

GREAT Gateway Innovation Fund 2026/27

Supporting Details



Purpose of the fund

The Fund provides financial assistance to UK-registered DDPs (England only), LVEPs (England only) or Regional DMOs (only in Scotland and Wales), to deliver marketing activity in the United States.

The Fund focuses on marketing innovation by targeting on a specific inbound gateway or region in Great Britain which has a direct port of passenger entry (i.e. an airport).

Objectives

- Drive innovation and collaboration via our regions and raise awareness of Britain through the lens of Starring GREAT Britain
- Encourage partners to collaborate on increasing impact and growing the wider economic impact for that region
- Drive dispersal of the visitor beyond the immediate access/gateway point
- Contribute to VisitBritain's ROI 12:1 target

Scope of the fund

VisitBritain is looking to support either a DDP, LVEP or DMO to;

- Promote and market your gateway/region experiences to an international consumer audience in the USA, and disperse beyond that point.
- Deliver a fully integrated consumer facing marketing campaign (this could include third-party media buy, influencer programme etc.) between October 2026 and March 2027.
- VisitBritain have a focus on TV/Film, *'Starring GREAT Britain'*, which launched in January 2025. We would ask that within your activity plans product/experiences/content links back to this theme. Your Call to Action should include *'Visit the Star of the Show'*.
- Inspire and rally a) the local industry, b) a minimum of three secondary destination partners, c) a minimum of one commercial partner (as FY 26/27 is US only, that would require an airline/airport). The route must be a direct, existing route and available year-round.
- Contribute 2:1 matched funding, made up of cash and in-kind.
- Provide post-campaign quantitative evaluation results from the executed marketing activities, including monetary (GBP equivalent) and volume (number) of consumer bookings generated from incremental visitors.

What funding is available?

How much can organisation's apply for?

Budget £200,000 – VisitBritain expect to award one fund.

- Matched funding requires 2:1 match. For example;
VB £200,000 Partner £400,000 made up of a minimum of £100,000 cash to invest in the media plan and £300,000 value in kind (should be consumer facing channels, production costs which will need to be assessed)

The fund will support;

- Media buy with a third-party media owner (you will need access to a media agency).
- Development and delivery of an influencer trip from relevant market
- B2B2C communication activities (some B2B activities may be considered within the MIK value of the application, not greater than £50,000).
- Other third-party marketing costs may be considered at the discretion of VisitBritain (i.e. third-party bespoke email development or targeted data purchase) but approval must be obtained prior to entering into spending commitments with the third party.
- PR, social media or any agency fees, production of new content/assets etc or any other added costs should not exceed 30% of the total cash budget.

Assessment Criteria

1. Gateway Capacity Gap
2. Industry Partnerships
3. Marketing, creative and content plans
4. Objectives and measurement
5. Resource/expertise

Potential Timings

- Portal open for applications – w/c Sept 21, 2026
- Closing date for applications - October 7, 2026. 12PM (BST)
- Notification of successful applications – from w/c October 19, 2026
- Live dates between November 2026 – Mar 2027

Please email innovationgatewayfund@visitbritain.org to provide feedback or ask further questions.

Questions & Answers

Why is funding only available for the US?

- The US market continues to rank #1 in terms of volume of travellers and value of spend and offers the greatest opportunity for return on investment, therefore we have prioritised the US this FY.

Why does this need to be a direct route? There are transit options available, via other countries, then into the UK? For example Aer Lingus via Shannon, KLM via Amsterdam.

- The aim of this fund is to promote and market a gateway/region so inbound visitors are aware of the options available to directly travel to the UK. Transiting via another country may dilute that message, may encourage consumers to split their holiday between that country and the UK (instead of multiple UK destinations) so we want to focus on direct routes into Britain to remove any additional barriers and maximise potential visitor spend within Britain.

Will this criteria be the same next year?

- Not necessarily. Once funding is known for FY 27/28, all VisitBritain programmes will be reviewed as part of business planning to determine how we meet the objectives set out by Government.