



VISIT KENT'S EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Taking your ideas to market

Be part of a multi-million pound project and develop your year-round experiential tourism product in Kent.

Find out more about **Interreg EXPERIENCE**, including how to get involved, inside.



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional
Development Fund



What is Interreg EXPERIENCE?

Interreg EXPERIENCE is a €23.3 million European funded project that aims to extend the tourism season through the development of off-season bookable experiences with an emphasis on overnight stays.



Project aims

- 1 To extend the tourism season and increase visitor spend
- 2 To improve the sustainability of tourism and reduce the social and environmental impacts
- 3 To develop and implement new products and services to attract new visitors

The funding is part of the **Interreg Channel Programme**, which aims to deliver sustainable economic development in the south of the UK and north of France through funding innovative projects which have a sustainable cross-border benefit.

The impact of tourism in Kent



65M VISITORS



£3.8BN VALUE



77,000 JOBS

Can EXPERIENCE benefit you?

The Visit Kent programme is open to all tourism businesses in Kent, with any type of experience idea and already has over 100 businesses enrolled on the programme. The recently launched Kent Downs Countryside programme welcomes applications from rural tourism business in the Kent Downs AONB or along the North Downs Way who want to build an experiences based on landscape, wildlife or rural life and culture.

If you have a great idea for a new experience, an idea for collaborating with another business or an existing offer which could be adapted for a new audience, this programme could help you turn this into reality and take it to market through a package of dedicated support. *For a full list of criteria, please see page five.*

Project Perks

Successful businesses will be provided with a package of support, as set out below. *For a full list of the benefits of taking part, please see page four.*

- 1 to 1 consultation**
Specialist consultancy to support the development of a business plan for the launch of your new product
- Product testing**
Market testing of your concept with consumers and travel trade, and feedback to further develop your product
- Content development**
New photography for your product and inclusion in inspirational content
- Consumer marketing**
Inclusion in targeted off-season consumer campaigns to market your product
- B2B distribution**
Distribution of your product to the travel trade though our established B2B connections and networks



The total estimated value of support provided through the programme is around **£6,000**

*Farmers.Producers.Artists.
Sailors.Surfers.Chefs.
Vineyards.Distillers.Pubs.
Creators.Photographers.
Attractions.Hotels.Foragers.*

Why should you take part?

This programme will help you develop your ideas into a product and take it to market. If your business becomes part of the Experience development programme, you will benefit from:

1. Support through the whole process of developing a new tourism product
2. Free and personalised 1:1 consultation with an industry specialist to support you in developing a plan to launch your new tourism product
3. Opportunity to work with cross-sector businesses to strengthen or diversify your business model
4. Opportunity to test your new product with consumers and the travel trade, giving you valuable insight into your new tourism product
5. Free content development as part of the project from the experienced marketing team at Visit Kent
6. Free photography for your new tourism product
7. Featured in the project's targeted off-season consumer campaigns
8. Opportunity to be included in press visits and trade familiarisation trips
9. Distribution of your product through our international travel trade network

Additional benefits of your business taking part are:

- Being part of an exciting, new, European funded project, which stretches across borders
- No cost to benefit from the package of support
- Working with other businesses in your area and building relationships with both local, county and countrywide businesses
- Working alongside a leading destination management organisation and experienced project partners
- The opportunity to tap into a rapidly growing market of experiential and localised tourism products
- Additional high value visitors, with a focus on bringing tourists in the off-season



Who can take part?

EXPERIENCE is open to all businesses in Kent & Medway.

We're looking to work with 125 organisations, both traditional tourism businesses and businesses from other sectors, who meet the following criteria:

Essential

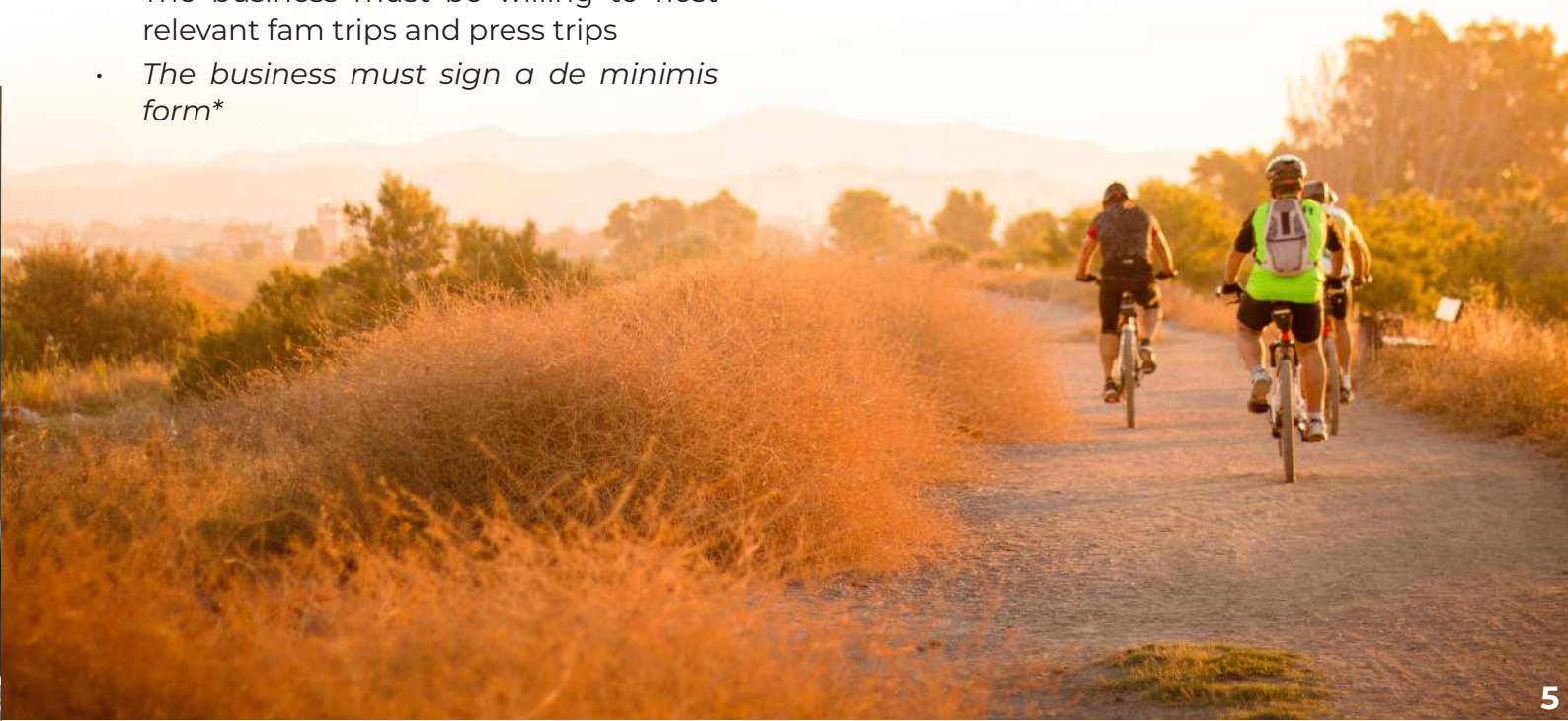
- The business or product should be available, open and operating in the 'off-seasons' (October to March) or have potential to do so
- The business must provide a clear concept of the product they want to develop
- The product must demonstrate a link to the natural environment or local culture
- The business must have or be willing to develop a digital presence
- The business must have finances in place to develop the product if investment is required
- The business must be committed to developing a product ready for distribution within 16 months and provide relevant information for collateral development
- The business must be willing to partake in a case study as part of the feedback process of the project
- The business must be willing to provide a form of measurement for research purposes, such as visitor numbers
- The business must be committed to seeing the project to the end
- The business must be willing to dedicate time in developing the product
- The business must be willing to host relevant fam trips and press trips
- *The business must sign a de minimis form**

Desirable

- Priority will be given to products that have a stronger off-season appeal
- Priority will be given to businesses that demonstrate a sustainable element to their product
- Priority will be given to businesses willing to work with the travel trade
- Priority will be given to bookable products and businesses willing to engage with the TXGB distribution platform - VisitEngland's new tourism booking system, which you can find out more about here: txgb.co.uk
- Priority will be given to businesses who commit to attending relevant project training and networking events
- Priority will be given to businesses in partner districts (*please see back page*)
- Priority will be given to businesses that align with priority themes within their areas and opportunities identified from project research
- Priority will be given to products that can be accessed by multiple markets

**There is a maximum limit to the value of state-aid a business can receive – no more than €200,000 over three consecutive fiscal years.*

Visit Kent reserve the right to change these criteria during the project



How do I take part?

To apply to take part in the **Experience development programme**, simply contact Visit Kent on enquiries@visitkent.co.uk. We'll then ask you to complete and return a short form explaining your product idea so we can assess your suitability for the programme against the criteria.

The below timings are subject to change, based on the needs of the project.

Deadline to complete form:

- Phase 1: 31st August 2020
- Phase 2: 8th January 2021
- Phase 3: 26th February 2021

You will find out if your application is successful by the end of:

- Phase 1: 30th September 2020
- Phase 2: 31st January 2021

Initial consultations will take place between:

September 2020 and March 2021

Content development will take place between:

January 2021 and December 2021

Campaigns and distribution will take place between:

July 2021 and July 2023

In addition to this intensive product development programme, there will be a number of opportunities that any business can take part in, including a series of training events and thematic cluster events to support collaboration between businesses. Sign up to the Visit Kent business newsletter or check our website for updates: visitkentbusiness.co.uk.



Get involved:

Contact Visit Kent:

enquiries@visitkent.co.uk



Partner Districts:

