

# FESTIVALS & EVENTS EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP



**Interreg** 

France ( Channel  
Manche ) England

**EXPERIENCE**

European Regional Development Fund



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**VISIT KENT**

**BUSINESS**

GARDEN *of* ENGLAND



## Experience Travel Trends that resonate with the Wellbeing offer

**Local and authentic** – This has probably been the longest standing driver for experience-led travel. People like to meet people, explore new places and to live like a local, so there is nothing better than for the visitor to immerse themselves in a local festival or event.

**Transformative Travel** - Activities to leave us 'positively' changed

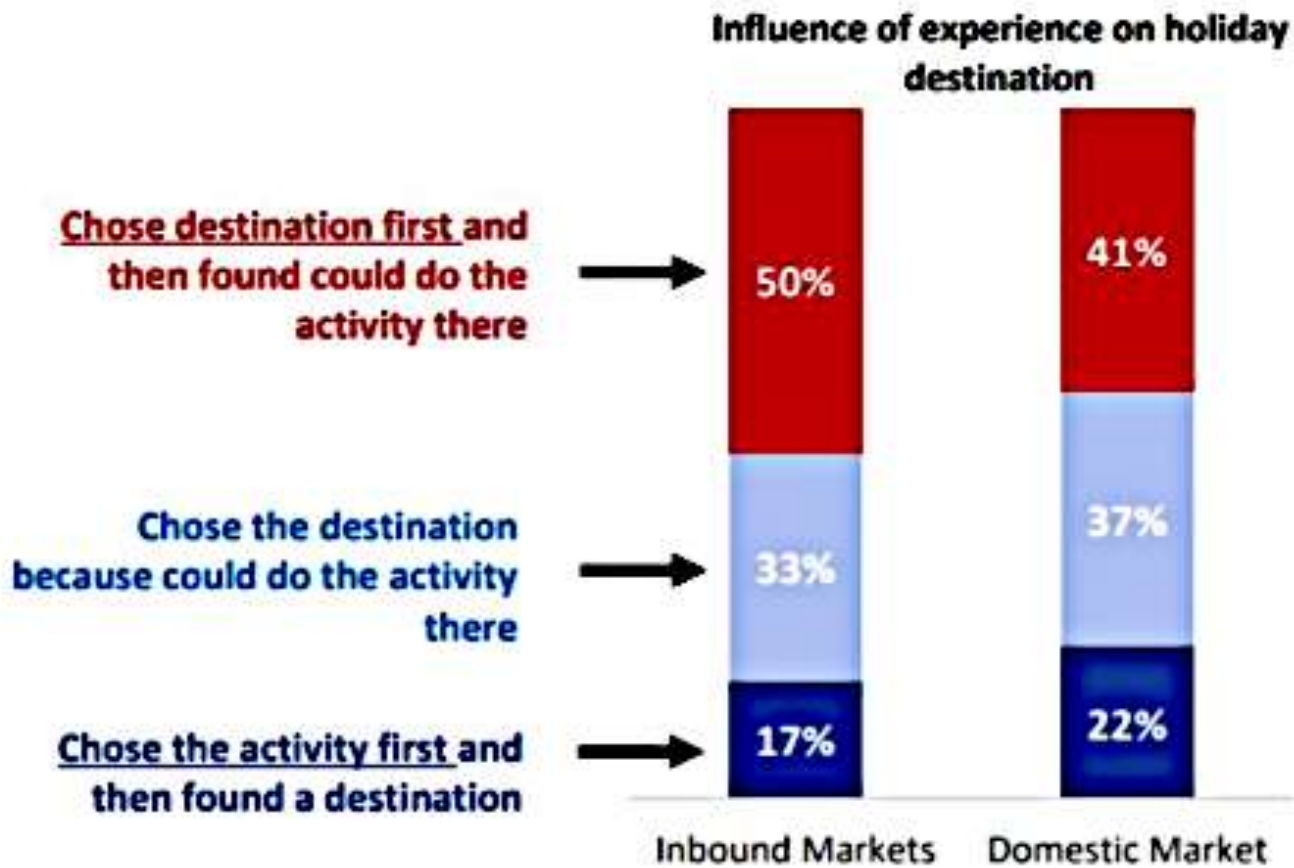
**Reconnect** – We want to reconnect with our families and friends through shared experiences and what better way to come together at a festival or event.

**Culinary travel** – We are booking trips with our stomachs! What better way to experience local food and drink through a festival or event.

**Tech & Safety** – Utilising technology and visible safety measures will be key to re-thinking events and building confidence once they return



# The Benefits of experience tourism for Kent

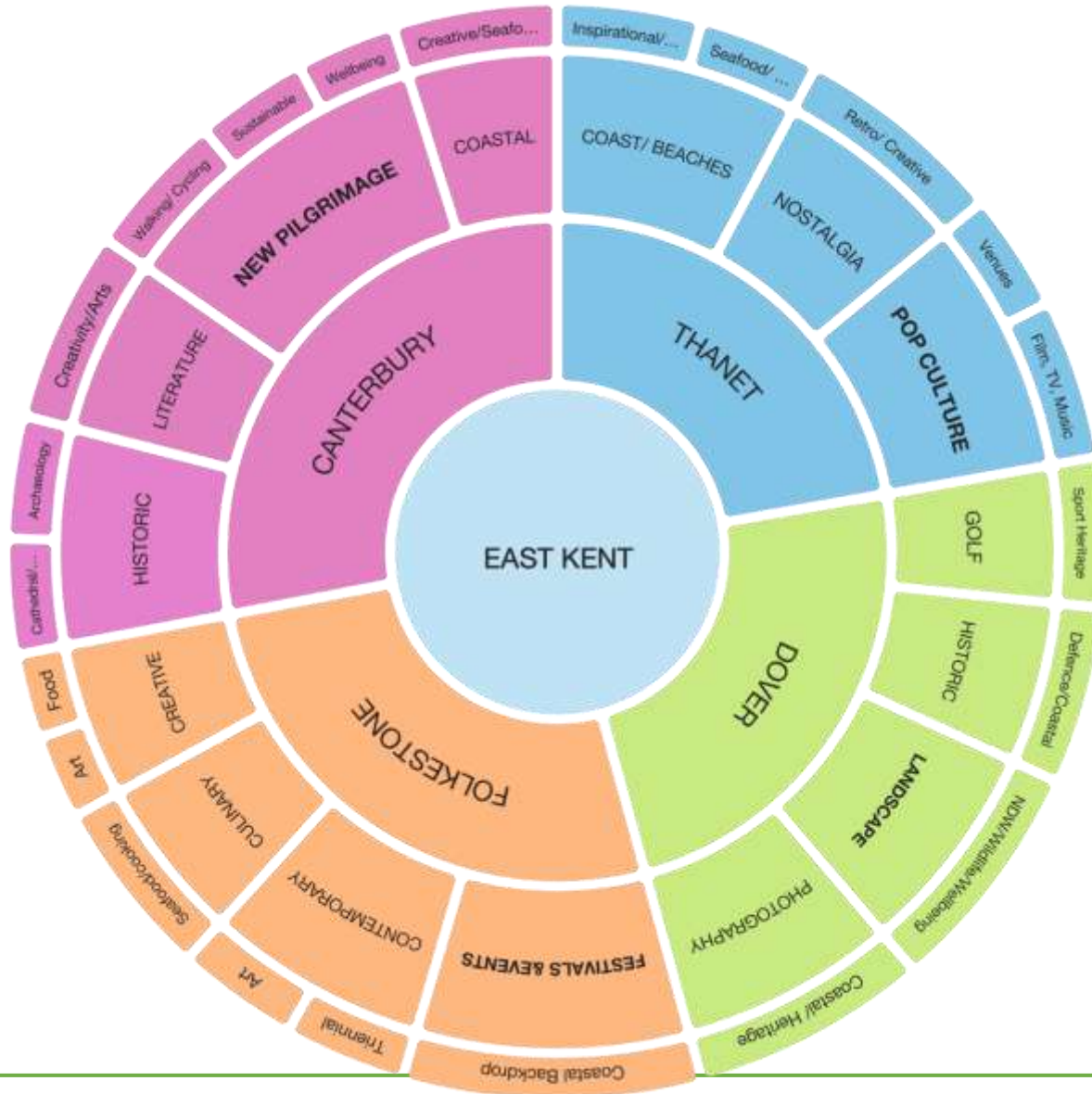


Developing travel experiences, is an effective way for a destination to reach and influence customers. From recent VisitBritain research, we already know that:

- ✓ **BOOK IN ADVANCE** - When booking an experience, 65% of the domestic market book before leaving home.
- ✓ **WILL TRAVEL OUT OF SEASON** – Many experiences are even better out of the main visitor season and can help drive footfall over these periods.
- ✓ **EXPERIENCES INFLUENCE DESTINATION CHOICE** - Nearly 60% of the domestic market are influenced by an experience when selecting a destination



# Options Analysis for East Kent – Core Strengths



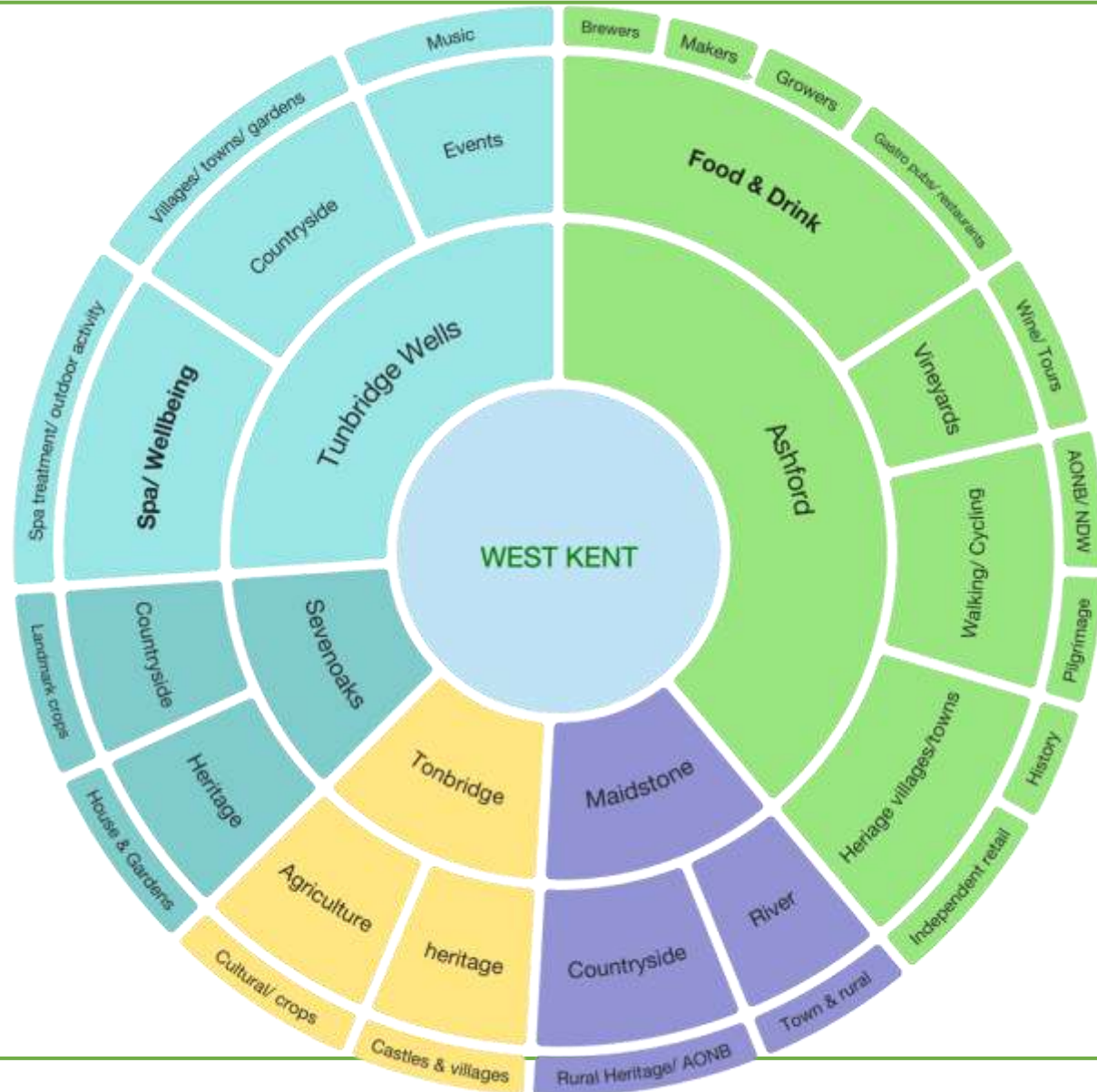
Festivals and Events product gaps and opportunities:

- ✓ The Great Outdoors
- ✓ Coastal festivals and events
- ✓ Walking and cycling
- ✓ Literature and arts
- ✓ Sustainable food – veg/ vegan
- ✓ Youth culture





# Options Analysis for West Kent – Core Strengths



Festival and Events product gaps and opportunities:

- ✓ Music events
- ✓ Wellbeing festivals
- ✓ Food and Drink
- ✓ Outdoor activities/ rural landscapes –  
Walking and cycling
- ✓ Heritage





# Building on the current product for Folkestone & Hythe District

**Hands on Creativity** – Over the past 10-15 years Folkestone has developed as a hub for creativity, which has rejuvenated the town by supporting SME independents. Research shows that this retail offer engages a younger millennial customer; by developing this appeal into bookable experiences, there is an opportunity to extend the day visitor retail proposition into overnight stay. E.g. Not just purchasing an upcycled piece of furniture, but learning how to do it yourself.

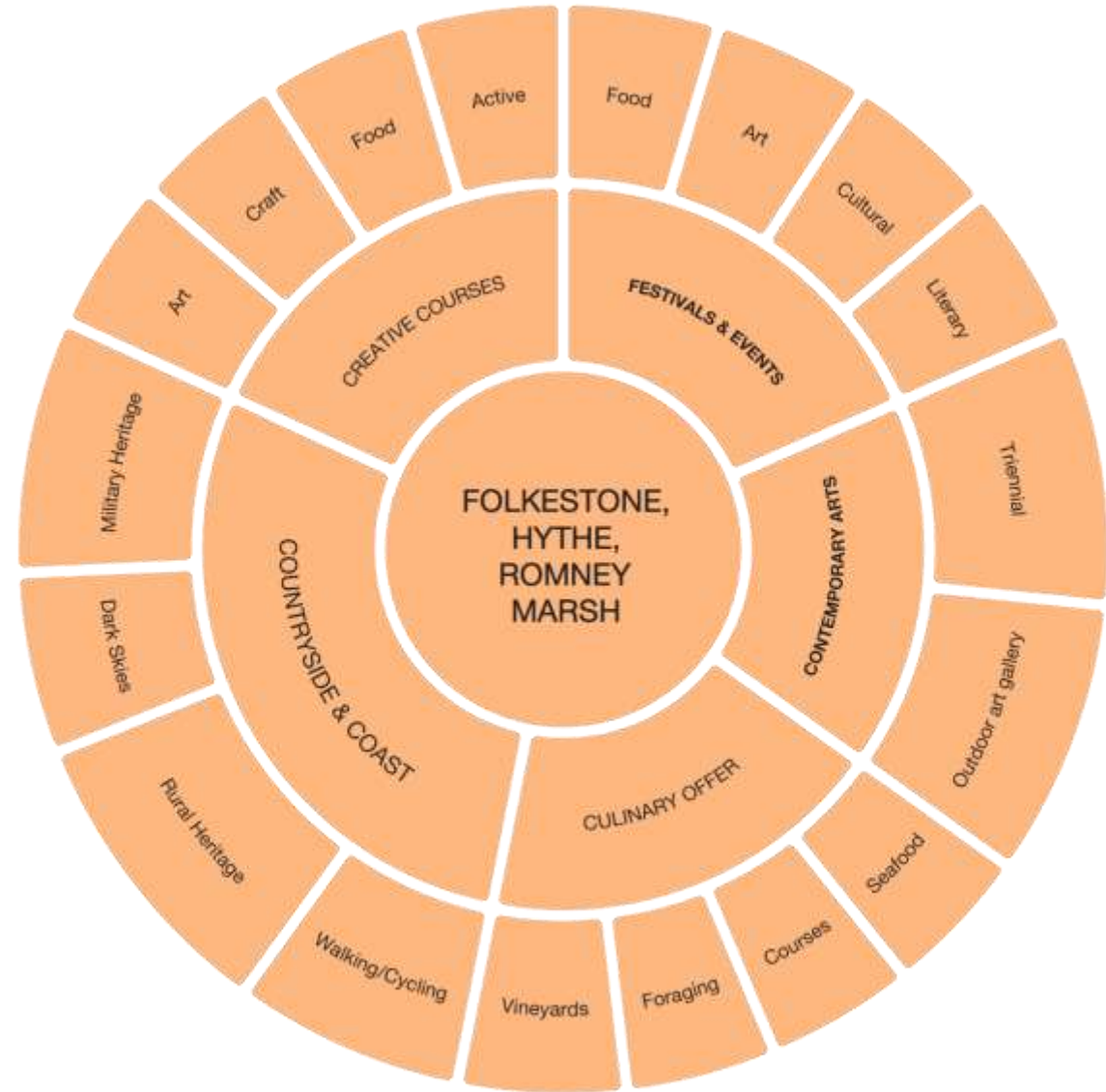
**Global art on a local level** – Art outside means that it's accessible, 24/7 365 days a year. However, all research shows that it is the overlay of local engagement and interpretation that the visitor is eager to experience. Guided tours of globally recognised art work, delivered by home grown artist talent gives the visitor an authentic and local touch point, making it unique to Folkestone.

**Getting more from the coast** – organised experiences to get the visitors to explore further than the popular beaches - capitalising on food & drink (Restaurants, tours & courses) hidden heritage (ecclesiastical and military), wildlife and dark skies, fossil hunting, walking & cycling.

**Events & Festivals** – are the perfect way to showcase a destination, but do often result in a concentration of day visits. Developing events in the shoulder and off season, helps to disperse this business and could also showcase the reason to repeat travel to engage with the creative offer. Having a 'bitesize' creative experience offer giving visitors the chance to learn a new skill over a 1-2 day period would really complement the events programme. Together they form a full year programme.



Strengthened and enhanced via a sustainable commitment

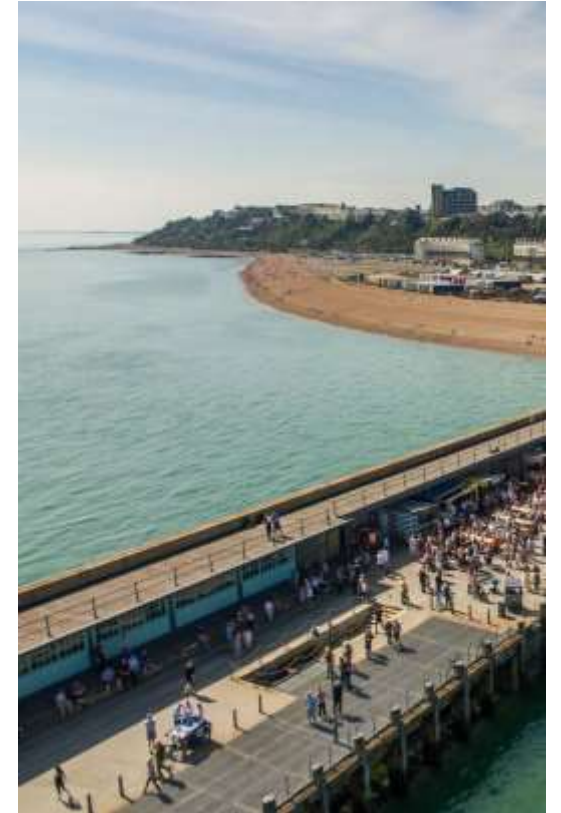






# Product priorities – opportunities & gaps

	Primary Themes	Gaps analysis for selected themes
Folkestone & Hythe	Creative Courses / Arts	<p>Creative course development is one of the most effective ways for a small business or attraction to diversify to appeal to small group visiting during off season/ mid week. The courses themselves can range dramatically, from one day herbalist courses to cooking, baking, brewing, cooking and growing or a full variety of crafts and practical skills such as upcycling.</p> <p>Increasingly the key audiences for the trendy courses are the millennials, but they are also changing the travel trends of their parents who are retiring earlier, and want to learn new skills, often engaging in crafts and educational courses.</p> <p>They all want more than just a classroom environment; the location, the back story of the teacher/ guide and what they take away from the experience are all important creating more of an 'edutainment' approach.</p>
	Events and festivals	<p>The transformation of the creative quarter over the last 10 years has resulted in a cultural destination that not only has the ability to attract Turner Prize winning artists such as Mark Wallinger, but has provided a base <b>attracting an influx of creatives as well as nurturing home grown talent.</b></p> <p>The breadth of the creative community has not only given rise to the Triennial, but to localised events such as SALT and the Folkestone Book Festival, as well as being home to the UK's largest outdoor exhibition of contemporary art.</p> <p>The reality is that culturally Folkestone is punching above its weight, with the quality and gravitas of the artists it's attracting – But is this offer reaching the wider visitor market all year round?</p> <p><b>Events give a time specific reason to travel</b>, but bookable product that is available all year round can offer a continual way to engage with the culturally inquisitive visitor, who wants to connect with the community. Delivering a guided local artist tour, potentially linked to a hands on creative experience can be delivered away from the core events programme, so plugging the gap.</p> <p><b>Events and product that taps into the strength of the destination as well as national and international trends also offer great opportunities</b> e.g. the growth in food and drink experiences aligned to a seafood event and the UK's first Giraffe Hotel.</p> <p>The challenge is increasing awareness. The art scene knows what's happening in Folkestone, but does the wider tourism sector? Having bookable product on platforms such as TXGB will deliver creative Folkestone to both a domestic and international consumer/ trade audience. But there must be bookable product.</p>



## Events & Festivals





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# NEXT STEPS AND FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES



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# EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Develop an all-year round product offer that will not only help your business to grow but also help your business become more resilient to future challenges.





# THE PROJECT PERKS

- 1 1:1 Specialist Consultation**  
Specialist consultancy to support the development of a business plan for the launch of your new product
- 2 Product Testing**  
Market testing of your concept with consumers and travel trade, and feed back to further develop your product
- 3 Content Development**  
New photography for your product and inclusion in inspirational content
- 4 Consumer marketing**  
Inclusion in targeted off-season consumer campaigns to market your product
- 5 B2B distribution**  
Distribution of your product to the travel trade through our established B2B connections and networks

The total estimated value of what you receive is £6,000





# APPLICATIONS

125 places available on the programme

70 + applications received in the first round

Deadline to apply 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Collaborative / joint applications encouraged



**Farmers. Producers. Artists. Sailors. Surfers. Chefs. Yoga Instructors.  
Vineyards. Distillers. Pubs. Creators. Photographers. Attractions. Hotels.  
Foragers. Astronomers. Upcyclers. Historians. Bird Watchers. Actors**