

# THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GRANT SCHEME

## GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA 2009-10

### BACKGROUND

The Highland Council's Tourism Grant Scheme is aimed at encouraging new tourism related projects among tourism businesses and community tourism projects. It can normally provide financial support of up to 50% of eligible costs or £10,000 (whichever is the lower amount) for appropriate projects. Assistance may be available, where appropriate, for longer-term projects (to a maximum of three years), subject to budget availability and normally with an annual limit of £10,000 or 50% of costs. Multiple applications for different projects by any one organisation or community group are acceptable but the combined value of grants will not normally exceed 15% of the total value of the Tourism Development Budget in any one financial year. The applicant(s) will meet at least 30% of the overall costs of their project in cash. Applications will be dealt with on a first come first served basis.

### SCHEME OBJECTIVES

The scheme is targeted towards both meeting the objectives outlined in the Council's Administration Programme and furthering the aims of the National Tourism Strategy and the Highland Tourism Strategy, in which the Council is a partner. In particular, the scheme focuses on the four themes for action outlined by the national strategy:

- Knowing Your Market
- Exceeding Visitors' Expectations
- Marketing Your Product
- Being Sustainable

Project applications should meet at least two of the following objectives:

- a) to maximise the economic and social benefits which tourism can bring to the Highlands
- b) to market the Highlands to new and existing customers as a world-class tourism destination
- c) to ensure the availability of market information necessary to support marketing decisions
- d) to extend the value and length of stay of visitors
- e) to improve the quality of the visitor experience by ensuring easy access to a wide range of facilities and experiences – i.e. cultural, arts, genealogy, sport, outdoor activities

In addition to meeting at least two of the above objectives, applicants must demonstrate that their project contributes towards the strategic objective of ensuring that tourism in the Highlands is sustainable. As well as ensuring any activities protect the natural heritage and environmental qualities of the area this can include helping sustain communities, using local goods and services, minimising the effects of seasonality and helping the dispersal of visitors throughout the Highlands.

### ELIGIBILITY

Assistance is available to groups of tourism operators and to community based tourism projects within the Highland Council area, which aim to create employment or income locally. Where a project takes place or has benefits across a number of areas, including Highland, any contribution will be pro-rata, reflecting the benefit to Highland.

## **ELIGIBLE PROJECTS**

- a) Setting up of tourism or marketing groups or assisting with the development of their operation
- b) Production of marketing plans
- c) Marketing activities not eligible for VisitScotland's Growth Fund but nevertheless in line with the aims of the Highland Tourism Strategy, but subject to applicants having a marketing plan. Projects which would normally be eligible for VisitScotland's Growth Fund should apply for this in the first instance - the Highland Council Tourism Development budget cannot be used to fund projects which are rejected because they fail to meet VisitScotland's quality criteria.
- d) Research projects
- e) Feasibility studies or pilot schemes
- f) Promotion of tourism excellence
- g) Best practice exchange
- h) Other projects deemed worthy that are in line with the Council's aims and which do not conflict with the Council's agreement with VisitScotland
- i) Tourism signposting if composite signs are being erected that will provide a benefit to the wider community rather than simply to individual businesses. The Council's contribution will normally equal that provided by any individual partner and will not exceed the limits above.

## **INELIGIBLE PROJECTS**

- a) Funding for the activities of an individual business
- b) One-off capital projects
- c) Revenue funding of projects which fail to demonstrate long term sustainability
- d) Projects being funded by VisitScotland's Growth Fund
- e) Events and festivals. See [www.highlandeventsandfestivals.com](http://www.highlandeventsandfestivals.com) for funding guidelines

## **STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

- a) The Highland Council will require to receive copies of all invoices/receipts relating to the costs of the project and reserves the right to recoup its pro-rata share of the unspent balance of the total project budget should the final costs turn out to be less than those projected by the applicant.
- b) The applicant will monitor the outcomes of the project and make this information available to the Council and will also permit officers of the Council to monitor the progress and outcomes of the project as required. Applicants must demonstrate how they will measure the success of their project and must be able to identify one or more measurable target.
- c) The applicant will incorporate the Gaelic language into the project in a meaningful way. Guidance on appropriate use is provided as an appendix to these guidelines but applicants are also encouraged to contact the Council at an early date so that Gaelic can be embedded in the project rather than being added at a later date.
- d) The applicant will acknowledge the Council's support of the project in all publicity and marketing materials, advertising, press comment etc.

**Note: The Council reserves the right to attach additional conditions as required.**

## **APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCEDURE**

Applications may be submitted at any time using the Council's application form to outline the proposed project and demonstrate how it meets the objectives and criteria of the scheme. Details of the overall cost of the project and other funding sources should also be provided.

Authority to approve applications has been delegated to the Director of Planning & Development in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning, Environment & Development Committee. Exceptional requests for assistance over £10,000 or multiple requests that cumulatively exceed 15% of the total value of the Tourism Development Budget will require to be considered by the Planning, Environment & Development Committee. The opinion of VisitScotland may also be sought when considering applications.

Applications should be sent to:

Gordon Ireland, Tourism Development Officer, The Highland Council, Inverness Castle, Inverness IV2 3EG. Tel: 01463 710729. E-mail: [gordon.ireland@highland.gov.uk](mailto:gordon.ireland@highland.gov.uk)

## **APPENDIX 1: USE OF GAELIC**

In accordance with the Council's policy on use of the Gaelic language which includes developing the role of Gaelic in tourism, the use of Gaelic within the project must be given due consideration. Direct translation of all text is not required but rather applicants are encouraged to make use of Gaelic in a way that enhances the Visitors experience of the Highlands. The following are examples of how Gaelic can be included:-

### **Communication**

- Identification of front line staff who are Gaelic speakers
- Gaelic can be included in publicity campaigns e.g. local papers and radio
- Internal and external signage, including temporary / event signage can be bilingual

### **Publications**

#### Printed material

- Inclusion of Gaelic in business literature, brochures and leaflets
- Provision of a Gaelic summary
- Incorporation of Gaelic elements such as bilingual captions or place names
- Use of bilingual slogans or straplines
- Production of a Gaelic fact sheet

#### Websites

- Inclusion of Gaelic in organisation/ project websites as outlined above
- Inclusion of Gaelic web pages

### **Exhibitions & Events**

- Use of Gaelic on exhibition display materials
- Gaelic can be included in a welcome/ introduction at public events
- Gaelic songs can be included at cultural events
- Awareness of Gaelic/ Gaelic culture can be raised through staff at events