



Event Innovation Challenge Fund

Introduction

Events and festivals, and in particular major events, play a positive role in enhancing the image and economic and social prosperity of the Highland area. They bring new visitors to the area and showcase its attractions, distinctive features and culture. The Highland Council operates a Major Events Fund to support those major events which generate a significant economic benefit, attract a large number of national or international participants and spectators, and/or come with a national profile and extensive media coverage.

In years where the full value of the budget is not required to support major events the Council has agreed to operate an Event Innovation Challenge Fund to assist the development of other Highland events. The primary purpose of the challenge fund is to support the growth of those events that have the potential to grow from being locally to regionally significant, or even to become of national importance. Accepting that aspiring to grow in such a way can involve the organiser in taking on a degree of risk, for example, by adding a new element to the event, a one-off grant would be awarded to successful applicants to encourage this type of innovation, and to lessen the risk to the organiser.

Criteria for applications

To ensure this does not simply displace other sources of funding or contribute to normal revenue costs, applicants would be required to meet the criteria below.

- Any organisation, business or individual may apply but the event must take place within The Highland Council area.
- Applicants should demonstrate that they have adequate funding in place to run the event in a similar way to previous years and that any funding sought is solely towards a new element.
- Applicants should demonstrate the additionality that will be achieved as a result of the award of funding. This could include things like attracting new audiences or participants or gaining additional television coverage that helps promote the event or the area.
- Applicants should demonstrate that they have sought funding from sources other than the Highland Council and should include evidence of the potential and confirmed match funding/in kind support from other sources.
- The Highland Council is committed to supporting and promoting the Gaelic language including through the use of Gaelic in the arts, media and heritage and in economic development. As this includes a focus on the inclusion of Gaelic in events, applicants

should demonstrate plans to promote the Gaelic language and / or Highland culture through their event.

- The Scottish government previously announced a programme of focus years to celebrate the very best of Scotland and designed to support and drive Scotland's tourism and events industries to both domestic and international markets. Where appropriate, applicants should try to demonstrate that their event fits with that year's theme.

Funding available

Normally a single grant of up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of £5,000 will be available to an individual event. Exceptionally, for example where an event is of a scale that significant additional economic benefits can be clearly demonstrated, consideration will be given to larger awards. Preference will be given to providing support on an underwriting basis so if, for example, an additional element does prove to be commercially viable and contributes a surplus to the event, the Council will not pay out the grant.

Application Process

Applications will be made through a single funding round each year to ensure the best initiatives are supported. Applications for events taking place in the period from 1 September 2015 to 31 March 2016 are invited. Then deadline for receipt of applications is 5pm on **Friday 17th July 2015**.

Applications should be made on the Council's Event Innovation Challenge Fund application form. Completed applications and documentation should be returned, marked "The Highland Council Grant and Discretionary Funding Applications", to the address given on the application form. In order to demonstrate that the funding sought is solely towards a new element of the event, applications should be accompanied by both a budget for the proposed event along with a final budget for the previous event.

Decisions on applications will be made by an advisory group who will measure applications against the criteria above and against the agreed strategic direction for tourism and events. The advisory panel will consist of:

- Two Elected Members from the Highland Council
- One representative from EventScotland /VisitScotland
- One business representative
- The Council's Principal Tourism & Film Officer