



**Antrim &
Newtownabbey**



Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council

Tourism Experience Taster sessions

Guidance Notes

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Section 1 – Introduction

1.1 Background

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (ANBC) has secured funding from Tourism Northern Ireland (TNI) through the Market Led Product Development Programme 2021-2022.

The programme seeks to enhance the overall tourism experience across the Borough by working with eligible businesses to develop new and enhanced experiences; to improve the appeal and demand for quality tourism products and to strengthen the food and drink offer.

The Council is offering businesses the opportunity to apply for grant assistance.

1.2 Purpose of Taster Sessions

ANBC wish to engage with a range of private sector experience providers to develop a suite of taster sessions before the end of March 2022. The taster sessions can be in a wide range of areas but might include fishing, golf, sailing, boat tours, water sports, walking trails, equestrian sports, archery, canoeing, birdwatching and family attractions. Our aim is to keep the scheme as flexible as possible and novel, innovative ideas are welcome.

ANBC is offering financial support to tourism providers to help develop these taster sessions that will run during March 2022. The overall aim of the taster sessions is to encourage visitors and residents to support as many local tourism activity providers as possible.

Our aim is to recruit up to 15 tourism providers from the Borough before the end of January 2022 and providers on the scheme must commit to running two taster sessions before the end of March 2022.

1.3 Levels of Award

The maximum grant award is £1,000 per business at a grant rate of up to 100%. Grant aid will be paid on the net cost of invoices for businesses that are VAT registered and the gross cost of invoices for businesses that are not VAT registered.

At **application stage**, applicants will be required to produce:

- Confirmation from the business owner that they agree to the scheme terms and conditions as set out in this guidance note.

Additional terms and conditions regarding funding recognition, fraud prevention and retention periods will be contained within the letter of offer if the applicant is successful.

- A completed State-Aid Declaration (Annex A)

At **grant claim stage**, applicants will be required to produce:

- Procurement evidence (as per guidance in Section 2)
- An invoice for the item(s)
- A photograph of any item(s) purchased / produced to support the scheme.
- Evidence of attendance and demographic data on attendees at the taster sessions.
- A signed claim form detailing any supplier/s and value of the works completed.

Submission of the evidence detailed above is essential for your grant to be administered and paid to you.

There is a set budget to support the Taster Sessions and grants will be awarded on a first come first served basis. It is a condition of the grant that funding must be spent by 31st March 2022 therefore claim forms must be in before that date.

Section 2 – Practicalities

2.1 Who can apply?

Indicative eligibility criteria for applicants:

- Independent private sector tourism businesses and activity providers from the Antrim and Newtownabbey Council area.
- Businesses must operate in the Tourism, Hospitality, Leisure, Cultural and Visitor Economy sector.
- Businesses are able to facilitate ticket sales directly.
- Businesses are able to offer socially distanced activities compliant with NI and Public Health regulations and guidelines at the time of the event.
- Please note that only one grant per business address is eligible.

2.2 What can be funded?

Eligible Costs

Please note only expenditure relating to the development and delivery of the project will be considered, examples include but are not limited to:

- **Operating costs:** e.g. costs to operate the experience, equipment to operate the experience, costs that enable the provider to offer the experience at a discounted rate to the visitor.
- **Supplier costs:** Buying in third party supplies/instructors.
- **Delivery costs:** Delivering activities in addition to their core services (times or volume of activity) in-house where the additional costs can be covered by the support.
- **Development costs:** De risk the development or enhance the product offering.
- **Equipment costs:** Props/equipment hire to be used in the delivery of the experience.

Council Officers and or a dedicated project consultant will be able to provide advice on eligible costs with potential applicants.

2.3 What cannot be funded?

Ineligible Costs

In general, the following will not be eligible for funding:

- **Salaries:** Staff time

- **Marketing:** marketing costs to promote the initiative are not covered for individual applicants. Instead, ANBC and Tourism NI will be promoting the scheme.
- **Retrospective costs:** Costs incurred prior to the date of the Letter of Offer from Council (retrospective funding).
- **Other costs:**
 - Any costs or projects, which are clearly **another statutory agency's responsibility** or costs that, can be claimed, back from elsewhere.
 - Costs towards **ongoing running costs**/ cash flow (e.g. electricity, rent, rates, insurance, salaries/wages etc.).
 - Any repairs to the **property or replacements to existing equipment**.
 - Cleaning products.
 - Costs towards **banking charges** and / or repayment of debt.
 - Costs that are not clearly linked to the project.
 - Costs that are assessed as **poor value for money** or that are purchased **without following Council procurement guidelines (see section 2.4)**.
 - Activities that are deemed offensive, non-inclusive or that are **party-political** in intention, use or presentation **Alcohol, gratuities, gifts and prizes**.
 - Purchase of **stock for general trading purposes**.
 - Costs relating to **private transportation/vehicles**.

2.4 Procurement

Applicants must demonstrate value for money has been obtained when purchasing all items to be grant-aided.

You must seek quotes for each item that you are applying for funding for, and your grant request must be based on the lowest quotation received. If you do not wish to use the lowest quotation you require the prior consent of the Council in writing. You should seek the required number of quotes based on the thresholds below - the threshold is the value of the full item, not just the grant aid applied for. You must ensure that the quotations obtained are 'like for like'. Grant funding will not be paid out for items that have been purchased without following this procurement process.

As part of our local sourcing ambitions, we encourage businesses to seek quotations from suppliers based inside the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council boundary.

Number of Quotations Required		Quotation Thresholds (£)
1	Minimum of 2 price checks (written / email quotations or internet quote)	Up to £2,999.99
2	Minimum of 3 written/email quotations (internet quotes not permitted)	3,000.00 – 7,999.99
3	Minimum of 4 written/email quotations (internet quotes not permitted)	8,000.00 – 29,999.99

2.6 Assessment Process

INCOMPLETE AND LATE APPLICATIONS MAY NOT BE ASSESSED

The deadline for completed applications is **31st January 2022**, however the funding will be allocated on a first come, first served basis and Council will close the programme when the budget has been exhausted.

It is in the applicant's best interest to ensure that all required information is supplied on the form to ensure it is assessed quickly.

Letters of Offer will be issued to successful applicants with time bound completion dates. Works should not commence nor any piece of equipment purchased until a Letter of Offer has been received, signed and returned to the Council.

Applications that do not include the necessary information will not be acknowledged as eligible until ALL required information is received.

2.7 Payment of grants

- Do not commence work, pay deposits or confirm the purchase of any equipment until an offer letter has been signed and returned to the Council.
Council will not retrospectively fund projects;
- Payment of grant will be made to the applicant via direct BACS payment. No cash or cheque payments will be made.
- Payment will only be made upon receipt of a completed claim form submitted with the following documentation:
 - Copy of invoice(s) for works/equipment purchase(s);
 - Photograph of the item(s) purchased / works completed;

Payment for equipment and to contractor(s) must be made via Cheque or BACS

CASH EXPENDITURE WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS FUND.

The Councils ability to deliver the programme is dependent on the future Covid-19 outlook and therefore the Council will not be held accountable or liable for the cancellation of the programme or any loss of business or costs arising from the cancellation

Section 3 – How to Apply

3.1 Next steps

Step 1	Make sure your proposed expenditure is eligible to allow expenditure by 31 March 2022.
Step 2	Complete the application form online. Make sure this is signed by the business owner.
Step 3	Return your application form via Council's website. The deadline for applications is 31st January 2022 however funding will be allocated on a first come first served basis and Council will close the programme when the budget has been exhausted.

All projects must be completed as soon as practically possible after receiving a Letter of Offer and by the end of March 2022 which will be stated in your Letter of Offer.

Annex A – De Minimis Aid Declaration

If you have been offered Government funded business support such as grants or subsidised consultancy from other Government Departments, InterTradeIreland, Local Councils or any other source over the last 2 Fiscal (accounting) years this might impact on your eligibility to receive assistance as GAP operates as 'de minimis' aid, under EC Regulation (EC) No 1407/2013 (*de minimis* aid).

The maximum amount of *de minimis* aid that a company¹ can normally be offered within its current and 2 previous accounting years is €200,000 although sectoral restrictions apply to Fishery and Aquaculture (maximum €30,000); primary production of agricultural products (maximum €15,000); and road freight transport (maximum €100,000). Where an undertaking is part of a group of companies the *de minimis* limit applies to the combined Group within GB and NI and not individual companies within the Group. To allow us to determine whether awarding this grant will breach this limit, please complete the online form in full with details including the date and value of any *de minimis* aid the company has received during its current and 2 previous accounting years. Where your company is part of a group of companies please complete the table for all group companies.

Please note that it is your responsibility to check whether the support you have received was classed as 'de minimis' aid. If in doubt, please check with whoever provided you with the support.

¹ 'company' or 'enterprise' refers to sole traders, family businesses, partnerships or limited companies.