



Shared Island Initiative

THE COAST-TO-COAST CAPITAL INVESTMENT SCHEME 2024

A Capital Investment Scheme for Improving Interpretation Provision and the Visitor Experience at Existing Operating Visitor Attractions and experiences located along the Wild Atlantic Way and the Causeway Coastal Route

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Document

FAQ Updated
29th July 2024

1. What is the Shared Island Tourism Brand Collaboration Project?

Supported through the Government of Ireland’s Shared Island Fund, the Shared Island Tourism Brand Collaboration Project is a new all-island tourism collaboration and marketing project based on a proposal developed by Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Northern Ireland, and Tourism Ireland. Its vision is to enhance the visitor’s journey by bringing together the Wild Atlantic Way in Ireland and the Causeway Coastal Route in Northern Ireland, to develop and establish international stand-out tourism products and visitor experiences on an all-island basis, and to improve the performance and impact of tourism to the island of Ireland.

The Shared Island Tourism Brand Collaboration Project aims to create synergies between the two iconic touring routes and bring benefits to the areas located within the hinterlands of each by bringing new opportunities that create lasting tourism impact and economic benefit. The Shared Island Tourism Brand Collaboration Project is aimed at increasing the profile of the island of Ireland in the international marketplace by increasing visitor numbers and their expenditure, whilst encouraging development that remains sensitive to the natural environment.

2. What is the Shared Island Coast-to-Coast Capital Investment Scheme 2024?

The Coast-to-Coast Capital Investment Scheme 2024 (“the Scheme”) aims to enhance a visitor’s opportunity to travel and experience both routes together, whilst doing so in either direction by providing capital investment funding to deliver enhanced interpretative experiences at existing visitor attractions.

This will be delivered by creating opportunities to increase the impact and benefits of tourism to the regions within each jurisdiction that are connected by both routes, i.e., counties Donegal, Sligo and parts of Leitrim in Ireland on the Wild Atlantic Way, and the Local Authority areas of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council in Northern Ireland on the Causeway Coastal Route. Please refer to the Location Map presented at Appendix 1 in the Scheme Guidelines.

3. What are the Scheme’s Aims, Objectives and Priorities?

The Scheme **aims** are:

1. To enhance the current offering at existing visitor attractions through capital investment in interpretative visitor experience provision,
2. To bring together the Wild Atlantic Way and Causeway Coastal Route to improve opportunities for visitors to explore each region and generate additional community and economic benefits, and
3. To create outstanding international marketing opportunities for the island of Ireland.

The Scheme’s **objectives** and **priorities** are:

Objectives	Priorities
To improve interpretation provision and the visitor experience at existing operating visitor attractions along the Wild Atlantic Way and the Causeway Coastal Route.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greatly improved interpretation and storytelling • Immersive experiences • Product innovation • Revealing hidden gems
To provide the visitor with interpretation in the first language of your specific key target markets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign language provision (English plus two additional foreign languages at a minimum)
To increase the duration that visitors stay and their volume of expenditure whilst visiting the Wild Atlantic Way and the Causeway Coastal Route by enhancing our visitor attractions and experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase dwell time • Increase visitor expenditure
To improve our visitor attractions and experiences to encourage overseas visitors to stay beyond the traditional tourism season and to encourage them to stay longer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal extension • Regional dispersion

4. What is Considered to be an Eligible Applicant Type?

Applications are invited from public, private and community/voluntary sector applicants, as summarised in the table below:

Public Sector	Private Sector	Community/Voluntary Sector
Local Authorities Semi-State Bodies Other public bodies established to operate facilities on behalf of the public sector including commercial and non-commercial entities	Private Companies Private Individuals Other Legal Entities	Community / Voluntary Groups Charities

Important Note

Potential applicants/applicant projects that received capital investment funding from Fáilte Ireland or Tourism Northern Ireland under a previous capital investment scheme *specifically administered* by either agency, but where the funded project has not been operated to the satisfaction of the relevant funding agency, **are not eligible to apply to this Scheme**.

5. What is Considered to be an Eligible Project Type?

The Scheme has been designed specifically for interpretative improvements at existing visitor attractions located in the eligible target areas in Ireland and Northern Ireland. For the purposes of the Scheme, a visitor attraction is defined as follows:

“A permanently established site, a primary purpose of which is to allow access for tourism, whether this occurs for the purpose of entertainment, interest, or education, rather than primarily a retail outlet or a venue for sporting, film, or theatrical performance. It must be open to the public for published periods of the year and should be capable of attracting local, domestic, and overseas visitors. It must be operated as a visitor attraction, rather than merely being accessible to the public. Operation as a visitor attraction may include Guides based on-site (even if only seasonally); staffed visitor facilities including exhibition and interpretive spaces, ticket sales, toilets. Interpretation panels on-site with no further visitor management is not sufficient to be considered a visitor attraction/experience.”

Applicant projects must therefore meet the following criteria:

5.1 An Existing Visitor Attraction / Experience

Applications are invited from existing visitor attractions and experiences that meet the following three core criteria:

1. Have been operating (open to visitors) since 1st March 2023,
2. Open and operational to the public full time (5 days per week, including weekends) for a minimum of 5 months of the year, and
3. Employ minimum of two full time employees.

5.2 Project Proposal Types and Expenditure

Applicant project proposals must relate to the development of interpretation/similar that **(1)** significantly enhances the visitor experience at the existing visitor attraction; **(2)** offers foreign language provision in a minimum of two foreign languages (in addition to English); and **(3)** contributes to the Scheme’s aims, objectives and priorities.

5.3 Project Location

Only applicant projects that are located within the Scheme’s eligible target area i.e., the Wild Atlantic Way Counties of Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim in Ireland, and the Local Authority areas of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council in Northern Ireland along the Causeway Coastal Route are eligible to apply.

Applicants located in County Leitrim are advised that the eligible target area for this Scheme is limited to those parts of the county highlighted in the Location Map presented in Appendix 1 of guidelines.

5.5 Planning Permission

Applicants should note that only project proposals that do not require planning permission, or which have already been granted planning permission, are eligible to apply to this Scheme. Evidence must be submitted at Stage 2 of the application process.

5.6 Right to Undertake the Project at the Project Site

Applicants must hold the legal Right to Undertake the Project at the Project Site. Should your Expression of Interest application proceed to Stage 2 of the Scheme's application process, you will be required to provide evidence to demonstrate the applicant's Right to Undertake the Project at the project Site (i.e., to build and operate) for the Scheme's requisite Operative Period of 5 years following the completion of the proposed project i.e., the completion of the construction works and fit-out programme.

6. What are the Areas of Eligible Project Expenditure?

Areas of eligible expenditure include:

- Interpretation planning and delivery including hardware design, manufacture, and installation,
- Construction Costs directly attributable to the delivery of Interpretation and
- External Consultants including Project Management for the delivery of the programme of works (salaried staff costs are excluded)

In addition, it is noted that expenditure on the development of retail and food and beverage facilities is considered as eligible where it is not the main part of the project being funded but rather supports and underpins the overall viability and sustainability of the attraction and visitor experience. This may result in the eligible expenditure on retail and/or food and beverage facilities being capped. Applicants will also be required to demonstrate this will not result in displacement.

7. What Is Considered as an Ineligible Project Type?

The following project types are ineligible under this Scheme:

- Projects located outside of the geographical confines of the Scheme (see Appendix 1)
- Accommodation and related facilities
- Driving routes
- Events or Festivals
- Stand-alone Food and Beverage facilities, e.g. cafés / tearooms / restaurants / public houses
- Stand-alone Retail facilities
- Motorised and non-motorised transport vehicles (including bikes, buses, boats etc). Exceptions may be made, at the discretion of the relevant agency, where a vehicle is integral to the interpretative experience and has a restricted transport range. (e.g. transport museum items)
- Public realm, including public spaces, parks, soft play, children's playgrounds
- Walks / Trails: Capital development including greenways, outdoor heritage trails, trail heads, trail furniture.
- Public service blocks, amenity areas and related facilities
- Theatres and cinemas
- Conference, spa and leisure facilities.
- Golf courses (including professional, adventure and crazy golf courses)
- Leisure facilities (including escape rooms, bowling alleys, laser quest, trampolines)
- Semi-permanent structures e.g. marquees/stretch tents/orangeries/similar structures
- Breweries and distilleries (with the exception of the visitor facing element, such as a visitor centre)

In addition, areas of ineligible project expenditure include:

- Printed marketing collateral (brochures, leaflets, offers, etc)
- Visitor facilities (e.g. toilets, services, car parking, access improvements where the primary purpose is to enable a site to comply with regulations etc)
- Expenditure incurred and /or paid before the date of approval of the investment.
- Expenditure incurred after the project completion date as stated in the Letter of Offer
- Financing costs (including bank interest and charges)
- Fines, penalty payments, legal costs, audit fees and insurance
- Depreciation
- Asset maintenance and repair costs
- Marketing activity, including start-up marketing and promotional activity
- Operational costs (e.g., licenses, warranties, cooking equipment such as crockery and cutlery, general walking equipment (non-safety) trailers
- Recoverable Value Added Tax (VAT)
- Salaries and wages
- Training costs
- Contracts that have already been entered into prior to the applicant's acceptance of our Letter of Offer
- Business Start-Up activities
- Feasibility/technical studies
- Terms of reference and accreditation schemes
- Purchase of land
- Website/online booking platforms

The above is not an exhaustive list of ineligible project costs. Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Northern Ireland and Tourism Ireland reserve the right to deem additional categories of expenditure/project types as ineligible.

8. How Much Investment Funding Can I Apply for?

The minimum investment grant value for any one project under this scheme is €50,000 in Ireland and £40,000 in Northern Ireland. The maximum investment grant value for any one project is €300,000 in Ireland and £250,000 in Northern Ireland.

The maximum investment grant rate for all applicants across the public, private and community/voluntary sectors **will not exceed 80% of eligible capital expenditure**. Applicants should therefore note that all eligible and ineligible project costs incurred above the maximum investment grant sum offered by Fáilte Ireland and/or Tourism NI will be the responsibility of the Grantee.

9. Do I Require Match Funding?

Applicants are required to have the necessary match funding to enable the development and delivery of the proposed project. Applicants should note that the maximum investment sum available to support eligible project costs is €300,000 if located in Ireland, or £250,000 if located in Northern Ireland.

Working Capital: Applicants will be required to have the necessary reserves/working capital to ensure that the proposed interpretative visitor experience project can be delivered in accordance with an Investment Grant Agreement. Applicants are reminded that under this Scheme, they can only be reimbursed for approved eligible expenditure that has been incurred and paid by the Grantee. There are no exceptions to this requirement.

10. I am Applying from Ireland – Can I Apply if I Have Previously Received De Minimis Aid?

Yes. However, there is a De Minimis Aid maximum threshold of €300,000 to any entity in any period of 36 months. Applicants that have previously received De Minimis Aid, from any source, will be required to declare that funding as part of the Scheme's application process.

11 (a). I am Applying from Northern Ireland – What is the Subsidy Control Act?

This only relates to applicants located in Northern Ireland. The Subsidy Control Act 2022 regulates public funding given out by public authorities. It is designed to make sure that public money is used effectively without giving unfair advantage to one recipient over others in the same economic or commercial market. Tourism Ireland has responsibility to comply with this legal requirement for this Scheme. (Please refer to Appendix 3 in the Scheme Guidelines for further information).

11 (b). How do I as an applicant comply with the Subsidy Control Act?

There is no action required on your part however where the value of any subsidy awarded under the scheme is £100,000 or above, we will publish the details on the UK's Subsidy Transparency Database, as required by the Act.

12. How Do I Apply?

The Scheme involves a two-stage application process, as follows:

Stage 1 Expression of Interest (Project Idea)

The purpose of this Stage and the Expression of Interest Form is to allow applicants to demonstrate that they meet the eligibility criteria to apply fully to the Scheme and that the proposed project is eligible and in accordance with the Scheme's aims, objectives and priorities.

The Expression of Interest Form is the primary document that will be assessed to determine the proposed project's eligibility to progress to Stage 2 of the application process, i.e., the formal Application Form.

Applicants in Northern Ireland: Prior to completing the Expression of Interest Form, applicants must first complete the Tourism Northern Ireland "Self-Assessment Eligibility Checklist" which can be found at [here](#). Applicants in Northern Ireland are advised that the applicant will only be permitted to complete an Expression of Interest Form upon satisfactory completion of the Self-Assessment Eligibility Checklist.

Your Submission of the Stage 1 Expression of Interest Form

Applicants in Ireland: fully completed Expression of Interest Form together with any relevant supporting information, must be submitted via the Fáilte Ireland Trade Portal (<https://services.failteireland.ie/>) by the due deadline as set out on the Scheme's webpage.

Applicants in Northern Ireland: the first Stage of the application process involves a two-step process. Step 1 requires completion of a mandatory Self-Assessment Eligibility Checklist, available [here](#). Upon successful completion of the self-assessment checklist, applicants will automatically be directed to proceed to Step 2, which requires completion of a full Expression of Interest Form. Once fully completed, applicants will be presented with the option of submitting their EOI form, which must be done by the due deadline as set out on the Scheme's webpage.

Can I Resubmit my Expression of Interest Form?

Applicants are encouraged to submit their Expression of Interest Form as soon as possible during the Stage 1 submission period. Any errors or omissions will be notified to give applicants in both jurisdictions the option of amending and resubmitting their Expression of Interest Form, but only one resubmission will be accepted for the same project proposal. The decision of the relevant tourism agency thereafter is final. Applicants who are resubmitting should at all times be cognisant of the deadline for receipt of Expression of Interest Forms.

14. Can I Appeal an Unsuccessful Outcome on my Expression of Interest Submission?

Where an applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria to apply to the Scheme to the satisfaction of Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland at their absolute discretion, may decide not to approve the progression of the application to Stage 2 of the Scheme's application process. All such decisions will be final and there is no appeals process with regards to this stage of the Scheme's application process.

Stage 2 Application Form (The Project)

The second (and final) step in the application process requires the submission of a fully completed Stage 2 (The Project) Application Form. Should your Expression of Interest satisfy the Stage 1 (The Project Idea) requirements in full, you will be invited to progress to Stage 2 of the application process to submit a Stage 2 (The Project) Application Form.

Please note that as this is a competitive application process within each jurisdiction, the receipt of a Stage 2 Application Form does not in itself confer eligibility on the project or the applicant. Depending on the information provided in the application form, the project or applicant may still be deemed to be ineligible for funding.

15. How Will I Know if My Application is Successful?

All **successful** applicants will receive written notification of the outcome from the assessment/appraisal/evaluation of the application from Fáilte Ireland, if located in Ireland, or from Tourism Ireland if located in Northern Ireland.

This notification will then be followed by the issue of a formal Letter of Offer from the relevant agency. The Letter of Offer will form the basis of the Contract between Fáilte Ireland and/or Tourism Ireland and the Grantee. It will also contain all terms and conditions relating to the offer of investment funding.

All **unsuccessful** applicants will also be notified in writing of the outcome and will be offered feedback.

16. Will there be further calls for applications?

At present, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland do not envisage or propose to open further calls to the Shared Island Coast-to-Coast Capital Investment Scheme.

17. Can I obtain a printed version of the Scheme Guidelines?

The Scheme Guidelines are available in PDF format for download only, at the following links:

Failte Ireland: failteireland.ie/shared-island-initiative.aspx

Tourism NI: tourismni.com/SharedIsland



WHO SHOULD I CONTACT WITH QUERIES REGARDING THIS SCHEME?

If applying from Ireland: Please direct any technical queries relating to the Fáilte Ireland Trade Portal to customersupport@failteireland.ie

Please direct any other general enquiries relating to the Scheme to sharedisland@failteireland.ie

If applying from Northern Ireland: Please direct any queries to Tourism NI:

<https://www.tourismni.com/contact-us/>

