives for product propositions
- Development of cross-regional visitor itineraries
- Integration of public transport throughout itineraries
- Upskilling businesses to become international and travel trade ready
- Supporting businesses to adopt core regenerative practices
- Development of accessible and inclusive destinations (see the [LVEP Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Toolkit](#), notably the Enhanced Destination Development Programme)
- Production of new assets e.g. imagery or video content
- Development of connected, commercially viable visitor propositions linked to business events demand, such as delegate extension itineraries, incentive travel products, cross-regional pre- and post-event experiences, or business-events-ready product development.

Ineligible activities that the Fund³ cannot support in Year 1, include but are not limited to:

- New App development
- New websites
- Capital costs and fixed business overheads, i.e. office and core staff costs, equipment, motor vehicle leasing contracts.
- Payments to any partners to promote itineraries or content on their own channels (i.e. website, social media, direct email etc.)

³ A comprehensive list of ineligible activities will be contained in the Grant Funding Agreement.

- Business Events activity where it relates solely to the delivery, enhancement, sponsorship or promotion of a standalone conference, exhibition, trade show or similar event.
- Enhancement of other large-scale events in isolation

If you have queries about the eligibility of potential project activity, then please contact your Regional Development Lead.

Evaluation and Performance Monitoring

Successful applicants will complete a logic model based on VisitEngland's evaluation framework: (see Annex 2) detailing Inputs, Activities, Outputs and Outcomes and will work with VisitEngland and its appointed evaluator on monitoring and evaluation.

Project performance reporting should include:

- Project milestones, outputs and outcomes achieved
- Emerging risks/issues
- Budget monitoring (inc. spend profile, actuals against forecast)
- Cash co-financing and monetised in-kind contributions secured
- Progress against agreed performance metrics

VisitEngland will hold short online meetings with projects to review the above as needed and provide advice and expertise as needed on future planning and development into Years 2 and 3.

Application Timeline

Please submit applications using VisitBritain/VisitEngland's Grants Portal. Further information about how to register on the Grants Portal is provided below.

The indicative timeline is set out below:

Key Stage	Date
Prospectus available for the <i>Connected Destinations Fund 2026-2029</i> on VisitBritain.org.	18 September 2026
Application goes live and opportunity is also advertised externally on Find a Grant on Gov.uk. Lead applicants must sign up/register on the VisitBritain Grants Portal	18 September 2026
Lead applicants can access the formal application via VisitBritain Grants Portal . Submission and claims will also take place within the Grants Portal .	18 September 2026
Target date for lead LVEP project applicants registering as first-time users on the Grants Portal	25 September 2026
Deadline for completed applications to be submitted in the Grants Portal	11.59hrs (UK time) on 5 October 2026
VisitEngland review and assessment of applications	5-14 October 2026
Indicative date when lead applicants will be informed about the decision reached by the Awards Panel	w/c 26 October 2026
Grant award set-up and contracting meeting held by video call (up to 45 minutes) with each successful lead applicant.	Mid November 2026

Grant funding agreement issued for e-signing and exchange after video calls with each successful applicant.	Mid November 2026
Deadline for the completion of project activities	31 March 2027
Final post-completion report	No later than 31 May 2027 (subject to confirmation)

Completed applications must be submitted via the Grants Portal by 11.59hrs (UK time) on **5 October 2026**. Once this time deadline has passed, prospective applicants will no longer be able to see the *Connected Destinations Fund* in the Grants Portal in order to be able to submit an application.

Applications will be assessed against the eligibility and scoring assessment criteria. Decisions on which applications to fund will be made by an Awards Panel, subject to the outcome of appropriate due diligence checks on the lead applicant.

Grants Portal

The VisitBritain / VisitEngland's Grants Portal can be accessed at: www.grants.visitbritain.org

The lead LVEP accountable for the project and making the application for grant funding needs to have an account on the Grants Portal. This can be done by clicking on the 'Register' button in the top right-hand corner of the webpage. The 'supporting' LVEPs in the partnership do not need to register but will be invited to access the application by the lead LVEP. *Please do not open an account on the Grants Portal until it is settled which organisation is going to lead the application.*

A number of LVEPs which received grant funding from either the *Destination Development Partnership Programme (Year 3) 2025/26* and/or *GREAT Gateway Innovation Fund (No. 3) 2025/26* in the last financial year have already accounts on the Grants Portal. They should not register again but rather use their existing logins and select the name of this Fund in the drop-down field to start a new application.

Lead LVEP applicants, when identified by each project partnership, should register on the Grants Portal by 25 September 2026. An information session may be organised thereafter to provide LVEP applicants with practical help and advice on using the Grants Portal.

When registering on the portal, please be vigilant that fields are not populated with incorrect information and data if you have autofill on your PC or laptop.

The lead LVEP applicant must start completing the online application form so that they can subsequently nominate co-applicants who are registered themselves on the Portal.

Accessibility, Freedom of Information and Terms and Conditions

If your application for Year 1 grant funding is successful, you will be informed that your project has 'funding in principle'. A draft Grant Funding Agreement will be prepared and issued prior to your online grant set-up and contracting meeting. This is your opportunity to ask any questions of the England and Project Management Office Teams. The Grant Funding Agreement will then be finalised and sent to your accountable officer / director for e-signing using Adobe Acrobat Sign.

As previously stated, the funding period for Year 1 projects will run from 1 November 2026 to 31 March 2027. All grant-funded activities must be delivered and fully completed by 31 March 2027 because expenditures must be annualised in this financial year, 2026/27 under public sector accounting rules.

If you receive grant funding from this Fund and it is subsequently determined that you have provided false or inaccurate information as part of your application or fail to meet the reporting requirements detailed in your Grant Funding Agreement, VisitEngland will seek to recover, with costs, all sums awarded to you from this Fund.

British Tourist Authority operating as VisitEngland is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and may be obliged to release information about your grant information or grant award in response to any questions received. Information on all grant awards will be uploaded to the Government Grants Information System, a database managed by Cabinet Office which is published annually to aid openness and transparency⁴.

Code of Conduct for Grant Recipients

Grant making is an essential component in the tools available to VisitEngland to deliver our policy objectives. Grants are awarded to external organisations to assist us with the development of the English tourism industry, thereby supporting local economic development and helping UK tourism exports. This is why it is essential to ensure that grants are administered efficiently and effectively providing value for the UK taxpayer.

Prospective applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with the ['Code of Conduct for Recipients of Government General Grants' \(Cabinet Office, November 2018\)](#)⁵ which sets out publicly the expectations placed on grant recipients, in terms of ethical and professional behaviour. [\(Accessible version available.\)](#)

Data Protection

VisitEngland will use the data provided and supporting documentation to assess the application for grant funding, contact you regarding your application and for grant management purposes. Information provided by applicants as part of the process and/or the supporting documentation may be verified against other information sources held by other public sector bodies for verification purposes and reporting. For further information, please see <https://www.visitbritain.org/privacy-policy-terms-use-cookies-and-foi>

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in writing applications

VisitBritain / VisitEngland recognises that some applicants may choose to use generative AI to support the drafting of an application that expresses their own original ideas and grant recipients may use it to assist with regular reporting. We understand that AI technologies may be useful in

⁴ See [Government grants data and statistics - GOV.UK](#)

⁵ See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/771152/2019-01-15_Code_of_Conduct_for_Grant_Recipients_v.1.01.pdf

streamlining reports and/or making applications. However, we recommend that prospective applicants use such tools cautiously as AI may generate erroneous data. It is important to stress that applicants are accountable for what they submit to us.

We are also increasingly aware that the use of AI tools can lead to the submission of applications with similar language and text which can distract from an application's unique proposition. We advise applicants to consider whether an application drafted with AI support offers the best and clearest representation of their project, and to ensure that any application submitted to VisitBritain/VisitEngland represents a true, original and deliverable proposition.

Subsidy Control

The proposed grants to be awarded from this Fund have been determined not to be a subsidy and therefore will not be published on the UK Subsidies Database.

Further Information

There is a FAQ document based on feedback received to date, this will be updated as needed.

If you have any further queries, please email destination@visitengland.org and the Regional Development Team will respond.

Please also feel free to discuss project ideas with Regional Development Leads in advance of application. They can advise you and channel expertise from within VisitBritain/VisitEngland teams as required.

Queries about registering for the first time on the Grants Portal should be sent to grants@visitbritain.org.

Annex 1 – Example Proposition Territories

These example proposition territories are designed to help LVEPs build connected, bookable visitor journeys rooted in the opportunities identified through international audience and product/market fit research (e.g. Project Mosaic), domestic market segmentation and travel trends – to compliment and support their product strengths and tourism assets. They focus on the motivations and drivers behind the experiences visitors are seeking, the products England can deliver distinctively, and the types of itineraries most likely to encourage travel beyond London.

International and domestic audience insights to keep in mind when building product propositions:

- **Visitors choose experiences.** Travellers are motivated by specific experiences and itineraries, rather than regional and national identities. They are more likely to travel beyond London when motivated by a clear experience, story, passion point or reason to go.
- **Strong storytelling and product packaging help destinations stand out.** Many visitors struggle to see clear differences between places, so distinctive stories, hero products and clear product packaging can help visitors understand what makes each place special and why it is worth adding to their trip.
- **Connected journeys encourage wider exploration.** Trip length is a key indicator of regional travel, so product packages should be designed to work across several days, with logical, easy-to-follow itineraries that give visitors clear reasons to stay longer, travel further and explore beyond one destination.
- **Visitors want richer, more authentic experiences.** Local recommendations, food, culture, heritage, nature, wellbeing and everyday local life remain strong drivers across domestic and international audiences.
- **England is well placed to deliver connected, bookable journeys.** Its compact geography, regional diversity and mix of iconic attractions, lesser-known discoveries and local experiences make it easier than competitor destinations to combine multiple places and experiences into one compelling trip.

Overall, strong LVEP bids should:

- Start with a compelling visitor motivation
- Be rooted in a distinctive English experience
- Connect multiple destinations cross-region
- Include clear hero products
- Encourage longer stays and wider exploration
- Demonstrate potential to become bookable visitor journeys

Five example proposition territories

The territories are intended as a guide, designed to be used flexibly and can be combined to create richer, more distinctive visitor journeys.

Beyond the Icon

Proposition: Using England's best-known stories, cultural icons and passion points as gateways to wider exploration and revealing something unexpected

What this could include: Screen tourism, literary tourism, football, music, food and drink, famous people, iconic attractions, local makers and cultural heritage

Reasons to believe:

- Passions and fandoms, from screen and music to sport, food and culture, give visitors a clear reason to travel
- Well-known icons can act as gateways, encouraging visitors to explore beyond the obvious
- Visitors respond strongly to distinctive experiences that feel memorable and rooted in place
- England's globally recognised stories are often tied to real places, making them strong hooks for regional exploration

Why England is well placed to deliver: England's world-famous icons, stories and passions create natural gateways into wider journeys and deeper exploration

Good bids could include:

- **Star Trails** – screen locations that unlock wider regional exploration
- **The Original Line-Up** – places where music, sport, fashion and culture broke through
- **Literary Legends** – authors, books, landscapes and festivals connected through place
- **Plot Twist England** – famous destinations paired with unexpected nearby discoveries

Living Heritage Routes

Proposition: Journeys that turn England's heritage, culture and stories into active, immersive bookable experiences rather than static sightseeing

What this could include: Castles, cathedrals, industrial heritage, royal history, literary heritage, historic towns, cultural routes and local legends

Reasons to believe:

- History, heritage and culture remain among England's strongest visitor motivators, providing clear reasons to travel, explore and connect multiple places

- Visitors respond more strongly when heritage is brought to life through stories, experiences and connected journeys, rather than promoted as standalone attractions
- Screen and literary tourism are growing travel trends and create further opportunities to connect famous stories with real places
- England's concentration of historic towns, cultural events, iconic attractions and local heritage makes it easy to link multiple places into a single, compelling trip

Why England is well placed to deliver: Few destinations can match England's concentration of literary, royal, industrial, cultural and screen heritage, often within a short distance of one another

Good bids could include:

- **Footnotes & Frontlines** – places that shaped ideas, innovation and social change
- **Kingdoms & Castles** – immersive heritage journeys spanning multiple destinations
- **England on Screen** – heritage and filming locations connected through storytelling routes

England in Real Life

Proposition: Experiencing England through its everyday culture, traditions, communities and social rituals

What this could include: Pubs, food markets, football culture, festivals, neighbourhoods, local makers, live music and community events

Reasons to believe:

- Visitors increasingly want authentic experiences that help them feel part of local culture and everyday life, not just observers of a place
- Local recommendations from residents, friends and family, remain trusted influences on travel decisions
- Food, pubs, live music, sport, markets and community events are strongly associated with England and help destinations feel distinctive and lived-in
- Travel trends point to growing demand for live, social and participatory experiences that let visitors experience the 'real England'
- England's local pride, regional identity and everyday rituals can help places stand out in ways that feel human, relatable and hard to replicate

Why England is well placed to deliver: England's pub culture, football traditions, music heritage, festivals and local events create distinctive experiences that are difficult to replicate elsewhere

Good bids could include:

- **Rock 'n' Goal** – music, football, pubs and local culture combined into one journey
- **Pub to Pitch** – matchday rituals and community life beyond the stadium
- **Soundtrack of England** – iconic music stories connected to places and people
- **Made in England** – makers, designers, producers and creative industries

England by Route

Proposition: Connected touring routes where the journey itself becomes part of the experience and the reason to travel

What this could include: Rail journeys, road trips, coast-to-coast routes, waterways, walking trails, cycling routes and multi-stop itineraries

Reasons to believe:

- Those staying longer in England are more likely to travel across multiple regions and destinations
- Visitors are more likely to disperse when places are connected through logical, easy-to-follow itineraries
- Slow travel, touring routes and multi-stop journeys continue to emerge as important travel behaviours shaping how visitors want to explore
- England's compact geography makes it easier to combine cities, countryside, heritage, culture and food experiences within a single trip

Why England is well placed to deliver: England's compact geography allows coast, countryside, cities, heritage and food experiences to be linked together within a single trip and more easily than many competing destinations

Good bids could include:

- **Coast to Coast England** – landscapes, towns and experiences linked through one route
- **Great English Rail Journeys** – station-to-stay itineraries designed around easy exploration
- **Trails Through Time** – heritage, culture and countryside connected through touring routes
- **Slow England by Water** – multi-day journeys following rivers and canals, connecting waterside towns, heritage, local food, nature and accommodation at a gentler pace

Restorative England

Proposition: Nature-rich and wellbeing-led journeys that help visitors slow down, recharge, reconnect and experience England at a different pace

What this could include: Coastlines, countryside, walking routes, waterways, wellness experiences, gardens, dark skies and rural stays

Reasons to believe:

- Escaping everyday routine, relaxing and unwinding are among the strongest motivations for taking a break in England

- Beautiful landscapes, nature and wellbeing experiences are key drivers of domestic and international travel
- Interest in slow travel, nature-led breaks and restorative experiences continues to grow, with visitors seeking emotional as well as physical benefits
- England offers easy access to countryside, green spaces, waterways, gardens and nature-rich experiences that can support year-round travel
- With no place in England more than 70 miles from the coast, nature-rich and restorative experiences can be connected across inland, rural, waterside and coastal settings

Why England is well placed to deliver: England combines coast, countryside, food, heritage and wellbeing experiences in close proximity, creating opportunities for richer, year-round nature-based trips.

Good bids could include:

- **Wine, Wellness & White Cliffs** – vineyards, coastal landscapes and wellbeing experiences
- **England After Dark** – dark skies, folklore, rural stays and night-time nature
- **Blue Mind England** – rivers, canals, wild swimming and waterside stays
- **Coastal Calm** – restorative journeys through England's coast and seaside communities

Annex 2 – Evaluation methodology

The methodology below has been produced by the VB/VE Evaluation Team to help prospective projects think about how proposed inputs and activities will eventually result in long-term impacts. VisitEngland will be appointing an evaluator to work with successful projects in Year 1 and beyond.

Evaluation guidance

Your evaluation should aim to measure any outputs, outtakes and early outcomes. You may be required to work with VisitBritain to measure overall impacts.

Inputs 	Activity 	Outputs 	Outtakes 	Early outcomes 	Long term impacts 
£xx grant payment	What you plan to do	What is delivered, and how your audience encounters and interacts with your communications through reach, distribution and exposure	The audience perception – what they think, feel or intend to do	Response from your target audience in terms of changes in behaviour or active engagement	Quantifiable impact on activity objectives (incremental spend)
	Examples: Online marketing activity Industry facing events Content creation <i>Add: product development and promotion</i>	Examples: Online reach Event attendees Volume of coverage	Examples: Online engagements / click through rate The number and proportion of target audience that agree with the campaign message Intended behaviour change	Examples: Behaviour change – maintain, stop or start	

Given the focus of the fund is to develop cross regional partnerships and product propositions / itineraries for sale through the travel trade, the expectation is that all funded projects will be able to provide evidence of the commercial outcome (such as the number itineraries/products sold), with the ability to report on the impact as incremental value to the local economy.