

Northern Ireland  
**Business Events**

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**Integrated Strategy**  
**2030**

# Contents

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# Foreword from the Chair

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**We are all aware of the importance of leisure tourism to Northern Ireland's economy. What may sometimes be overlooked however, is the impact that business events can have – and not just on our economy.**

Business events bring with them a wide range of benefits in terms of jobs, attraction of inward investment, a legacy of knowledge exchange, and positive societal outcomes, aligned to areas of our greatest strength and making a significant contribution to the 10 X Vision for the Northern Ireland economy.

Business events attract high spending visitors throughout the year, playing a vital role in a balanced tourism portfolio.

Conferences are largely focused in our vibrant cities, Belfast and Derry-Londonderry, with meetings and business and incentive programmes bringing benefits across Northern Ireland.

For these reasons, I welcomed the opportunity to Chair the Steering Group, to help shape the direction of this strategically important area.

I would like to thank the Steering Group Members for their commitment and contributing insight and knowledge to this report. This has been of huge benefit. In particular, the contributions of the key strategic partners - Tourism Northern Ireland, Visit Belfast, Visit Derry, Belfast City Council, Derry City and Strabane District Council and ICC Belfast, must be recognised.

Their collaboration has resulted in bringing the strategy to this stage. I would also like to thank Strategic Research & Insights and GainingEdge for their invaluable expertise throughout this process. The research findings uncovered in this report will play a pivotal role in unlocking Northern Ireland's business events' potential moving forward in a period of challenging uncertainty and recovery.

This report demonstrates the potential for business events in Northern Ireland - **with an additional £209 million in direct economic impact during the period 2021 - 2030.**

However, the success of this strategy lies with all the partners and industry throughout Northern Ireland and it will require focus, continued and enthusiastic collaboration and appropriate investment.

Times are challenging now, and as the sector reopens, competition will be greater than ever. Equipped with the knowledge and insight gained from this report, however, we are confident that Northern Ireland and its cities have the energy, the product and the giant spirit needed for continued success in business events.

**I look forward to seeing the strategy being implemented in full and the long lasting benefits felt across the country.**

**Conal Harvey**  
Chair of the Steering Group

# Background

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Tourism has always played an important role in Northern Ireland's economy. While consumer events such as sporting events and concerts draw crowds and stimulate the local economy, business events play an important role in showcasing the region as a place to visit, study, live, work, do business and invest in.

Every destination is now seeking to increase international visitors, while at the same time diversifying their markets so that every possible source of new business is fully developed. One of the key areas for this diversification is the business events market – meetings, incentives, and conferences. It is recognised that hosting these kinds of meetings is a vital form of economic and intellectual engagement. Destinations are adding business events development to their economic policy statements because they see this segment as key to their economic development strategies.

The Integrated business events Strategy for Northern Ireland seeks to outline the potential growth and the necessary journey for industry to take. With the implementation of a new business plan focused on this area. **It is estimated the expansion of the business events sector will generate up to 2,000 new jobs across Northern Ireland.** Despite these positive figures, it is important to understand that the benefits go far beyond the traditional measurements of the financial impact on Northern Ireland in terms of delegate spend, room nights, retail, food, etc.



These 'beyond tourism benefits' vary and include a convergence between a city's and the world's leading experts - international knowledge, expertise and best practices - and local sector researchers and practitioners in the same fields. Additionally, many event and conference programmes can be designed to create long-term positive economic, societal, environmental and other impacts that can bring benefits to the host destination.

Northern Ireland's business events sector will significantly increase the number of conferences, meetings and incentives taking place:

- Contributing to the country's economic development and transformation
- Positioning Northern Ireland as a destination of reference for unique, authentic and memorable events
- Supporting Northern Ireland's economic development, higher education, research and tourism objectives

# Vision

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Northern Ireland will be recognised as the most authentic and exciting business events destination in the UK,

offering a variety of opportunities for unforgettable and valuable experiences to conferences, meetings and incentive delegates.



# Key Goals

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Based on our analysis of key issues and findings, and related strategic responses, we have developed 5 strategic goals for Northern Ireland with respect to the business events sector.

By 2030:

1. Northern Ireland will double the number of international conferences hosted annually
2. Northern Ireland will triple the number of delegates from UK and Ireland attending conferences here
3. Northern Ireland will double the value of corporate incentives
4. Northern Ireland will increase the value of the corporate meetings sector by 50%
5. Northern Ireland's business events industry will consider the efforts of the key strategic partners as a major contributor to their success in the sector

In achieving these goals, it is estimated the business events sector in Northern Ireland will generate an additional £209 million in direct economic impact during the period 2021 - 2030.

# Key Findings

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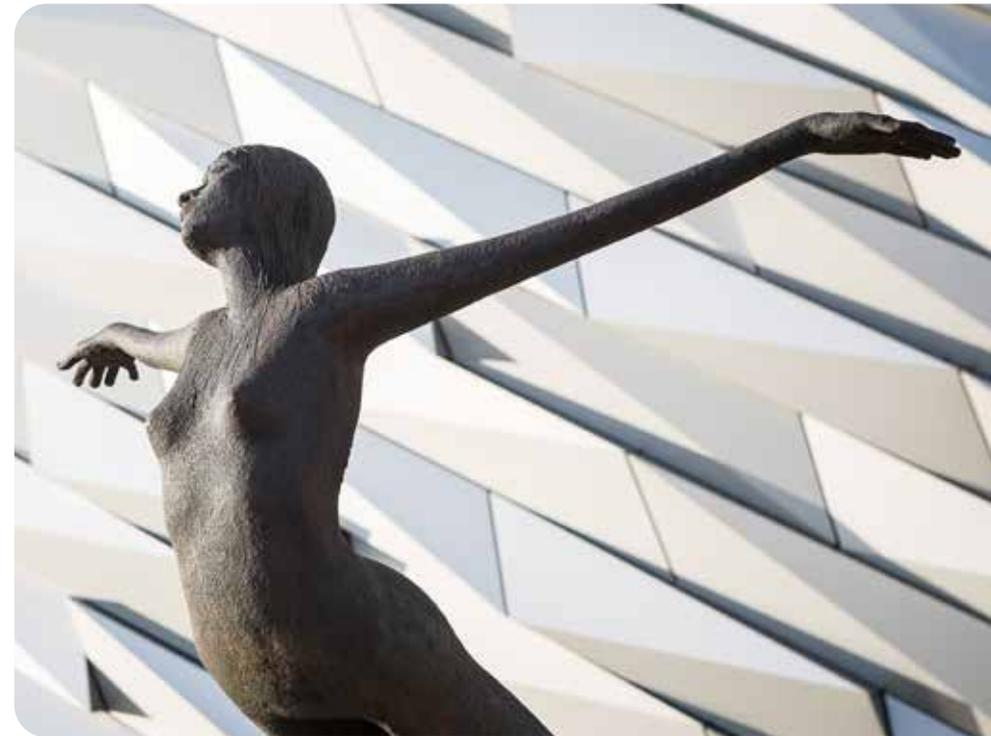
Summary findings from 365 quantitative interviews and 11 qualitative interviews are shown below. These highlight a number of key factors, from a market-based viewpoint, concerning Northern Ireland as a business events destination.

Concerning the association conference segment:

1. Destination sectoral reputation and ease of access are the two dominant criteria for choosing a destination for an event
2. Belfast fares quite well on awareness, but less well on conversion, with more than 50% of buyers being aware of its offering, but only 16% have held an event there
3. There is limited awareness of Derry~Londonderry (31%), and only 2% have booked there
4. Belfast delivers. Most buyers claim the city met or exceeded expectations.
5. Northern Ireland suffers from perceived awkward access and lack of sectoral strengths which hinders development of market share

Concerning the incentive segment:

1. Access issues weigh on buyers' mind, despite positive notes concerning NI's experiential offering
2. There is good awareness for incentive product, but conversion is an issue
3. Cultural programmes and experiences are well perceived



# Key Priorities

## Key Economic Sectors

Market research concerning Northern Ireland has clearly shown that one of the key criteria for meeting planners in choosing a destination for an event is closely related to the city's or country's sectors of economic excellence. Northern Ireland's sales and marketing strategy will leverage the following key economic sectors.

### Key Economic Sectors for Northern Ireland

#### Food and Drink

- £5 billion industry in NI and largest manufacturer
- Presence of world class research institutes including Institute for Global Food Security and AFBI
- Sector employs over 100,000 people across the country
- Tapped into global food and beverage markets

#### Aerospace

- One of Europe's leading centres of aerospace technology with annual revenues of over £1 billion
- Presence of some of the globe's key players in the sector
- Key areas of expertise include : composite design and manufacturing, design and stress, advanced metal forming, tooling design

#### Cyber Security

- CSIT is a world renowned cyber security centre as part of Queens University
- Significant presence in NI of North American firms looking to expand internationally
- Extensive range of research expertise including encryption, security mechanisms against attack, intelligent agents, data mining, smart card technologies, and biometric authentication

#### Creative and Digital Industries

- Cluster of organizations and companies that provide products and services globally in the areas of animation, mobile content, e-learning, gaming and music
- Critical mass of exceptional facilities and a talent pool that position NI as a production centre for film and television

# Key Priorities

## Key Economic Sectors

Strong cooperation and collaboration between Destination Marketing Organisations, economic development agencies and Universities should become the cornerstone of a long term strategy to develop a strong and sustainable business events sector for Northern Ireland.

### Key Economic Sectors for Northern Ireland

#### Life Sciences and Medical

- Well-established sector with a strong reputation in UK and Europe for research and clinical activities
- Key areas of expertise include medical technology, diagnostics, e-health, precision medicine and clinical trials
- A number of research centres and university departments place Belfast and Northern Ireland in the top 10 of UK research hubs

#### Advanced Manufacturing

- World class research centres and the presence of indigenous and international companies makes this a key economic sector for NI (over 15% of GVA)
- Sectors of excellence include : plastics and polymers, composite design and manufacturing, design and stress modelling, aircraft seating and interiors, and specialist joinery and fit-out

#### Legal and Professional Services

- Accounting for more than 16,000 jobs in Northern Ireland, legal and professional services represents one of the key talent pools
- Among the areas of expertise present are : regulatory and compliance services, legal process outsourcing, accounting, management consultancy, tax services, blockchain and AI, commercial dispute resolution and forensic services

#### Technology

- A vibrant and growing cluster involving over 1,000 companies, including more than 100 global leaders
- A well-established core of research institutes supports the growing level of expertise in this sector including areas such as : telecom, mobile and data networks, financial tech services, AI, sports tech, and legal services technology

# Key Priorities

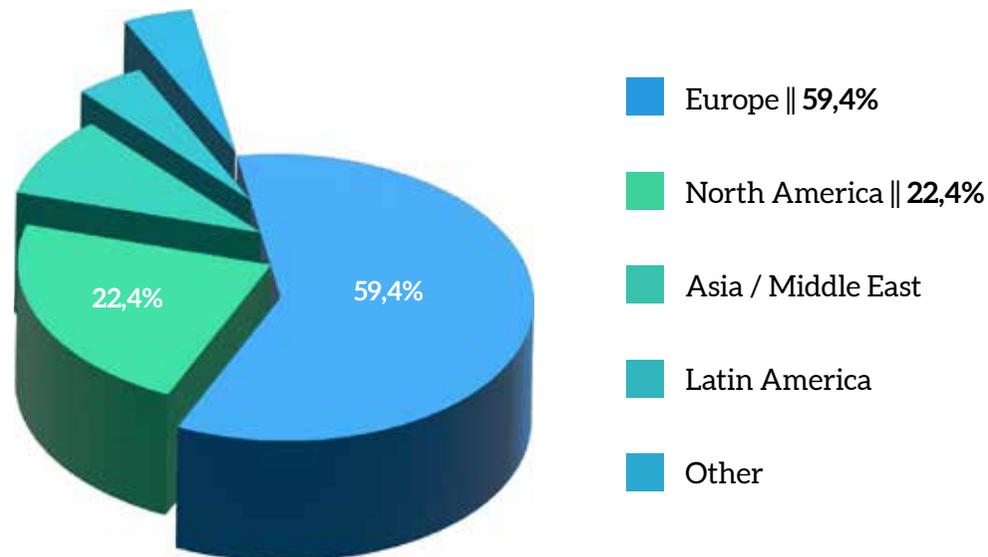
## Conventions – Strong Potential.

By 2030: estimated £85 million per annum.

Northern Ireland should focus on National, Regional, European and select global associations. Associations with local contacts and those that are connected to key areas of specialisation should be a key focus.

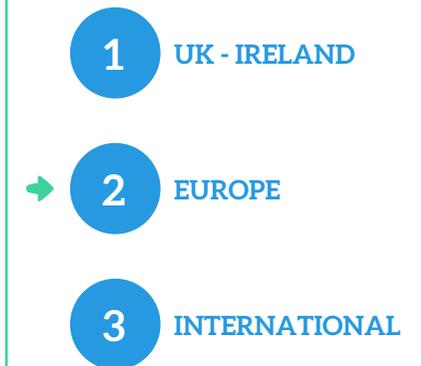
### International and National Conventions – Strong Potential

#### Where International Associations are Based<sup>1</sup>



#### Recommended Priorities

- Associations with key contacts in Northern Ireland
- Associations relating to Northern Ireland specializations
- Explore possibilities of creating bespoke events that correspond to NI's expertise in certain niche segments, perhaps in partnership with other destinations



# Key Priorities

## Incentives – Strong Potential

By 2030 estimated £6 million per annum.

### Incentives – Strong Potential

#### Trends Impacting the Incentives Market

- Per-person incentive expenditure is moderately increasing
- Increasing focus on value for money, clients seek more for less
- Shift from group to individual awards
- Decreasing focus on CSR aspects
- Social media, an important tool to promote programmes
- Increasing demand for unique experiences
- Wellness incentives

#### Recommended Priorities

- Incentive Companies
- Corporate Agencies
- In-house Planners



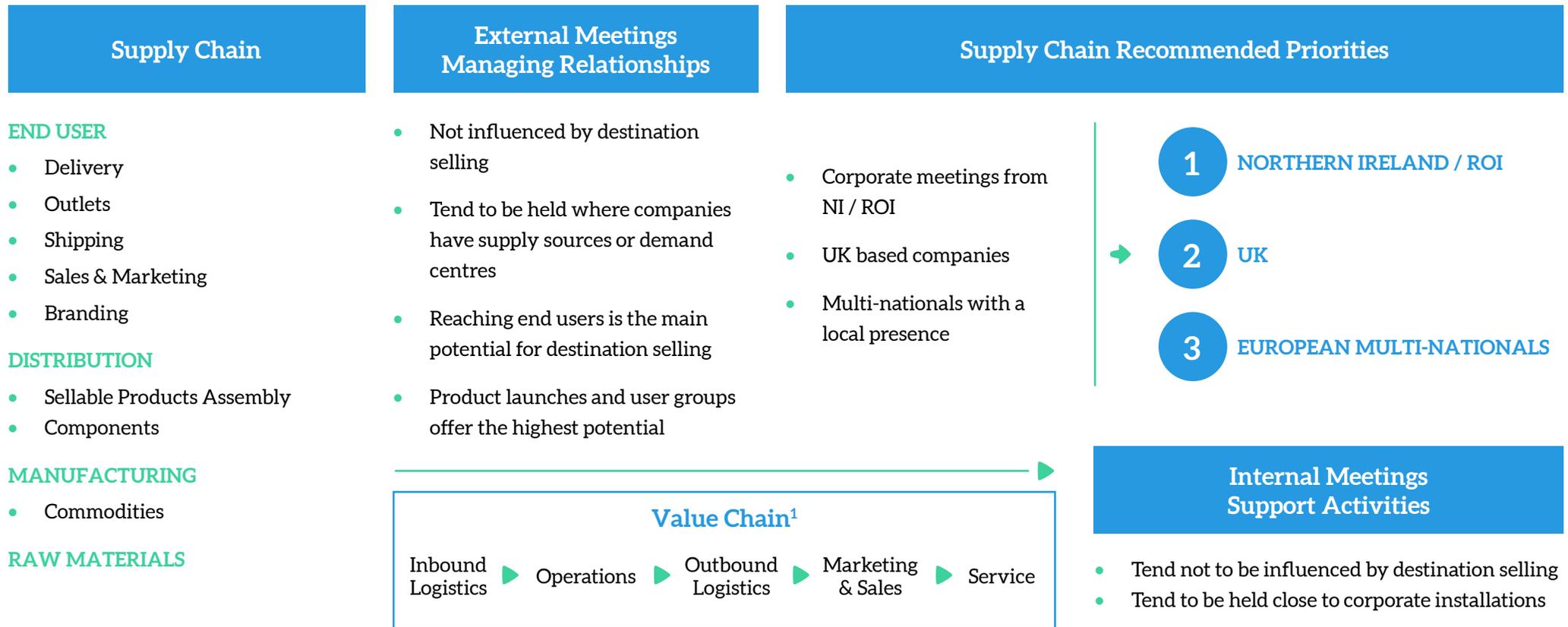
- 1 NORTH AMERICA
- 2 EUROPE
- 3 INDIA
- 4 APAC

# Key Priorities

## Corporate Meetings – Moderate Potential

By 2030 estimated £10 million per annum.

### Corporate Meetings – Moderate Potential



# Key Priorities

## Sales and Distribution Channels

Sales and marketing staff should focus on these channels in order to attract a maximum number of events.

### Conventions

Associations  
AMCs  
Core PCOs  
European Associations  
National Associations  
NI Contacts  
National PCOs  
Venues



Contacts from Northern Ireland are often essential, and AMCs and Core PCOs are potential intermediaries

### Incentives

Global Corporations  
Incentive Houses  
Corporate Agencies  
Regional Headquarters  
National Headquarters  
Provincial Headquarters  
DMCs



The most efficient path to market is through Incentive houses and corporate travel agencies

### Corporate Meetings

Global Corporations  
Regional Headquarters  
Corporate Agencies  
National Headquarters  
UK / Ireland Headquarters



The most effective path to market is through agencies, in-house corporate organisers and ambassadors

# Key Recommendations

## 1. Northern Ireland possesses a solid foundation to develop the business events sector

As a business events destination, Northern Ireland is well positioned to increase its activity in the business events sector. It boasts good venues, a well-developed hotel sector, appealing pre- and post-event touring opportunities, and strong research and economic development activities.

Research in the business events marketplace demonstrated the importance of continuing to drive awareness among key decision makers. This will be supported by improved marketing, branding and a stronger sales presence in key markets.



## 2. Develop a brand strategy for business events

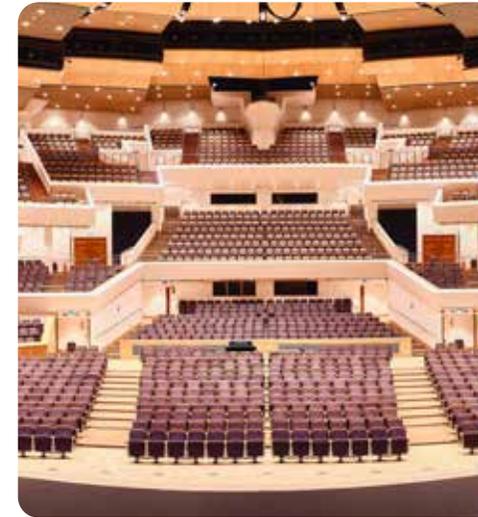
Marketing and communication around the business events sector is at minimal levels, and the messaging lacks clarity about the benefits of holding an event in NI.

There is a need to develop a strong brand for the business events sector, that incorporates city branding also. The key strategic partners will act as brand guardians.

## 3. Allocate appropriate sales and marketing resources to business events

When it comes to marketing and selling in the business events sector, Tourism NI, Visit Belfast and Visit Derry should be better resourced. This will enable them to intervene effectively in the marketplace. The aim should be to create a “bid factory” that will help all to secure events in the future.

Northern Ireland should strengthen current organisational structures to manage the business events sector, aimed at driving sales and marketing activities. Resources will need to be increased.



# Key Recommendations

## 4. Leverage Northern Ireland's intellectual capital

Northern Ireland's outstanding intellectual capital, both in academia and business circles, should be better leveraged to enable the country to position itself as a destination of choice for events in key economic sectors. There needs to be change in the way the business development and sales efforts are carried out. International meeting planners are looking for "content managers" within economic sectors, rather than having to deal with traditional sales staff. This is a key change that needs to be implemented in Northern Ireland.

A high-profile "Ambassador Circle" with representation from the key organisations should be created, that can work with the business events sector to develop awareness of Northern Ireland's offering and attract events. In addition, a sectoral approach should be adopted in sales and marketing activities where appropriate.



## 5. Synergies between business events and economic development organisations

One of the key factors for success going forward will be to build on the synergies between the business events sales teams and those working on economic development and direct foreign investment.

There are opportunities to build on the partnership established with Invest NI particularly in international markets and within key sectors.

## 6. Business development activities focused on economic sectors

Research has revealed the importance of sectoral excellence, awareness and reputation as key criteria for choosing a destination. With this in mind, sales teams should be organised by sector, and promote sector activity in their sales and marketing approach.

# Key Recommendations

## 7. Secure greater visibility in key markets

To position itself more effectively in the business events sector, Northern Ireland should develop stronger co-operation among the agencies that are undertaking sales and marketing efforts in international markets.

To achieve greater visibility in and access to key markets, Northern Ireland should review current agreements with Failte Ireland / Tourism Ireland.

## 8. Build Northern Ireland's presence in international markets

Northern Ireland and the business events industry, both institutional and private, have opportunities for growth in international markets.

To firmly place Northern Ireland on the map, synergies should be maximised among agencies regarding market approach, international representation and sales strategy in target market segments.



## 9. Develop “initiated” and recurring events in key sectors

Northern Ireland has an opportunity to increase the number of unique or recurring events that it hosts annually - which could help in positioning them around key sectors and clusters.

In addition, Northern Ireland should develop strategic partnerships with other destinations that could contribute to re-inforcing the positioning in the business events sector.

## 10. Invest in research, measurement and monitoring of the business events sector

Northern Ireland would benefit from investing in ongoing market research in business events. It is strategically important to implement a research function as a key element in business events activities. A “business events observatory” should be set-up.

# Key Recommendations

## 11. Develop clear policies around business events development

Business events can play an important role in driving or accelerating economic recovery – which is valuable in a post-Covid environment.

A variety of actions should be implemented to raise the profile of business events among policy makers.

## 12. Ensure service levels are up to international standards

To tackle any complacency that may exist among suppliers in Northern Ireland, and to motivate them to consistently deliver a satisfactory service, training programmes should be implemented to improve levels of service across the board.

## 13. Change the perception that Northern Ireland has limited air access

Air access has been identified as one of the key decision-making criteria by meeting planners - this issue is of strategic importance for the destination.

While out of the scope of this project, increasing international routes into Northern Ireland should be treated as a high priority.



# Roles and Responsibilities

Tourism NI will have an overarching strategic leadership role, ensuring business events prosper within the wider tourism portfolio, leading partners and industry in key workstreams.

Visit Belfast, will take on a Northern Ireland wide sales mandate to secure conferences and meetings for Northern Ireland . As an aggressive sales and marketing organisation, Visit Belfast will work closely with the key business events strategic partners such as Visit Derry & ICC, and other partners from the business events industry across Northern Ireland to increase NI's share of the very competitive business events market.

Visit Derry will champion business events in the city, working closely with Visit Belfast on the bidding and sales process.

Collaboration and integration between these agencies remains of paramount importance.

An integration process should seek to incorporate the sales work of Tourism NI, Visit Belfast and Visit Derry.



# Tourism Northern Ireland

Tourism Northern Ireland will work in partnership with the strategic partners on the following areas;

## Branding

This is probably the single most important area to work on in the short term. While there has been some excellent work done to develop a tourism brand for Northern Ireland, research has revealed that the brand could be more effective in the business events sector. A stronger brand could help position the destination in the marketplace and provide key arguments for choosing NI for a future event. Tourism Northern Ireland will work in close partnership with Visit Belfast and Visit Derry to develop a strong brand for the business events sector, making sure it works on a wider destination and city level. The three agencies will become “guardians” of the brand once it has been developed and rolled out.

## Initiated Meetings / Destination Partnerships

Initiated conferences are high-level meetings of doctors, researchers, specialists and communities who are not formally structured through existing associations or other professional organisations. Such conferences provide a valuable means of sharing information in ways that cannot be achieved via traditional communication channels, publications and presentations at large scientific meetings, providing a unique opportunity to study a specialised area of expertise or market niche.



## Capacity Building

To position itself as a world-class business events destination, Northern Ireland should further develop its product offering. Infrastructure is an area that needs attention, and the potential incentive product would benefit from being renewed and better packaged. In addition, Tourism Northern Ireland should coordinate with partners and stakeholders to develop professional training and certification programmes. There should be a special focus on training programmes aimed at improving service quality.

# Tourism Northern Ireland

## Legacy programme

Tourism NI should seek to integrate business events into a wider regenerative tourism approach. Visit Belfast and Visit Derry will champion legacy programmes on the ground, working with conference organisers on specific plans to realise the wider long-term societal benefits of business events for Northern Ireland. More and more associations are looking to qualify and quantify the lasting impacts that their events leave on a destination. This trend will become more prominent as the meetings industry emerges from the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is an opportunity for Northern Ireland to develop a strategic legacy programme that would contribute significantly to positioning the destination in the sector.

## Sustainability

Similar to the point above regarding legacy, sustainability is now an absolute must for destinations to consider going forward. Tourism Northern Ireland should ensure that business events is integrated within a wider regenerative tourism approach. Visit Belfast has already commenced a sustainability journey with Belfast City Council. All partners should co-ordinate and collaborate ensuring synergies are maximised for the destination and work to push forward its sustainability strategies and performance.



Tourism NI should seek to co-ordinate the development of comprehensive, destination-wide sustainability policies and programmes. The ensuing benchmarking and evaluation tools will enable Northern Ireland and its key cities to promote themselves in the international marketplace as being amongst the most sustainable destinations in the UK and Ireland.

## Client Advisory Board

To keep a close handle on issues related to customer satisfaction and the quality of customer experience, Northern Ireland should create a customer advisory board composed of different representatives of the international business events sector.

## Association Development

Northern Ireland should consider the development of a strategy to build the local, national and association communities and promote their engagement with international associations. This could include promoting NI as a place to set up national or regional headquarters. This would have major macroeconomic benefits as well as create an environment in which more conferences will come to Northern Ireland and its meeting destinations.

# Tourism Northern Ireland

## Marketing & Communications

Northern Ireland should develop a series of marketing tools, assets and content that are highly inspiring and motivational that describe Belfast, Derry-Londonderry and the rest of Northern Ireland's possibilities as a business events destination.

Tourism NI, Visit Belfast and Visit Derry should work in partnership on developing an integrated sales and marketing plan, targeting the relevant segments and creating a suite of brand assets that will motivate the market.

## Strategic Relationships

Tourism NI will lead on engagement with its counterparts Failte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and Visit Britain, engaging strategic partners on appropriate opportunities from the outset. Tourism NI should also be the coordinating agency in dealing with key industry bodies such as SITE, PCMA, BVEP, IAPCO, ICCA, UIA, etc. Tourism NI will also continue to take a lead role in the organisation of international trade shows.

## Incentive Sales

Tourism NI will continue to be the lead agency in the area of sales and marketing for incentive travel, since this activity is closely aligned with the luxury leisure market. They will work hand in hand with the corporate sales team at Visit Belfast and should seek to integrate sales knowledge through the CRM.



# Visit Belfast

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Visit Belfast will be given a Northern Ireland wide mandate as the lead delivery organisation for business events sales and marketing in Northern Ireland. It will be responsible for association and corporate business development, sales and tactical marketing activities and lead delivery of the ambassador circle. It will do this in close partnership with the industry, Tourism NI, Invest NI, Universities, Visit Derry and regional NI partners.

## Sales Development

Visit Belfast will focus on developing and delivering sales and marketing activities in order to generate a maximum number of leads to drive targeted growth . It should have an increased sales and marketing team focussed on association and corporate business. To support sales growth, it is crucial to establish in-market positions in GB and Europe.

## Lead Development / Bidding

One of the key areas for improvement identified across the board in NI's business events sector is leads research and business development activity. Visit Belfast should create a dedicated team to identify, qualify and develop bid intelligence on leads that will enable Northern Ireland to fill the sales pipeline for potential events.

## Setting up “Team Northern Ireland”

Visit Belfast will expand its partner programme to include representation of relevant business events industry across Northern Ireland. Visit Derry will continue to manage its partners in the region.



# Visit Belfast

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## Site Inspections / Educational Tours

Working closely with Tourism Northern Ireland, Visit Belfast should strive to increase the number of decision makers coming to the city to showcase the capabilities and potential for future events. Visit Belfast has a key role to play in organising these high-impact visits because of the potential in booking and finalising deals, and should coordinate with key partners whenever appropriate.

## Yield Management / Event Marketing

When key events are held, Visit Belfast should develop a coordinated and aggressive approach to event marketing to maximise impact. Pre-event marketing will improve yield and help to win bids. Programme announcements, sponsorship help, exhibition sales, and leisure up-selling are activities that Visit Belfast should manage.

## Transform existing ambassador programmes into a Leadership Circle

Visit Belfast will develop and lead on the Ambassador Circle in order to strengthen the network of ambassadors across Northern Ireland and Internationally. Sector advisory panels will be established in partnership with Invest NI, Universities, Visit Derry and key stakeholders.



## CRM

Visit Belfast should develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to database management, online marketing, sales enablement and process management. This technology platform should be standardised and accessible, at different levels, by all members and partners. An integration process should seek to incorporate the sales work of all partners.

## Tactical Marketing

Investment in business events marketing is required to support ambitious sales targets. Visit Belfast will deliver tactical marketing activity to support these targets and should have increased business events marketing resource for web/digital, sales campaigns, business events sales and the development of sector and marketing content and collateral.

# Visit Derry

Visit Derry as a key business events strategic partner will work in close partnership with Visit Belfast and lead on the following areas:

## Business development and bidding process specific to the city

As the lead business events agency on the ground in the city, Visit Derry will be best placed to generate leads for meetings and conferences in the City.

## Site Inspections / Educational Tours

Working closely with both Tourism NI and Visit Belfast, Visit Derry should strive to increase the number of decision makers coming to the city to showcase its potential. Visit Derry has a key role to play in curating stand out itineraries that will showcase the city's offering in this area.



## Ambassador Circle – Derry-Londonderry

Visit Derry will continue to develop its successful Ambassador Programme, ensuring that city level connections, relationships and opportunities aligned to the master programme can be established and converted for future business events opportunities. This programme will be integrated with the master programme led by Visit Belfast.

# Wider Northern Ireland

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Wider Northern Ireland has an important part to play in the growth of business events as part of a balanced tourism portfolio for Northern Ireland.

Regional partners should continue to work with Tourism NI on experience development aligned to incentive programmes. For conferences and meetings, regional partners should work closely with Visit Belfast to maximise opportunities to attract events, corporate businesses in their areas, potential ambassadors or appropriate venues. Through the Visit Belfast partner programme, and thanks to clearly defined and agreed SLA's, other key stakeholders can be engaged in future sales and marketing activities.

# Resourcing

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To achieve the ambitious goals set out in this strategy and leverage the wider economic development, education and research benefits of business events, Northern Ireland will be required to significantly increase its investment in this segment.

Tourism NI should work across all partners to make the case for additional funding as well as pursuing efficiencies for maximum impact within existing resources.



# Supporting Structures

## Client Advisory Board

To keep a close handle on issues related to customer satisfaction and the quality of customer experience, Tourism Northern Ireland should create a customer advisory board composed of different representatives of the sector, as well as bringing an international perspective to the table.



### Purpose and goals

The purpose of the Client Advisory Board is to provide end-use input into Northern Ireland's strategic plans, programmes, capabilities and sustainable development.

The goal is to enhance Northern Ireland's competitiveness and to grow its share of the lucrative international business events market.

The focus of the Client Advisory Board will be on association conferences, corporate meetings & incentive programmes.

### Composition and representation

The following segments will be represented on the Client Advisory Board:

- Conferences: association executives, meeting planners, PCOs, AMCs
- Meetings and Incentives: corporate meeting planners, corporate and incentive travel agencies, DMCs
- Exhibition organisers
- Industry leaders: market leaders, thought leaders, representatives of industry bodies

It will also be crucial to assure a representative mix between local, national and international members.

### Activities and Meetings

The Client Advisory Board will be made up of 12-15 members.

There will be an annual workshop organised in Northern Ireland to discuss a number of key issues including:

- Corporate and marketing strategy
- Brand management
- Promotional programmes
- Product and service enhancement
- Legacy issues

Additional meetings can also be organised during the year, for example, during trade shows.

# The Ambassador Circle

Over 79% of business events to Northern Ireland are secured with the support of an Ambassador; a leader who works with Visit Belfast & Visit Derry to identify and bid for events within their industry, sector or organisation. The Ambassador network is a hugely successful initiative and has delivered over £400m in economic impact since it was established over 20 years ago.



Last year, the Department for Economy's 10X Vision and the Tourism Recovery Action Plan set out bold ambitions for the economic recovery and future growth of Northern Ireland. To support that vision the Ambassador Circle was launched, marking a new era in collaboration across tourism, economic development, education and research.

Five sector advisory panels aligned to 10X clusters have been established in life and health sciences, financial and business services, technology, advanced manufacturing and food & drink supported by Invest NI, Queen's University, Ulster University and 50 leading NI organisations. The objective of the Ambassador Circle is to strategically target business events to NI that not only deliver significant spend for the local economy but that also showcase the region as a place to visit, do business, work, live, study and invest.

The Ambassador Circle is a collaborative initiative between Invest Northern Ireland, Queen's University, Ulster University, Visit Belfast, Visit Derry Tourism NI and ICC Belfast.

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**2030**