Guidelines for Applicants

NATIONAL TOURISM EVENTS SPONSORSHIP SCHEME 2023/24

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Tourism NI Tourism Events Funding Programme

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). See separate Guidelines for this scheme at **Guidelines for Applicants (tourismni.com**
- National Tourism Events Sponsorship Scheme (NTESS)

The two schemes complement each other and run concurrently, maximising the benefits to Northern Ireland. The NTESS will offer financial support 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. National 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 or extend their stay in Northern Ireland, generating economic return through visitor bednights and spend.

1.2 Setting the scene

Over the next number of years, the tourism marketplace, from both a destination and individual business perspective, will be fiercely competitive. The last decade has seen events play an important role in supporting the exceptional growth of tourism. They can also play an important role in post-COVID recovery for the wider tourism industry, and provide an opportunity to enhance and support the Northern Ireland experience brand.

The recent COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect right across Northern Ireland, with far-reaching consequences for the tourism sector. While in the current climate it is difficult to make any predictions, it is unlikely that the tourism sector will return to pre-COVID revenue levels for a number of years. It is also highly likely that the majority of demand in the short-to medium term will be from closer-to-home markets. More information on market reviews can be found at **Build your Tourism Business - Support | Tourism NI**.

1.3 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 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 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 NTESS align with Tourism NI's statutory duties.

The key objectives for all events supported by Tourism NI 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.

2. NATIONAL TOURISM EVENTS SPONSORSHIP SCHEME

2.1 Objectives and principles

Objectives

The aim of the NTESS is to support growth in visitor numbers and visitor spend. The key objectives of supporting events will be to maximise opportunities to:
- Enhance the visitor experience
- Generate economic benefits for Northern Ireland through increased visitor numbers and spend
- Enhance the appeal and profile of the area
- Elongate the tourism season
- Address regional spread
- Alignment with the brand "Embrace a Giant Spirit".

Principles

The NTESS is a sponsorship 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'. When additionality occurs, the event has usually been able to enhance the visitor experience, has improved the opportunities to grow visitor spend, and enhance the marketing and appeal of Northern Ireland through the addition of Tourism NI financial support.

- **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 supported must be tourism events of national significance in order to maximise the value of support from Tourism NI. They may attract visitors from outside the area where the event is taking place i.e. the rest of NI, ROI, GB, and overseas.

2.2   Definition of a tourism event

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. National events endorse geographical spread and exploration of all destinations and enhance off peak times where there is surplus capacity in our tourism industry, generating additional visitor and participant spend, increasing the occupancy rate for local accommodation providers, providing a positive image of Northern Ireland, give the visitor a true Northern Ireland experience, and leave a lasting legacy.

Tourism events showcase Northern Ireland's regions and destinations, allowing our visitors to get closer to our authentic people, places and personality through experiencing the real Northern Ireland. These events cover a wide range of themes and areas such as activities, music, culture, food, art, and theatre. Certain events will appeal to niche markets and appeal to specific visitor segments.

National tourism events should aim to deliver an economic return of £5:£1 on Tourism NI's investment.

2.3   Parameters

The NTESS 2023/24 will offer financial support to eligible events taking place between **1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024.**

Events must satisfy the parameters below to apply for the NTESS:
- Event date/s – the event must take place between **1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024** (events must take place on one day or over a period of consecutive days).
- Total visitor numbers **greater than 1,000**.
- Events must deliver a high-quality experience that is distinct to Northern Ireland and align with the Embrace a Giant Spirit Brand.
- Events must deliver appropriate marketing activity to target key visitor segments.
- Events must have a **minimum income of £50,000** through ticket sales, private sponsorship, other public sector, merchandise etc. (prior to receiving monies from Tourism NI).
- Events must have an overall **minimum expenditure of £50,000** (prior to receiving monies from Tourism NI).
- Events are anticipated to deliver an **aimed return on investment of 5:1**.
- **Tourism NI support <u>cannot be included</u> as part of the minimum income requirement.** This is because your event should be able to proceed without our financial support.
- In-kind support is not included in the budget, although there is an opportunity elsewhere in the application to detail in-kind support.
- Events must be able to demonstrate the clear and measurable impact of the sponsorship award.

2.4   Financial support available

Tourism NI will seek to provide financial support for National Tourism Events which provide an authentic visitor experience. The value of the packages available will be:

- **£10,000**
- **£20,000**
- **£30,000**

All awards are inclusive of VAT.

There is a finite budget available to support applications to the scheme. Successful applications will be selected on their ability to meet the full requirements of the scheme.

2.5   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.

Event organisers may only submit one application per event to the NTESS. Any financial award offered will depend on the overall budget available to Tourism NI and 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.

Events eligible for sponsorship support would be:

- **Live, public facing tourism events** – which welcome audiences in person to spectate or participate safely.
- **Hybrid tourism events** – for the purposes of this scheme, hybrid events are categorised as events that have an in-person opportunity to attend an event, alongside an online opportunity to engage with the event.

What type of events are not eligible to apply?

- Conferences/exhibitions
- Community festivals

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

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. We expect all event organisers to act in a similarly respectful manner across all communications, both in person and online. Abuse of staff will not be tolerated.

3. **THE APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

3.1 **How to apply**

Applications must be submitted via the online application system. The online application system will open on **Monday 5 December 2022 at 10am**. Full applications must be completed and submitted online by **noon on Monday 16 January 2023**. **No applications received after this date will be considered.**

It is important that applicants demonstrate in their application, through example and evidence, how their event meets the requirements of the scheme. **It is not enough to copy text from the guidance notes.**

Please note, if you have previously used Tourism NI's online Flexigrant system, you should use your existing username and password to apply. If you are a new user, please register to gain access to the application form.

The application form will require applicants to 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 evidence to support their application.

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 NTESS, its obligation to promote good relations (as defined in *Section 4.14 Equality of Opportunity, Accessibility and Good Relations*) 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.

3.2 Assessment of applications

All applications received to the NTESS within the open call period will be assessed in a just and fair manner. Applications will be assessed and decisions on awards made by panels comprising Tourism NI Senior Management and where appropriate, external representatives. A preliminary assessment will be completed to ensure the event meets the parameters of the scheme. Applications that do not pass this preliminary assessment will not progress to full review.

Tourism NI will appraise your application to the NTESS by taking account of the areas detailed below:

i. Event visitor experience
Describe the authentic Northern Ireland experience on offer for visitors to the event, taking into consideration the Embrace a Giant Spirit Brand

ii. Tourism economic impact
Does the event generate additional expenditure within a defined area as a result of staging the event**?**

iii. Marketing
Demonstrate how your event marketing plan will target visitors, especially from outside Northern Ireland and those out-of-state visitors already in Northern Ireland. What activity is being undertaken and which visitor segments are you targeting?

iv. Finance
Is the budget appropriate for the activity that is planned?

v. Tourism economic impact and additionality of the sponsorship award
The applicant will need to demonstrate the impact of receiving an award.

vi. Event management and governance
The applicant must outline the event management and governance in place for the event.

vii. Environmental sustainability
The applicant must outline relevant policies and procedures in place for the event.

viii. Social impacts
The applicant must identify the wider social impacts of the event taking place.

ix. Equality of opportunity, accessibility and good relations
The applicant must have policies and practices in place to ensure that the event has due regard for the need to promote equality of opportunity and accessibility for all persons attending the event, as well as promotion good relations.

3.3 Scoring

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

INITIAL REVIEW	
Event Date/s	Must take place between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024
Visitor Numbers	Must have a minimum of 1,000 visitors attending the event
Event Budget	Must have a minimum income of £50,000 and minimum expenditure of £50,000 (not including Tourism NI monies)

Event Programme and Visitor Experience	Must be able to demonstrate a high-quality visitor experience and evidence of brand alignment

If any of the above areas are not fulfilled, the application will not proceed to full assessment.

	SCORED CRITERIA	Maximum Score
1.	Visitor experience	15
2a.	Visitor and participant numbers	10
2b.	Visitor and participant commercial bednights	5
2c.	Direct economic impact	5
3.	Marketing	15
4.	Finance	5
5.	Additional tourism impact of the sponsorship award	10

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

Weighting Indicator	Score
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

	PASS/FAIL	
6.	Event management and governance	Pass/Fail
7.	Environmental sustainability	Pass/Fail
8.	Social impacts	Pass/Fail
9.	Equality of opportunity, accessibility and good relations	Pass/Fail

Tourism NI will notify all applicants to the NTESS of its decision as soon as possible after the assessment process is complete. Tourism NI's decision shall be final; there is no appeal process.

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. All awards are inclusive of VAT. The final Tourism NI sponsorship award will not exceed 50% of total event cost.

Unsuccessful applicants will also be notified by email. If your application to the NTESS is unsuccessful and you wish to receive feedback in respect of your application, please contact **eventsunit@tourismni.com**. We will endeavour to complete feedback at the earliest convenience. However this may be delayed due to capacity within the Events Unit.

3.4   Sponsorship agreement

You will then be issued with a Sponsorship Agreement which constitutes a formal contract. Deliverables will be agreed with you which will include a tailored benefits package for Tourism NI. The Tourism NI events unit will arrange a call with you to discuss this. You will be required to sign and return the Sponsorship Agreement within 14 days of issue.

4.   WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

4.1   Event visitor experience

Tourism NI's objective is to increase the growth in visitors to Northern Ireland. National events must be able to demonstrate how they will attract visitors in person (and online) through their event content

and how they will enhance the visitor event experience. This is your opportunity to demonstrate how your event can deliver on this.

You must clearly provide sufficient detail to understand what each day (or a typical day) of the event will consist of and how it will deliver on Northern Ireland Embrace a Giant Spirit brand. It is important that you read the toolkits about Northern Ireland Embrace a Giant Spirit which can be found here: **Northern Ireland's Embrace a Giant Spirit | Tourism NI**.

Within this section of the application, you should identify the visitor experience and what you can realistically deliver for in-person attendance or hybrid event, clearly outlining your event programme and content. Consider the following:

- What is the event experience?

- What are the elements of your event in which visitors can get involved? Describe how visitors will get 'hands-on' if appropriate.

- How will the event animate and showcase other tourism assets in the area?

- Think about your welcome at the event including online – what is the visitor's first experience?

- How will your event programme be curated?

- What is your seamless visitor journey? Consider how you present, engage and inform your visitor through all communication channels, to provide them with information such as:
  o ticketing
  o transport links
  o car-parking
  o food and drink
  o accommodation
  o other things to see and do in the area.

If you are delivering a hybrid experience, please detail the visitor journey online. Please include:

- production
- ticketing
- event content
- how you will keep the audience engaged
- showcasing the area where the event is taking place.

4.2   Alignment with Embrace a Giant Spirit

It is important that the event showcases the place and personality of Northern Ireland. You should outline what you plan to do to deliver a bighearted experience at your event. Consider:

- What is original and unique about your event?

- How does it animate Northern Ireland e.g., food, location, people, culture etc.?

- What is distinctly Northern Ireland about this experience?

- How will visitors be in contact with local people?

- What legends and stories will you bring to life through the event?

- How will the event awaken the giant spirit in visitors and make a lasting impact/impression on them?

- What emotion/reaction are you aiming to awaken in visitors to your event? What feelings will you invoke in the visitor? Why do people attend your event and how does this make them feel?

- Will you work in partnership to develop event packages with other local providers/suppliers? Think about:
  - working with accommodation providers e.g. bednights in hotels
  - encouraging people into the area for food and drink venues
  - allowing locals to showcase their produce/ crafts
  - showcasing local communities
  - involving local communities in the event
  - utilising venues and different locations within the area
  - job creation
  - volunteer opportunities
  - how the event will animate and showcase other tourism assets in the area

4.3   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 national standout and appeal. Example event types include:

- 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).

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

4.4   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.

The tourism economic impact of an events is calculated by taking account of the following areas:

- Visitor and participant numbers;
- Visitor and participant commercial bednights;
- Event spend both inside and outside Northern Ireland.

4.5   Visitor and participant numbers

Events applying to the NTESS must have a **minimum of 1,000** in-person visitors attending the event. Please note: live and hybrid events must have 1,000 visitors not including an online audience.

Events applying to the NTESS must also demonstrate the event's ability to attract visitors and participants from outside the town/city where the event takes place, and the event's ability to deliver visitor spend and/or participant spend to the economy.

It is important to be open and honest when submitting the projected number of visitors and participants (and online live audience if applicable) who will attend the event. **Please ensure that you keep your visitor and participant numbers (and online audience numbers if applicable) separate**.

You will be asked to demonstrate the event's potential to attract visitors, participants and an online live audience to areas of Northern Ireland, during and/or after the event. You will be asked to enter the total visitor and participant numbers and online live audience numbers projected for your event as well as a percentage breakdown of where visitors, participants and online live audience will come from.

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 1,000 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.

You must provide the methodology you use to calculate the percentage breakdowns. Your explanation should take into account whether your event is ticketed or free to watch:

Ticketed event

Measuring attendance at ticketed events can be monitored through ticket sales or tickets surrendered on entrance to gain admission. You also need to take account of free or complimentary tickets and ensure this all tallies with your ticket numbers. If online, you can consider the analytics that will be available for your event, or previous event statistics, your contacts database, targeting of marketing, and the results of any audience research studies you have undertaken.

Non-ticketed event

Measuring non-ticketed events is more difficult as people can chance upon or drift in and out of an event. Suggested considerations when measuring attendance at non-ticketed events are:

- Venue capacity
- Number of entrances to the event
- If people can watch from different locations

If the event is hybrid, for the online element you can consider the analytics that will be available for your event, or previous event statistics, your contacts database, targeting of marketing, and the results of any audience research studies you have undertaken.

Other ways of measuring event attendance numbers

- Surveys from previous event/s (Please provide details on survey size, year of survey, etc.)
- Benchmarking against similar event/s
- Online following e.g. event social media accounts
- Database information
- Market research

For participants, it is important to give a clear breakdown of the participant roles and number for each subgroup.

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 'live online audience' for tourism events?

For hybrid events there will be an online audience as well as live attendees. These are people who will view your event live online. They can buy a ticket to view the event, or it can be free to view. Please note persons viewing the content after the event should <u>not be included</u> in this section and can be recorded within the marketing section of the application.

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. For example, typical subgroups of participants will include:

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

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

4.6   Visitor and participant commercial bednights

You will be asked to provide the methodology you used to calculate the bednights generated as a result of your event if applicable. This will include the number of bednights for each type of accommodation and average number of days that visitors and participants will stay overnight, as a result of the event.

We are keen to know all types of bednights available to the visitor/participant e.g.:

- Commercial bednights (hotel, B&B, guest house, self-catering)
- Non-Commercial bednights (camping, motorhomes)

- Staying with family and friends

Clearly record the following:

- Number of visitors staying overnight
- Number of nights visitors will stay
- Number of participants staying overnight
- Number of nights participants will stay
- Methodology used to capture the numbers

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, staying with family and friends 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.

We ask that you are realistic with your numbers and do not over inflate the bednights figures.

4.7   Direct 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.

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, spend by visitors and participants from outside the town/ city where the event is taking place, in particular on accommodation, is one of the biggest factors in generating economic impact.

However, spend by event organisers is another important consideration and local businesses can benefit from an event taking place, as well as providing job opportunities and upskilling the local work force. 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 x 50 = £4,000.

It is important to provide a separate breakdown of visitors and participants, and if applicable, online live audiences. We ask that you are realistic with your numbers and do not over inflate the visitor/participant/online live audience numbers and bednights. If participant costs are subsidised it is important to include this total.

 You will be required to complete an economic calculator, for which a template will be provided in the application form. A template for the economic calculator can be accessed **here**.

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.

National tourism events receiving financial support from Tourism NI should aim for 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.

4.8   Marketing

National tourism events that can encourage visitors to Northern Ireland and increase their dwell time and spend are essential to Northern Ireland's tourism economy. In this section you should explain how your planned marketing activities and associated budget will attract visitors to your event. You should ensure that the assessor is provided with confidence that the marketing plan and spend:

- is targeting the people who are interested in your event programme and experience.
- will attract the visitor and participant numbers projected, including local, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, or further afield.
- is affordable and achievable.
- generates content that can be used by you as the event organiser, and Tourism NI.
- aligns with the Embrace a Giant Spirit brand.

Key areas of focus are:

a. Priority visitor segments and marketing channels
b. Online and digital
c. Marketing budget.

In addition to answering questions about your activity, you should submit the marketing plan template (included in the application form) in support of your application.

a.   Priority visitor segments and marketing channels

In this section, you should demonstrate how your event marketing plan will target visitors, especially from outside Northern Ireland and those out-of-state visitors already in Northern Ireland. The plan must clearly indicate what activity is being undertaken to target these visitor segments using all available marketing channels.

- **Marketing objectives**
Please provide details on your event's marketing objectives and how you plan to deliver on these. Make sure your objectives are SMART, practical, and measurable. Marketing objectives could be focused on promotion, increased ticket sales, increasing out of state followers, social media metrics or establishing new partnerships.

- **Priority visitor segments**
Please provide details of the visitor segments and markets you will be targeting. Tourism NI has identified a number of priority visitor segments. Information on these priority visitor segments can be found at: **Northern Ireland Domestic Tourism Strategy** and **ROI Market Strategy 2021 – 2026**.

- **Marketing channels**
Please provide details of the marketing channels and collaborative marketing activities you will use as part of your event marketing plan.

Marketing channels could include media advertising, digital and online, and publicity and PR channels. Collaborative marketing activities could include collaborating on competitions and giveaways, sharing user-generated content, guest blogging, brand ambassador programme, social media takeovers. Examples of collaborative marketing partners include working with Tourism NI (in both NI and in the ROI markets), Tourism Ireland, local councils, RTPs, city bid teams, local clusters, tourism experience providers, accommodation providers, attractions, private businesses.

A template marketing plan is provided for you to submit alongside the application form. Only complete the sections within the template that are applicable to your event marketing plan, submitting as much detail as possible on the marketing channels you will use.

- **Monitoring and evaluation**

Please provide details of how you will monitor and evaluate the marketing plan and assess whether it has met the marketing objectives you have set.

b. Online and digital

In this section, you must provide details of the online channels you will use to promote your event and online marketing content you will develop to generate interest for your chosen visitor segments and overseas visitors.

- **Website and ticketing platform**

Please provide details of the event website address and demonstrate how you will use it to reach your chosen audience and enhance the visitor journey.

Tourism NI has produced a series of training materials to help you package your event by upselling and cross-selling. Guidance can be found at: **E-commerce for tourism events** and **Ticketing and the need to prebook/contactless innovations & considerations**.

- **Social media channels**

Please provide details of the event's social media activity presence and how you will use these to promote your event, reach your chosen audience and enhance the visitor journey.

Tourism NI has produced a series of training materials to help you use social media to drive sales and market your event successfully. Guidance can be found at: **Events Industry Support in Northern Ireland**.

- **Online marketing content**

Please provide details of how you will develop online marketing content. Please demonstrate the types of content marketing you have or will develop and how you will use the content to enhance the promotion of your event, encourage attendance from overseas audiences and how it aligns with the Embrace a Giant Spirit brand.

Tourism NI has produced a series of courses to provide you with the expertise to create content, connect with audiences, build brand awareness, and promote your event. Guidance can be found at: **Content marketing for tourism events**

c. Marketing budget

Please provide details of the marketing budget for your event. You should demonstrate how the budget will be allocated against the most effective marketing channels proposed in your event marketing plan, ensuring that it will help you target the segments you are trying to reach.

Marketing cost examples could include:

- Advertising media (such as television, radio billboards, newspaper ads, digital, and social media)
- Design and production
- Content development
- Merchandise
- Influencer and ambassador fees
- Complimentary tickets, competitions, and giveaways
- Partnership/sponsorship fees and other associated costs
- Media monitoring**.**

4.9   Finance

Events must have a **minimum income of £50,000** through ticket sales, private sponsorship, other public sector, merchandise etc. Tourism NI support **cannot be included** as part of the minimum

income requirements. Events must also have an overall **minimum expenditure of £50,000** prior to receiving monies from Tourism NI.

You will be asked to provide a budget breakdown for your event. It is important not to inflate your budget figures. **Please note, Tourism NI is not a core funder.** Applications that do not provide a budget may be ineligible and may not be scored.

Income sources

Public sector support may include but is not limited to:

- Local Authority
- Arts Council
- Invest NI
- Sport NI
- Department for Communities
- The Executive Office etc.

Self-generated income may include but is not limited to:

- Ticket projections: x number of attendees at £x
- Sponsorship (not including Tourism NI request)
- Merchandising income
- Advertising income
- Food and drink sales
- Trade stands
- Donations.

Other income sources may include but are not limited to:
- Other grants e.g. Department of Foreign Affairs (ROI), National Lottery Funding, EU funding etc.
- Other material sources of income.

Expenditure categories

Expenditure categories detailed in the application form as broken down as below:
- Production and venue costs
- Entertainment/artistic programme
- Marketing and promotion costs
- Health and safety costs
- Administration costs
- Other expenses

Please note that in-kind support is an important element in the delivery of events but should not be included in your budget breakdown. You will be given an opportunity elsewhere to provide information on any in-kind support you may receive.

You will also be asked to provide a budget breakdown for last year's event or the most recent year that the event took place (if applicable).

The assessor will contact the event organiser for further clarification if required. If clarity is not provided, the application score may be reduced.

4.10 Additional tourism impact of the sponsorship award

Additional impact of Tourism NI financial support

'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.

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.

Please note: Tourism NI is NOT a core funder of events. Therefore, events that are applying to this scheme must be able to take place without Tourism NI funding.

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

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

It is important that the applications assessors can understand clearly what additionality this support will bring.

Impact of reduced financial support

Given the current operating environment and severe pressures on budgets and the public purse, Tourism NI needs to understand how a smaller award would impact on your event and 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 a lower band than the requested amount:
- What would the event still deliver in terms of additionality?
- What areas of the event 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?
- What areas would change from a tourism perspective and what would the impact be on economic impact estimations?

4.11 Event management and governance

It is important that relevant event management and governance arrangements are in place for your organisation and for the event. This can include:

- managing and delivering safe and viable events of a scale similar to the event proposed.
- key members of the team; do they have the relevant skills and experience?
- relevant financial information available including financial data on income and costs that provide 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.
- 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.

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 event or 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, Diversion and Inclusion

4.12 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 also consider how they are addressing environmental sustainability in the following areas:

- Event planning and management
- Venue
- Catering
- Overlay and dressing
- Energy
- Water
- Waste management and minimisation programme and policy: sources of information and examples 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 for example 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, and how these will be measured.

For further guidance, please refer to Tourism NI's Sustainability Toolkit which is available on our website **here**.

4.13   Social impacts

Tourism events can deliver wider social impacts such as the development of community and the advancement of skills. The development of people's skills and volunteering through events is not just an important social impact but is also important if future events are to be sustainable. Events offer diverse opportunities for people to gain experiences and skills that they may not be able to develop within their own working environments. 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.

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.

Events may offer training opportunities to up-skill the workforce, provide volunteers with transferrable skills and the host region with better quality support for future events. The benefit for the event organiser is the provision of cost-effective labour, which is sometimes highly skilled in nature and often makes the difference in events becoming financially viable. It is important you detail the opportunities the event will bring and how they will produce these social benefits, and how these will be measured.

4.14   Equality of opportunity, accessibility and good relations

As outlined in Section 1.3, 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 considers 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.

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, 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 with 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.

As set out at above, events supported under the NTESS 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 NTESS, 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.

5. POST EVENT

5.1 Post event evaluation

Events must complete a Post Event Evaluation report 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 form and agreed in your Sponsorship Agreement. It will also include reporting on adherence to all conditions outlined in the Sponsorship Agreement, which Tourism NI will assess as part of the claim process.

You will also be required to provide:

- Evidence proving marketing deliverables and use of logos/branding (examples of evidence required will be included in the Sponsorship Agreement);
- Independent verification of income and expenditure figures. You will be required to provide a letter form an auditor/accountant confirming total income of the event including sponsorship amount from Tourism NI, total expenditure of the event to include sponsorship amount from Tourism NI, and VAT status of the event;
- Updated economic calculator based on actual figures including visitor numbers, participant numbers, bednights for both visitors and participants, total income and total expenditure for the event.

5.2 Payment

Payment will be made in one instalment and should be claimed no later than **ten weeks** after the event. This is a simple post-event reporting process, details of which will be included in the Sponsorship Agreement.

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

Note that the award decision will be made on event plans and information provided at time of application. Should the event deliverables change before or after a Sponsorship Agreement is in place, the award level may be reviewed following an assessment of the revised benefits.

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