

Tourism NI Operating Plan

2026/27

Operating Plan 2026/27 Framework



Minister’s Tourism Vision & Action Plan: 10 Year Plan

Revenue Targets 2035: £2bn overnight spend, £1.5bn day trips

Minister’s
Priorities

Regional
Balance

Good
Jobs

Increased
Productivity

Sustainability

Apex Tourism
Outcome

Increase Revenue to Tourism Businesses and the Economy

Drivers

Our
Priorities

Demand

A globally competitive brand and high-quality visitor experience

Destination Development

Strong and resilient regional visitor economies

Effective investment influence and coordination

Responsible tourism growth and stewardship

Differentiation

Enhanced competitiveness and productivity of the tourism base

Delivery

Strong organisational capability

Impact Framework

The DRIVERS for our activities and the IMPACT they will have:

Drivers:				
Impact:	Demand	Destination	Differentiation	Delivery
Spend <i>Total visitor expenditure and yield grows</i>	NI wins higher-value visits from higher yielding visitors.	Public and private investment is coordinated to support revenue growth for tourism businesses and the resilience of local visitor economies.	Digital optimisation and adaptive capability of business drives revenue growth, with visitors staying longer and spending more.	Good governance is embedded across the organisation ensuring resources and investment allocations are maximised.
Spread <i>Visitors are distributed across regions, seasons and experiences building strong and resilient visitor economies</i>	Visitors from priority markets stay longer driven by the promotion of compelling, attractions, events and experiences.	Tourism growth is felt across all regions and seasons, strengthening local visitor economies and business.	A wide range of tourism experiences and events are available all year-round reducing seasonality and supporting secure local employment.	Diverse range of skills supporting the growth and development of tourism across NI.
Stewardship <i>Tourism strengthens places for the long term through responsible tourism growth and stewardship</i>	Growth is managed to protect place, relieve pressure on high-demand natural/ built assets and promote alternatives across the region.	Tourism is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable building thriving and engaged communities.	The tourism business base is developed to have minimum environmental impact through innovation and best practice and maximum community benefit.	An economically, environmentally and socially sustainable organisation.
Sentiment <i>Positive perceptions and satisfaction are built</i>	Northern Ireland is recognised as a sustainable, well-managed destination that benefits visitors and communities alike.	Tourism NI is seen as a credible strategic leader, influencing partners through insight, excellence and collaboration.	A thriving and profitable tourism sector, accessible to all and a favoured career choice by many.	A connected and engaged workplace culture that drives positive corporate reputation through effective staff engagement internally and externally.

2026/27 Budget & Operating Plan Reporting



Budget

- For 2026/27, Tourism NI have received a contingency resource allocation of £20.1m.
- The total contingency capital allocation is £6.4m, of which £3.9m is ring-fenced for the City & Growth Deals DNA Museum.

Reporting

The Operating Plan details the specific Targets that each of the 30 Actions will be measured by. These are both output and outcome based depending on the nature of the Action, and together, their success is measured according to our Impact Framework. Actions from the **Minister's Tourism Vision & Action Plan: 10-Year Plan** are highlighted as [TVAP Action x].

- Each Action within the Plan is owned by a Directorate and Team who are responsible for delivery and reporting on progress on a quarterly basis. Individual Teams develop an annual Unit Plan to manage their workstreams across potentially multiple Actions.
- Through the annual Performance Review process, individual team members have annual performance objectives that align with team, directorate, and ultimately corporate objectives.
- Managers, Heads of Departments and Directors provide **quarterly update reports on performance against Action Targets**. Performance for each Action is reported on using the RAG system and a short narrative is provided.
- These reports **are reviewed and approved** by the Executive Leadership Team and are submitted to the Board for approval. The reports are discussed as a standing agenda item with DfE officials at the quarterly Oversight and Liaison meetings.
- Tourism NI's **Corporate Risk Register is aligned to the objectives in the Corporate Plan and Operating Plan** to ensure that any risk or uncertainty linked to delivery is identified, managed, and effectively controlled or mitigated where possible.

Strategic Priority 1: **Demand Generation:** A globally competitive brand and high-quality visitor experience

Outcome: Tourism contributes growing economic value to NI through increased tourism spend and for high quality, high value visitor experiences

Actions		Targets
1.1	Delivery of integrated and multi-channel marketing campaigns to priority segments in ROI and NI audiences. [TVAP Actions 2 and 9]	Campaign activity delivered achieving a Return on Marketing Investment of £45: £1.
1.2	Maximise the industry opportunity to convert business through the new discovernorthernireland.com platform. [TVAP Action 2]	Increase industry referrals by 11% from 180k to 200k.
1.3	Deliver focused island of Ireland PR activity aligned to priority segments. [TVAP Action 2]	Positive PR reach of 60 million across the island of Ireland.
1.4	Deliver Golf Strategic Vision.	Deliver a set of prioritised actions to achieve economic impact aligned with Golf Strategic Vision to achieve £95m by 2030.
1.5	Deliver International Travel Trade Strategy.	Year 1 priority actions delivered with Travel Trade Dashboard in place, tracking key indicators.
1.6	Deliver an International & Domestic Educational Familiarisation (FAM) Programme targeting international media and group tour organisers aligned to high yield markets. [TVAP Action 2]	390 million reach based on Tier 1 media - the highest-profile, most influential outlets that deliver the widest and most impactful reach. 180 International Tour Operators hosted with 80% programming intent within 6 months.
1.7	Incentivise and secure international conferences for Northern Ireland aligned to the Business Events Strategy. [TVAP Action 12]	£40.65m economic impact. (secured in-year for future years)
1.8	Review the EAGS experience brand to reaffirm continued market relevance, sharpened differentiation, and positioning to support growth in the long term.	Review undertaken with prioritised recommendations assigned and socialised.
1.9	Deliver NI Tourism Quality Assurance Engagement Programme to attractions, accommodation, and experiences. [TVAP Action 6]	30 new members of the visitor accommodation Quality Grading Scheme.
1.10	Deliver NI Tourism Certification Programme. [TVAP Action 6]	650 new members of the visitor accommodation Certification Scheme.
1.11	Maintain and strengthen an organisation-wide partnership with Tourism Ireland in support of overseas tourism growth. [TVAP Actions 11 and 15]	Cross-organisation engagement plan developed to maximise international opportunities, with specific action plan developed for Ireland Unrushed & Icons campaigns.

Strategic Priority 2: **Destination Development:** Strong and resilient regional visitor economies

Outcome: Tourism growth delivers meaningful economic and social value across all regions of NI, including rural, coastal and regional communities

Actions		Targets
2.1	Deliver a market led regional engagement approach based on destination development needs. [TVAP Action 4]	Initial implementation of a Destination Stewardship pilot.
2.2	Develop dispersal strategies to direct visitors beyond major hubs through new curated touring routes, festivals, and experiences. [TVAP Action 2]	Develop and deepen 4 market-led, clustered regional trails and festivals engaging 100 businesses.
2.3	Deliver International Tourism Events Fund (ITEF). [TVAP Action 7]	ITEF ROI: Minimum 10:1.
2.4	Support successful delivery of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann. [TVAP Action 7]	Net Economic Impact (£53m) and 75% visitors state that they would return.

Strategic Priority 3: **Differentiation:** Enhanced competitiveness and productivity of the tourism base

Outcome: Tourism businesses have the skills, leadership and capability to design and deliver competitive, high-quality, high-value experiences that meet demand and drive sustainable growth

Actions		Targets
3.1	Develop a client segmentation model. [TVAP Actions 10 & 16]	Model developed & informed through best practice - launch in Q4.
3.2	Deliver the Tourism Business Support Programme focused on key pillars – Digital, People, Sustainability, Customer Service and Commerciality - to drive Competitiveness. [TVAP Actions 10 & 16]	500 businesses engaged across support programmes.

Strategic Priority 4: **Destination Development:** Effective investment influence and coordination

Outcome: Tourism NI is a trusted, high-performing public body that provides strategic leadership, coordinates partners and influences investment decisions to maximise tourism's economic and regional impact

Actions		Annual Targets
4.1	Deliver Shared Island projects as part of the All-Island Strategic Tourism Group. [TVAP Action 9]	Five small scale capital projects and three discovery/ signature points completed on the Causeway Coastal Route.
4.2	Provide strategic direction to the City and Growth Deal projects and other major investment proposals that align with strategies for regional dispersal and reduced seasonality. [TVAP Action 8]	Two Full Business Cases and two Outline Business Cases developed.
4.3	Develop a Tourism Investment Programme. [TVAP Actions 3 and 6]	Programme guidelines and criteria developed.
4.4	Scope and define propositions and opportunities for investment.	Investment prospectus produced.
4.5	Delivery of a Marketing Support Fund.	30 participating industry investing own marketing funds.
4.6	Evaluate, review and refresh programme of research.	Refreshed research & insights programme undertaken.
4.7	Deliver Tourism Research & Insights Platform (TRIP).	TRIP project plan, baseline, user and user experience targets set, and Year 1 objectives met to grow active users by 10% and maintain engagement rate at 50% on 2025 baseline.

Strategic Priority 5: **Destination Development:** Responsible tourism growth and stewardship

Outcome: Tourism growth is environmentally sustainable, socially responsible, inclusive and supported by communities.

Actions		Targets
5.1	Implement an Environmental, Social and Governance Framework. [TVAP Actions 16 and 17]	ESG framework approved encompassing an internal management plan and a framework influencing how tourism develops across the destination.
5.2	Create a TNI advocacy statement and stakeholder engagement programme that identifies the fiscal, policy and strategic interventions required to ensure tourism flourishes.	Advocacy statement/ case for tourism developed and socialised.

Strategic Priority 6: **Delivery:** Strong organisational capability

Outcome: Inclusive, collaborative and high capability leadership that engages staff and sustains strong organisational performance and reputation

Actions		Targets
6.1	Ensure the effective use of TNI's budget to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.	Financial position monitored throughout the reporting period to ensure underspend kept to less than 1%.
6.2	Ensure effective and appropriate corporate governance processes are adhered to across TNI.	Positive assurance on internal and external audits as well as DfE Assurance Statement.
6.3	Design and Deliver a Data and Technical Infrastructure Plan.	Deliver Year 1 of the Plan.
6.4	Design and Deliver the People & Cultural Engagement Plan including SPARK.	Deliver by December 2026.