

YEAR OF CROESO: WEATHER-PROOFING FUND FOR TOURISM ATTRACTIONS 2025-26

Guidance Notes

1. Introduction

Visit Wales is running a small-scale capital grants fund in 2025-26 to support tourism attractions to invest in weather-proofing measures.

Feedback from the tourism sector is telling us that poor weather is a key factor impacting on trading. Our Business Barometer shows that weather was the most common reason cited by businesses for having had fewer visitors in summer 2024, with 55% of businesses attributing lower visitor numbers to the weather (this was ahead even of cost-of-living pressures on visitors which were mentioned by 42% of businesses)¹.

Climate data show that UK winters from 2009-2018 were on average 5% wetter than 1981- 2010 and 12% wetter than 1961-1990. UK summers over the same period were also wetter, by 11% and 13% respectively². In the longer term, winter rainfall in Wales is expected to increase by approximately 6% by the 2050s compared to the average in the period 1981-2000, while summer rainfall is expected to decrease by approximately 15%, but this may be accompanied by increased intensity of rainfall when it occurs³.

The Climate Adaptation Strategy for Wales (October 2024) sets out the Welsh Government's strategic approach to climate adaptation. The Adaptation Action Plan for Business noted the importance of protecting businesses from climate impacts and undertook to explore funding mechanisms to support greater resilience.

The Welsh Government's tourism strategy Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2024-25 identifies increased visitor spend and increased seasonal spread through enhancing the year-round offer as key success measures. Feedback from businesses indicates that poor weather is a factor which hampers the achievement of these objectives.

88% of businesses responding to the Welsh Association of Visitor Attractions (WAVA) summer 2024 survey stated that Visit Wales financial support for weatherproofing their business would be 'very beneficial'. Visit Wales is responding by bringing forward this Weather-proofing fund for visitor attractions in 2025-26.

¹ Visit Wales Business Barometer, Summer 2024 wave

² UK Climate Projections headline findings – August 2022, UK Met Office

³ Climate Adaptation Strategy for Wales 2024 p.3

2. Purpose of the Fund

Periods of poor weather negatively affect the operation of tourism attraction businesses in two main ways: firstly, by preventing the business from operating as normal (for example, if a facility becomes water-logged) and secondly, by impacting negatively on the visitor experience and/or discouraging visits. Weather-proofing measures supported by this Fund will be aimed at mitigating these impacts.

Weather proofing will therefore serve to help support the business's **economic resilience and adaptability**, strengthen the **climate resilience** of the business, and help enable the business to offer its best possible welcome to visitors during the **2025 Year of Croeso**.

Eligible weather-proofing measures will include:

- measures which mitigate the impact of poor weather on the business
- measures which mitigate the impact of poor weather on the visitor experience

3. What support is available and delivery timescale

The Fund is offering capital grants of between £5,000 and £20,000, which must be used before 31 March 2026. No revenue costs will be considered. The grant can support up to 75% of the costs of the weather-proofing measures (or up to £20,000 if this is less than 75% of the costs).

For example, an application could be for £15,000 of grant towards costs of £20,000 (75%) or for £20,000 of grant towards costs of £40,000 or £50,000.

The remainder of the costs must be financed by the business from its own funds or private sources of finance. Applicants **cannot** use any other form of grant or funding from any public sector organisation as match funding.

Projects must be completed, full spend defrayed and claimed by 31 March 2026.

Awards of grant will be made under the Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) subsidy control regime in line with the Subsidy Control Act (2022). Applicants will be required to confirm, by way of signed declaration, that any award made under this fund would not result in total MFA assistance received by the business over this and the previous two financial years exceeding £315,000. Applications will be declined if the business is unable to make this declaration.

4. Who can apply to this Fund?

Tourism attraction businesses in Wales which:

- are accredited as visitor attractions under the VAQAS scheme (or are eligible and willing to seek VAQAS accreditation as a condition of grant)
- are micro, small or medium sized enterprises (employing up to 249 employees)

- have been trading for at least one year as a limited company, partnership or sole trader or social enterprise
- receive visitors in a setting where poor weather can impact on the business performance and the visitor experience

Only one application may be made per attraction business. If a single owner or director owns more than one attraction business, then a maximum of two applications will be accepted.

We do not support the unfair use of zero hours contracts. Where these are in use, they should not be unilaterally imposed, and workers should be provided with the offer of a guaranteed hours contract. Businesses which do not operate in this way should not apply to this Fund.

5. What costs are eligible and ineligible

The only eligible costs are weather-proofing measures to mitigate the impact of poor weather on business performance and on the visitor experience.

Examples of eligible weather-proofing measures could include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- canopies or pergolas
- covered seating areas
- covered walkways
- visitor shelters
- woodchip or gravel pathways
- hard standing for car parks

Visit Wales accepts that most weather-proofing measures supported under this Fund will be essentially practical and preventative in nature. Within the constraints that this inevitably imposes, it is still important to ensure that the measures taken will also enhance the **visitor appeal** of the attraction. Even basic and functional projects can be given an element of visitor appeal, for example an area of hardstanding could incorporate the word 'Croeso' in a visually interesting way, or visitor shelters could feature local materials and references.

We are particularly keen to support any weather-proofing measures which are especially eye-catching and have real potential to intrigue or surprise visitors and to change perceptions of what visiting the attraction in poor weather might be like.

We do not wish to support measures which are unsightly or unappealing or make a poor-quality impression on people visiting the attraction.

The following types of cost are ineligible:

- Any measures where a financial commitment has been made before a grant is offered
- Revenue costs, such as marketing, overheads and staff time

- Professional fees, although architect's fees and planning fees will be allowed if these can be capitalised and are necessary for the project
- The purchase of stocks or consumable items (such as ponchos or umbrellas)
- Any measures which will lead to redundancies

The terms of the Fund also exclude any activities which are connected to (1) party political purposes; (2) the promotion of particular secular, religious or political views; (3) gambling; (4) pornography; (5) offering sexual services; (6) any kind of illegal activities; or (7) any kind of activity which in our opinion could bring the Welsh Government into disrepute.

6. Application Process

The Fund will operate a single call for applications in a one stage application process and the timeline for the process is as follows:

Date	Project stage
Thurs 24 April	Opening date for applications
Thurs 22 May	Closing date for applications (1pm)
June 2025	Grant Decisions issued

The documentation required at application stage is:

- Completed application form
- Most recent end-year accounts for your business
- Dated photograph of site where weather proofing will be installed
- Copies of quotes from your selected suppliers for the project expenditure
- Images/designs of intended weather proofing (if available)
- Evidence of initial discussions with local planning authority (if relevant)

Our due diligence will include checking that the accounts show that the business was trading profitably and had a positive balance sheet at the most recent year-end. Accounts which show losses or a negative balance sheet will normally lead to the application being rejected, although we may consider any mitigating information which you bring to our attention.

Applications will only proceed to be scored if they satisfy the eligibility conditions set out in section 4 above ('Who can apply to this Fund?').

This is a competitive process and only the highest scoring applications will be recommended for approval. The applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

	Area being scored	Score (1-*5)	Weighting
1	Deliverability - The application must clearly describe the project and provide assurance that the project can be successfully delivered by 31 March 2026		5
2	Strengthening the Business (Economic Strength and Adaptability) - The application should clearly explain how the weather-proofing measures will reduce the impact of poor weather on business performance		5
3	Climate Resilience and low carbon - The application should clearly explain how the intended measures will make the business more resilient to present and possible future climate impacts and be consistent with the business's progress towards lower carbon operation.		5
4	Visitor Experience and Visitor Appeal -The application must explain how the weather-proofing measures will improve visitor experience. Projects with strong visitor appeal and potential to enhance visitor perceptions of the attraction will be scored highest.		5

Score	Description	Fundable
5	Exceptional – The response was robust, detailed, well-articulated in all material respects providing strong evidence that the criteria would be met, with no weaknesses or areas of concern with the content.	Yes
3	High quality – The response presented evidence that the criteria would be met, good in many respects but with minor weaknesses or concerns with the content.	Yes
1*	Weak – The response provided limited evidence that the criteria would be met, there were weaknesses with the content. The response lacked significant detail/or clarity.	No*
0*	Unacceptable – The response did not provide evidence that the criteria would be met; and was wholly unsatisfactory in terms of content. Major weaknesses, issues or omissions were identified. The response was poorly articulated and/or inconsistent.	No

*If you receive a score of 0 for any area, or more than one area receives a score of 1, your application will be rejected.

7. Approval & Decision

Applicants will be notified of the decision and the reasons for it. This is a discretionary fund and if successful in your application, a Grant Offer Letter will be issued. There is no appeal process for this fund. 'Start of work' on the project, or a formal commitment, must not happen prior to the decision as this will void the application. Welsh Government is not responsible or liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

8. Claims Process

Grant payments will be made in a single instalment following completion of the approved project.

Claims must be submitted following completion and by no later than 31 March 2026 and any claims submitted after this date **will not** be considered for payment.

Claims will be paid in arrears based on **defrayed** costs.

Claims and supporting documentation **must** be submitted electronically.

The documentation required at claim stage will be:

- Completed claim form
- Invoices and proof of payment for all expenditure claimed
- Dated photographic evidence of the completed weather-proofing measures
- Copy of the attraction's Welsh language policy

The weather-proofing measures must remain in place at the attraction for at least 3 years, otherwise the grant will be recoverable.

Visit Wales will not be carrying out on-the-spot monitoring visits for this Fund but we may look at your weather-proofing measures as part of our quality team visits under the VAQAS scheme.

9. Planning consents

If your project will need planning approval or sustainable urban drainage approval, these do not need to be in place at the time of application, but you should provide evidence that initial discussions have taken place with the relevant local planning authority to ensure that the project will be deliverable by March 2026.

10. Procurement

You are expected to secure best value by using your normal commercial procurement practices such as obtaining competitive quotes from suppliers.

Copies of quotes you have selected should be supplied with your application to demonstrate the reasonableness of your expected costs.

If you propose to use an associated company to undertake any of the project works, you must declare this to us. In this instance, you will be required to ensure that the cost of works undertaken by the associated company exclude any profit element for either material costs or labour charges and at claim stage you will need to provide evidence that these costs have been verified by an independent Quantity Surveyor.

11. Evaluation

As a condition of grant, supported businesses will be required to participate in follow-up research. This research will seek to understand the perceived impact of the weather-proofing measures implemented under this Fund on business performance and visitor experience. We expect to issue an evaluation questionnaire in 2026-27.

12. UK Subsidy Control

Awards of grant will be made under the Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) subsidy control regime in line with the Subsidy Control Act (2022). See section 3 above.

13. Welsh Language

The Welsh language requirement relating to this Fund is that the attraction must have in place a Welsh Language Policy, detailing how the materials, interpretation, employment opportunities advertisements, and services you provide commit you to a fully bilingual delivery. A copy of this policy must be provided at claim stage in order for your claim to be paid.

The Welsh Language Commissioner's office has published guidance which may be helpful for developing or strengthening your organisation's Welsh language policy, and for seeking Cynnig Cymraeg recognition for effective policies. For more information please see [Guidance](#).

14. Publicity

You will need to acknowledge the support on all publicity, press releases and marketing material related to the project as being funded by Welsh Government. Such acknowledgement must be in a form approved by us beforehand and must comply with the Welsh Government branding guidelines. All requirements will be clearly outlined in the Grant Offer Letter.

16. UK General Data Protection Regulation – Privacy Statement

Welsh Government is the Data Controller for any information you provide. Information collected may be shared with fraud prevention agencies who will use it to prevent fraud and money-laundering and to verify identity. Further details of how your information will be used by us and these fraud prevention agencies, is explained below.

The information that you provide will be used by Welsh Government to process and administer this application. Information supplied here and in the accompanying paperwork may be shared securely in confidence with other public funding organisations, and external technical advisers (as appropriate). It is necessary for us to collect this information for us to comply with our legal obligations under the scheme. Failure to provide all the required information may result in us being unable to undertake a full assessment of the application.

The collected information will be accessible by Welsh Government support service teams and its system technical administrators who support the I.T. system. System technical administrators will not use your details in any way.

The retention period for the data that we hold is explained in the attached [privacy notice](#), including your rights under the UK General Data Protection Regulation.

17. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The objectives of this Fund are aligned with Future Generations principles, in particular the goals of a resilient Wales and a prosperous Wales and the preventative way of working.

18 Welsh Government expectations of grant recipients

The Welsh Government wants to work with organisations who are proud of their reputation, what they deliver, and their conduct. The attached guidance is designed to highlight and clarify the types of behaviours, cultures and values Welsh Government expects to see ‘lived out’ by its grant recipients:

[Welsh Government expectations of grant recipients \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

19. Further Information

For any queries on this Fund please contact: WeatherProofingFund@gov.wales

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS TO THIS FUND IS 1pm on THURSDAY 22 MAY 2025