

Tourism Investment Support Scheme (TISS) – Frequently Asked Questions

No	Question	Answer
1	Will support be repayable?	<p>The way Welsh Assembly Government provides financial support is changing as we move towards a prioritised sectoral model of repayable business finance.</p> <p>Visit Wales intends that the TISS scheme will operate as a ‘grant’ scheme in cases where the level of support is up to £25,000, unless the case presented indicates that a repayable element should be considered.</p> <p>In larger investment cases, generally, where the level of support is above £25,000, case officers will be required to determine, in the appraisal process, if the support recommended is repayable.</p> <p>If applicable to your application for funding, repayment milestones will be established during the application process, within the business plan. On the basis that the repayments occur as forecast, the investment will not be subject to interest charges. It should be noted that repayable support is not intended to replace commercial loans, and, as is standard, applicants will need to show that they have explored all such options. The details of repayable support will be fully discussed with you during the progress of your application for financial assistance.</p>
2	What level of financial assistance can I expect to receive?	<p>There is no standard level of financial assistance. In practice, support to the private sector is likely to be no more than 25% of eligible costs, under this scheme, from a minimum £5,000 up to a maximum of £300,000 support per project.</p> <p>The level of support possible is driven first and foremost by the additionality case – that is the case you make to show that you need the funding, at the level stated, for the development to proceed (at the quality level stated, in the timescale projected etc). Most capital</p>

		<p>applications are presented based on a case for financial constraint. Your cashflow forecasts (as part of your application) should therefore evidence the financial constraint case.</p> <p>As part of the application process you will need to evidence your match funding for the project, at the outset. Eligible funding must therefore be 'new' project funding, specifically for the project, and not ongoing internal cashflow.</p> <p>Legally, State Aid Rules also determine how much funding can be granted to a particular business. In capital projects, this largely depends on the project location and the size of the business (ie. as a small, medium, or large enterprise - SME).</p> <p>Proposals based in East Wales (including Powys) generally will encounter lower investment rates than in West Wales. As a result, although the upgrading scheme has a general limit of up to 25%, some businesses located in East Wales (and of a certain size) may be limited to a lower percentage rate. If in doubt, please discuss with a relevant Visit Wales representative.</p>
3	What is the minimum / maximum level of investment provided?	<p>Minimum – £5,000 (Total project cost of £20,000)</p> <p>Maximum - £300,000 (Total project cost of £1.2m)</p>
4	Would my investment proposal be eligible for TISS?	A number of factors are taken into consideration when assessing applications for financial assistance. Please see the 'TISS scheme guidance' notes for further information (provide link to this).
5	Once I have submitted the Introductory Questionnaire what happens next?	On receipt of your completed 'Introductory Questionnaire' (IQ) we will quickly determine your eligibility under the scheme and, assuming you are eligible, we will then send you the application form relevant to your circumstances and / or discuss an application in further detail.
6	Why do I have to complete an Introductory	The information you supply at the Introductory Questionnaire (IQ) stage will help us establish if your project meets the eligibility criteria and fits

	Questionnaire	<p>with our investment priorities. This step helps avoid inviting an application, that is unlikely to be approved on the basis of eligibility / priority.</p> <p>The IQ is a basic level enquiry form. It is not an application. The figures you present on this form should be as accurate a representation of the proposal as you can provide at that point. As initially we undertake a desk based review of your proposal, it is clearly to everyone's benefit if you could expand – beyond the form – on the key points. Of particular interest is 'what the project is', how it will change quality, and how it might affect your market. Include some brochures / website reference, and so on.</p>
7	How long does it all take?	<p>Processing your initial enquiry (Introductory Questionnaire) will normally take up to two weeks. If your proposal is eligible we will discuss the proposal with you, and at the appropriate point ask you to complete the relevant application. Completed applications will be appraised carefully to ensure that public funds are being used effectively and efficiently. Decisions will be made as speedily as possible without prejudicing the need for proper financial prudence and accountability.</p>
8	Can you please provide further details on the application process for the TISS scheme?	<p>For eligible project cost over £100k a full business plan is required. For projects with an eligible cost of between £20k and £100k the application procedure applies.</p> <p>The application process will still require additional information such as CVs, evidence of other funding, marketing information, financial forecasts, historic accounts, but the information requirement will be less detailed than in the Business Plan format.</p>
9	Will I definitely get financial support?	<p>No. Decisions on investment are discretionary and each application will be assessed on merit and compatibility with our investment priorities. Our support is seen as 'funding of last resort', therefore, applicants must have exhausted all other funding sources. We will then only provide the minimum amount necessary to ensure the project is completed to the planned quality, extent or timescale and in accordance with the funds that we have at our disposal at any given</p>

		time.
10	Why do I have to give you an estimate of costs?	<p>We have to carefully manage the limited funds at our disposal so an early indication of cost helps us do this.</p> <p>A complete application should include evidence that the project has been accurately costed, and also achieves best value (eg. through providing some competitive quotations for significant parts of the work).</p>
11	Do I have to pay you any money outset?	<p>No – you just need to complete the Introductory Questionnaire. However, before incurring or defraying any costs, such as preliminary professional fees, applicants are strongly advised to discuss their proposals with our staff in order to determine whether or not a project meets our priorities and eligibility criteria.</p> <p>You should be aware that an application is unlikely to be decided if planning permission has not been obtained (this <i>may</i> be acceptable at an outline stage). However, any project related fees incurred or defrayed before an investment decision will not be eligible costs within your application.</p> <p>You should of course not assume that your application will be approved, and any spend on preliminary fees must be at your own risk.</p>
12	Visit Wales only support big businesses don't they so there's no point in me applying?	<p>All tourism businesses irrespective of size are eligible for consideration if they meet the criteria. The majority of investment in tourism businesses goes to small and medium sized businesses (SMEs).</p>
13	If my application is approved are there conditions attached? Will I need to create jobs?	<p>Yes. You will need to adhere to the conditions set out within the offer letter ie. creating or safeguarding the jobs you have proposed within the application and completing the project to the standards agreed. We may also specify other conditions which will help achieve what we expect of the tourism industry – for example the need to take part in the Croeso Cynnes Cymreig initiative.</p> <p>For lower cost investment cases (up to £100k</p>

		<p>cost / maximum £25k support) there will be no requirement for job creation. We will however expect you to maintain existing employment levels, and applications that can demonstrate job creation or safeguarding will be prioritised.</p> <p>In all cases above this, investment support will be considered against a benchmark of £12.5k support for each full time equivalent (FTE) post created or safeguarded. Safeguarded jobs must only be those posts that are under imminent threat. Part Time, Casual and Seasonal jobs can be considered, but only pro rata as an FTE figure.</p>
14	I might need some assistance with the forms, can you help?	<p>Yes, talk to us in the first instance –one of our quality advisers may be able to help you complete the Introductory Questionnaire. Depending on the nature of the project, the quality adviser will also offer advice on the standards expected of you.</p> <p>The completion of the application is not something we can directly support you in, other than by providing generic responses and clarifications. You may be able to access broader advice through Welsh Assembly Government's business website.</p>
15	What about grading? My business is not graded at the moment.	<p>Not a problem, but you will need to become graded, at the required level, once the project is completed.</p>
16	I understand that for my business to be eligible, we will need to increase a star rating after completion?	<p>Visit Wales overall aim is to improve the quality of the tourism industry in Wales. The limited funds available are targeted towards businesses that can help achieve this aim. It is possible in some circumstances to apply for investment, but not increase in grade. However, it will be at the judgement of the case officer to determine if the project represents a <i>significant</i> step change in quality (eg by adding a spa facility).</p> <p>Although a quality improvement is mandatory, we will also give credit to those projects that meet a number of other criteria, as detailed in the TISS scheme notes. This includes a business showing that it has, or is developing</p>

		improved energy and environmental facilities and procedures.
17	My idea fits the type of business that you say you will support but it is way over the cost limitations you have set.	While we will not be able to provide any support from our fund above the £300k level, if the project is of strategic importance Visit Wales can investigate alternative sources of funding that may be available via Welsh Assembly Government. Businesses should not however expect that this will be so, and each will be determined on a case by case basis.
18	My kitchen is outdated and the EHO is very critical – will you help me fund improvements?	No, if the works are related to meeting statutory standards. It may be however that we could support some investment in higher efficiency equipment, as part of a broader upgrade, that might enable a change in product / output (eg. facilities and equipment that might enable an improved menu / faster service).
19	Do I need planning permission before I apply?	Yes. We are not able to decide applications unless the required permissions are in place. Note that related expenditure (incurred or defrayed) will not be eligible as part of the project costs.
20	Where can I find research data to help inform my application?	Please visit our research website on http://wales.gov.uk/topics/tourism/research/
21	My proposal involves the development of a new tourism business (new capacity), is there any support available under the TISS scheme?	Yes. The TISS scheme has recently been made available for new businesses and new capacity projects. The scheme also focuses on the upgrading of existing tourism businesses.
22	I work for a Local Authority and understand that support is to be made available for	Visit Wales will be providing funding for destination amenity works starting from financial year 2012/13. In the interim period Local Authorities will be encouraged to establish destination partnerships and work on developing destination management plans. For further information please contact Gerwyn

	Destination improvements, how do we go about accessing this support?	Evans on 02920 475245.
	Can I source other public sector support to complement Visit Wales funding?	You can investigate other public sector funding providing the cumulative level of support does not exceed State Aid limits. However, this scheme is not intended to 'top up' or conflict with certain other funding schemes. You cannot for example combine the Local Investment Fund with this fund, and if an alternative funding source is more appropriate for environmental improvement, it is that funding source that should prevail. If in doubt please discuss with us.