



# 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 small scale tourism infrastructure projects. 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 (subject to the organisation being incorporated) but is not open to other private sector SME businesses. To be eligible the project must be located in an eligible ward, see Annex A in the attached link:

<http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/180404-rural-community-development-fund-guidance-notes-en.pdf>

The fund is operated via an annual call programme with full spend to be completed by December 2020. If you are submitting more than one enquiry we recommend that you limit your submissions to the highest priority cases only. The 2018 opening dates for completion of the Expression of Interest (EOI) are:

**TAIS Call launch:** 27<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

**TAIS Call Deadline:** 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 (by 5pm)

#### 2. Purpose of fund

The purpose is to develop accessible small scale tourism infrastructure at the destination level. Ideally we are seeking creative 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.

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 also supports eligible projects identified within destination management plans:

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

Successful applicants to this fund will be those that can bring forward projects that help build and add value to visitor destinations.

### **3. Priorities**

The wider priorities of the fund are to:

1. Drive a product-led approach & support high quality, reputation changing product.
2. Develop destinations that people want to visit and recommend to others by providing opportunities to:
  - deliver memorable visitor experiences in local communities;
  - improve 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;
  - encourage more opportunities to deliver a distinctive sense of place to visitors in order to utilise the best of Wales' culture, heritage and language;
  - improve the reputation of Wales as a sustainable tourism destination;

and:

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.

### **Wales Brand**

Where possible we review whether the project reinforces the Wales brand, as follows:

- 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: [www.walesthebrand.com](http://www.walesthebrand.com)

For example a proposal that excels in using local materials 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.

## Example Projects

An eligible proposal must be a capital project and a tourism project. Examples might include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- 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 these are an integral part of a destination management programme.
- Car & Coach Parking, including accessibility, EV car charging points, information, and improved toilet facilities at key destinations.
- Improved access to water for activities, and water quality projects (e.g. Blue Flag awards). Accessibility improvements might include ramped routes to beaches with handrails and / or wooden pathways to the beaches; electric scooter charging points; changing places facilities (more space and more equipment than standard accessible toilet); dog toilet area for assistance dogs; accessible toilets, designated parking and close to accessible toilets; accessible (e.g. sensory) paths and routes to avoid the use of stiles.
- Event infrastructure (where the event is tourism related), and artwork or 'experiential' product at key destinations.
- Theme building projects related to Year of the Sea, Year of Discovery & The Wales Way. Links to Thematic Years: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/tourism/thematic-years>; [www.thewalesway.com](http://www.thewalesway.com).

## 4. Eligibility

### Who can apply?

Expression of Interest (EOI) can be received from the following:

- Local Action Groups (if incorporated entities).
- 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.

### What can be funded?

This is a capital fund. 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 a mandatory 80%. The focus of the fund is to support small scale tourism infrastructure works, examples as described (but not limited to the above).

## 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).
- Tourism Information Centres (TIC).

Eligible fees cannot exceed 12% of eligible capital expenditure, and must relate to a one off task specific to delivering the project e.g. to design, architect, planning, or road safety & technical / specialist reports and audits. These can be in the form of internal expenditure, but only if there is clear evidence of defrayal. Ineligible fees include preparing a funding application, or generic project management and administrative roles, or internal cost transfers.

## Indicators and outputs

Support will be measured against the following indicators, which Welsh Government will collate, and the applicant will be required to report into:

- The total intervention and match funding.
- The number of operations supported.
- Visitor numbers benefiting from improved 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.

## 5. Expression of Interest and Application Process

### Project Assessment

Projects will be considered in two stages:

**Stage 1:** Following the submission of the Tourism Amenity Investment Support (TAIS) Expression of Interest (EOI) form, checks are undertaken to ensure that the eligibility criteria have been met. The TAIS EOI Form is attached here:

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/tourism/finance#guides-tabs--4>

Each EOI will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Is the organisation eligible to apply?
- Is planning approval in place or will be in place?
- Can the project be delivered within a maximum 2 year period?
- Is the amount requested in line with the scheme guidelines?
- Can the amount of funding requested be provided within State Aid and scheme rules?
- Is the project a strategic priority?
- Is the project aligned to the Wales brand?

**Stage 2:** Subject to budget, the highest scoring enquiries are invited to submit an application. Applications received are reviewed first by a case officer and assessed & scored by an independent moderation panel, before being recommended for Ministerial consideration and decision.

- Applications can only be accepted where the project is located 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/180404-rural-community-development-fund-guidance-notes-en.pdf>.
- The minimum level of support starts from £25,000. In unusual cases where there is *exceptional product, lower value but priority projects*, some flexibility may be applied which will mean that cases below £25,000 support can be considered where appropriate.
- 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 exactly 80% of eligible capital costs.
- 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 the Sea, Year of Discovery and The Wales Way. The strength and quality of the destination and innovation case will be crucial to project selection.

Funding is not dependent upon direct job creation, but will be considered in line with the following headings:

- Strategic Fit
- Project Quality
- Evidence of Need
- Risks, Project Implementation and Delivery
- Project deliverables (outputs & outcomes)
- Project Costs & Value for Money

Applicants will be advised of the assessment criteria at the time the application is issued.

## 6. Approval & Decision

You will be notified of the decision and the reasons for it. This is a discretionary fund with no set appeals process. If successful in your application, a Grant Approval letter will be issued. '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.

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

The payment profile is set out in a Funding letter. If additional claim periods are required, a request can be made in writing to the Monitoring Team setting out the reasons for the amendment. The decision of the Monitoring Team is final. Each claim must be verified by a Finance Head (in the case of Local Authorities).

The Welsh Government policy is to make payments in arrears. Welsh Government recognises however that most Third Sector organisations do not hold large reserves and do not have the resources to undertake work and receive payment afterwards. Provision of funding for committed expenditure may therefore be considered in advance of payment but only where evidence of need is clearly established. In the case of Third Sector applicants, if your organisation requires payment in advance you should indicate this at the enquiry stage, and a 'payment in advance' form will be issued to you. This should be completed and returned with the required evidence. The information and evidence that you provide will be assessed to determine whether we can make payments of grant awarded to you in advance. Payment to LAs will be made in arrears based on costs incurred.

Each project will have a set timeframe to be achieved; this will be outlined in the Funding letter. Expert project management is highly important as funding could be lost to the project if the offer timescale is not adhered to.

Welsh Government target for payment of claims from Third Sector organisations is 30 calendar days from receipt of a completed valid claim. Claim forms must be submitted electronically and must be accompanied by a progress report and evidence where necessary. If claims are incomplete or inaccurate this may result in payment being delayed.

### **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.

## **8. State Aid**

The offer of grant is made by an official in the Welsh Government under the authority of Welsh Ministers. The offer is made pursuant to the Rural Development Programme (Wales) Regulations 2014 [SI No.3222 (W.327)]. This grant is available under the above named Scheme which is a Scheme that is being delivered under the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014 - 2020.

## **9. 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, third sector entities, and commercial enterprises in the private sector that receive grant support of 50% or more of total project costs exclusive of VAT.

For all project capital expenditure the relevant procurement evidence must be provided at the claims stage not the application stage. You are also required to provide a reasonable breakdown of project cost at application stage.

For further information please see the table below and:

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

The following is the current procurement summary:

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 may 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 may 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 these figures are exclusive of VAT.

## 10. Welsh 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 will be specified in an offer document and might 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.

## 11. 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.

## 12. 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.

## 13. 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>.

## 14. Contacts for Further Information

### Regional Case Officers

Name	Location	Email Address	Telephone No
Phil Griffiths	North / Mid	<a href="mailto:phil.griffiths@gov.wales">phil.griffiths@gov.wales</a>	0300 062 5397
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John Woodward	South West / Mid	<a href="mailto:john.woodward@gov.wales">john.woodward@gov.wales</a>	0300 062 2413