

Straits Committee Small Project Initiative- Guidelines for Applicants

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1. About the Small Projects Scheme and the Straits Committee.

The Straits Committee is a cooperation organisation which brings together Belgian, British, Dutch and French local authorities bordering the Dover Straits and the Channel-North Sea area. The aim is to initiate a new, flexible and efficient way of working together to pursue lasting good neighbourly relations and create opportunities for mutual benefit for businesses, residents, local stakeholders and communities in the Straits area.

The member authorities of the Straits Committee are:

- UK: Kent County Council.
- The Netherlands: The Province of Zeeland.
- Belgium: The Provinces of West Flanders and East Flanders.
- France: The Départements of Nord and of Pas-de-Calais.



Each member authority has a designated elected official to represent their authority on the Straits « Executive Committee », which meets up to four times a year.

The Straits Committee authorities wish to give a boost to local-to-local cross-Channel cooperation by setting up a joint initiative to support and fund small cross-border projects, covering many themes including innovation and projects towards a thriving economy, initiatives to address the challenges of climate change, and youth-related projects.

This funding initiative and the process and conditions for applying will be described in this guideline.

In addition, in case you need any other support for your project (for instance, in the search of cross-border partners, regarding project building, or if you need assistance to fill in the form for the Small Project Initiative), you can reach your local region's officers, listed below:

Member authority	Person(s) to Contact	Telephone number	Email
Province of Zeeland (The Netherlands)	Ms Wieteke Wolterbeek	+31 (0)6 21 12 48 91	w.wolterbeek@zeeland.nl
Province of East Flanders (Belgium)	Mr Julio Delva	+32 (0)9 267 87 22	julio.delva@oost-vlaanderen.be
Province of West Flanders (Belgium)	Ms Elien Declercq	+32 (0)50 40 31 92	elien.declercq@west-vlaanderen.be
Province of West Flanders (Belgium)	Ms Jessica Monteyne	+32 (0)50 40 33 41	jessica.monteyne@west-vlaanderen.be
Nord Département (France)	Ms Hélène Dinh	+33 (0)3 59 73 56 98	helene.dinh@lenord.fr
Pas-de-Calais Département (France)	Ms Emmanuelle Bertrand	+33 (0)3 21 21 91 73	bertrand.emmanuelle@pasdecalais.fr
Pas-de-Calais Département (France)	Ms Perrine Dachicourt	+33 (0)3 21 21 92 16	dachicourt.perrine@pasdecalais.fr
Kent County Council (United Kingdom)	Ms Myriam Caron	+44 (0)3000 417 042	myriam.caron@kent.gov.uk
Kent County Council (United Kingdom)	Mr Dafydd Pugh	+44 (0) 3000 417157	dafydd.pugh@kent.gov.uk

2. General rules.

2.1. Who can apply?

Any organisation or group that is “legally constituted”, with an organisational bank account, and which is located in the Straits Committee Area.

An organisation or body based in the countries covered by the Straits Committee (France, the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands) is eligible if the beneficiaries for the submitted project are located in the territory covered by the Straits Committee.

Please refer to the exclusions (point 3) and in the annexes of these guidelines (point 6).

Please note for funding applications to one of the Provinces within the Euroregion – Scheldemond (the Province of West Flanders, the Province of East Flanders, and the Province of Zeeland), projects where partners from all 3 regions are involved are encouraged.

To be eligible, projects must be submitted by at least two eligible organisations from two different countries within the Straits Committee area. All project partners must be involved in its implementation.

2.2. Projects eligible for a Straits Committee’s Small Projects Grant.

The programme will welcome applications on any type of cross-border project where a tangible benefit from working together can be demonstrated.

We are particularly interested in fresh and innovative ideas for projects that can help implement the priorities of the Straits Committee’s vision and strategy.

The theme is wide ranging, however projects in the following areas are particularly encouraged:

- **Innovative projects and projects that contribute towards a thriving economy.**
Examples:
 - *agri-innovation approaches such as farm-to-fork, emergence of new technologies (health-tech);*
 - *projects involving cross-border cooperation between SMEs, universities and the public sector.*

- **Initiatives to address the challenges of climate change.**
Examples:
 - *creation of cross-border educational nature guides for the younger audience (6-12years) to promote nature conservation;*
 - *projects linked to soft mobility, energy saving...etc.*

- **Initiatives aimed at young people.**
Examples:
 - *Collaborations between schools on a historical subject, to produce a joint film or series of educational materials;*
 - *Organisation of cross-border activity between sport and cultural associations.*

We also value projects that help **build a gateway between the UK and the EU**, as well as **initiatives that address or can contribute to post-Covid 19 recovery.**

To find out more about our vision for the Straits area, please refer to the Straits Committee's vision and strategy.

Further details on project selection criteria are set out in section 2.5 -What are the selection criteria?") of this document.

2.3. Budget available for 2021.

The total amount of funding available for each authority to allocate to projects in 2021 is 30 000€, which can be allocated to various projects.

Payment will be made on results, based on the deliverables planned in your project proposal. For more information, please refer to section 2.9 (payment on the basis of results and evidence) and 2.10 (What are clear outputs? What is tangible evidence?)

Pre-financing can be considered as part of the application process, upon request during the application, covering up to 50% of the grant.

Co-funding from sources other than the Straits Committee funding authorities (i.e. Private foundations, other public funding) is possible but not required.

For more details regarding funding and the rules for your funding authority please refer to the annexes point 6.

All grants are one-off funding. There is no ongoing support implied or provided through awarding any organisation a grant.

Any grant you receive must be used for the project described in your application. It cannot be used for any other purpose or project. Any changes to the objective(s) reasoning or outputs) you have stated in your application must first be discussed and agreed with the Project officer from your funding authority.

2.4. How to apply?

Organisations will complete a single application with their partners and will apply for funding from the local authority area where they are based.

This includes a joint budget, showing clearly how much funding is requested by each partner and from which Straits Committee funding authority this will come from.

The application will be written in French, Dutch or English, depending on the official language of the concerned local authority. It is not necessary to provide a certified translation.

For instance, if funding is requested from Kent, Pas-de-Calais and East Flanders authorities, you should provide a translated document in English, French and Dutch.

Only complete applications, including the application form and the budget form, and in compliance with local and national rules applying to the programme will be eligible and examined.

2.5. What are the selection criteria?

Once you have submitted your completed application, the Project Officers of the regions where you applied will check if your application for eligibility, and will assess your project based on how well it matches the following criteria:

- Your project must support the Straits Committee’s aim of promoting and strengthening good-neighbourly relations between the participating areas.
- Your project must have **clear objectives and outputs** (Please refer to 2.10: “What are clear outputs and tangible evidence?”)
- **The partnership should be relevant and closely associated to the project:** i.e. the partners have the relevant skills and abilities to carry out the project.
- Particular attention will be paid to **communication activity** related to the project. At least one form of communication activity relating to the project should be organised, and can take various forms e.g. article in a local newspaper, school conference to present the project...
- It should take place at a **cross-border level**, and you should **demonstrate the local benefits** to the area, the local population involved or the audience.

Please keep in mind that a **cross-border project can involve local activities as well.**

For example, cross-border work can provide the following benefits:

Learning from each other: while we share challenges, we might come up with different solutions and learn from each other’s experiences. We value projects which share best practice and knowledge: i.e. cross-border seminar, field studies...

Building bridges to mitigate border impacts: borders should not prevent us from working together. For instance, we would encourage projects which will provide information exchange on legal frameworks, cycling paths... at a cross-border level.

Stronger together: some projects can be difficult to implement alone or make better sense if undertaken together. For instance, pollution does not stop at the border and therefore, initiatives to protect the environment should not either. In addition, partnerships can also result in cost benefits.

Please note that the Project Officers may ask for any relevant additional information during the appraisal process.

The technical appraisal of your project will be presented to the elected members sitting on the Straits Executive Committee for formal approval. If they choose to support the project, the funding request will be sent to the authorities they requested funds from, who will follow up with their own process for grant allocation.

2.6. Contract.

Depending on the funding authority, different processes exist to formalize the approval of the grant and the mutual obligations to be agreed between the funding authority and the applicant. Please refer to the annexes (point 6).

2.7. Duration of the project.

The Grant Funding Agreement will be valid for a **maximum duration of 2 years**. Your application must clearly state the start and end dates for your project.

If the project is not completed by the end date defined in the Grant Funding Agreement, and only in force majeure cases, an extension request with a justification for the extension should be completed and submitted by the Beneficiary of the grant least 3 months before the end of the project.

2.8. Monitoring and evaluation of your project.

Your funding authority will monitor the use of all grants awarded and, by accepting the grant and by signing the Grant Funding Agreement you are agreeing to participate fully in the monitoring process.

For the duration of the project, your assigned Project Officer will be in touch with you to discuss the project progress (phone call, virtual/ physical meeting...). However, do not hesitate to get in touch with your assigned Project Officer with any questions you might have at any time or if difficulties arise with your project.

Some funding authorities may require additional information (evidence of expenditure for instance), please see Annex 6 for more information.

The **payment of grant will be made on the submission of a final project report**. This document will describe how the project developed, what its successes were and what lessons have been learned. It should clearly list and describe the outputs from the project and any longer lasting outcomes from the activity undertaken. It will be written in the language of your funding authority and must be submitted to your funding authority within 10 weeks from the end date of your project. For more information about the final report, see point 5.

2.9. Payment on the basis of results and evidence.

The payment of the grant for the project is directly linked to the submission of evidence showing that the anticipated actions and activities, and the delivery of outputs described in the project application were realized and achieved. You must be able to evidence these actions and activity and provide measurable outputs. This should be the information specified in your project application, which will serve as proof of progress and completion of activity. Please note that grant awards cannot be increased because of unforeseen costs.

When submitting the project, a detailed cost estimate per action is requested directly linked to the actions, activity to be delivered and measurable outputs. Your Project Officer will assess whether this cost estimate is realistic. Payment of the approved grant per action is only possible if the action has actually been executed and the necessary evidence for this is available. This principle is applied separately per action.

2.10. What are clear outputs? What is tangible evidence?

To get a clear picture of what is meant by tangible evidence, you will find a non-exhaustive list of examples below.

What you did? (Expected outputs)	How to prove it? (Evidence of delivery)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example 1: Realisation of cross-border tourism products. 	Evidence could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Copy of the guide - proof of distribution of the guide (distribution list, photos of distribution places, ...) - number of visits to the webpage - number of borrowed communication materials.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example 2: Set up a cross-border excursion (to discover heritage, to exchange on the protection of biodiversity...) 	Evidence could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - photos of the excursions - copy of the communication documents promoting the event - list of participants in each event - example of the posters - Social media activity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example 3: Establish exchanges between schools. 	Evidence could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lists of participants - film or other material realized - photos of the exchanges.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example 4: Organisations of cross-border meetings for young people to inform them about the existing mobility opportunities within the area. 	Evidence could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - example of the posters, invitation in the press - photos of the meetings - Lists of speakers - lists of registered participants.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example 5: Organisation of matchmaking events for SMEs, universities and public organisations. 	Evidence could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lists of participants and speakers - photos of the event - invitations sent to the attendees - press release of the event.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example 6: Organisation of a cross-border event (festival, market...) programme. 	Evidence could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promotional material - photos of the organized activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example 7: Organisation of cross-border training activity. 	Evidence could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - documents for the promotion of training - certificate of attending the training for each participant - course material.

2.11. Publicity.

It is a requirement of the Straits Committee Small Project Initiative that grant beneficiaries give recognition in any publicity to your funding authority and the Straits Committee (logos of local authorities and Straits Committee).

At the end of each financial year, all Straits Committee Small Project Initiative grants awarded will receive publicity, detailing the organisation, the project and the amount funded.

3. Exclusions and points of attention for the applicant.

- **Individuals**

You cannot apply if you are an individual, or if the benefit of the grant will only benefit an individual and individual mobility projects.

- **Regarding items purchased during your project**

Any items purchased or gained through the Straits Committee Small Project Initiative Scheme must remain within the organisation stated and for the purpose stated, for a minimum of two years. If these items are not being used, or if they are transferred to another party without the prior consent from your Authority, the items themselves or the value of the grant may be reclaimed by the Authority.

Items purchased with the intentions of selling on to raise funds are subjected to local restrictions: please see point 6.

- **Ongoing projects**

Completed projects are not eligible for a grant. However, ongoing projects may be eligible if you can demonstrate the added value a grant will provide to your project within the Straits Committee.

4. Guidelines - project application form.

4.1. Information on the project.

1) Project overview

In a few words (max 20 lines) provide a clear, concise and simple summary of the project. This should cover what the project is, why you want to undertake it (rationale), the results you expect (outputs)) and how you plan to achieve them (main activities). This summary will also be used to communicate your project to third parties.

2) Relevance of cross-border cooperation for your project

Explain the benefits of working in cross border partnership for this project with organisations in other countries of the Straits Committee. International cooperation can, for example, generate economies of scale or increase knowledge.

3) Organisations' relevant expertise/experience

You should briefly state the skills and experience you and your partners have to carry out the project competently and successfully.

4) Planned actions to reach the objective (s) – up to 5 actions

Your actions will allow you to achieve your objectives. Please be concise: if you plan to organise several beach clean-ups, you should list them as one action: “Beach clean-ups”. Question 5 will allow you to quantify. A maximum of 5 actions can be set up within the project. Each intended action has to be described in detail.

Please keep in mind that the payment will be made on the basis of the results achieved for each action planned.

5) Overview of expected outputs and evidence of delivery per action:

Please complete the tab to clearly formulate each action/activity you will organise (expected outputs) as well as the quantified target. You should indicate what evidence you plan to provide to show that the activity has taken place and the outputs delivered.

There can be more than one expected output or evidence of activity.

Please keep in mind that the information you provide will be used to evaluate activities undertaken and the outputs achieved and will determine whether or not the grant will be paid.

6) Project timescales:

Please fill in the timescales for your planned actions. This will be used to help monitor progress of your project.

7) Communication on the Straits Committee support:

Explain how you will communicate your project to its target audience and tell us how you will acknowledge the support given by the Straits Committee. Local press articles are perfectly fine, but you should also try and reach a wider audience where possible – local/regional TV, social media etc. (for instance, if you work with young people, communication should also address their families).

4.2 How to fill in the budget form?

The budget form contains 3 sheets: costs, resources, and total budget.

1) Costs (for all partners)

Each partner must fill in the page with the provisional costs for the project.

The grant is not paid on the basis of costs incurred, but on the basis of the actions achieved for the project. In order to properly evaluate the grant application, a cost estimate must be drawn up in addition to a description of the actions.

This cost estimate must be drawn up per action, broken down per partner, and divided into the following categories:

Internal costs

Internal costs are incurred by the project manager and the partners.

Examples of internal costs are personnel costs, travel expenses...

External costs

External costs are costs of third parties, i.e. those of non-project partners for which an invoice is received. Examples of external costs are hiring external expertise (such as the costs of a consultant, a communication agency), costs for catering, costs for printing, purchase of material ...

2) Resources (optional)

This section is optional and only required by some authorities; please consult Point 6 (annexes) to know if your authority requires it.

You should indicate the funds specifically dedicated to the project and their provenance, including the funds you request to the Straits Committee. Please state if these are requested or already acquired.

Please note that funds coming from fundraising events should be indicated as internal resources.

3) Total budget project

This sheet will allow us to get a general overview of your project's budget.

If you indicated the resources for your project, make sure that the green cells (total resources and total costs) are equal.

Any questions or help needed regarding the budget form, please contact the project officer from your authority.

5. Guidelines - final report.

The payment of the grant will be made after receipt and evaluation of your project in the form of a Final Project Report. This document will contain details on how the project was developed and delivered and will highlight progress and activity including the results achieved against agreed targets. The activity report should be presented per action. This report should include:

- A detailed description of what has been achieved and how the project was developed, implemented, and brought to a successful conclusion. It will include activities and actions undertaken and outputs delivered. It should also include how the project has benefitted the wider area and any longer-term outcomes that will result from the project, and any future benefits it has generated for the partners involved and the region generally.
- You should provide evidence for all the activities/actions undertaken and the outputs delivered. . This evidence should be the same identified in your application. Material evidence should be attached to the final report as an appendix.
- In addition, a brief explanation must be given on the communication activity undertaken to publicise your project. Press articles or other communication material (social media) related to your project should be attached as an appendix. Please note that the relevant logos (local authorities financing and the Straits Committee) should appear on this material.

The final report must be signed by the head of your organisation before being sent to the project officer.

6. Annexes - Specific rules for funding for each authority.

6.1 Specific rules for Pas-de-Calais and Nord Départements.

- **Exclusions for Churches or Faith groups (1905 Law):**

Cultural and religion associations registered in France under 1905 Law cannot apply for public grants, as stated by French Law.

- **Political parties or trade unions:**

Political parties or trade unions are not eligible to apply. Political activities cannot be funded.

- **Specific rules for business and companies:**

Businesses and companies which are proposing activities which could lead to commercial gain cannot apply for a grant.

- **Specific rules for Schools or Academies (Pas-de-Calais only):**

Please note that only State schools or academies can apply for a grant from Pas-de-Calais.

This restriction does not apply to Nord.

- **Contract:**

The financial support from Conseil Départemental du Pas-de-Calais or Conseil Départemental du Nord, and their mutual obligations with the applicant will be formalised with a contract (« convention »), signed by the two parties.

- **Budget:**

The budget form must clearly indicate other funding sources used for the project, whether they are requested or already acquired.

- **Other:**

Under certain conditions, we accept the purchase of items which will be sold to raise funds. Please contact your project Officer for more information.

6.2 Specific rules for applicants to Kent County Council.

Who can apply? (See alongside section 2.1 of main guidance)

The following may not apply:

- individuals (or where the benefit of the grant will only benefit an individual).
- party political groups or political activities. This includes any Parish Council (or group of), District Councils, or the Kent County Council where any grant would challenge or oppose the democratic functions of that Local Government. Or where such grants would be deemed to risk the reputational standing of Kent County Council.
- church or faith groups who are using the grant to promote religious activity.
- schools and academies cannot apply for funds towards capital building costs; teaching materials; or curriculum delivery (although they may apply for funding towards projects that support wider community benefit).
- voluntary and community organisations who have a turnover of over £100K if seeking replacement funding for a project previously funded by KCC.

What cannot be funded (See alongside section 3 of the guidelines)

- any costs incurred in putting together your application;
- day to day running costs – e.g. utility bills, rent;
- contingency costs;
- fundraising activities for your organisations or for others;
- items that mainly benefit a small number of individuals e.g. training/trips;
- loans;
- membership or registration costs;
- political or religious activities;
- activities which would risk the reputational standing of Kent County Council;
- purchase of alcohol;
- VAT that you can recover;
- used vehicles or the maintenance of used vehicles.

How much can you apply for?

KCC encourages bids up to a grant value of £5,000 towards some or all of your project costs.

Subsidy control

The appraisal process will test bids against UK government guidance on subsidy control.

UK Government guidance on the UK's obligations on subsidy control can be found on the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complying-with-the-uks-international-obligations-on-subsidy-control-guidance-for-public-authorities>

Contract (See alongside section 2.6 of main guidance)

If your project is approved, you will be sent a grant agreement. Please read it carefully. It sets out the terms of conditions of the grant and what you will need to do to help us to monitor the progress of your project.

You must complete and return a copy of your grant agreement. We will also ask you for details of the bank account into which we should pay the grant. By completing the grant agreement, you are agreeing to abide by the terms and conditions and the monitoring requirements of the KCC Straits Committee Small Project Initiative. These include safeguarding policies where you work with children and or vulnerable adults and equality and diversity. For advice:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-safeguarding-policy

www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/equality-and-diversity

Payment of the grant (See alongside section 2.9 of the main guidance)

Your grant will be paid directly to your organisation's bank account by BACS transfer only. Unless KCC has agreed an alternative payment scheme with you, KCC aims to pay your grant in a single block sum no more than 28 days after acceptance of your final project report.

if KCC has agreed to pay a percentage of your grant as pre-financing, we will pay this after confirmation from other Straits Committee authorities that all partners in your project have concluded grant agreements with their respective funding authorities. KCC aims to pay the remainder of your grant no more than 28 days after acceptance of your final report.

As part of your final report, you will be required to provide evidence of expenditure. For example, this could include scanned copies of your paid invoices, receipts or bank account statements. If you are unable to attach these to your final report, you must submit these within 28 days of completing the final report and indicate your intention to do so in your final report.