NATIONAL EVENTS PROGRAMME 2025

GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA

EventScotland

Visit Scotland | Alba

About VisitScotland and EventScotland

VisitScotland is the national tourism organisation, with a vision to ensure that Scotland is a leader in 21st century tourism with a thriving, responsible visitor economy. Through strategic leadership and industry partnerships, VisitScotland encourages a responsible approach to re-building and growing the value of tourism, highlighting the benefits of tourism and events across Scotland in delivering the very best for our visitors, our businesses, our people, our communities and our environment.

EventScotland is a team within the Events Directorate at VisitScotland. EventScotland was set up in 2003 with the aim of strengthening and promoting Scotland's events industry and developed the National Events Strategy, Scotland the Perfect Stage. The Events Directorate as a whole led on the refresh of the strategy in 2024, retaining the vision of Scotland as the Perfect Stage for events. Its mission is to sustain and develop, through a "Team Scotland" approach, a dynamic, resilient and responsible events sector that is recognised as a global leader and valued for its contribution to Scotland's wellbeing economy. It aims to achieve this through the delivery of a world-class, diverse and inclusive portfolio of cultural, sport and business events – for participants, workforce, communities and visitors.

Delivering this vision and mission is based around three interconnecting strands - developing events, developing the industry and developing Scotland. Please visit the *strategy page on our website* for further information.

Welcome to the National Events Programme

The National Events Programme is one of the core funds run by the EventScotland team, designed to assist in the delivery of the national events strategy, Scotland the Perfect Stage.

The programme supports the strategic development of events and it has been designed specifically to support public facing live sporting and cultural events, which take place outwith the local authority areas of Edinburgh and Glasgow and drive domestic tourism within Scotland.

The National Events Programme is designed to support new, innovative projects and activity at events which meet the programme criteria. Awards of between £5,000 and £25,000 are available to events which can demonstrate alignment with key impact areas identified in our national events strategy, Scotland the Perfect Stage. These events will have delivery budgets in excess of £20,000 and attract more than 1,000 in-person attendees, whilst showcasing Scotland's key event and tourism assets.

Objectives

The programme objectives are to:

- Generate economic benefits for specific regions of Scotland and Scotland as a whole
- Attract visitors to specific regions of Scotland from other parts of the country and beyond
- Enhance the profile and appeal of the host region
- Inspire and involve local communities to confidently and responsibly engage with events, allowing people to benefit from community engagement
- Ensure that visitors and locals can enjoy Scotland's tourism assets in a responsible way, while still protecting them for future generations

The programme is a strategic development programme and does not provide long-term, start up or core funding. It is designed to support project costs including additional elements, innovations or new activity aimed at enhancing and developing events.

Event Eligibility

- Events must take place in Scotland, outwith Edinburgh and Glasgow local authority areas
- The programme is open to public facing cultural and sporting events that take place in a live format (entirely virtual events are not eligible for funding through this programme)
- Events should have the capacity to further develop in terms of audience, spectator and participant numbers, visitor experience, accessibility, environmental sustainability or media profile
- Applications must be endorsed and/or supported by the relevant local authority/ies
- Applications must be made by legally constituted organisations. Alternatively, eligible groups will have a management committee, constitution and their own bank account
- Events being supported by EventScotland via any other funding programme will not be eligible to apply to this programme
- Events that secure funding through this route are not eligible to apply into any other EventScotland funding programmes for the same year

- A limit of three rounds of funding applies, having been reset from 2022. Events having previously received funding in 2022 will be eligible to receive up to two further awards from this programme, assuming all other programme criteria are met. Events having received three rounds of National Events Programme funding prior to 2022 will be eligible to re-apply
- Financial support cannot be retrospective, and the requested activity must not already be in process
- Whilst we are looking to see that event budgets are viable, **applicants should also demonstrate a clear financial need for funding support to deliver the requested activity**. Successful applicants will provide transparent and realistic budgets which are balanced, achievable and show other income sources
- Funding cannot be offered through the programme to support certain types of events, details of which are included in the appendix at the end of this document
- All applicants should take note of the Scottish Government's Fair Work First principles. **All applicants will need to comply with the mandatory requirements as set out in the application form**. More information can be found in the *Fair Work First guidance*.
- Due diligence will be undertaken for all applicants; the financial health of the applicant organisation will be taken into consideration during the assessment process
- Applicants should ideally have an organisation/business bank account, however if this does not exist additional finance checks will be required for verification purposes
- A maximum of **two** individual events will be supported per applicant organisation per calendar year. If an applicant has multiple companies set up to deliver a range of events which apply to this fund, this will also be considered during the assessment process

Eligible Costs

The programme supports activity designed to strategically and sustainably develop events. The following activity is considered eligible for funding:

- Innovations to develop, enhance or grow the event
- Strategic marketing & PR activity to increase audiences / profile
- Hired equipment to improve the visitor experience
- Hired equipment to increase capacity
- Initiatives or developments aimed at enhancing the event's environmental sustainability credentials and contribution towards responsible tourism in Scotland
- Specific new activity or event related projects which provide opportunities to inspire or engage the local community with the event or festival
- Initiatives or developments which improve accessibility and inclusion at the event or festival

The following are not eligible:

- Core event costs required to stage the event
- Significant capital costs, including equipment and infrastructure purchases
- Funding gaps left by other funds being withdrawn
- Hospitality costs

Assessment Criteria

Events will be assessed on their merits, and the EventScotland team will look at ways the event will create a positive impact for the host region and Scotland as a whole. Events are assessed in terms of their viability and event management experience as well as the five impact areas; Economic – Tourism and Business; Brand, Identity and Reputation; Media and Profile; Social and Cultural and Environmental Sustainability. The ability of events to deliver against these event impacts determines the support EventScotland can offer.

Viability

When assessing applications, the Events Team will be looking for evidence of the following:

- That the event organisers have sufficient proven experience in financial administration and event management, demonstrating the required skills to undertake the project
- That the proposed budget, event and communications plans are viable , transparent, realistic and achievable
- That the event has sufficient financial and in-kind support from other sources i.e. the Local Authority, sponsorship and/or investment from private sector organisations, ticket and other earned income
- That there is a clear financial need for public investment into the event from the National Events Programme, in order to deliver the requested activity. Events showing significant financial surpluses or deficits are unlikely to be awarded funding

The team will take into consideration the following when assessing events against the five impacts.

Sustainability

Economic - Tourism and Business
- The event's potential to attract visitors to the region during and after the event
- Expected visitor numbers and economic impact
- Capacity for growth and self-sustainability
- Potential opportunities for local and Scottish businesses, supporting the supply chain and showcasing Scottish talent and produce

Social and Cultural
- Opportunities the event offers around wellbeing, participation, boosting equality outcomes, volunteering and community engagement
- Outreach opportunities including areas for social/skills development
- The event's capacity to promote or protect Scotland's natural and cultural heritage
- The event's accessibility and inclusion credentials – for further guidance on this please refer to our Accessible Events Guide available to download at: *https://www.visitscotland.org/events/advice-materials/sustainability*

Environmental
- Safe and responsible delivery of the event while following public safety guidance
- Measures in place to minimise negative impact on the environment and community in support of responsible tourism
- Evidence of the promotion of sustainable practices including use of local suppliers, encouraging active travel
- Demonstrate compliance with existing and new legislation, (where applicable) including the *ban on single-use plastics in Scotland* and the *Waste (Scotland) regulations*

For guidance on creating your own sustainable event plan please refer to the Environmentally Sustainable Events Guide available to download at: https://www.visitscotland.org/events/advice-materials/sustainability

Further Impact Areas

Brand, Identity and Reputation
- The event's overall fit with the *National Event Strategy*, Scotland the Perfect Stage
- The event's fit with the host region and contribution to local priorities
- The event's fit with local event and tourism strategies

Media and Profile
- The potential for the event to generate media profile for the host region
- The type of media coverage the event generates, i.e. print; broadcast; digital; social
- Level of media achieved, i.e. local; national; international

Programme Conditions

- Eligible events will take place between January and April 2025 inclusive
- The minimum award is **£5,000** and the maximum award is **£25,000**
- The funding requested must not exceed **25%** of the overall event income. This means your event income should be no less than £20,000, if applying for the minimum award value
- If an event has received an EventScotland award in the previous year all post-event outcome information **must be submitted and approved before a new application will be considered**

Please note if your application does not meet the conditions stated above it will not be recommended for funding.

Applying For Funding

Events taking place from January and April 2025 inclusive are invited to apply to the next round. Apply online using the EventScotland Funding Portal. Please first submit an enquiry via www.visitscotland.org/ eventscotlandfundingportal. After speaking with the team, you will then receive confirmation that your event is eligible for consideration and further details and a link to register will be provided as appropriate.

As applying for funding is a two-step process and you must first submit an enquiry before access to the online portal will be shared, please do ensure you submit your enquiry with plenty of time to complete the application process before the deadline.

If you have any questions please contact apply@eventscotland.org

Events must take place in the timeframe relevant to the funding round to which the application is submitted. All applications will be assessed individually and considered by a funding panel as part of the assessment process.

Please ensure your full application is submitted via the EventScotland Funding Portal by the following deadline:

Round 52: Wednesday 4 September 2024 at 5pm

Notes For Applicants

- There is a limited amount of funding available and there is **no guarantee** that applications will be successful in securing funding
- Applicants should not commit to any activity that is subject to an application before the outcome of the assessment process has been communicated. Any decision to proceed with activity before a successful application has been confirmed is at the applicant's own risk
- If you are interested in applying to this programme, *please submit an enquiry via our website* and a member of the team will be in touch. *Contact apply @eventscotland.org if you have any queries*
- Following the application deadline, **each applicant will receive an email acknowledging receipt of their application**. If you do not receive this acknowledgement and you have submitted an application, please contact the EventScotland team within 5 days of submission
- EventScotland aims to notify applicants of the outcome of their application within 40 working days of the closing date of each round. If for any reason there is a delay resulting in a longer assessment period, applicants will be notified.
- Applications must be completed in full and on time, including the required supporting documentation, budget, and marketing activity outline
- Funding for events through the Programme is provided entirely from public funding and as such events must be able to demonstrate clear and measurable public value to Scotland
- Successful applicants will be required to sign a funding agreement and report on outputs and outcomes in alignment with the objectives of this programme
- Future funding deadlines will be advised through our e-news and via Twitter/X @EventScotNews. Please sign up to receive those updates **here**.

UK Subsidy Control

Following the introduction of the UK subsidy control regime, VisitScotland has undertaken a review of how we administer our grant funding. As a consequence of this review, we are implementing new procedures to ensure we continue to award crucial funding to the Scottish events sector in compliance with the law. The new procedures will mean that you will start to see references to us making a "subsidy" in your grant funding paperwork. If you want to learn more about the UK subsidy control regime **click here**. Further information will be made available when you are asked to complete the application process.

Accessibility, Terms and Conditions and Freedom of Information

If you require the forms to be made available to you in another format for accessibility reasons, please contact *apply@eventscotland.org*. If successful, applicants must sign and return the grant award agreement and accept the terms and conditions before the funds will be paid into the organisation's bank account. Successful applicants will be required to provide updates on progress in alignment with the schedule to be agreed as part of the grant agreement. This will be followed by a full post-event outcome report on completion of the event. If you receive grant funding from this Fund and it is subsequently determined that you have provided false or inaccurate information as part of your application, VisitScotland will seek to recover, with costs, all sums awarded to you from this Fund.

VisitScotland is subject to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and may be obliged to release information about your application or grant award in response to any requests received.

Data Protection

We will use the data provided by you in the application form and supporting documentation to assess your application for grant funding, contact you regarding your application and for grant management purpose (for example, managing the fund beyond the grant award stage).

Information provided by applicants as part of the process and/or the supporting documentation may be shared with the Scottish Government, relevant local authorities and/or other Scottish public sector bodies for verification purposes and reporting. If you want to find out more about what we do with your data, please see our *Privacy Policy*.

Appendix - Eligible and Ineligble Event Types

More detailed guidance which indicates which types of events and activities meet the eligibility criteria for this programme can be found below. This list is not exhaustive but illustrative of the type of events which may be eligible. Please note that even if your event is an 'eligible' type, there is no guarantee it will be successful in securing funding.

Eligible	Ineligible
Open to the public cultural and sporting events taking place in outdoor, indoor or hybrid settings and environments. These are generally one off or annual occurrences. This includes but is not limited to; • Agricultural events and shows • Arts festivals • Book, Poetry and Literature festivals • Comedy festivals • Dance festivals • Design festivals • Drive in events • Fashion festivals • Film festivals • Food and Drink events and festivals • Highland Games • History and Heritage festivals • Lighting trails and illuminations • Maritime events • Mass participation sporting events • Music festivals, in all genres • National and International Sports Championships / Competitions • Nature and Wildlife festivals • Piping events • Science festivals • Sports competitions or tournaments that are not part of regular fixtures, and which attract spectators • Visual arts festivals • Wellness festivals	Private events not open to the public are ineligible for this fund. The following types of events and activities are also ineligible. This includes but is not limited to • Civic Events and Ceremonial Functions • Coffee mornings and jumble sales in community centres, church halls, schools etc. • Conferences, AGMs, incentive programmes, awards dinners or social corporate parties, away-days, team-building, training, business to business trade shows or consumer exhibitions • Demonstrations / Marches / Parades of a political nature • Group activities, self-guided and guided tours • Local markets including car boot sales and regularly scheduled or pop up craft fairs, food and drink/ farmers markets • Online classes • Participative events with a principal focus on fundraising, generally these are run by the charitable organisation • Private, social or family events such as weddings, birthdays, dinners, functions or parties • Regular or recurring programming in year-round venues unless part of a wider festival. This includes productions in; theatres, cinemas, arts centres and galleries; seasonal promotions and activation in shopping centres; live music and DJ sets in venues, pubs and clubs; comedy gigs in venues, clubs and pubs • Regularly scheduled sports fixtures and club championships e.g. football, hockey, rugby, golf, bowls or tennis club • School, college or university group events including concerts, productions, proms and balls, school sports days and graduation ceremonies • Series of events – an application should be submitted in relation to single events or festivals. • Showgrounds and funfairs • Community gala days and fetes • Seasonal community celebrations • Touring productions