

# COVID-19 Business Support – Information & Guidance for potential applicants

## Introduction

As part of the government's response to the coronavirus pandemic, they have released £300,000 of European Regional Development Funding to support businesses in the West of England LEP area. This support comes in the form of fully funded grants to mitigate some of the impact to their business. A third of this funding is earmarked specifically for businesses in the 'Visitor Economy' - which has been particularly affected in the current climate – while the rest is available to all suitable businesses across the region.

Eligible businesses are able to apply for £1,000 - £3,000 to cover up to 100% of costs for professional, legal, financial or other specialist advice, as well as new technology and other equipment to help them with recovery.

This scheme is delivered by Business West on behalf of the West of England Combined Authority.

## Who can apply?

To be eligible for a grant, applicants must:

- Be able to demonstrate that the business has been adversely impacted by COVID-19. Priority will be given to those businesses seeking to safeguard jobs or that have not received other grants related to COVID-19 recovery.
- Be located in the Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset or North Somerset local authority areas
- Have been trading prior to 01 March 2020 and still be actively trading.
- Be a small or medium enterprise (SME)
  - Which means fewer than 250 FTE employees, and either annual turnover of less than €50 million or a balance sheet totalling less than €43 million for both the applicant and any linked organisations combined.
- If a Charity, operate a separate trading arm
- Not belong to an ineligible sector
  - These include: Fishery and aquaculture; the primary agricultural production; processing and marketing of agricultural products; coal and steel industry; synthetic fibres; shipbuilding; transport and related infrastructure, banking and insurance; energy generation, distribution and infrastructure.
- Be able to cashflow the purchase prior to reimbursement through the grant.
- Submit their claim for reimbursement within 2 months of accepting the Grant Offer.

A third of the grant fund is allocated specifically for applicants participating in the 'Visitor Economy' - which refers to businesses whose income is dependent on visitors to the area for either business or leisure purposes – and we will be considering this when awarding grants. A non-exhaustive range of SIC codes classifying businesses in the 'Visitor Economy' can be seen in **Annex A** at the end of this document.

## What can it be spent on?

The grant can be used to cover 100% (up to £3,000) of the costs of any specialist consultancy that, through the application, businesses can demonstrate would aid in their recovery from the negative effects of the coronavirus pandemic. It can also be used for the purchase of minor pieces of technology or equipment that would clearly enable the organisation to survive the current economic climate.

Some examples of uses for the grant funds include (but are not limited to):

- Business coaching for strategy development
- New markets research and development
- Consultancy for a re-branding effort
- Business development support
- IT hardware to enable home working
- Website development consultancy
- Purchase and implementation of a new CRM system
- Specialist equipment

Applications are not limited to one supplier; combinations of consultancy or equipment up to £3,000 from several suppliers will be considered.

## What can't it be spent on?

The grant scheme cannot be used to:

- Reimburse expenditure that occurs before the grant offer
  - Any prospective expenditure must be detailed in the application and cannot occur until the grant is offered.
- Partially fund property, plant or equipment that costs more than £5,000 in total
- Purchase equipment or consumables associated with PPE and social distancing measures
- Fund wage subsidies
- Support working capital

## How does the grant process work?

- Once the applications deadline has passed all those that have been submitted will be assessed on a competitive basis
- Successful applicants will then receive a formal grant offer to sign
- With the grant offered, beneficiaries are clear to engage with the suppliers listed in their application
- They then have a maximum of 2 months to complete the proposed expenditure
- As soon as the items listed in the application have been paid for, a grant claim – which must include suppliers invoices and bank statements showing the invoices being paid – can be sent to Business West
- Upon receipt of a completed grant claim, Business West will pay within 30 days

## Tips on completing the application

- Please include as much of the requested information as possible. Blank answers could render the application ineligible. If you think the requested box doesn't apply, please write "N/A"
- We will look favourably on applicants that clearly quantify the effect of COVID-19, for instance by using year on year figures
- If the business has yet to register with companies house please write "sole trader" in the company registration number box and take the date you started trading as the "incorporation date"
- Applications for support are expected to be "additional" to business as usual and the grant cannot be used for activity that would have occurred without the funding. Applications should demonstrate that planned activity will occur at a larger scale, in a shorter timeframe or will only be possible because of the grant.

## How to submit

Once your application is complete, type your name and the date into the applicant signature section on page 6 and email the word document as an attachment to [contracts@businesswest.co.uk](mailto:contracts@businesswest.co.uk).

After you've submitted your application, someone from the project team will reply confirming receipt – although due to high anticipated demand we expect this may take 2-3 working days.

Any application received after **21/09/2020** will not be considered.

### Annex A – Example ‘Visitor Economy’ SIC codes

SIC	Description	Tourism Sector
49.1	Passenger rail transport, interurban	Railway passenger transport services
49.32	Taxi operation	Road passenger transport services
49.39	Other passenger land transport n.e.c.	Road passenger transport services
50.1	Sea and costal passenger water transport	Water passenger transport services
50.3	Inland passenger water transport	Water passenger transport services
51.1	Passenger air transport	Air passenger transport services
55.1	Accommodation	Accommodation services for visitors
55.2	Accommodation	Accommodation services for visitors
55.3	Accommodation	Accommodation services for visitors
55.9	Accommodation	Accommodation services for visitors
56.1	Food and beverage service activities	Food and beverage serving activities
56.21	Food and beverage service activities	Food and beverage serving activities
56.29	Food and beverage service activities	Food and beverage serving activities
56.3	Food and beverage service activities	Food and beverage serving activities
68.2	Renting and operating of own or leased real estate	Exhibitions & Conferences etc

77.11	Renting and leasing of cars and light motor vehicles	Transport equipment rental services
77.21	Renting and leasing of recreational and sports goods	Sport and recreation activities
77.34	Renting and leasing of water transport equipment	Transport equipment rental services
77.35	Renting and leasing of air transport equipment	Transport equipment rental services
79.11	Travel agency and tour operator activities	Travel agencies & other reservation services
79.12	Travel agency and tour operator activities	Travel agencies & other reservation services
79.9	Other reservation service and related activities	Travel agencies & other reservation services
82.3	Organisation of conventions and trade shows	Exhibitions & Conferences etc
90.01	Performing arts	Cultural activities
90.02	Support activities to performing arts	Cultural activities
90.03	Artistic creation	Cultural activities
90.04	Operation of arts facilities	Cultural activities
91.02	Museum activities	Cultural activities
91.03	Operation of historical sites and buildings and similar visitor attractions	Cultural activities
91.04	Botanical and zoological gardens and nature reserve activities	Cultural activities
93.11	Operation of sports facilities	Sport and recreation activities
93.19	Other sports activities	Sport and recreation activities
93.21	Activities of amusement parks and theme parks	Sport and recreation activities
93.29	Other amusement and recreation activities	Sport and recreation activities