## Industry Marketing Programme overview and applicant guidelines

19 November 2026

### 1. Industry Marketing Programme overview

Tourism Northern Ireland's Industry Marketing Programme is designed to stimulate additional tourism industry marketing activity in the Republic of Ireland market. Through a grant, it will financially support eligible tourism organisations to deliver media-based marketing activity that complements Tourism NI campaigns, strengthens Northern Ireland's collective share of voice and helps convert visitor interest into enquiries, bookings and spend.

| Programme budget | £200,000 |
|---|---|
| **Tourism NI support** | Up to 30% of eligible expenditure |
| **Award range** | £500 to £5,000 per successful applicant |
| **Applicant contribution** | At least 70% of eligible expenditure |
| **Target market** | Republic of Ireland |
| **Programme launch date** | 23 November 2026 |
| **Open for applications date** | 23 November 2026 |
| **Applications close date** | 8 December 2026 at 3pm |
| **Activity period** | 1 February to 31 March 2027 |
| **Claims Closing Date** | 23 April 2027 |
| **Application route** | Online through FlexiGrant, accessed from Tourismni.com |

### 2. Programme objectives

The programme aims to:

- increase tourism industry participation in marketing activity targeting the Republic of Ireland;
- increase Northern Ireland's visibility, reach and frequency in a highly competitive market;
- support measurable activity that converts visitor interest into bookings and spend.

### 3. Who can apply?

Applications may be submitted by private-sector organisations and charities and, in certain circumstances, public-sector organisations or councils, subject to meeting the programme eligibility criteria and operating in Northern Ireland. Eligible applicants are expected to include:

- **Visitor accommodation** that is certified by Tourism NI.
- **Visitor attractions and visitor experiences**
- **Public bodies or councils,** but only where the proposed activity directly markets a visitor attraction or visitor experience that the body manages or operates. **Generic destination or place marketing is not eligible.**

Applicants must be legally constituted, able to enter into a Letter of Offer, demonstrate that they can match fund the activity and meet all programme requirements.

Only one application per business/charity/organisation.

## 4. Eligible activity and costs

Applications must be for additional, external, media-based marketing activity, such as paid press, radio, out of home, video, digital or social media, targeted at Republic of Ireland visitors. Activity must:

- run within the programme activity period, from 1 February to 31 March 2027;
- promote an eligible Northern Ireland tourism business, attraction or visitor experience;
- include an appropriate marketing tracking mechanism, such as UTMs, campaign landing pages, analytics or booking data;
- set out expected reach, impacts or impressions, the current baseline where available, a realistic target and how results will be evidenced;
- be delivered consistently with the approved application and Letter of Offer.

### Production and administration costs

Production or administration costs may be eligible **only** where they are directly linked to the approved media buy. These costs must be clearly identified in the Application Form and may account for no more than 20% of the **total** grant awarded.

Examples of eligible production or administration costs include:

- Creative development and design of advertisements.
- Production of advertising assets, including photography, radio edits, videography, copywriting and artwork.
- Adaptation or resizing of creative assets for approved media channels.

- Agency management fees directly related to planning, booking and managing the approved media buy.

Examples of ineligible production or administration costs are detailed below. These examples are provided for guidance only and are not intended to be exhaustive. Tourism NI reserves the right to determine, at its sole discretion, whether any cost is eligible for support under the programme and may require additional information to inform this assessment.

- General business overheads.
- Permanent staff salaries.
- Corporate administrative costs.
- Costs unrelated to the approved media buy.

## 5. Ineligible activity and costs

The programme will not support:

- activity primarily targeting business tourism, weddings or conferences;
- internal communications or promotion that is not consumer-facing;
- website development;
- pre-payment for advertising that will run outside the eligibility period;
- expenditure incurred before formal acceptance of the Letter of Offer, unless expressly authorised in writing; or
- any cost that is not included in the approved application or is not supported by acceptable evidence.

Tourism NI may determine that other costs are ineligible where they do not contribute directly to the programme objectives or do not represent appropriate use of public funding.

## 6. How much can be applied for?

- The minimum Tourism NI award is **£500**.
- The maximum Tourism NI award is **£5,000**.
- Tourism NI may contribute up to **30% of eligible expenditure**.
- The applicant must match fund at least **70% of eligible expenditure**.
- For VAT-registered applicants, eligible costs will exclude recoverable VAT. Applicants who are not VAT registered may include VAT within their eligible costs.

## 7. How to apply

1. Access the application form here www.tourismni.com/industrymarketingprogramme
2. Develop a clear marketing proposal for the Republic of Ireland market, including audience, channels, timing, costs, expected reach, impressions or advertising impacts, proposed tracking approach and the evidence that will be used to demonstrate post-campaign results.
3. Complete the online application and upload all required supporting information by 3pm on 8 December 2026. Late applications will not be accepted for consideration.
4. Submit the application and retain the automated confirmation for your records.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their application is complete and accurate. Tourism NI may seek clarification but is not obliged to accept supporting information submitted after the closing date.

Applicants will be asked to provide a campaign or media plan, supplier estimate, media rate card, quotation or other reasonable evidence supporting the proposed costs. Tourism NI may also request additional information to support the assessment of eligibility and programme requirements.

Applicants must set out how the proposed activity will be measured before, during and after delivery. This should include forecast media outputs, such as total reach, impressions, advertising impacts, frequency where available and the source of these estimates, together with the method that will be used to track post-campaign performance. Successful applicants will be required to provide a post-campaign report showing delivery against the approved plan, including landing page views, engagement, referrals, enquiries, bookings or ticket sales generated as a result of the funded activity, where these measures are relevant to the campaign channel and objective.

## 8. Assessment and decision-making

### Stage 1: basic eligibility and compliance checks

Your activity must meet Tourism NI brand requirements.

After the closing date, we will check that your application meets all mandatory eligibility and compliance requirements. These checks are Pass/Fail, not scored.

We will check that:

- you operate in Northern Ireland and meet the eligibility criteria in Section 3;
- you have submitted only one application;
- you are a legitimate operating business and have provided bank details;
- you can provide at least 70% match funding;
- you applied by the deadline and supplied all required declarations and supporting information;

- your declarations show no duplication or obvious double funding.

Your application must pass all checks to proceed. We may seek clarification where programme rules allow, but you cannot materially rewrite or improve your application after the deadline. Outcomes are Pass, Fail or Clarification Required.

### Stage 2: Initial marketing assessment

The Marketing Team will then check that your proposal meets the following Pass/Fail requirements:

- your main activity is external, consumer-facing, media-based marketing targeting the Republic of Ireland;
- your activity runs between 1 February and 31 March 2027;
- your campaign is realistic and deliverable within your budget and the activity period;
- your costs are eligible and your requested Tourism NI award is between £500 and £5,000;
- if you are VAT registered, your eligible costs exclude recoverable VAT; if you are not VAT registered, you may include VAT in your eligible costs;
- your production and administration costs are clearly identified in your application, directly linked to the approved media buy and account for no more than 20% of the total grant awarded;
- you include an appropriate booking or ticket link and tracking mechanism, and meet the branding requirements above;
- your activity is additional to normal business activity and consistent with your application.

You must pass all checks to proceed to scoring. Outcomes are Pass, Fail or Clarification Required.

### Stage 3: Detailed marketing assessment and scoring

If you pass both checks, you will be assessed against a 100-point framework. A four-person Marketing Assessment Panel will independently score your proposal and supporting evidence against the criteria below, recording reasons for each score. The detailed assessment will consider both the quality of the proposal and the evidence supplied by the applicant.

| Criterion | Maximum score | What will be considered |
|---|---|---|
| **Additionality** | 35 | How the grant enables additional or enhanced Republic of Ireland marketing beyond business as usual: what you would deliver without funding, the extra activity, scale or reach it enables, and supporting evidence, including previous and planned marketing expenditure where available. |
| **Strategic Alignment and Market Impact** | 25 | Clear objectives and a credible Republic of Ireland audience; a strong rationale linking objectives, audience and media channels; audience insight and campaign proposition; alignment with Tourism NI activity; and potential to stand out in the market. |
| **Reach and Return Potential** | 20 | Expected reach and impact, clear campaign KPIs, effective tracking and potential to generate |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | measurable enquiries, referrals, bookings, ticket sales or other outcomes. |
| **Value for Money** | 20 | Reasonable, efficient costs supported by evidence; an appropriate balance of media and production spending; and confidence that you can deliver the activity. |
| **Total** | **100** | |

### Minimum standard

- Proposed overall threshold: you will need to score at least 60 out of 100 for your application to be considered for funding, subject to confirmation against the approved published guidelines. Awards will remain subject to budget availability and Finance and Casework Committee approval.
- Where eligible demand exceeds the £200,000 budget, qualifying applications will be ranked by a final moderated score.

- Applications tied in rank will be assessed first by Additionality, then Strategic Alignment, Reach and Value for Money. If still tied, a documented, independently witnessed draw will take place.

Final approval is scheduled for the week commencing 4 January 2027. If successful, you will receive a Letter of Offer during the week commencing 11 January 2027, setting out your approved activity, funding and conditions. Unsuccessful applicants will also be notified following final approval. See Section 10 for details of Letters of Offer.

## 9. Oversubscription, undersubscription and available budget

The programme has a fixed budget of £200,000. Where the programme is oversubscribed and the value of funding requested exceeds the available budget, eligible applications will be assessed and ranked based on their final assessment scores. Funding will be awarded to the highest-scoring applications until the available budget is exhausted. A reserve list will be maintained in score order and, should additional funding become available, further awards may be made from this list. Applicants will be notified accordingly.

Meeting the programme eligibility criteria does not guarantee funding. Eligible applications will be assessed, scored and ranked in order of merit, with funding awarded to the highest-scoring applications until the available programme budget is exhausted.

Where funding is awarded, the lowest of the amount requested will be offered. This will be either 30% of approved eligible expenditure or £5,000. Awards below £500 are not made.

## 10. Successful applications and Letter of Offer

Successful applicants will receive a Letter of Offer setting out:

- the approved activity and activity period;
- the maximum Tourism NI award;
- the eligible expenditure and applicant match funding contribution;
- branding, measurement and reporting requirements;
- the evidence required to support a claim;
- procurement and subsidy control obligations;
- change-control, withholding and recovery provisions; and
- the deadline and process for accepting the offer.

No funding is committed until the applicant has accepted the Letter of Offer in the required manner. Applicants must not assume that expenditure incurred before formal acceptance will be eligible.

### Changes after the letter of offer has been issued.

Any proposed change to the approved activity, budget, supplier, channel or timetable must be requested in writing before the change is made. Tourism NI will determine whether the change can be approved within the existing award, requires reassessment or requires a formal variation to the Letter of Offer. Unapproved changes will make expenditure ineligible.

To request a change, applicants should fill out the change request form included in the applicant pack and email it to industrymarketingprogramme@tourismni.com. The completed form should be returned to the same email address, outlining the proposed change and reason for it, along with any relevant supporting information. Tourism NI will confirm its decision in writing.

## 11. Delivery, claims and payment

Grants will be paid retrospectively after the approved activity has been completed and the required evidence has been accepted. This will include evidence of expenditure, proof that the approved media activity was delivered and a post-campaign report showing performance against the approved measures.

All claims must be made by 23 April 2027.

A claim may be reduced, withheld or rejected where activity was not delivered as approved, expenditure is ineligible, VAT has been claimed where it is not eligible under the programme's VAT requirements, evidence is incomplete, value for money has not been demonstrated or programme conditions have not been met. Tourism NI may recover funding paid in error or because of inaccurate or misleading information.

## 12. Governance and Compliance Requirements

### Subsidy control

Funding awarded under this programme is provided in accordance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

Applicants must declare any other public funding received, awarded or applied for in relation to the same project or activities.

Please note that information relating to this subsidy scheme will be published where required under Subsidy Control transparency requirements.

### Data protection and publication

Applicant information will be processed for programme administration, assessment, assurance, payment, audit and evaluation in accordance with applicable data protection requirements. Tourism NI may publish the name of successful applicants, the award value and a brief description of supported activity where required for transparency.

Tourism NI may use relevant internal or external advisers or consultants to support appraisal, verification, audit or evaluation, in accordance with the applicable privacy notice and data-protection requirements.

### Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations

Tourism NI is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Applicants should ensure that proposed activities are delivered in a manner that is inclusive,

accessible and does not unlawfully discriminate against any individual or group.

### Rural Needs

Tourism NI is committed to meeting its obligations under the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 and will have due regard to rural needs in the administration of this Programme.

Applicants may be required to provide information to assist Tourism NI in considering the potential impact of funded activity on rural tourism businesses and communities.

## Marketing and Advertising Compliance

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all marketing and promotional activity supported through this Programme complies with all applicable legal, regulatory and industry requirements, including advertising, consumer protection and marketing standards.

Tourism NI reserves the right to withhold or recover funding where supported activity is found to be materially misleading, inaccurate or non-compliant with applicable requirements.

## Accessibility and Inclusion

Applicants should consider accessibility and inclusion when developing and delivering marketing activity. This may include, where appropriate, the accessibility of digital content, promotional materials, visitor information and associated customer communications.

Tourism NI encourages applicants to adopt approaches that help ensure marketing activity can be accessed and enjoyed by the widest possible audience.

## Sustainability

Tourism NI recognises the importance of sustainable tourism development and encourages applicants to consider environmental sustainability in the planning and delivery of funded activity.

Applicants should seek, where reasonably practicable, to minimise environmental impacts and adopt sustainable practices in the delivery of marketing activity.

## Freedom of Information

Tourism NI is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Information provided as part of an application, or subsequently in relation to an award, may be subject to disclosure in accordance with these statutory requirements. Applicants should clearly identify any information they consider commercially sensitive and explain why disclosure may be prejudicial. Tourism NI will take such representations into account but cannot guarantee that information will be withheld where disclosure is required by law.

## Record Retention

Successful applicants must retain all records relating to the funded activity, including invoices, receipts, proof of payment and any other supporting documentation specified by Tourism NI.

Such records must be retained for any period specified in the Letter of Offer and made available to Tourism NI or its authorised representatives upon request for monitoring, verification or audit purposes.

### Monitoring, Verification and Audit

Tourism NI reserves the right to undertake monitoring, verification and audit activities in respect of any application or award made under this Programme.

Applicants may be required to provide additional information, documentation or evidence to demonstrate that expenditure has been incurred and that funded activities have been delivered in accordance with Programme requirements.

Failure to provide requested information or supporting documentation may result in grant payments being delayed, reduced, withheld or recovered, as appropriate.

### Due Diligence Checks

Tourism NI reserves the right to undertake such due diligence checks as it considers necessary before making an award or releasing grant payments.

Successful applicants may be required to provide information and documentation necessary to verify organisational eligibility, identity, financial standing, tax status and compliance with Programme requirements.

## 13. Complaints

Applicants who are dissatisfied with the administration of this Programme may submit a complaint in accordance with Tourism NI's Complaints Policy, which is available through the following link on Tourismni.com Feedback and complaints |

The complaints process does not provide a mechanism for appealing funding decisions or assessment outcomes.