

FAQ's for the Strategic Tourism Transport Business Continuity Scheme 2022

Note: This is a living document which means that as frequently asked questions are received on the Scheme, they will be added to this document, and it will evolve.

1. Who is the Scheme for?

The Scheme aims to support the strategic tourism transport sector as it enables visitors to access the geographically dispersed Irish tourism offering. Pre COVID-19, these businesses earned a large portion of their income by providing tourism services to visitors.

As a result of COVID-19 they have suffered significant losses and struggled to operate fully. Supporting this sector will support regionality and enable a successful spread of demand around the country.

2. What tourism businesses can apply for this round of the scheme?

The following businesses can apply once they meet the eligibility criteria:

- Business Category A: Coach Tourism Operators, Tourism Chauffeur, Limousine Services, Escorted Private Tours and Hop On – Hop Off Bus Tour Operators
- Business Category B: Tourism Vehicle Rental Sector
- Business Category C: Tourism Aviation & Rail Tour Operators

3. Who should I contact for general queries on this scheme?

Please direct all queries to the Fáilte Ireland Customer Support Team by emailing customersupport@failteireland.ie

4. How will the grant amount be determined?

Grants for successful applicants will be based on the following calculations:

- The grant amount per applicant will be based on the annual eligible tourism turnover from 2019.
- The grant amount is calculated as 5% of the 2019 eligible tourism turnover figure (subject to the maximum grant as set out below, and European Union (EU) State Aid rules).
- The minimum grant amount per applicant is €2,500 based on a minimum eligible tourism turnover of €50,000.
- For applicants / groups with eligible tourism turnover of €16 million and above, €800,000 is the maximum award payable out under this Scheme, subject to EU State Aid rules.

5. If I applied to the previous Coach Tourism Business Continuity Scheme 2020, can I apply to this Scheme?

Yes, provided you meet the eligibility criteria and submit all relevant documentation.

6. If a business received the Fáilte Ireland Adaptation Grant are they eligible for the Strategic Tourism Transport Business Continuity Scheme?

Yes, businesses in receipt of the Adaptation Grant may be eligible should they meet the full eligibility criteria set out in the Guidelines. They must declare whether they are in receipt of the Adaptation Grant along with any other funding under the COVID-19 EU State Aid Temporary Framework.

7. What is EU State Aid and how will it affect my grant?

EU State Aid is a term that refers to forms of public assistance, using taxpayer-funded resources, given to undertakings on a discretionary basis, with the potential to distort competition and affect trade between member states of the European Union.

The Scheme is being funded under the COVID-19 EU State Aid Temporary Framework. There is a threshold of funding a legal entity can receive under this framework and grants will be capped in accordance. Other sources of funding under the COVID-19 EU State Aid Temporary Framework must be declared upon application and will be taken into account when calculating a successful applicant's final grant amount.

Applicants must declare if they received any of the following forms of EU State Aid:

	Title	Granting Authority
1	Repayable Advances Scheme Ireland	Enterprise Ireland & IDA Ireland
2	Sustaining Enterprise Scheme	Enterprise Ireland & IDA Ireland
3	Covid 19 Products Scheme	IDA Ireland
4	Covid 19- Credit Guarantee Scheme	Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland
5	Irish Restart Grant	Enterprise Ireland
6	COVID 19 Adaptation Fund for the Re-Opening of Tourism and Hospitality businesses	Fáilte Ireland
7	Beef Finishers Payment	The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
8	Live Performance Scheme	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
9	Irish Coach Tourism Scheme	Fáilte Ireland
10	Ireland-Based Inbound Agents Business Continuity Scheme	Fáilte Ireland
11	Tourism Business Continuity Scheme 2021	Fáilte Ireland
12	Small Business Assistance Scheme for COVID (SBASC)	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

8. What elements of my business's turnover are eligible?

The following constitutes eligible tourism turnover for each category:

Business Category A: Coach Tourism Operators, Tourism Chauffeur, Limousine Services, Escorted Private Tours and Hop-On, Hop-Off Bus Tour Operators.

Eligible Tourism Turnover	Ineligible Turnover
Eligible applicants must have a minimum eligible tourism turnover threshold of €50,000 in 2019	Corporate and non-tourism related VIP
Turnover generated from tourism event organisers, conference venue managers, inbound tour agents and similar tourism intermediaries.	Wedding Car Hire & Ceremonial Events
Turnover generated from the provision of a minimum half day escorted tour booked directly by visitors.	Turnover generated on tourism activity taking place outside the Republic of Ireland. Transport for non-tourism related activities e.g. school bus route.
	Point to point services.

Business Category B: Tourism Vehicle Rental Sector

Eligible Tourism Turnover	Ineligible Turnover
Eligible applicants must have a minimum eligible tourism turnover threshold of €50,000 in 2019	Non-tourism related transport turnover e.g. van hire
Eligible turnover relates to turnover generated from tourism vehicle rental to domestic and overseas visitors	Non-tourism contracted business e.g. commercial, car replacement services

Business Category C: Tourism Aviation and Rail Tour Operators

Eligible Tourism Turnover	Ineligible Turnover
Eligible applicants must have a minimum eligible tourism turnover threshold of €50,000 in 2019	Commercial/chartered/scheduled airlines or rail providers
Turnover generated sightseeing and landing trips as part of a heritage tour	Corporate and non-tourism related VIP Services
Turnover generated from aviation tours are eligible where they have been contracted for a minimum of a half day	Turnover generated on tourism activity taking place outside the Republic of Ireland.
	Point to point services.

9. What do you mean by point-to-point services? (In relation to Business Category A)

The Strategic Tourism Transport Business Continuity Scheme has been developed to support strategically important **tourism** transport businesses.

These are businesses that:

1. enable visitors to access the geographically dispersed Irish tourism offering, often in remote locations which are difficult to access with public transport or
2. provide a tourism experience to the visitor.

Point-to-point services which provide a direct transfer or similar service to public transport are excluded from this scheme. For example, where a public service vehicle, such as a taxi or bus, could equally bring the tourist from Point A (e.g., airport) to Point B (e.g., city centre). These are one off, point-to-point transfers.

Point to point transfers which are part of a wider contract for a minimum of a half day may be considered eligible tourism turnover. E.g., These can be transfers

- included in contracts for delivering full itineraries for leisure tourists, or
- included in contracts for conference, incentive or events in the case of business tourists.

10. Are airport transfers eligible?

Airport transfers which are part of a wider contract for a minimum of a half day may be considered eligible tourism turnover. E.g., These can be transfers

- included in contracts for delivering full itineraries for leisure tourists, or
- included in contracts for conference, incentive or events in the case of business tourists.

Turnover generated from one-off airport transfers that are point-to-point is not eligible for inclusion. (see Q.8 and Q9 above)

11. How do I apply?

- Only eligible applicants will qualify for this Scheme.
- All applicants will be required to have a profile on Fáilte Ireland's 'Trade Portal' which is accessible on www.failteireland.ie. If you do not already have an account, you will be required to create one.
- Those that already have a Trade Portal account, the application form can also be found under '**Funding**'. Should the form not be available please contact customersupport@failteireland.ie
- The Guidelines, Terms and Conditions and Application Form will be available on www.failteireland.ie
- Applicants should note that granting access to the application form does not confirm final eligibility of an applicant. Depending on the information provided in the application form, an applicant may still be deemed ineligible for funding later in the process.

12. What do I need to apply?

- Management accounts for 2021. **Please note, these do not need to be prepared by an accountant.**
- Full Annual Financial Statements for 2019. Where audited Financial Statements are abridged for filing purposes, the unabridged version should be provided. If your business is a Sole Trader or Partnership, where full financial statements have not been prepared, you will need to provide your 2019 business profit and loss account as part of this application.
- Tax Reference Number (TRN), or Companies Registration Office number (CRO) as appropriate.
- Copy of your 2019 tax return (CT1, Partnership or Individual). Please note, payment cannot be made if applicant is not tax cleared in Republic of Ireland.
- Valid licence information as appropriate.
- In the case of Business Category A: *Coach Tourism Operators, Tourism Chauffeur, Limousine Services & Escorted Private Tours*, evidence of 10% turnover related to eligible tourism business activity, as appropriate.
- If eligible tourism turnover is in excess of €1million in 2019, an independent auditor's letter is required confirming that this is the case.
- Be established and registered for Tax in the Republic of Ireland.
- The total value of State Aid received by the applicant and/or by its wider group entities to date under the EU Temporary Framework for State Aid Measures to Support the Economy in the Current COVID-19 Outbreak.
- Under State Aid rules contained in the COVID-19 EU Temporary Framework for State Aid measures to support the economy in the current COVID-19 Outbreak, large and medium-sized enterprises more than 3 years in business cannot have been an undertaking in difficulty ON OR BEFORE 31 December 2019. If the business is a large or medium sized enterprise over 3 years in business and was not an undertaking in difficulty as defined above, an uploaded letter of either (i) an independent accountant's verifying that this is the case or (ii) an audit letter/report signed by an accountant for the most recently prepared year-end financial statements is required.
- Bank Account Details and a copy of a recent Bank Statement Header. This information will only be used in verifying the payment details so that we can process the payment without unnecessary delay. It will only be retained for successful applicants for a period of 10 years.

13. What invoicing/evidence of eligible tourism turnover can be submitted with the application form?

For applicants in **Business Category A**: Coach Tourism Operators, Tourism Chauffeur, Limousine Services, Escorted Private Tours and Hop-On, Hop-Off Bus Tour Operators to be eligible to apply, applicants are required to submit evidence to the value of 10% of declared eligible tourism turnover for 2019.

****Note that where you have previously applied to the Strategic Tourism Transport Business Continuity Scheme of 2021 this information will not be required in the application form again. At Fáilte Ireland discretion, we may ask for further information on these upon evaluation.***

The following constitutes acceptable examples (but not limited to) of evidence to demonstrate that the business engages in tourism activity:

- Invoice clearly stating tourism purposes
- Invoice or proof of bank transfer in 2019 from members of the following:
 - Irish Tour Operators Association
 - Ireland Golf Tour Operator Association
 - Association of Irish Professional Conference Organisers
- Invoice or bank transfer from a licenced tour operator
- Invoice to a Fáilte Ireland registered accommodation provider
- Invoice from a tourism experience provider e.g. visitor attraction, tourism activity operator
- Letter from an accountant confirming value of eligible tourism turnover from 2019.

If you have any queries on the type of evidence that can be provided please email us at customersupport@failteireland.ie

14. If I carry out work as a subcontractor for another tourism transport provider, is that eligible? (in relation to Business Category A)

If the service you provide as part of the contract generates eligible tourism turnover, then that is eligible. See table in Q8 for more information. Your application can be supported by evidence in the form of invoice(s) to the contracting tourism transport provider.

15. What if I cannot get all the documentation required together within the allocated time?

All documentation must be received by the closing date. You can save your application as you progress through the various steps in order to gather your documentation, but please note once you press submit there is no returning to the application.

The scheme closes on Tuesday, 8th February 2022 at noon. No further applications will be accepted after that date.

16. Is 2019 turnover relating to the business financial year or the calendar year?

This relates to the calendar year, January to December 2019.

17. What if my financial year doesn't run from January – December?

If your financial statements cover a period other than January – December 2019, please indicate on your application form the turnover relating to the January – December period and upload the financial statements to cover all of 2019.

If further financial information is required during the assessment, the evaluation team will be in contact with you.

18. What do you mean by management accounts? If I'm a sole trader without management accounts, what do I do?

Businesses maintain management accounts to monitor financial performance. Management accounts generally comprise a monthly or quarterly and year to date Profit & Loss Account and Balance Sheet.

While all applicants are required to provide management accounts, smaller sole trader businesses may only maintain an Income and Expenditure account (equivalent to a Profit and Loss account) to track the income generated and the costs and expenses arising for their business

during the year. That is what we are looking for from these businesses for the period identified in the Application Form.

Management accounts do not need to be prepared by an accountant, however, please ensure they are as accurate as possible, as this Scheme will be subject to audit in the future.

19. Are minibuses, coaches and double-deckers included in this scheme? (In Relation to Business Category A)

The type of vehicle is not relevant in the context of this scheme as long as all statutory licensing regulations are met. If the vehicle provides a tourism service and generates eligible tourism turnover then it can be included in the application.

20. Are there any age limits on vehicles when applying?

No, there are no age limitations on vehicles. Applications will be evaluated on eligible tourism turnover per business. The activity associated with coaches of all ages can be included to show the total tourism turnover of a business.

21. I have more than one eligible business, how do I apply?

When submitting an application, applicants must declare any other applications being made for affiliated businesses to the same Scheme; i.e., an applicant should declare if they have more than one business (company, sole trader, partnership etc.) applying and/or if their business shares common ownership with another business that is also applying to the Scheme.

Each business may apply per eligible legal entity or as a group. While applications will be evaluated on their own merit, they will be considered a 'group' for

the purposes of this Scheme, i.e., for entities that meet the conditions of a group, total combined eligible turnover is utilised to determine grant payment. Payment of any grants will be calculated subject to Scheme caps and with taking into account EU State Aid rules.

Please note: Multiple applicants with the same or common ownership/control are considered one economic unit and therefore a single "undertaking" for the purposes of EU State Aid rules.

22. How will the grant be paid?

The grant will be paid by electronic transfer to the business account detailed on the application form. A copy of a recent Bank Statement Header is required to verify details for payment.

23. When will the Scheme be open for applications?

The scheme opened for applications on **Tuesday 11th January 2022**.

24. What is the closing date for applications to the Scheme?

The closing date for the submission of applications is **12 Noon on Tuesday 8th February 2022**.

25. How long will it take to receive payment?

Due to the anticipated high volume of applications, Fáilte Ireland will endeavour to process applications as quickly as possible. However, applicants should be aware that during peaks in applications this may be a matter of weeks. We will keep all applicants informed throughout the application process of anticipated timelines for completion.

Only fully completed forms will be processed, and the onus is on the applicant to ensure that applications are completed correctly and fully, in order to expedite the procedure.

Fáilte Ireland will contact applicants with any queries on applications

26. We are a Tourism Coach Operator and also an Inbound Tour Operator – which grant is most applicable to us?

Applicants are welcome to apply to both Schemes provided that they meet the criteria for each individual Scheme. Therefore, the applicant must be one of the eligible business types outlined under each Scheme, along with providing evidence for each criteria as indicated in the Application Form and Guidelines.