Business Events Growth Programme
Bid Enhancement & Support

Guidelines 2022/23

11 May 2022
Introduction

VisitBritain promotes business event tourism through the establishment of the Business Events Growth Programme, supporting all organizations in the winning of international events and the creation, development, growth and internationalization of events that already take place in the UK.

The Bid Enhancement & Support strand of the programme specifically supports the bidding process for an international business event not currently held in the UK, to help boost its winning potential.

The objective of this strand is to secure new international business events in the coming years.

Financial support

Financial support is available to support cities in bidding for international business events, up to the value of £20,000 gross per event. Exceptional proposals requiring more than £20,000 per bid, 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:

- Communications and digital activity, website, live streaming, social media, film, webinar, e-newsletters or other content to support the development of a 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
- Sales and marketing activity to increase awareness and encourage voters to favour the UK bidder
- Production of bid booklet to distribute
- Translation costs of a bid
- Bid pitch, including costs for support and production of the pitch
- Live or virtual site visits

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)
- 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 2022/23?** All items of expenditure must be concluded and claimed in arrears within the financial year ending on 31 March 2023. 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 tradeshows/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. **Is the bid for a business event to be hosted in the United Kingdom?**

5. **Are you the sole UK bidder for the event?** Applications will only be considered when the applicant is the sole UK candidate for the event.

6. **Will the event attract 250 or more international delegates?** VisitBritain will consider events of a smaller size if the event is clearly for a very senior audience, i.e. CEO-level or equivalent.

7. **The applicant is a Convention Bureau (CVB)/ Destination Management Organisation (DMO).** Venues and event organisers who are partnering with CVBs/DMOs are eligible to apply. If not, has the CVB/DMO been informed?

8. **Does this funding application support new, additional activities to support the bid?** 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 rent and business overheads, salaries for existing or new positions within your organisation and capital expenditure/replacing equipment or in retrospect of expenditure already made.

9. **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 the UK. You will be given access to the brand guidelines assets and contacts to approve the brand’s use. Any activities that could bring VisitBritain into disrepute do not qualify for support from the Programme.
10. Has your organisation received less than 325,000 Special Drawing Rights (approximately £335,00 at the time of writing) 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 Article 3.2.4 of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement which enables the Grant Recipient to receive up to a maximum level of subsidy without engaging Chapter 3 of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (a “Small Amount of Financial Assistance”). The current threshold is 325,000 Special Drawing Rights to a single economic actor over any period of three fiscal years.

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 Convention Bureau (CVBs) / Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), as well as venues and event organisers who are partnering with CVBs/DMOs.

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.

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 Small Amounts of Finance 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.

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1 See https://www.imf.org/en/About/Factsheets/Sheets/2016/08/01/14/51/Special-Drawing-Right-SDR
2 See https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=XDR&To=GBP
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: BID/Event name.

If you are applying for financial support for multiple bids, you can submit a single application, providing that all bids fulfil the criteria, the activity and spend occurs in this financial year (up to 31 March 2023), and the maximum combined value is £20,000 (incl. VAT). You will need to provide a clear itemised breakdown of the requirements and proposed activity for each bid/ event in the application, and rank the bids in order of priority.

Please note, there is no guarantee that all events or activity will be deemed appropriate or offered grant funding.

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 ‘Small Amount of Financial Assistance’. The Grant is awarded as in accordance with Article 3.2.4 of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement which enables the Grant Recipient to receive up to a maximum level of subsidy without engaging Chapter 3 of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (a “Small Amount of Financial Assistance”). The current threshold is 325,000 Special Drawing Rights to a single economic actor over any period of three fiscal years.

- 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 Bid Enhancement & Support, please visit: https://www.visitbritain.org/bid-enhancement-support

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