

# INTERNATIONAL TOURISM EVENTS FUND 2023/24

## Guidelines for Applicants



31 October 2022

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## **1 OVERVIEW**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Events are powerful tools. They have the ability to provide Northern Ireland with a competitive advantage, benefiting the image, economy, tourism performance and future potential of the region. They can enhance Northern Ireland's reputation as a destination to live, work, visit and study. Events can stimulate the economy by generating new jobs, business and training opportunities, whilst attracting visitors at times of the year when there is surplus capacity in the accommodation sector.

Tourism NI operates two schemes within the Tourism Event Funding Programme:

- International Tourism Events Fund (ITEF)
- National Tourism Events Sponsorship Scheme (NTESS; see separate Guidelines for this scheme)

The two schemes complement each other and run concurrently, maximising the benefits to Northern Ireland. The ITEF will offer funding to eligible events taking place between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024.

Tourism NI's role is to work collaboratively with our partners to accelerate growth of the Northern Ireland tourism industry. We do this through supporting tourism businesses, the development of world-class products, experiences and events and promoting Northern Ireland as a must-see destination to those markets which offer the greatest potential for growth.

Events have the potential to play a role in the overall visitor experience and economic benefit for Northern Ireland. They present the visitor the opportunity to immerse themselves in local culture, heritage and tradition. International tourism events must be authentically unique to Northern Ireland and be demand generators to attract out of state visitors (i.e. from outside of Northern Ireland) whilst enhancing Northern Ireland's international reputation.

It is important that these events have content or are an experience which is strong enough to make people want to travel to Northern Ireland, generating economic return through visitor bednights and spend.

### **1.2 Vision and objectives**

Our vision is for a portfolio of distinctive, high-quality tourism events which tell a compelling story of Northern Ireland to the world. Events that we support will help to deliver the £2bn impact target for the visitor economy, while also meeting other important industrial, cultural and social agendas, including creating a sustainable, inclusive and welcoming event programme for all our communities and visitors. All experiences that Tourism NI supports and funds must be open and inclusive to all visitors, including all communities across Northern Ireland and should not offend or insult the public, or damage community relations.

This vision has been developed to ensure Tourism NI fulfils its statutory duty to promote good relations in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and so Tourism NI shall consider whether applications to the ITEF align with Tourism NI's statutory duties.

The key objectives are to maximise opportunities to:

- Enhance the visitor experience;
- Increase visitor numbers and spend;
- Develop a positive international profile;
- Generate increased bednights;
- Elongate the tourism season.

### **1.3 Principles**

The ITEF is designed as a grant scheme which acts as a catalyst and motivator for the events industry in Northern Ireland. **It does not provide long-term or core funding.**

The four main principles that underpin financial support for events from Tourism NI are:

### **Additionality**

The core principle of Tourism NI's funding model is 'additionality'. This means that the fund should only provide the **minimum** level of government assistance to allow the tourism event, or elements of the event, to take place. In some cases, without government intervention, events would be unlikely to happen or would take place at a reduced size or scale.

When additionality occurs, the event has usually been able to enhance the visitor experience and has improved the opportunities to grow visitor spend, through the addition of Tourism NI funding.

### **Leverage of other funding**

The event should demonstrate the ability to generate growth by ensuring maximum financial support from other sources. This leverage of other funding will support the long-term sustainability of your event. Tourism NI is not a core funder of events, but will support the development of events.

### **Partnership working**

Tourism NI does not deliver events directly but will work in partnership with organisers from the public, private and voluntary sectors to ensure event success.

### **Significance**

All events funded must be tourism events of international significance in order to maximise the value of support from Tourism NI. They must attract international visitors.

## **1.4 Definition and expectations of an international tourism event**

An international tourism event is an event which attracts out of state visitors to Northern Ireland, where the event has played the key role in attracting them to visit. It will attract visitors to travel to and stay in Northern Ireland and offer an authentic Northern Ireland experience. It will generate additional visitor and participant spend, increase the occupancy rate for local accommodation providers, provide a positive image of Northern Ireland, give the visitor a true Northern Ireland experience, and leave a lasting legacy.

A tourism event is classed as an event occurring on one day or over a period of several consecutive days; there must be no break in days.

Events are expected to deliver an economic return of at least £5:£1 on Tourism NI's investment.

An international event should showcase Northern Ireland on a global stage as a unique tourism destination, highlighting Northern Ireland's authentic people and places, our iconic landscapes, and our visitor attractions. This is likely to be achieved through the generation of significant out of state media coverage across a variety of marketing platforms including TV, print, social, and digital, both pre and during the event.

## **2 DETAILS AND PARAMETERS OF THE FUNDING SCHEME**

### **2.1 Scheme parameters**

The ITEF supports events which attract significantly high levels of visitors to Northern Ireland and generate international media coverage.

Events supported through the ITEF must:

- Generate substantial economic benefit for Northern Ireland through increased visitor and participant numbers, including bednights and increased numbers of visitors from out of state;

- Enhance Northern Ireland’s opportunities to host further major events;
- Be underpinned by a viable budget and realistic event planning;
- Identify and deliver on measurable outcomes; and
- Help Tourism NI fulfil our vision set out at Section 1.2.

Events **must** satisfy the following parameters to apply for the ITEF:

- The event must take place between **1 April 2023** and **31 March 2024**.
- The event must occur on one day or over a period of several consecutive days; there must be no break in days.
- **Maximum funding of 50% of eligible costs** for private, public and voluntary sector events can be provided through the ITEF.
- Total **visitor numbers** greater than **5,000** (not subsidised).
- A **minimum return on investment** of **5:1**.
- A **positive media matrix assessment** for events where media exposure is a central driver.
- A **minimum income of £150,000** through ticket sales, private sponsorship, other public sector, merchandise etc. **Tourism NI support cannot be included as part of the minimum income requirements.**
- An overall **minimum expenditure of £150,000** prior to receiving monies from Tourism NI.
- The **maximum funding request** from Tourism NI is capped at **£150,000**. However funding will align with application deliverables and assessment of the application, through each assessment stage. The minimum award that may be offered is £30,000. There is no guarantee of funding, or any level of funding.

**All applicants wishing to apply to the ITEF MUST meet with a member of the Tourism NI Events Team before they are eligible to start an application. Please email: [eventsunit@tourismni.com](mailto:eventsunit@tourismni.com) to arrange your appointment.**

## **2.2 Eligible and ineligible costs**

Under the legislation through which Tourism NI delivers this event fund, only certain costs are deemed as eligible. The following list of costs is not extensive. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Tourism NI Events Unit to ascertain cost eligibility if unclear.

### **Example eligible costs**

- Marketing costs: for marketing only outside the host town or city
- Performance costs: performance fees, appearance fees (excluding travel, food and accommodation expenses)
- Health and safety costs – first aid, stewards
- Venue costs: venue hire, venue preparation, venue restoration, marquee hire
- Production costs: staging, sound, lighting, equipment hire, communication (e.g. radios), toilet hire, bin hire
- Investors in Volunteers Accreditation
- Volunteer training costs
- Auditor Certificate
- Security costs

- Independent event evaluations: subject to advance discussion and approval from Tourism NI including approval for evaluation content and methodology
- Bidding costs (including host fees)
- Freight costs
- Staffing or external resource support costs for development of commercial opportunities and marketing only: subject to discussion and approval from Tourism NI on a case-by-case basis.

### Example ineligible costs

- Accommodation costs
- Travel e.g. flights, car hire, public transport etc.
- Prize money, awards, trophies, medals, ceremonial cost
- Licence fees, permit fees
- Stationery, postage, gifts (including goodie bags)
- Promotor fees, event management fees
- Accountancy fees
- Legal fees
- Bank fees, bank charges, interest charges
- Capital repayments
- Corporation tax
- Capital expenditure and assets e.g. computers, digital cameras
- Hospitality
- Rates, fuel costs, electricity, rent
- Membership fees
- Phone bills
- Charitable donations
- VAT repayments: where applicants are VAT registered and reclaiming VAT
- Insurance costs
- Vehicle insurance
- Commission: sales, bonuses
- Liquor licences
- Cash payments are deemed ineligible and will not be accepted.
- Staff salaries: including all consultancy fees, casual staff, production staff/crew etc except as noted above under eligible costs.

## 3 APPLICATION PROCESS

### 3.1 Who can apply

Applications are open to legally constituted organisations or individuals in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Financial assistance from Tourism NI will not exceed 50% of an event's eligible costs.

Charitable organisations are eligible to apply to the ITEF. However please note, **should the event make a profit, this surplus cannot be used as a charitable donation.**

Event organisers may only submit one application per event to **either** the ITEF or NTESS, **not both**. The financial award given will depend on the funds available within Tourism NI and on the number of applications received. Awards will be based on how the event scores against the criteria, not the funding gap in the event budget. Therefore, funding requests should be proportionate to the additional tourism benefit that will be delivered.

### Who is not eligible to apply?

- Conferences
- Community festivals
- Exhibitions: unless they can demonstrate they have a travelling international perspective that is exclusive to Northern Ireland within the Republic of Ireland, UK and/or Europe.

Previous funding and support received from Tourism NI does not guarantee funding in subsequent years, or funding of a similar level.

Before you apply to the ITEF 2023/24 applicants should be aware that within the application process, applicants must state if they have ever been declared bankrupt, or are awaiting any criminal or civil proceedings against them, or if they have any unspent criminal or civil convictions. Applicants must also state if they have any outstanding court judgements against them. If an applicant answers 'Yes' to any of these areas, they will be required to provide detailed additional evidence to support their application.

If an applicant is successful in receiving an offer of support it will include a number of terms and conditions. These terms and conditions will include specific conditions regarding 'Adverse Events and Good Relations' as well as 'Conduct and Reputation'. Should you wish to receive any further information in this regard, please contact the Tourism NI Events Unit.

**The Tourism NI Events Unit commits to dealing with all event organisers in a respectful and courteous manner and expects all event organisers to act in a similarly respectful manner across all communications, both in person and online.**

### **3.2 How to apply**

Tourism NI is keen to ensure that the application process is as user friendly as possible for applicants.

For 2023/24 there are two stages to the application process:

Stage One: Mandatory meeting with the Events Unit

Stage Two: Progress to full application.

#### **3.2.1 Stage One - Mandatory meeting with the Events Unit**

All events who wish to apply to the ITEF 2023/24 MUST meet or have a call with the Events Team to discuss your event, the application process and ensure that your event fits the parameters and criteria of the scheme before progressing to full application.

Please note if a pre-meeting has not been undertaken a full application cannot be submitted.

#### **Mandatory criteria to progress to full application:**

Events must meet all the below criteria before progressing to full application. This information will be discussed and presented by the event applicant at the meeting with the Events Unit.

- 1. Event date:** The event must take place between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024. If outside this time they cannot proceed to full application. The event must occur on one day or over a period of several consecutive days with no break in days.
- 2. Visitor numbers:** Live visitor numbers of 5,000 MUST be achieved. If less than 5,000 visitors the event cannot proceed to full application.
- 3. Event budget:** Events must have a minimum income of £150,000 and expenditure of £150,000 prior to receiving an award from Tourism NI. In kind support listed should not be included in the event budget as part of the £150,000 requirement. If less than £150,000 income and expenditure, the event cannot proceed to full application. In kind support will be reviewed in the full application.
- 4. Marketing:** The applicant must confirm that international marketing will be delivered as part of the promotion of the event and to which markets e.g. ROI, GB etc. If not planning to market outside Northern Ireland the event cannot proceed to full application.
- 5. Event programming:** The applicant must ensure that event content will appeal to and attract an international audience and align with the Embrace a Giant Spirit brand. If following discussion, applicants are not including content and programming to target out of state audiences and aligned with the brand, the event cannot proceed to full application.

6. **Economic benefit:** Visitor numbers, participant numbers, out of state, subsidised. Commercial bednights. Non-commercial bednights. Must return 5:1 on Tourism NI investment.
7. **Funding request from Tourism NI:** the applicant should confirm the level of support requested from Tourism NI, for information only.

If the event promoter can fulfil each of the above mandatory requirements and criteria they may progress to a full application, in discussion with Tourism NI. You will be sent a link and invited to complete the full application on the online Flexigrant management system, along with the required document uploads. Applicants are required to substantiate, by example and evidence, how their event meets the key criteria.

### 3.2.2 Stage Two - Full application

The first section of the online application process is to answer a number of preliminary questions including event date, location, contact details and desired financial support from Tourism NI.

The online application will then require the applicant to upload a number of documents:

- **Event Business Plan**  
The event business plan is an essential tool for planning and developing your event. The plan should be relevant to the current event. You must upload your event business plan for assessment. Tourism NI have provided Guidance Notes in Annex A. It is important the business plan you provide to Tourism NI follows the structured outlined framework for assessment purposes. See Annex A for an example of what should be included in the business plan.
- **Detailed budgetary information**  
The information required will include a detailed budget, and financial statement.
- **Economic calculator**  
An economic calculator for which a template will be provided in the application form.
- **Marketing plan**  
Tourism NI has provided marketing plan guidance notes at Annex B. You will be assessed against the information as it is vital that appropriate marketing is delivered to attract an out of state audience. You must ensure that all information requested is provided, for assessment purposes.
- **Declaration**  
The application form concludes with a declaration that requires you to confirm a number of statements and authorisations. These include authorisations such as that Tourism NI shall have permission to discuss your proposals with your bank, other funders or appointed experts.

Further, the statements include matters such as that all information submitted is correct and complete, that you have read these Guidelines for Applicants and that you are not aware of any reason how the Event would contravene Tourism NI's vision for the ITEF, its obligation to promote good relations (as defined in Annex A Section 8) or damage the reputation of Tourism NI. The applicant shall inform Tourism NI should there be any material change to the details comprised within the application.

## 4 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND SCORING

### 4.1 Assessment criteria

We will appraise your application by taking into account the following criteria:

1. Visitor experience
2. Visitor segments
3. Economic impact estimation based on:



- Visitor and participant numbers (the events ability to attract out of state visitors)
  - Commercial bednights (ability to generate non-subsidised commercial bednights)
  - Return on investment
4. Marketing activity and media impact
  5. Budget
  6. Additionality and financial sustainability
  7. Monitoring and evaluation
  8. Event management and governance
  9. Social impact
  10. Environmental sustainability
  11. Equality of opportunity, accessibility, and good relations
  12. Alignment with Tourism NI's vision set out in Section 1.2 above
  13. Previous breach of Tourism NI's terms and conditions of support.

**As the fund is designed for event development or international promotion, it is not aimed at providing long term or core funding for events. Tourism NI is a funder of last resort.**

#### 4.2 Scoring

Tourism NI will assess the information you present in your application and supporting business plan. As a guide, please see below the scoring framework for the application process:

	<b>SCORED CRITERIA</b>	<b>SCORE</b>
1.	Visitor experience	Total Score: 0-15
2.	Visitor segments	Total Score: 0-5
3.	Economic impact	
3a.	Visitor and participant numbers	Total score: 0-15
3b.	Visitor and participant commercial bednights	Total score: 0-10
3c.	Return on investment	Total Score: 0-5
4.	Media impact and marketing activity	Total Score: 0-15
5.	Budget and financial plan	Total score: 0-15
6.	Additionality and financial sustainability of the event	Total score: 0-10
7.	Monitoring and evaluation	Total Score: 0-5

Scores will be assessed based on the information presented in the application. This will then be subject to weighting as below:

<b>Weighting Indicator</b>	<b>Score</b>
Failure of confidence in meeting the criterion	0
Poor confidence in meeting the criterion	1
Limited confidence in meeting the criterion	2
Acceptable confidence in meeting the criterion	3
Good confidence in meeting the criterion	4
Excellent confidence in meeting the criterion	5

	<b>PASS/FAIL</b>	
8.	Event management and governance	Pass/Fail
9.	Viability of organisation and event	Pass/Fail
10.	Environmental sustainability	Pass/Fail
11.	Social impacts	Pass/Fail
12.	Equality of opportunity, accessibility, and good relations	Pass/Fail
13.	Alignment with Tourism NI's vision	Pass/Fail
14.	Previous breach of Tourism NI's terms and conditions	Pass/Fail

## 5 TIMELINE

Mandatory meetings with the events team should be arranged and held by 28 October 2022. Full applications must be completed and submitted online by noon on Monday 5 December 2022.

**No applications received after this date will be considered.**

All applications will be assessed and then presented to a decision-making panel which will include representation from Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland.-Tourism NI reserves the right to commission independent consultants to undertake reviews, evaluation and/or appraisals of the information provided through the application process.

## 6 SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

If successful at assessment stage, you will be notified by email, including the award offer value. This will only be an offer at this stage. Key Performance Indicators and deliverables will be agreed with you. You will then be issued with a Letter of Offer which constitutes a formal contract. You will be required to sign and return the Letter of Offer within 14 days of issue.

## 7 APPEALS

All applications received to the ITEF within the open call period will be assessed in a just and fair manner. All applications are scored as outlined in Section 4. Subsequent award offers are made dependent on this scoring, the competition for awards and budget available.

If an applicant decides to appeal Tourism NI's decision not to provide funding, an appeals procedure is in place. They must, in the first instance, contact the Tourism NI Events Unit to arrange a debrief meeting which must take place within 14 calendar days from the date of receiving an unsuccessful notification.

During the debrief meeting, Tourism NI staff will explain why the application was unsuccessful. Following this, if the applicant still wishes to appeal, written notification must be submitted to the Tourism NI Events Unit within 21 calendar days of the receiving an unsuccessful notification. Appeals will be considered by an independent appeals committee.

**To ensure consistency and fairness to all applicants NO additional event information from that supplied within the original application will be considered during the appeal procedure.**

If an application is successful in securing an offer of funding, applicants are not permitted to appeal the amount awarded.

## 8 POST EVENT

### 8.1 Post event evaluation

Events must complete a Post Event Evaluation document to support their claim. Tourism NI will provide a template for this. This will require you to report on how your event delivered against the deliverables outlined in your application and business plan, and against the key performance objectives agreed in your Letter of Offer. It will also include reporting on adherence to all conditions outlined in the Letter of Offer, all of which Tourism NI will assess as part of the claim process.

You will also be required to provide:

- Final event management plan and risk assessment
- Evidence proving sources of income
- Any approvals needed for the event to take place e.g. insurance, road closure, licences etc

- A completed Claim Form and claim documentation including invoices, bank statements and tendering evidence
- Final budget for the event with an independent verification of claim
- Updated economic calculator based on actual figures.

## **8.2 Claim payment**

Payments will be made ideally in one instalment per annum. The grant may be claimed after the event as long as full evidence is provided of spend, in line with the eligible costs requested at application stage and agreed within the Letter of Offer. Claims must be received no later than four months after the event.

Payments are made using funding from Central Government. If Tourism NI does not receive adequate budget to cover the event grant schemes, we can suspend, end or reduce the amount we offer.

## **9 ANNEX A: EVENT BUSINESS PLAN GUIDANCE 2023/24**

This Annex presents an example business plan, to help events ensure that all required information has been submitted. You may have your own template but it is your responsibility to ensure that all details and content required below have been included. These are the areas which will be assessed and scored, as detailed previously in these guidelines.

### **Summary contents**

- 1. Executive summary**
- 2. Event detail and visitor experience**
  - 2.1 Event introduction and background
  - 2.2 Event programme and content
  - 2.3 Event visitor experience and journey
  - 2.4 Alignment with Embrace a Giant Spirit
  - 2.5 Target audience segments
- 3. SMART objectives**
- 4. Event management and governance**
- 5. Budget and financial plan**
  - 5.1 Budget
  - 5.2 Additionality and financial sustainability of the event
- 6. Economic impact**
  - 6.1 Visitor and participant numbers
  - 6.2 Commercial and non-commercial bednights
  - 6.3 Tourism economic impact
- 7. Non-monetary benefits**
  - 7.1 Social impacts
  - 7.2 Environmental sustainability
- 8. Equality of opportunity, accessibility, and good relations**
- 9. Monitoring and evaluation**

## 1. Executive summary

The executive summary should be concise, ideally one or two pages only, and contain an overview of the key contents of your business plan, including:

- Description of the event
- The event's vision and mission
- The event's objectives
- When and where it will take place
- Why the event has been developed
- Who the event aims to attract (the market)
- A summary of the key benefits of hosting the event including monetary and non-monetary benefits such as visitor numbers, out of state visitor numbers, commercial bednights, marketing benefit, volunteering and social impact etc.
- Who developed the event and business plan
- Management and control
- Statement as to the estimated event income and expenditure
- Business plan review (i.e. plans for monitoring and updates).

## 2. Event detail and visitor experience

This section will give the reader an understanding of your event and the experience the visitor will have as well as how the event is delivering and embodying the Embrace a Giant Spirit brand. It is important to address all of the areas outlined to complete this section of the business plan.

### 2.1 Event introduction and background

This section should include introductory and background information on the event and its development, including:

- Date
- Time
- Location
- Duration
- Vision and mission
  - Vision – a short statement that describes, in broad terms, the event's long term aim.
  - Mission – a more detailed statement which provides detail on how the vision will be delivered.
- Overview of the quality and content of event
  - What kind of event is it?
  - Provide summary detail of the programme
  - What is the key audience(s) for the event?
- History and background to the event
  - Is this the event's first year
  - If not the first year, what is different about your event from previous years?
  - Where did the idea come from
  - Have there been similar events delivered elsewhere by others
  - Have you previously staged the event elsewhere, and if so, why has it moved?
- Tourism and other benefits and outcomes
- Legal status of the event.

### 2.2 Event programme and content

It is vital that the reader has an understanding of your event, including providing a detailed overview of the key content and event programme.

Please provide a detailed description of your event, including programme content:

- Describe the event and its various elements in more detail.
- Give an overview of the intended event content and programme and any new developments.
- Events applying to the ITEF must attract visitors from outside Northern Ireland. You must clearly demonstrate:
  - how your event programming will attract out of state visitors
  - what is its unique selling point
  - how is the event interactive and aligned to the needs and event appetite of out of state visitors.

### 2.3 Event visitor experience and journey

Please outline the seamless visitor experience and journey you offer visitors planning to and attending your event.

- What will the visitor experience at your event?
- What is seamless visitor journey for your visitors?
- How do you engage and inform your visitor with event information?
- How do you make the experience at your event as easy and accessible as possible for the visitor?
- Please inform the reader of what you do to make the visitor experience as enjoyable as possible please consider:
  - online pre-event experience
  - what is the welcome for the visitor
  - ticketing
  - visitor experience when at the event
  - transport links and information
  - car-parking
  - food and drink offering and experiences
  - accommodation offering
  - partnerships and information
  - other things to see and do in the area
  - packages and offers
  - cross selling
  - itineraries etc.

Please provide an event itinerary, if available; this can be an annex to the business plan. It should provide the reader with sufficient detail for them to understand what each day, or a typical day, of the event could look like for a visitor. You must ensure that what is described is a realistic and deliverable.

### 2.4 Alignment with Embrace a Giant Spirit

It is important to understand how your event will deliver on the Northern Ireland Embrace a Giant Spirit brand. For guidance, please refer to the Northern Ireland Embrace a Giant Spirit toolkit available on our website here: [Northern Ireland's Embrace a Giant Spirit | Tourism NI](#).

#### (i) How does your event aim to showcase the very best of Northern Ireland, and awaken a giant spirit to visitors?

In this section you should consider how your event showcases and highlights the very best of Northern Ireland. What does your event offer that is unique to Northern Ireland that cannot be delivered anywhere else.

Please consider:

- landscapes and scenery
- sharing stories myths and legends
- showcasing local people and crafts
- local food producers
- sustainable initiatives for Northern Ireland
- hidden places/showcasing unknown areas to visitors

- participatory elements
- what experience will you offer that is iconic and authentically Northern Ireland.

**(ii) How does your event support local people and businesses?**

A key element of the brand is working in partnership with local people and local businesses. Please outline how your event is supporting the wider industry. Some things to consider are:

- working with accommodation providers e.g. bednights in hotels
- encourages people into the area for food and drink venues
- allows locals to showcase their produce/ crafts
- showcases local communities
- involves local communities in the event
- utilises venues and different locations within the area
- job creation
- volunteer opportunities
- how the event will animate and showcase other tourism assets in the area.

Please note it is not sufficient to simply copy and paste the above list; the reader should understand the detail and impact of what you are doing. Be specific in the information you provide on how your event supports local people and businesses.

**2.5 Target audience segments**

Please outline the existing and target audience and visitor segments. Explain how the event type and programme will serve as an attractor to these audiences, delivering on their needs. and gain international standout and appeal

Does your target segment/visitors align with these event types, and if so, how:

- Food & drink events
- Family events
- Sporting events
- Live music events featuring local artists
- Live music events featuring international artists
- Culture and arts events
- Live events featuring other international artists, e.g. comedy
- Other (please specify)

You must clearly demonstrate how your event programme will appeal to the selected segment(s), and motivate national and international visitors to travel to Northern Ireland.

In the marketing section, you will be expected to provide detail on how you will align marketing activity to reach these segments, particularly visitors from outside Northern Ireland.

**3. SMART objectives**

This is an opportunity to define and communicate the specific tourism objectives and deliverables of the event. These should help to deliver the vision and mission. Set timescales and identify an owner for each action i.e. which organisation or individual will be responsible for ensuring that the action is delivered.

Objectives need to be clearly set out and should follow the SMART principle: **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant** and **Time-Based**. Describe how the project will meet these objectives:

- Total visitor numbers: it is important that you provide us with actual figures and not a percentage uplift on previous year.
- Total visitor numbers from outside Northern Ireland

- Total participant numbers
- Total bednights: commercial bednights
- Marketing in key markets
- Non-monetary objectives e.g. marketing, analytics, volunteering, social impact.

#### **4. Event management and governance**

Within this section it is important to outline the event management and governance arrangements in place for your organisation and for this event. Indicators of the efficacy of management are likely to include:

- a proven track record in managing and delivering safe and viable events of a scale similar to the event proposed. If a new event, please outline experience in this area;
- details of the team involved and their requisite range of relevant skills and experience;
- a well-researched business plan access to credible professional expertise when required;
- up to date, relevant financial information – financial data on income and costs that provides reliable, accurate details on the event to the relevant Board/Committee or sub-committee;
- evidence of strong financial management and control of substantial budgets from a variety of income streams that resulted in good event outcomes and outputs;
- clear governance arrangements and operational standards that are event and organisation specific including key written policies approved by the Board/Committee;
- details of the business model used to successfully run previous event(s) (if relevant) e.g. sub-committee(s); project manager(s); external consultants; joint ventures; volunteers;
- a personal commitment to the project from all key individuals and organisations.

Information should be provided on:

##### **Organisational Structure**

Please provide details of your organisational structure and status for example limited company, charity, local authority etc.

Outline the areas of responsibility for all key roles such as Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, event operations, public relations, marketing, health and safety, sub-committees and the members with Terms of Reference (including Job Profiles if available), and day to day operational oversight etc. Please provide an organisational chart, and clearly specify who will be the lead contact for the key areas outlined as well as the key lead with Tourism NI on the decision making, application process and claim administration.

##### **Committee/Board**

To deliver on the event the Committee/Board should host regular meetings with clear agendas and typed minutes retained for actions and records. Please provide details on:

- How many Committee/Board and sub-committee meetings are normally held each year
- If and when you hold an AGM
- It is important that you outline the systems and processes and policies for your event, including governance, financial procedures etc. which may be overseen by sub-committees.

##### **Legal responsibility and other risks**

It is important to identify who owns or carries the legal responsibility for your event and how you manage the other risks associated with it. When numbers of people are brought together for entertainment, legal issues and other risks can arise. The organisers and 'owners' of the festival or event should operate as a legal entity and have appropriate legal protection, including relevant insurance in place.



A key issue to consider is who assumes the financial responsibility for any successful claim that may be taken against the festival, what insurances are in place to cover this and how other risks are managed e.g. with a risk policy and a risk register.

### **Relevant policies**

Relevant written policies are important for staff, volunteers and other key stakeholders covering key areas such as Health & Safety; Safeguarding; GDPR; Volunteers; Risk Management; Finance (including procurement); Sustainability/Environmental; Conflicts of Interest; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Please provide a list of your written key policies (either in the business plan or separately).

### **Succession plan**

To future-proof your event, please advise if you have a succession plan in place for the organisation and/or the event management and delivery and provide key details of this.

### **Attachments required (where available)**

Please include:

- Memorandum of Understanding/Terms of Reference approved by the Board/Committee for any relevant sub-committee(s)
- Minutes from the three most recent Board/Committee or relevant sub-committee meeting)
- A copy of the governance structure for your event. This can be a separate upload or form part of the business plan.
- A copy of your organisation's succession plan relevant to this event.
- An organisational chart showing clear reporting lines and any job descriptions (relevant to the event)
- A list of key policies in place e.g. Health & Safety; Safeguarding; GDPR; Volunteers; Risk Management; Finance (including procurement); Sustainability/Environmental; Conflicts of Interest; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (not the policies themselves)
- A detailed Event Implementation Plan (from the proposed or previous events)
- Insurance/Indemnity details including any previous claims
- A copy of the latest Risk Register
  - Register of Interests
  - 3/5 year strategic plan.
  - Guidance and Advice can be found here: [Financial Support \(tourismni.com\)](https://www.tourismni.com)

## **5. Budget and financial plan**

This section is crucial. Every event must have a detailed annual budget. You need to show that the event, and the organisation delivering it, is financially viable. Assurances must be provided that the event and delivery organisation is:

- Adequately funded through an appropriate financial structure
- Capable of maintaining sufficient cash flow to cover all event expenditure and to service all debts on a rolling 12 month basis.

When assessing viability, the following issues are particularly important and will be reviewed:

- Historical performance
- Current financial position
- Profitability
- Forecast performance.

Where an event is undertaken by an existing organisation, the profitability of that organisation over the previous three years may be reviewed in addition to its current financial position. Areas for concern might include declining profitability, high-gearing and negative cashflow from trading.

Financial Statements for the last three years (where available) will be considered and must be provided at time of application.

**Note to applicant: Tourism NI is not a core funder of events and monies contributed by Tourism NI should be used following the principles of ‘additionality’ as outlined at Section 1.3.**

Events which show a profit will be considered on a case-by-case basis by Tourism NI and funding maybe reduced in line with the principle of ‘additionality’ and ‘sustainability’. Profit should be carried forward into the next year’s event reserves; this should be clearly shown in the financial statements.

Many events do not make a profit, but they must demonstrate how they will move towards sustainability or how they intend to grow. Consideration will be given when events are building cash reserves for financial sustainability.

Tourism NI is not in a position to provide additional funding over and above the agreed Letter of Offer. Applicants must provide sufficient evidence to ensure that the proposed financial structure will provide adequate funding to meet the present and future needs of the event.

If the event income or expenditure changes from the budget submitted at application and final Letter of Offer stages, this could have an impact on the funding offer amount. If the budgeted expenditure drops by 10% or more, Tourism NI reserves the right to reduce the funding offer and payment made.

## **5.1 Budget**

A budget must be provided on an excel spreadsheet. It will not be accepted in any other format.

This section of the business plan is required to:

- Demonstrate the viability of the event
- Understand the commercial mix of how the event is funded
- Have confidence in the ability to deliver the programme and event
- Ensure the budget links with all sections of the event.
  - Ensure the £150,000 minimum income and expenditure threshold is upheld, as per the scheme parameters detailed at Section 2.1: Scheme parameters.
  - Assess the mix of public and private sector support
  - Assess the level of funding support from Tourism NI, and if this is reasonable. The level of financial risk to Tourism NI is a key consideration.

Events must submit a full explanation of proposed budgets. If there is any ambiguity around specific budget items, events must provide clarity to help the assessor evaluate if the budget is realistic, achievable and financially sound.

You must upload the following including a detailed the Excel budget breakdown showing:

- Details of actual expenditure from previous event e.g. 2022/23 (where applicable)
- Projected cash budget for the 2023/24 event
- In-kind budget for the event
- A copy of your most recent Financial Statements for last 3 years (where applicable).

In-kind support is an important element in the delivery of events but should not be included within your financial breakdowns. It should be outlined separately from your cash budget. Please include the source and value of the in-kind support and the service provided.

## **Income projections**

Please present detailed event income projections for the period of the plan. Clearly describe each income stream and how the figures have been calculated e.g.:

- Public sector support which may include but is not limited to:
  - Local Authority
  - Arts Council

- Invest NI
- Sport NI
- Department for Communities
- Executive Office etc.
- Self-generated Income which may include but is not limited to:
  - Ticket projections: x number of attendees at £x
  - Sponsorship: a breakdown must be provided
  - Merchandise
  - Food and drink sales
  - Trade stands
  - Donations
- Other:
  - Other grants e.g. Department of Foreign Affairs (ROI), National Lottery Funding, EU funding etc
  - Other material sources of income.

Please also state if the income included within your budget is confirmed or unconfirmed at this time. If not confirmed, when will this be confirmed including the project timeline. This should include for example when the grant application was submitted, expected feedback date, status of negotiations with sponsors, expected responses from sponsors etc.

Ticket income should clearly outline the potential total ticket income and correlate with the number of attendees anticipated. Ticket projections must be clearly broken down by ticket price per event/performance/show, number of potential ticket sales per ticket range, price of ticket, number of complimentary tickets, and any tickets for prize or promotion.

When presenting income projections, please identify opportunities to increase income streams such as private sponsorship, merchandise, ticket sales, cross selling, VIP experience, merchandise etc. This is an important aspect of the application. Tourism NI will review the self-generated private sector income planned and confirmed for the event as it is important to understand how the event is generating its own income and making efforts for self-sustainability. It is important that the information provided is robust and achievable.

Within this section it is also important for Tourism NI to understand the level of financial support that is received from the public purse (Local Authority, Arts Council, DfC, DfE, SNI etc) versus those that the event plans to generate through private sources as mentioned above.

Please note: The **maximum request for funding** from Tourism NI through the ITEF is capped at **£150,000**.

Please include details of all assumptions you have made in your projections. This must be a robust budget.

**Example:**

Income	Total	Confirmed/ Unconfirmed	Date confirmed/ to be confirmed	Assumption detail	2022/23 Actual Expenditure
Local Authority	£200,000	N	01/12/2022	An application has been made for £200,000. Awaiting outcome of decision	£180,000
Sponsorship	£50,000	Y	1/11/2022	Meeting undertaken with Bloggs & Co to present packages and opportunities available.	£50,000

## Expenditure projections

Please provide a detailed budget breakdown of all expenditure relative to the event in the excel spreadsheet budget. It is important to provide the assessor with a clear breakdown of expenditure items and not just top line expenditure figures. This should give a clear understanding to the reader of the different elements of the event and the costs associated. You must include details of all assumptions you have made in your projections.

Please include the previous year's detailed breakdown of actual income and actual expenditure (if the event took place the previous year) with clear explanations of any variances against the projected budget, such as areas of under and over spend.

## Financial plan and considerations

Within your business plan, you should include and consider:

- The financial procedures and policy for your event.
- Who will underwrite your event?
- If your event makes a loss, who will be responsible for paying suppliers and ensuring the event is delivered as outlined within the application.
- What is your VAT status?
- What controls do you have in place to record income received and payments made?
- Do you have systems and process in place for procurement? Please outline your Procurement Policy or attach to this business plan.
- Do you have budget control measures in place? Please outline the frequency of budget control meetings, who is responsible, and methods used.
- Do you have a formal financial reporting mechanism for use at Event Team/Committee meetings?
- Do you follow public sector procurement procedures or always use the same supplier for goods and services? Is it in line with NIPPP? **Note to Applicant: see here for Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy information: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/procurement>**
- What is your policy to decide what to charge for admission/tickets?
- Are you aware of existing other grant schemes? Please provide details.
- Please describe the accounting systems that you will use if successful in receiving an award e.g. electronic or manual. If electronic, please outline the package you use.
- Please upload your most recent accounts for last 3 years.

## ***Eligible and ineligible expenditure***

Please refer to Section 2.2 in these guidelines for details of eligible and ineligible costs. If successful in your funding request these eligible expenditure categories will be used to pay out against your claim, following receipt of proof of such eligible expenditure. In your application you must outline the request for support and identify what eligible costs this request will go towards.

## **5.2 Additionality and financial sustainability**

'Additionality' is the measure of success of government intervention through the public, private or voluntary sectors. This term is used to describe the effects of public sector intervention. In the context of the events industry, 'additionality' should occur on receipt of minimum government assistance. It should allow an event, or elements of an event, to take place which would only occur on a reduced scale or quality.

This section gives you the opportunity to demonstrate how financial assistance will enhance new or existing elements of the event as well as making it more financially viable. You will be asked to enter your financial request from Tourism NI and list the eligible costs to which such funding will be aligned.

### ***Additional impact of Tourism NI funding***

You must demonstrate the direct impact of receiving funding from Tourism NI and how it will add value to the event and help grow the event. Please explain the difference that funding from Tourism NI will make to the tourism element of your event, for example it could:

- increase out of state visitor numbers
- increase commercial bednights
- enhance the visitor experience
- enhance event development and quality of the event
- enhance collaborations and partnerships.

Please provide a value estimate of what support from TNI will do for your event i.e. if you received £X to do deliver Y, the benefit would be Z. It is important the reader can understand clearly what additionality this support will bring.

**Please note: Tourism NI is NOT a core funder of events. Therefore, it should not be assumed that the event will not take place without funding from Tourism NI.**

### ***Impact of reduced funding***

Given the current operating environment and severe pressures on budgets and the public purse, Tourism NI needs to understand how a smaller award could still deliver for tourism. You must demonstrate the direct impact of receiving a lesser award than requested from Tourism NI and the impact this will have for your event.

For example, if funding was offered at 25% of the requested amount, what would the event still deliver in terms of additionality, what areas of eligibility would this be allocated towards and how would this value of request still enhance the tourism aspects of your event.

- What impact would a reduced award have on the benefits outlined previously? Please insert numerical values e.g. reduced out of state visitors by XX% reduced bednights generated by XX%.
- Please outline what areas would change from a tourism perspective and the impact will be on economic impact estimations?
- Please insert numerical values e.g. reduced out of state visitors by xx% - reduced bednights generated by xx%
- Please outline what plans you have in place to meet potential shortfalls in funding
- Have you included a contingency in your overall budget?

Tourism NI operates a model with the objective of aiding long-term event sustainability. This facilitates better financial planning for events and enables greater leverage for other funding sources such as sponsorship over and beyond the funding period. Enhanced financial security, especially in the current economic climate, would encourage event development and sustainability and ensure the events industry in Northern Ireland continues to grow.

Events are expected to make all possible efforts to generate income from other sources, including private sector sponsorship. This should result in less reliance on public sector support due to annual reductions made by Central Government.

### ***Considerations for a financially sustainable event***

Please provide detail on how you propose to develop the event to be self-sustaining in the future. Some points to consider are:

- Consider all income generation opportunities such as merchandising, advertising concessions, ticketing policy, targeting of private sector sponsors
- Maintain relationships with public sector funders
- Identify where your event objectives are aligned with key partners' corporate plans and make proposals for alignment where appropriate

- Develop private sector sponsorship plans
- Review human resources with a particular focus on community volunteering
- Ensure an audience development plan is in place
- Develop and deliver on a staff training plan.

## 6. Economic impact

Events can drive economic impact within the area the event is hosted and also within Northern Ireland. It is important to include the additional impact that holding the event will bring to the Northern Ireland economy. You will be required to complete an economic calculator, for which a template will be provided. Further details are provided in section 6.3 below.

It is important that your business plan details (where relevant) the additional economic impact that holding the event will bring to your area/economy. For example will the event create new jobs, considering part time and full time as well as temporary and permanent positions.

### 6.1 Visitor and participant numbers

Events applying to the ITEF must have a minimum of 5,000 in-person visitors attending the event. International events must target and attract visitors from outside Northern Ireland and have a clear evidence-based approach as to how you have calculated the visitor numbers from Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Great Britain and overseas.

Please demonstrate the event potential to attract visitors and participants to Northern Ireland before, during and/or after the event.

Area	Projected Visitor Numbers	Projected Participant Numbers
Town/city where the event takes place		
Rest of Northern Ireland		
Republic of Ireland		
Great Britain and Overseas		
Total		

#### What is classified as a 'visitor' for tourism events?

For tourism events, a visitor is classified as someone who comes to spectate or attend the event. They can either buy a ticket to attend the event or gain free entry. Anyone who participated in the event or makes the event happen is deemed a participant and not a visitor.

#### What is classified as a 'participant' for tourism events?

For tourism events, a number of people outside spectators/ visitors will attend and these people are classified as participants. These are principally people participating in or running the event.

Some typical subgroups of participants will include:

- Team participants
- Media
- Officials
- Delegates
- Volunteers
- Organisers
- Artists

**Please note: ensure that you present your visitor numbers and participant numbers separately.**

## Rationale

It is important to be open and honest when submitting the projected numbers of visitors and participants who will attend the event. You must provide justification and a rationale for the numbers projected. Please include as much detailed relevant information as possible to support the following aspects of your application:

- Total visitor numbers
- Breakdown of where visitors are coming from (NI, ROI, GB & Overseas) – please note out-of-state visitors breakdown is extremely important aspect of the international application and this area of your response will be assessed individually
- Total participant numbers
- Breakdown of where participants are coming from (NI, ROI, GB & Overseas). Applicants that do not provide a justification for the numbers and breakdowns provided may be ineligible.

Please provide robust research and analysis to back up all of your figures, to validate the projected visitor and participant numbers. This may include consideration of:

- Previous ticket sales
- Online booking systems
- Postcodes of attendees
- Police counts
- Event surveys
- Independent evaluations
- Capacity of site
- Duration of the event
- Previous similar events
- Collaborations with Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland
- Tour operator partnerships
- Partnerships with events
- Trade events
- Industry opportunities.

## Online audiences and participants

If there is a hybrid or online element to your event, it is important to record the online audiences and participants projected figures, which should be reported separately to your live audience and participant numbers. These will be in addition to the live visitors attending the event; live visitor numbers of 5,000 must be achieved.

Some ways of projecting and measuring online attendance may be:

- Previous event statistics
- Surveys from previous event(s) and/or other audience research. Please provide details on survey size, year of survey etc.
- Benchmarking against similar event(s)
- Online following
- Contacts database
- Market research.

For participants, you need to give a clear breakdown of the participant roles and number for each subgroup.

## 6.2 Commercial and non-commercial bednights

It is important that international tourism events attract visitors to Northern Ireland to stay in paid-for accommodation to generate economic benefit for region. In this section, please outline the paid for accommodation your event generates. Within this section of the business plan, you must be able to

provide a clear justification as to how you have calculated the commercial bednights figures entered in the calculator.

Please provide a breakdown for visitor and participant bednights from Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Great Britain and Overseas. Tourism NI calculate bednights based on £87 per person per night.

It is important that you give an evidence-based rationale as to how you have arrived at your bednights figures for visitors and participants, and outline any assumptions you have made. Information sources may include:

- Tour operator partnerships
- Relationships with international marketing companies
- Visitor information centre
- Commercial bed stock in the area
- Hotel partnership
- Independent evaluations
- Hotel availability
- Duration of event

Please note: non-commercial bednights (camping, motorhomes etc) cannot be included as part of the economic calculator. However, Tourism NI will consider these bednights separately alongside the rest of your application. Therefore please ensure you clearly outline the rationale for achieving these additional bednights.

### **6.3 Tourism economic impact**

The tourism economic impact of an event refers to the total amount of additional expenditure generated within a defined area as a direct consequence of staging the event. For most events, spending by visitors from outside Northern Ireland, and in particular on accommodation, is one of the biggest factors in generating economic impact.

However, spending by event organisers and participants is another important consideration. If participant costs are subsidised it is important to enter this total within the calculator. Please note the total amount should be calculated, rather than an individual subsidy rate indicated. For example, a subsidy of £80 is paid to 50 participants, therefore the total subsidy is  $£80 \times 50 = £4,000$ .

#### **Economic calculator**

Please complete the economic calculator for which a template will be provided in the application form.

Tourism NI uses the Event Impact Model to assess the return on investment on funding awarded. The model reflects Northern Ireland levels of expenditure by day visitors and those on overnight trips.

International tourism events receiving funding from Tourism NI must achieve a minimum return on investment of 5:1. Please ensure you clearly outline where all of the figures inserted in the calculator have come from and any assumptions, evidence and rationale you have used to substantiate the figures.

### **7. Non-Monetary Benefits**

Within this section of the business plan you should detail the additional non-monetary benefits that holding the event will bring to your area/economy. Examples of these non-monetary benefits may include:

#### **Event taking place in the shoulder season**

- When will your event occur?
- Is this outside the typical tourism season?
- Will this event encourage people to visit Northern Ireland at a different time of year?



## **Event taking place across Northern Ireland**

- Will the event encourage people to go to certain areas in Northern Ireland?
- Will it encourage people to move around Northern Ireland?

### **7.1 Social Impact**

Within this section please outline the measures that will be taken to increase positive impact on local communities for example, training programmes, initiatives around diversity and inclusion, engaging hard to reach socio demographics and so on. Social impact is a vital requirement of the scheme and you must outline how your event is delivering in this area. It is important you detail the opportunities the event will bring and how they will produce these social benefits.

International events can deliver directly or act as a catalyst for wider social impacts such as:

- Development of communities
- Enhancement of civic pride
- Advancement of skills
- Volunteer opportunities, training etc.

The development of people's skills and volunteering through the events is an important social impact in its own right. Events offer diverse opportunities for people to gain experiences and skills that they may not be able to develop within their own working environments.

Events may offer training opportunities to upskill the workforce, providing the volunteer workforce with transferable skills, and the host region with better quality and support for future events.

Volunteering helps people develop skills which can help them find work or improve their career prospects. The successful delivery of many events relies on the support of volunteers. People engaged by events in these ways are typically sourced from the host area although larger events requiring specialist experience might recruit volunteers from elsewhere. Some events also provide people with practical training opportunities.

At a basic level, the recommended indicators to evaluate that provide evidence of the opportunities provided by events for people (especially those from the host area) to volunteer and benefit from real life work experiences in all aspects of event management are outlined below:

- The number of volunteers from the host area e.g. town, city, or region
- The total number of volunteer hours delivered in host area i.e. the number of volunteers x average number of hours contributed per volunteer
- The number of young people (16-25 year olds) from the host area engaged on work placement and/or internship programmes.

Measurement of these indicators requires event organisers to maintain an accurate and transparent database of the people that they recruit to volunteer or take part in practical training opportunities linked to the planning, preparation and delivery of the event.

Other aspects linked to volunteering that event organisers may wish to evaluate depending on their aims and objectives include:

- The number of volunteers from targeted groups such as those with a disability or on low income
- The economic value of the time contributed by volunteers to the event.
- Volunteer experiences, perceived benefits and their likelihood of volunteering in the future. A post event online survey could be designed to gauge volunteer perceptions and experience at your event.

## 7.2 Environmental sustainability

Environmental change is one of the biggest challenges facing the events sector. Alongside the desire to act responsibly, event organisers are facing pressure to deliver events that are sustainable and environmentally responsible.

Applicants must identify the impact their event may have on the environment and the mitigation measures they will put in place to minimise these. You should also demonstrate how the event will provide a positive impact to Northern Ireland's sustainability ambitions.

Applicants should consider and present the following:

- Environmental or sustainability policies in place for the event or the proposed activity that is being considered.
- The measures that will be taken to increase positive environmental impacts and reduce negative impacts. For example use of local suppliers, increasing biodiversity, minimising the carbon footprint of the event, and efficient energy uses.

Applicants should consider and clearly outline how they are addressing environmental sustainability in following areas within their business plan:

- Event planning and management
- Venue
- Catering
- Overlay and dressing
- Energy
- Water
- Waste management and minimisation programme and policy: sources of information and example could include Wrap UK or local equivalents.
- Transportation and distribution
- Procurement and supply chain
- Sourcing materials and supplies from sustainable sources
- Communication
- Land replenishment
- Noise pollution
- Accreditation

It is not sufficient to state that the venue or locations where an event is taking place has bins in place or that the local council will collect refuse as part of their normal service. Event organisers must detail what environmental measures they are taking specifically for the event.

For further guidance, please refer to Tourism NI's Sustainability Toolkit which is available on our website [here](#).

## 8. Equality of opportunity, accessibility, and good relations

### 8.1 Vision for events

As outlined in Section 1.2, Tourism NI's vision for events includes reference that all experiences that Tourism NI support and fund must be open and inclusive to all visitors, including all communities across Northern Ireland and should not offend or insult the public or damage community relations.

This vision has been developed to ensure that Tourism NI fulfils its statutory duty to promote "good relations" in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Equality Commission of Northern Ireland consider that promoting good relations means "***the growth of relations and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledges the religious, political***

***and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms”.***

As a result, Tourism NI shall consider how the event shall promote such good relations or whether the event aligns with its statutory obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 or shall cause Tourism NI to contravene such statutory obligations.

## **8.2 Equality of opportunity and accessibility**

As applicants will be aware, there is a vast network of equality and anti-discrimination laws to protect the rights of individuals. The equality and anti-discrimination laws will be relevant to applicants as an employer, in any of its volunteer programmes, through its procurement of goods and services, in its delivery of the event and in particular in ensuring access to the event for all.

Applicants must at all times comply with all applicable fair employment, equality of treatment and anti-discrimination legislation, including but not limited to: the Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 as amended by the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1988, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, The Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 as amended by the 2003 Regulations.

It will be necessary for applicants to have policies and practices in place to ensure that the event has due regard for the need to promote equality of treatment and opportunity between:

- persons of different religious beliefs or political opinions;
- men and women or married and unmarried persons;
- persons of different ages;
- persons of differing sexual orientation;
- persons with and without dependants (including women who are pregnant or on maternity leave and men on paternity leave);
- persons of different racial groups (within the meaning of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997); and
- persons with and without a disability (within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995).

While the above are legal requirements which all events must comply, Tourism NI's vision is to create events that are inclusive and welcoming to all. Applicants should demonstrate how the event programming, content, delivery and operations fulfil this vision and go the extra mile to be as inclusive as possible.

## **8.3 Content of your Business Plan in respect of equality of opportunity, accessibility and good relations**

As set out at above, events funded under the International Tourism Events Fund must align with Tourism NI's statutory obligation to promote good relations and also provide for equality of opportunity and accessibility in line with fair employment, equality of treatment and anti-discrimination legislation.

Whilst Tourism NI does not intend to act as curators of any event that is successful in its application to the International Tourism Event Fund, it will be necessary for any successful event to promote equality of opportunity and good relations to ensure public funds are applied appropriately and that Tourism NI complies with its statutory obligations as a public body.

Within your business plan you must evidence your engagement with this section 8. This may include:

- reference to your policies and procedures to evidence compliance with equality and anti-discrimination laws as referenced above;

- evidence how the event shall promote equality of treatment and opportunity through its programme, risk assessments, accessibility measures and adjustments, specific contract terms with suppliers and service providers,
- how the event shall promote good relations as defined above, including but not limited to:
  - (i) how the event shall be inclusive, from its content, promotion to your policies;
  - (ii) how the event shall promote respect, equity and trust across the different communities of Northern Ireland society;
  - (iii) evidence that the event content (including but not limited to the event performers and their content) would not insult or offend the public, or any community, or damage community relations;
  - (iv) evidence that the event shall refrain from including any content within the event which is party political or for political purposes. For the purpose of this guidance a “political purpose” is any purpose that is aimed at either furthering the interests of a political party or campaign on behalf of or in alignment with a political party;
  - (v) the security measures and procedures for the event to ensure the health and safety of all attendees from members of the public, employees of the Applicant, suppliers and performers, and which shall consider the necessary remedial actions to ensure the protection of all attendees.

You should provide Tourism NI with your Good Relations Policy or equivalent (where available).

## 9. Monitoring and evaluation

Please detail how you propose to monitor progress and achievement of your objectives. You should include details and plans for data gathering, ongoing monitoring, and post-project evaluation of your event. Headings could include:

**Event delivery:** describe how you will keep track of event delivery, including the management and administration systems that will ensure the smooth running of the event. This should also include processes in place to monitor and manage your budget.

**Other records:** explain the other systems you will put in place to monitor progress of each operation, when will you do it, who will do it, etc.

**Monitoring and evaluation of outcomes:** how will you measure objectives and outcomes against levels of achievement (marketing, budget, etc.) and how will you provide reports? Potential sources of data on attendee numbers, spend, marketing reach etc can include:

- Ticket sales
- Online booking systems
- Postcodes of attendees
- Police counts
- Event surveys
- Collaborations with Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland
- Data from event partners
- Independent evaluations

**Risk factors:** identify key risk factors e.g. finances, operations, reputation, legal, audience, health & safety, etc. How will you manage and mitigate risks?

Please provide an initial risk assessment.

## 10 ANNEX B: MARKETING PLAN

### 1 Introduction

This section provides guidance on the information you should include in your marketing plan, to be submitted as part of your application.

A comprehensive marketing plan is compulsory for the delivery of a successful event. It will help you to direct activity to grow your event and focus your marketing efforts. The right marketing plan should clearly identify:

- what you are hoping to achieve
- what did you learn from previous events? What worked well/did not work previously?
- who is your target audience
- what your event needs to deliver to attract this audience
- how you will market the event to them
- how much it will cost
- how you will know if it is a success.

As part of your application you must provide this information for assessment by Tourism NI. This will help gauge whether your event is a tourism event with appropriate marketing activity that will attract national and international visitors, staying overnight in commercial accommodation. You must provide a rationale for your activity and assumptions.

There is guidance on Tourism NI's website, but this in particular may be helpful for guidance on routes to market, and target markets: [How to develop and grow a viable and sustainable tourism business](#)

## **2 Marketing objectives**

You should consider your event's marketing objectives and how you plan to deliver on these.

Make sure your objectives are SMART, practical and measurable.

- Specific: be accurate with numbers you want to achieve
- Measurable: Be sure that your objectives can be monitored in progress and confirm achievements
- Actionable: Is it possible? Can you do it?
- Reasonable: Be sure that it is realistically attainable
- Timed: Incorporate deadlines and timeframes
- Budget: Is the budget realistic, proportionate, and sufficient to deliver on the event's international ambitions

Usually these marketing objectives can be focused on:

- Promotion
- Increasing sales
- Increasing brand awareness of the event
- Communication to key target audiences
- Attracting new customers
- Generating revenue and profit
- Improving customer satisfaction
- Growing international visitors
- Increasing out of state followers
- Improving customer retention and brand loyalty
- Social media metrics
- Establishing new partnerships
- Increasing PR reach.

This is a guide only, and your marketing objectives may focus on other areas.

## **3. Planning your marketing activity**

### **(i) Target audience**

It is not enough to simply list various target markets and visitor segments. It is important that you clearly indicate how you decided on your target audience, supported by any research you conducted, or previous evaluations that you carried out. You could include previous learnings from your event / marketing, what marketing tactics worked well/did not work well previously?

The local market is important; however you need to think beyond Northern Ireland. As an international event you must clearly demonstrate how you will market to and reach out of state visitors. Your marketing plan must clearly demonstrate how you will grow your international visitor community.

## **(ii) Marketing channels**

You must consider which marketing channels will be most effective to reach your intended target audience(s) and why, broken down by segment and by target market. Different marketing channels will be more appropriate for different markets.

Please note that the below list is not a definitive listing but provided for your consideration:

- Advertising: print, radio, TV, outdoor, digital advertising to include display, social media, native, search, video, and email marketing
- Website: bespoke website for your event, upgrading your current site to ensure content is relevant, accessible and engaging, online booking, visitor content such as plan your trip information, itineraries etc
- Social and digital: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter podcasts, blogs, influencers etc.
- Ezines and/or e-newsletters: consider if you have a database of customers who you can legally email to promote your event
- Direct selling: consider if you are going to directly sell your event tickets
- Outdoor advertising: billboards, street furniture, POS displays, bus shelters, kiosks, etc.
- Friends/ambassadors' programmes
- Press and media relations: press launches, press releases, media events, promotions and activity, media partnerships etc.
- Private sponsorship opportunities including marketing channels and support offered. Does the sponsorship add value e.g. align with market segments, target new audiences using socials, mailing lists etc.
- Partnership and collaborative marketing: such as accommodation partners, tourism experience providers, attractions etc.
- Fam trips
- Strategic partnerships e.g. Tourism Ireland, local authorities, etc.
- Print: posters, leaflets, postcards, programmes, inserts in national newspapers etc.
- Direct mail: offers, coupons etc.
- Content creation: videography, photography, streaming etc.

## **(iii) Key items for consideration**

- How will you target international visitors?
- What international markets and visitor segments are you targeting?
- Are the markets and segments relevant to your event?
- What marketing channels are you using to target international visitors and why?
- What messages do you wish to communicate?
- How will your event align with the Embrace A Giant Spirit brand?
- Do you have the necessary resources/budgets?
- Is the budget targeting international visitors?
- Is the budget appropriately aligned to target international visitors?
- Is the budget appropriate to the size, scale and expected visitor volume for your event?
- Do you have the necessary skills and expertise to deliver on the marketing plan or will you bring in external support, or a combination of both?
- Are you working with Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland? Consider the other businesses, organisations and events that you can work with to promote i.e. Tourism NI (in both NI and in the ROI markets), Tourism Ireland, local councils, RTP's, city bid teams, local clusters, tourism experience providers, accommodation providers, attractions, private businesses, etc?

- Is the information that you handle GDPR compliant? It may be helpful to familiarise yourself with the GDPR guidelines to ensure your event complies with the legislation. The Information Commissioner's Office has produced a GDPR guide for organisations which is available on the ICO website <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection>

#### 4. Marketing action plan

As part of the application process, you must upload your marketing action plan. Please provide as much detail as possible on your marketing channels, frequency, reach and so on.

It is vital that the information contained in this section links with all other areas of the plan and you outline in one cohesive action plan table what exact activities you will undertake regarding:

- Marketing
- Public Relations
- Social and digital.

##### (i) Marketing action plan

The marketing action plan must clearly indicate what activity is being undertaken in international markets and what markets and visitor segments you are targeting. Detail which should be considered for inclusion is:

1. Marketing channels to be employed and the activity to be undertaken (include specific details).
  - a. TV, radio and press**  
Please include how you will capitalise on broadcast, press and outdoor channels for each market and visitor segment that you are targeting. It is vital that all details are included with specifics to the audience you are trying to reach to ensure the plan will deliver on the objectives.
  - b. Social and digital**  
Please include how you will capitalise on social and digital channels for each market and visitor segment that you are targeting. It is vital that all details are included with specifics to the audience you are trying to reach to ensure the plan will deliver on the objectives.
  - c. Public relations**  
Please include how you intend to capitalise on PR opportunities and how you plan to gain positive PR for NI through both online and traditional media channels. It is vital that all details are included with specifics to the audience you are trying to reach to ensure the plan will deliver on the objectives.
2. Target market for each marketing channel: what region/country this will target? As an international event, there must be evidence of how you will target out of state visitors.
3. Visitor segments that you will target:  
More information on the ROI market can be found here <https://www.tourismni.com/business-guidance/opportunities-campaigns/roi-market/>  
Domestic market details can be found here <https://www.tourismni.com/business-guidance/opportunities-campaigns/ni-domestic-market/>
4. Quantity of what is to be delivered: for example, frequency of radio ads, number of outdoor placements, number of press inserts etc.
5. Potential audience reach of the marketing channel: for example, TV/VOD impressions, radio reach, social media reach, digital impressions, etc.
6. Costs: please detail the costs for each channel identified, please provide details on appropriate spend aligned to marketing to international audiences.

7. Dates: please highlight the specific timings for each marketing channel to be employed in all markets e.g. dates when adverts will be placed in press, dates of TV coverage etc.

## 5. Marketing budget summary

A summary breakdown of the marketing plan budget is required. Your marketing budget should clearly show:

- A breakdown of projected costs across marketing channels
- Planned marketing expenditure in each target market, including the percentage per target market against your overall marketing spend
- Percentage of marketing budget against your projected ticket income. This is important to gauge whether your planned marketing spend is appropriate and will return an increased income for your event.

**Note to applicant: please ensure that the marketing budget presented aligns with the detail presented in the overall budget within your business plan.**

## 6. Measurement and evaluation

In this section you must clearly demonstrate how you will measure the success of your marketing activity. As a marketing plan is fluid, it will constantly evolve and develop. It is important to track progress on a regular basis of how the marketing activity is delivering against event objectives. This will also enable the marketing action plan to be adjusted if required to ensure results.

You should consider:

- How are you going to measure the success of the plan?
- How often will you review the plan?
- If targets are not being met, will you relook and re-evaluate to get on track?
- How will you evaluate if you've met your KPIs?
- Post event evaluation: it is important to carry out a post event evaluation to ensure the Marketing Plan has delivered on the objectives outlined.
- How will you plan to evaluate the Marketing Plan and help improve the marketing for the future?
- Do you have an independent review of Marketing, PR and Digital achieved for your event?
- Please provide figures generated and source for last event held.

### CONTACT DETAILS

Tourism NI Events Unit  
Tourism NI  
Floors 10-12 Linum Chambers  
Bedford Square  
Bedford Street  
Belfast BT2 7ES

Tel: 028 9044 1656

Email: [eventsunit@tourismni.com](mailto:eventsunit@tourismni.com)

Web: [www.tourismni.com/events](http://www.tourismni.com/events)