

# EAFRD Tourism Amenity Investment Support (TAIS) 2017-2020



## European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

### Guidance Note

#### 1. Introduction

This document provides guidance on both enquiring and applying for funds in support of existing or new *Tourism Amenities*. This is a *capital* fund and is supported through the Welsh Government Rural Communities Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and Welsh Government, and focuses on the priorities noted below.

It is open to public, third sector and not for profit organisations located in eligible wards (see Annex A in the attached link: <http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/170130-rural-community-development-fund-guidance-notes-en.pdf>). Excepting the above, the fund is not open to other private sector SME businesses. If the project falls outside the eligible wards, we may still consider highly exceptional proposals, outside of the parameters of this scheme. You are advised in these circumstances to discuss with a case officer.

The fund is operated via an annual call programme until April 2020 with full spend to be completed by December 2020. The 2017 enquiry call dates are:

**TAIS Call launch:** 17<sup>th</sup> May 2017. This is the opening date for enquiries.  
**TAIS Call Deadline:** 5pm 16th June 2017, the final date for receipt of enquiries.

#### 2. Purpose of fund

The purpose is to develop quality sustainable tourism facilities and find ambitious proposals that make a difference and add value to the visitor experience, whether as a strategic perception changing product, or as part of a cluster of products that help to build a destination and drive economic growth. With the exceptions of, for example, tourism signage, or visitor parking & toilets, we are looking for distinctive, innovative, stand out products and the greater this is represented in the project, the stronger the case will be.

The Welsh Government's Tourism Strategy – Partnership for Growth aims to grow tourism earnings in Wales by 10% or more by 2020. The strategy adopts a product-led approach intended to deliver compelling reasons to visit and discover Wales by creating 'best in class' product experiences.



<http://gov.wales/topics/culture-tourism-sport/tourism/partnership-for-growth-strategy>;

The fund will also target project identified with destination management plans:

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/dmwales/destination-management/wales-destination-management-partnerships>

This is a discretionary capital investment fund supporting those objectives by developing quality sustainable experiences through investment in Tourism Amenity infrastructure at the destination level.

### 3. Priorities

The wider priorities of the fund are to deliver key elements of the tourism strategy under the five themes - Promotion, Place, Product, People and Profitable Performance, particularly:

**Product Development:** Driving a product-led approach & supporting high quality, reputation changing products.

**Place Building:** Developing destinations that people want to visit and recommend to others by providing opportunities for

- local communities to deliver memorable visitor experiences;
- improving the reputation of Wales as a destination that provides a diverse range of distinctive experiences including heritage & faith, music, arts, food, contemporary culture, ancestry and local events;
- encouraging more businesses to deliver a distinctive sense of place to visitors in order to utilise the best of Wales' culture, heritage and language;
- improving the reputation of Wales as a sustainable tourism destination;
- Increasing the use of public transport for journeys both to and within Wales.

#### Three key objectives are:

1. Promote social inclusion, poverty reduction, and economic development in rural areas.
2. Help those most deprived in rural Wales and those that have limited scope to change their circumstances.
3. Develop the resilience and capability of rural communities so that they are better able to cope with and adapt to change.

#### Example Projects

An eligible proposal must be a capital 'tourism project' and it must be able to evidence that it can affect the quality of the tourism experience at the destination level. Examples might include:

- Environmental improvements such as hard and soft landscaping, or pedestrianisation schemes at key tourism destinations.
- Improved bilingual/multilingual signposting, interpretation & trails including in exceptional circumstances visitor centres where they are an integral part of a destination management programme.

- White on Brown Tourism signage on trunk roads, and at gateway locations – discretionary and subject to meeting the required technical eligibility criteria.
- Car & Coach Parking and improved toilet facilities at key destinations.
- Improved access to water for activities.
- Traffic/Visitor Management schemes including park and ride facilities.
- Event infrastructure (where the event is tourism related).
- Walks & Cycle Trails.
- Capital expenditure associated with achieving Blue Flag status.
- Artwork or 'experiential' product at key destinations.
- Visitor Information – discretionary according to the impact and innovation within the proposal.
- Theme building projects related to Year of Legends, Year of the Sea & 'Routes of'.
- Other innovative Tourism Amenity infrastructure works.

## **4. Eligibility**

### **Who can apply?**

Enquiries can be received from the following:

- Local Action Groups.
- Local Community Groups (including charities, trusts and co-operatives).
- Social Enterprises.
- Not for Profit Companies Ltd by Guarantee.
- Community Interest Companies.
- Mutuels.
- Local Authorities.
- Other public bodies such as National Parks.

All lead partners (including third sector) must be a financially viable and sustainable business/charity with a satisfactory balance sheet, and must be a legal entity.

### **What can be funded?**

This is a capital fund only. Revenue costs will not be considered. The minimum level of support is £25,000 and support will not exceed £128,000. There is a cap on total eligible project expenditure at £160,000, making the intervention level 80%.

### **What cannot be funded?**

The following activities would not be considered for funding:

- General repairs & Maintenance work.
- Revenue costs such as marketing, overheads and staff time.
- Economic Activity (such as a tea room).
- 'In Kind' commitments cannot be considered as match funding.

## **Indicators and outputs**

Support will be measured against the following indicators, which the applicant will be required to report upon:

- The total intervention and match funding.
- The number of operations supported.
- Visitor numbers benefiting from improved services / infrastructures.
- The number of people accessing services. The services provided must be new and created or improved in terms of accessibility or scope of provision. This will be monitored on a cumulative basis for the lifetime of the project. For services that are improved then this will need to be monitored against a baseline established before improvements are carried out.
- Number of new or improved products, processes or services developed to market introduction (for products and services) or use (for processes).
- The number of initiatives improving or developing new visitor attractions or visitor facilities in natural and/or historic environments. This excludes managed access to countryside or coast.
- The project reinforces the Wales brand, reflects the core values and approach and in particular, delivers against the core brand objectives:
  - Elevates Wales' status.
  - Surprises and inspires.
  - Reinforces positive perceptions.
  - Does good things.
  - Is unmistakably 'Wales'.

Link for further information on the Wales brand can be found at::

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMh3zIWaIHE&feature=youtu.be>

The inclusion of the Wales 'brand' in the assessment enables us to interpret how the project delivers at a strategic level. For example a proposal that excels in using local materials, provides an innovative experience at a destination level, or emphasises cultural or heritage strengths, including sense of place and use of the Welsh Language, could all be seen to align with the brand.

## 5. Enquiry & Application Process

### Project Assessment

All projects will be considered in two stages:

**Stage 1:** Following the submission of the Tourism Amenity Investment Support (TAIS) Introductory Questionnaire (IQ) form, checks will be undertaken to ensure that all eligibility criteria have been met. Only projects that fully meet the eligibility criteria will be invited to submit a full application. The TAIS IQ Form can be found at: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/zones/tourism/finance#tabs-4>

### Stage 2:

Full applications received will then be appraised internally by a case officer and reviewed by an independent investment panel in line with the appraisal criteria noted below. Successful projects will be recommended for Ministerial consideration and decision.

## 6. Assessment

### Criteria

The principle criteria and points to note are:

- Enquires and Applications can only be accepted in specific eligible wards across Wales. These can be found in Annex A of the attached RCDF Guidance Note: <http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/170130-rural-community-development-fund-guidance-notes-en.pdf>.
- The minimum level of support starts from £25,000.
- The total support cannot be more than £128,000 against a maximum net project cost of £160,000. The ceiling for the intervention level is therefore 80% of eligible capital costs.
- In unusual cases where there is *exceptional* product, or in obvious lower value but priority projects e.g. signage cases, some flexibility can be applied which will mean that cases below £25,000 support can be considered where appropriate.
- Funding is not dependent upon direct job creation, but will be assessed in line with the scheme indicators, eligibility and appraisal criteria as detailed in this note.
- Support is non repayable.
- The evidence you provide in support of the destination case, must match with Visit Wales priorities or themes (such as Year of Legends, Year of the Sea). The strength and quality of the destination and innovation case will be crucial to project selection.

### Stage 1 - Eligibility Criteria

The enquiry will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Is the organisation eligible to apply?
- Is planning approval in place or will be in place at decision?

- Can the project be delivered within a maximum 2 year period?
- Is the amount requested in line with the scheme guidelines?
- Are there any State Aid issues?
- Is the project a priority and aligned to the Wales brand?

## Stage 2- Assessment Criteria

### Application Appraisal & Scoring

At the application stage, the following will be assessed in further detail by the case officer:

	<b>Appraisal Criteria</b>	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Score</b>
1	<b>Strategic Fit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fit with the TAIS objectives</li> <li>• Identified priority within the delivery of the DM plan</li> <li>• In line with Visit Wales product-led thematic year approach (i.e. Years of )</li> <li>• Fit with the needs of Visit Wales' market segments</li> <li>• Aligned with the Wales brand</li> </ul>	× 10	/5
2	<b>Project quality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall quality of application and description of proposal</li> <li>• Benefit and impact (e.g. does it deliver measurable benefits for tourism businesses in the destination)</li> <li>• Innovation &amp; experiential qualities</li> <li>• Environmental considerations</li> <li>• Aligned with the Well Being and Future Generations Act 2015, Tackling Poverty, Equal Opportunities &amp; Gender Mainstreaming, Welsh Language standards.</li> </ul>	× 5	/5
3.	<b>Evidence of Need</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons for undertaking the activity (e.g. is it a priority in the DM Plan)</li> <li>• References to the activity stated in the Destination Management Plan</li> <li>• Evidence &amp; Research regarding market need</li> </ul>	× 10	/5
4.	<b>Risks, Project Implementation and Delivery</b>  Quality of information provided for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project plan and team</li> <li>• Risk assessment &amp; mitigation</li> <li>• Management Team Structure</li> <li>• Project collaboration and agreements</li> <li>• Quality of cost &amp; funding evidence</li> <li>• Delivery</li> </ul>	× 10	/5
5.	<b>Project deliverables</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of project targets</li> <li>• Outputs &amp; deliverables, used to measure the success of the project</li> <li>• Detailed information on how these will be measured</li> </ul>	× 5	/5

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meets the scheme tourism priorities, outputs and RDP indicators</li> </ul>		
<b>6.</b>	<b>Project Costs &amp; Value for Money</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall proposal represents value for money</li> <li>Activity and associated costs represent realistic and best value quotes</li> <li>Project costs, claim schedule and information is acceptable</li> <li>Expected benefits are proportionate with costs</li> <li>Long term sustainability acceptable</li> <li>Ability to have an impact in the market place over a longer period of time</li> <li>Additionality case is clear</li> </ul>	× 10	/5

**Each criterion will be scored out of 5. Half marks can be given.**

The scores indicate the following with respect to the criterion under examination:

0 - The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.

1 - Very poor. The criterion is addressed in a cursory and unsatisfactory manner.

2 - Poor. There are serious inherent weaknesses in relation to the criterion in question.

3 - Fair. While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses that would need correcting.

4 - Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, although certain improvements are possible.

5 - Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

## **7. Approval & Decision**

Once reviewed by the Panel, recommendations will be submitted to Welsh Government Ministers for consideration and decision. You will then be informed of the final decision and if successful an award of funding offer letter will be issued. Offer letters will need to be signed, and one copy returned to Welsh Government before starting the project. ‘Start of work’ on the project, or a formal commitment, must not happen prior to the decision as this will void the application. Welsh Government is not responsible or liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of an application. You will be notified of the decision and the reasons for it. This is a discretionary fund with no set appeals process.

## **8. Claims Process, Delivery and Monitoring**

The applicant must provide a planned payment schedule for the complete funding period for the project between June 2017 – December 2020. The number and timing of claims will then be set out in an offer letter. If additional claim periods are required, a request must be made in writing to the Monitoring Team setting out the reasons for the amendment. The decision of the Monitoring Team is final.

Project payment conditions will need to be met as set out in an offer letter. Each claim must be verified by a Finance Head (in the case of Local Authorities), or via an independent accountant report (in the case of third sector and other not for profit entities). The cost of such reporting must be met by the applicant.

The Welsh Government reserves the right to review the award of funding if agreed funding schedules are not met. All payments are made on a defrayed basis (i.e. evidence of spend) which may require a bridging facility. Each project will have a set timeframe to be achieved, this will be outlined in the offer letter. Expert project management is highly important as funding will be lost to the project if the offer timescale is not adhered to. Claim forms can be submitted electronically but will not be processed until full evidence has been provided and assessed. Once approved, payment will be made within 4 working days. Progress reports and evidence must be submitted with each claim, and it is estimated that a claim will take some 30 days to be processed from receipt of a complete claim to authorisation.

### **Post Completion Monitoring**

Delivery and achievement against agreed outputs will continue to be recorded for at least 5 years following completion of the project and will be a condition of offer. There is no set appeals process. However, applicants not achieving the agreed outputs will be notified and provided with detailed feedback.

## **9. Statutory Authority and State Aid**

In most cases of projects submitted by Local Authorities, the support will be on the basis of a 'no aid' approach. In certain Third Sector projects (where economic activity prevents a No Aid approach) the funding could be awarded in line with Commission Regulation (EC) No 1407/2013 of 24<sup>th</sup> December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty to de minimis aid: [http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state\\_aid/legislation/de\\_minimis\\_regulation\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/legislation/de_minimis_regulation_en.pdf). Please note that if the applicant entity exceeds the limit of €200,000 de minimis aid over three fiscal years then we will not be able to provide support. Where State Aid prevents, an application will be rejected.

## **10. EU Procurement**

The EC Procurement Directives apply to contracts that are financed or part financed by EU Funds. The full procurement rules apply to all public bodies and commercial enterprises in the private sector that receive grant support of 50% or more of total project costs exclusive of VAT.

The procurement evidence must be provided at the claims stage not the application stage.

For further information please see:

<http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/160704-competitive-tendering-and-public-procurement-technical-guidance-notes-en.pdf>.

The Welsh Government is obliged to publish, at least every six months, details about the beneficiary receiving Rural Development payments.

Estimated Value*	Requirement	Action
£0 - £4,999	One written quote	It is recommended to use suppliers that are registered on <a href="http://www.sell2wales.gov.wales">www.sell2wales.gov.wales</a>
£5,000 – £24,999	Three written quotes	It is recommended to use suppliers that are registered on <a href="http://www.sell2wales.gov.wales">www.sell2wales.gov.wales</a>
£25,000 - £106,046 (Goods and Services)	Full and open competition	Requirements must be published through <a href="http://www.sell2wales.gov.wales">www.sell2wales.gov.wales</a> Quotes may be sought by direct reference to suppliers
£25,000 - £4,104,393 (Works)	Full and open competition	Requirements must be published through <a href="http://www.sell2wales.gov.wales">www.sell2wales.gov.wales</a> Quotes may be sought by direct reference to suppliers
£106,047 and above (Goods and Services)	Full and open competition	Publish requirement throughout Europe via <a href="http://www.sell2wales.gov.wales">www.sell2wales.gov.wales</a>
£4,104,394 and above (Works)	Full and open competition	Publish requirement throughout Europe via <a href="http://www.sell2wales.gov.wales">www.sell2wales.gov.wales</a>

\* Please note that these figures are exclusive of VAT

## 11. Welsh Language Standards

The Welsh Government has a duty to promote and facilitate of the use of Welsh language in accordance with Section 78 of the Government of Wales Act 2006. In addition, the Welsh language standards legally require the Welsh Government through funding awards to promote opportunities for persons to use the Welsh Language and to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English Language.

Applicants should seek early advice regarding the bilingual requirements of their projects and ensure that all aspects have been costed and included in their proposals. Welsh Language requirements include (as appropriate):

- Bilingual signage, educational, interactive and interpretative materials.
- Bilingual marketing print, unless targeting audiences located outside of Wales only.
- Bilingual website.
- Bilingual social media unless it is used for anticipated audiences that are located outside Wales.
- Training and People Development opportunities regarding the Welsh Language.
- Bilingual Job advertisements.
- A Welsh Language Action Plan & Policy.

## 12. Publicity

You will need to acknowledge the support on all publicity, press releases and marketing material produced as being from the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014 -2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and Welsh Government. Such acknowledgement must be in a form

approved by us and must comply with the Welsh Government branding guidelines, which will be sent out in the award of funding offer letter.

### **13. Data Protection Privacy Statement**

Welsh Government is the Data Controller for any information you provide. Full details of our privacy policy can be found at [www.business.wales.gov.uk/privacy](http://www.business.wales.gov.uk/privacy) . Please confirm in the relevant sections of the forms that you are happy to proceed on this basis so that you can continue to receive support and advice from Welsh Government.

### **14. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

The objectives of the Act show how each public body will work to achieve the vision for Wales set out in the ‘well-being goals’. The seven well-being goals show the kind of Wales we want to see. The Act makes it clear that the listed public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals, not just one or two. Reference to and explanation as to how your project meets these goals will be important in the assessment of an application. The well being goals can be found at: <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act>

### **15. Contacts for Further Information**

#### **Regional Case Officers**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Email Address</b>	<b>Telephone No</b>
Phil Griffiths	North / Mid	<a href="mailto:Phil.griffiths@wales.gsi.gov.uk">Phil.griffiths@wales.gsi.gov.uk</a>	0300 062 5397
Theresa Cartlidge	South East / Swansea, NPT and Mid	<a href="mailto:Theresa.cartlidge@wales.gsi.gov.uk">Theresa.cartlidge@wales.gsi.gov.uk</a>	0300 061 5710
John Woodward	South West / Mid	<a href="mailto:John.woodward@wales.gsi.gov.uk">John.woodward@wales.gsi.gov.uk</a>	0300 062 2413