



## **Guidance Note for Business Event Planners and Professional Conference Organisers**

### **Introduction**

This guidance note contains advice for Business Events Planners and Professional Conference Organisers wishing to apply for financial assistance from the Welsh Government's Event Wales - Business Events team.

Since 2018, Welsh Government has invested in business events with a view to develop product, engage with industry and encourage business event planners to consider Wales as a viable destination to host meetings, incentives, conferences, exhibitions, and events.

In the *Welcome to Wales 2020-2025 Priorities for the Visitor Economy strategy*, Business Events is a key priority. Business travellers are a high-value market who return for future visits. We are investing in world-class convention facilities and business events as a sector. We believe that growing the number of high-spend business visitors to Wales – in a way that is sensitive to environmental issues – is fundamental to our efforts and to the short and longer-term future of the wider economy of Wales. Internationalising our offer and events portfolio is a commitment of the Welsh Government's *International Strategy*, and is needed even to appeal to the highly-competitive UK marketplace. Our ambition is to build a new level of demand for Wales internationally in support of this, driving international visitation levels beyond one million visitors a year.

This grant funding forms part of Welsh Government's commitment to attract more international business events which bring international and national delegates to Wales. An Award of Funding would be to support the growth in international attendees at the event, growing its economic benefit through additional international visitor spend, and also through encouraging greater international trade and investment potential for Wales.

### **Types of event support:**

Welsh Government is offering grant-funding of:

- Up to £25,000 per business event.

## **Event Wales Subvention Funding Scheme 2020/21**

Exceptional proposals, backed by a strong business case, requiring more than £25,000 per bid, may be considered on a case by case basis (subject to available funds).

We welcome applications from various types of organisations, including but not limited to; business event owners, planners and destination management organisations, convention bureaus supporting bids or associations. Applications cannot be submitted by venues or venue owners.

Further information, including current criteria and how to apply for financial support, can be found on Welsh Government website at: <https://gov.wales/tourism-major-events>

### **How we will assess your request for funding:**

Following an initial scoping conversation and then a discussion with one of our appraisal officers, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which will enable us to judge whether your business event meets the strategic priorities of Event Wales. Your proposals will be assessed against a set of criteria and when completing the questionnaire, it is important that you include firm evidence of how your event meets the criteria. For existing business events, you should draw on historic data from previous business events. For new business events, please reference any research into events of a similar nature and scale. In addition, you will need to evidence and include confirmation of Local Authority, destination partnership and any other related partner, in-principle support for your event.

**Currently, the focus of our investment is on business events which attract international and national delegates to Wales.** Copies of the assessment questionnaire and criteria are provided with this guidance note.

The questionnaire should be returned to the appraisal officer who undertook the initial discussion. Potential applicants are advised not to complete and submit a questionnaire without first having had an initial discussion. If your application meets the criteria, the event will be eligible to apply for funding but there is no guarantee that all events will be deemed appropriate or offered grant funding.

We will assess your experience of managing business events and the overall viability of your proposals both financially and in terms of delivering a long-term positive impact for Wales. Recurring and rotational events, will need to demonstrate how the Government's strategic investment will lead to financial sustainability within a defined period, usually at the end of 3 years.

Event Wales - Business Events highlights the importance of strong partnerships and the business plan for delivering your event should explore opportunities to forge new strategic alliances and develop new forms of collaboration with public and private partners across geographic, organisational and sectoral boundaries.

If we are satisfied that your event proposals are closely aligned to the strategic priorities of Event Wales - Business Event, we will negotiate with you the range of benefits and strategic outputs which we would expect to be delivered for our investment in your event. These discussions are also designed to take us to the point where we are able to indicate to you

## **Event Wales Subvention Funding Scheme 2020/21**

whether we would be prepared to recommend Event Wales – Business Events funding for your event.

### **Timetable**

There are no prescribed 'bidding rounds', however completed Step1 assessment questionnaires should be submitted no later than 30<sup>th</sup> June in the year immediately preceding the financial year in which your event is to be held. In exceptional circumstances, applications for funding may be considered after this date but will be subject to available budgets and other competing priorities at that time. No pre-payments for future financial years are permitted, but the event can itself be taking place in future years.

### **Decision making:**

Once all requested documentation has been received, the application reviewed we will endeavour to complete our assessment and let you have a decision within 4-6 weeks.

### **Purposes of Event Wales – Business Events grant funding:**

Our grant funding will not be provided for core costs such as venue hire or bedroom costs, but may be used to support a wide range of business event related activities, such as:

- Financial contribution e.g. Hosting registration fee
- Discounted / negotiated travel in and around the destination for delegates as well as to and from the destination
- Supported civic reception
- Marketing efforts to support the event and its promotion including branding and welcome points
- Marketing support for attending delegates i.e. city maps, brochures and marketing collateral.

Pitching support will be part of the offer from Event Wales. Event Wales will look to support where appropriate with letters of support from Ministers and Welsh Government staff will support the bidding process as deemed necessary and suitable to the process need.

### **Please note**

- 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.
- Applicants are advised that any marketing activity funded from this programme will require the integration of approved Welsh Government branding.
- This grant funding opportunity is being operated by Welsh Government as a de minimis scheme. If successful, you will need to declare in writing all other sources of de minimis aid which your organisation (and any linked organisation) has received over the current and previous two financial years. For further details, please see the Welsh Government's [State Aid Guidance](#), which includes details of the de minimis

## **Event Wales Subvention Funding Scheme 2020/21**

Regulation. **Please note any funds awarded must be within State Aid limits, as this fund is provided under de minimis aid.** If the total funding from State sources exceeds €200,000 de minimis aid over a rolling fiscal year period (at applicable exchange rate), then we are unable to award the grant.

- If successful, we will conduct a credit check on your organisation and other necessary due diligence checks. You will also need to provide confirmation of your VAT recovery status.