

Tourism NI Operating Plan & Summary Budget Allocation 2024/25

Tourism Northern Ireland's Mission

Our mission is to support the development of a productive, regionally balanced and sustainable tourism industry for all people and places in Northern Ireland which provides workers with good jobs and enriches its people, its economy and its guests.

We will do this through:

- Supporting our industry to raise productivity and grow sustainably.
- Promoting Northern Ireland as a must-see destination to markets which offer the greatest potential for growth.
- Developing a tourism ecosystem that presents opportunities for all, bringing economic and community benefit through good jobs and regional balance across Northern Ireland.
- Supporting the tourism sector to become greener, working towards net zero and contributing to the sustainable development of our built and natural environment.
- Supporting the development of authentic tourism experiences which bring our unique heritage to life in an invigorating, responsible and sustainable way.
- Looking after our people ensuring they have good jobs and that we engage good management practices.
- Transforming the way we work.

Policy Context

Tourism Northern Ireland's annual Operating Plan is set in the context of a number of key government policies and departmental plans, including;

[Draft Programme for Government 2024-27](#)

[DfE Business Plan 2024-25](#)

[DfE Sub-Regional Economic Plan](#)

As part of the Sub-Regional Economic Plan, the Economy Minister has established a Tourism Partnership Board (TPB) in support of the development and delivery of a Tourism Action Plan. Through representation on the TPB, Tourism Northern Ireland is involved in this process.

The Tourism Northern Ireland Corporate Plan for 2025/28 and Operating Plan for 2025/26 will therefore be aligned to the final Tourism Action Plan.

Economy Minister's Economic Vision Objectives

1. Increase the proportion of working age people in **Good Jobs**.
2. Promote **Regional Balance** so that everyone, no matter where they live, should have the same opportunity to earn a living.
3. A fundamental driver of overall living standards is to **Raise Productivity**.
4. Reduce **Carbon Emissions** in order to transition to a greener and more **sustainable** economy, generating prosperity for all.

Strategic Framework

These four Economic Vision objectives provide the strategic direction for the 2024/25 Tourism NI Operating Plan.

Our Goal for 2024/25 is to support the tourism industry to increase the value of tourism by 5%.



Reporting on the 24/25 Operating Plan

- 2024/25 Operating Plan performance will be reported on Quarterly, alongside the Risk Register Review, using the RAG system:

Red	Target not met / Unlikely to be met
Amber	Not on target / mitigating action required
Green	Target met, exceeded or currently on track
Blue	Information unavailable / Not due in this reporting period

- The four directorates will report on a total of 45 KPIs (76 in 2023/24).

KPIs by Directorate

Strategic Development	17
Marketing	9
Events	5
Corporate Services	14
Total	45

24/25 Operating Plan: alignment with the Economic Vision and Organisational Capability

Each of the activities or programmes included in the Operating Plan can be aligned to one or more of the five areas detailed below. The first four are based on the Objectives in the Minister's Economic Vision. Definitions of these Objectives are currently being developed by DfE, therefore the definition provided below is Tourism NI's own interpretation. These Objectives are delivered by the Strategic Development, Marketing and Events directorates.

Organisational Capability refers to Tourism NI's performance as an organisation and the ambitions that we have. Activities and programmes here are delivered by the Corporate Services directorate.

GJ

Good Jobs: a tourism industry that offers secure employment with good pay and conditions, and opportunities for career progression.

RB

Regional Balance: all parts of Northern Ireland benefit from tourism as visitors are welcomed across the Region.

S

Sustainability: a tourism industry that is economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable.

P

Productivity: a competitive tourism industry demonstrating innovation and strong management practices.

OC

Organisational Capability: we attract, retain, and develop a highly motivated workforce;
we are a sustainable organisation;
we use technology to improve our productivity and innovate;
we deploy good management practice and governance ensuring our stakeholders and partners expectations are met through delivery of effective corporate governance, finance and procurement arrangements.



2024/25 Operating Plan - Programmes and KPIs

Strategic Development

Delivery Team	Activity/ Programme	KPIs (Target completion date is Q4 unless otherwise stated)	Economic Vision Objective
1 Tourism Careers	Establish an Employer Excellence Programme in partnership with trade and industry bodies, alongside continued promotion of the Wellbeing Promise, in order to embed recruitment and retention best practice in tourism and hospitality businesses.*	New Employer Excellence Programme approved and ready for launch in 2025/26; 200 businesses signed up to the Wellbeing Promise. <i>Baseline: 79 in 2023/24</i>	GJ
2 Tourism Careers	Deliver a Tourism and Hospitality Careers programme, aimed at changing perceptions of the sector as a career option and boosting the pipeline of future talent into the industry.	A minimum increase of 3 percentage points in the percentage of respondents reporting positive perceptions of the tourism sector rising from the current baseline of 28% to 31%; 50,000 visitors to the 'makeyourcareer' microsite for jobs in tourism and hospitality. <i>Baseline: 40,600 visitors in 2023/24</i>	GJ
3 Tourism Careers	Develop and deliver a Customer Service Excellence Programme resulting in Level 2 Accreditation to develop supporting recruitment, retention, and inclusivity to enhance the overall visitor experience.	45 individuals obtaining a Level 2 qualification in Customer Service Excellence. <i>Baseline: 45 Level 2 in 2023/24</i>	GJ
4 City & Growth Deals	Support to accelerate the development and delivery of the major new tourism investment projects identified within the four City and Growth Deals across NI on behalf of DfE.*	Three contracts for funding secured for BRCD projects; OBC developed for the Belfast Stories project; two SOCs approved for Growth Deal projects; FBC approved and construction underway of the DNA project.	RB
5 Q&S	Transfer of tourism responsibilities from Invest NI, including powers to financially assist visitor accommodation.*	An assessment of the visitor accommodation sector over the next 10 years is in place.	RB
6 Q&S	Deliver an effective service for the certification and grading of visitor accommodation in order to drive quality and good practice across the sector.	10% of certified new venture accommodation providers become members of the grading scheme; support DfE in the revision of the Certification criteria; work with DfE in the development of suitable legislation for a new tourist amenity grading or classification scheme.	RB

* Indicates an activity or programme which is dependent on a third party(ies) such as Tourism Ireland, Failte Ireland, DfE etc.

Strategic Development continued

Delivery Team	Activity/ Programme	KPIs (Target completion date is Q4 unless otherwise stated)	Economic Vision Objective
7 Experience Development	Deliver the overarching Experience Development Framework to support the development of innovative tourism experiences across regions within the Experience Portfolio.	Deliver Year 1 of the Experience Portfolio Development Plan, engaging 100 businesses; Establish a robust baseline of business KPIs against which growth and performance can be measured in future years. <i>Baseline: 89 businesses 2023/24</i>	RB P
8 Experience Development	Deliver the next phases of three innovative, thematic Visitor Experience Development Plans (VEDP) aimed at the regional development of Food and Drink, Outdoor and Activities, and Culture and Heritage experiences.	Priority actions delivered to drive tourism growth in Food and Drink, Culture & Heritage, and Outdoors and Activities engaging up to 100 businesses and other stakeholders.	RB
9 Experience Development	In partnership with key stakeholders, scope and define a shared approach to realising the potential of Political Tourism. *	Existing experience audit complete; Stakeholders working group established; Shared approach developed as part of co-design process; Concepts tested with key markets.	RB
10 Regions & Investment	Work in partnership with Tourism Ireland and Failte Ireland to deliver a programme of activity to build synergies, brand collaboration and route development on the Causeway Coastal Route, the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and Ireland's Ancient East.*	Four capital works projects identified and approved for potential delivery on the CCR in 2025/26; A further collaborative application submitted to the Shared Island initiative.	RB
11 Regions & Investment	Develop new capital investment and development programmes to support new and enhanced tourism experiences drawing on the recommendations of the NI Product Review.	A new investment programme(s) is (are) in place for roll out from April 2025.	RB

Strategic Development continued

Delivery Team	Activity/ Programme	KPIs (Target completion date is Q4 unless otherwise stated)	Economic Vision Objective
12 Regions & Investment	Lead the development of management / stewardship plans for priority tourism destinations across NI, working closely with Councils and other key stakeholders. *	An agreed framework for Destination Stewardship Plans is established which can inform the preparation of plans for individual destinations.	RB
13 Regions & Investment	Work with Heritage Trusts and other stakeholders to support the management and development of key visitor locations, with a focus on community development and sustainability. *	A new NI-wide approach is in place to support delivery from April 2025; Transition support provided to Mourne Heritage and Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust	S
14 Industry Development	Roll out the 'MyTourismNI' E-Learning Platform to enhance capacity and professionalism within tourism and hospitality enterprises.	A minimum of 500 new onboarded learners; At least 50% of new learners subsequently return to engage in further learning. <i>Baseline: 162 onboarded learners - 46% returning users in 2023/24</i>	GJ P
15 Industry Development	Develop and deliver an industry focused Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Programme including support to enhance inclusion and accessibility to all visitors regardless of ability.	Programme developed and delivered, with 100 businesses engaged.	P S RB
16 Industry Development	Deliver an Innovate Tourism Growth Programme aligned to Innovate NI framework and wider programme/ fund opportunities.	Deliver the Programme with 30 tourism businesses achieving at least a Bronze Innovation recognition. <i>Baseline: 26 businesses in 2023/24</i>	P
17 Q&S/ Industry Development	Deliver a robust Sustainability Programme to drive Climate Action and good practice across the tourism industry. The Programme will support and complement the new umbrella All-Island Sustainability Tourism Assurance programme being rolled out in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland. *	300 businesses engaged in sustainability initiatives; 60 accredited businesses using the agreed sustainability mark; 25 businesses onboarded at the entry level towards a sustainability accreditation. <i>Baseline: In 2023/24 68 tourism businesses held a third-party sustainability certification</i>	S

Marketing

Delivery Team	Activity/ Programme	KPIs (Target completion date is Q4 unless otherwise stated)	Economic Vision Objective
18 Marketing & Promotion	Promote Northern Ireland as a short-break destination in the domestic and the Republic of Ireland markets through integrated marketing campaigns that drive visitor growth and revenue and support regional and seasonal balance.	80% campaign coverage outside Belfast. Return on Marketing Investment of £50:£1. Generate £4.5 million positive PR Value. Achieve 2,600,000 social media engagements.	RB P
19 Marketing & Promotion	Continue to deliver a fit for purpose consumer website: discovernorthernireland.com, to inspire and drive interest and visits to Northern Ireland as a destination.	Complete the procurement of Discovernorthernireland.com.	RB
20 Marketing & Promotion	In collaboration with Tourism Ireland, promote Northern Ireland in overseas markets through international media familiarisation (fam) trips. *	Run a programme of International Media Visits in conjunction with Tourism Ireland to deliver 300 media fam trips to achieve £75m of positive publicity.	RB
21 Marketing & Promotion	In collaboration with Tourism Ireland and Failte Ireland, introduce a timetable for only promoting accredited sustainable tourism experiences in overseas markets. *	Plan developed and agreed in collaboration with Tourism Ireland & Failte Ireland.	RB
22 B2B Sales	Deliver the NI Golf Tourism Strategy including a programme of B2B Golf sales missions.	Launch the Golf Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025/30; achieve £70 million golf tourism value; deliver 4 x FAMS/30 specialist Golf Tour Operators across all key golf markets; attend 6 Golf Trade Shows across all key markets – min. 45 industry opportunities; attend a minimum of 5 golf consumer events – min. 12 industry opportunities. <i>Baseline: £68.2m golf tourism value in 2023</i>	RB
23 B2B Sales	Work in collaboration with Tourism Ireland /DMCs and stakeholders within the industry to help secure higher levels of Incentive Business and Corporate meetings for operators. *	Implement sales and marketing activity plan in international markets alongside Tourism Ireland.	RB

Marketing continued

Delivery Team	Activity/ Programme	KPIs (Target completion date is Q4 unless otherwise stated)	Economic Vision Objective
24 B2B Sales	Develop a travel trade strategy to maximise revenue for Northern Ireland.	Set up Industry Steering Group, Scope and Procure Support for International Travel Trade Strategy, Appoint Supplier and Commence Work with a View to Completing Strategy in Q1 2025/26	RB
25 B2B Sales	Working with key partners, such as Tourism Ireland/Visit Britain/Failte Ireland and Travel Trade and MICE associations such as ITOA/ ETOA/ UK Inbound/ SITE to develop and deliver an innovative B2B programme of sales and marketing activity to support the NI tourism industry to increase programming from international operators. *	Deliver: Meet the Buyer/ ITOA Workshop/ Fam Programme/ 770 industry opportunities.	RB P
26 Business Events	Work with Visit Belfast and Visit Derry to deliver recommendations within the Business Tourism Strategy that support the industry in securing conferences and business meetings for NI. *	Through Conference and Business meetings work with Visit Belfast and Visit Derry to - Generate economic benefits of £44.1 million in Belfast Generate economic benefits of £1.575 million in Derry-Londonderry	RB P S

Events

Delivery Team	Activity/ Programme	KPIs (Target completion date is Q4 unless otherwise stated)	Economic Vision Objective
27 Major Events	Maximise the benefits to Northern Ireland by leading on or supporting the planning, and cross government coordination of The Irish Open 2024	Multiagency support structures established and coordination to deliver a safe and successful Irish Open 2024, demonstrated by the Irish Open delivering: A positive economic return on investment; high % out of state visitors attending the event; positive global media coverage achieved (global broadcast hours; AEV; weighted PR); event spectators rank their experience positively (high net promoter score achieved).	RB
28 Major Events	Maximise the benefits to Northern Ireland by leading on or supporting the planning, and cross government coordination of The 153 rd Open 2025	Multiagency support structures established and coordination to prepare for the delivery a safe and successful Open Championship in 2025. Positive promotion of Northern Ireland pre-event and active engagement with industry to maximise the opportunities of hosting (PR value; nos business engaged).	RB
29 Major Events	Maximise the potential benefits to Northern Ireland by supporting the planning and cross government coordination of preparatory work for EURO 2028.	Preparatory work for EURO 2028 undertaken.	RB
30 Major Events	Provide recommendations to DfE in regard to a Northern Ireland Events Framework and Tourism Events Strategy. *	Recommendations and input provided	RB
31 Event Development	Deliver an International tourism events funding programme to support events that will enhance the destination profile, increase visitor numbers and bednights from key markets, increase spend, and encourage regional spread.	All events funded under the ITEF 2024/25 to achieve a minimum 10% Out of State visitors, a minimum return on TNI's investment of 10:1, and a positive AEV/weighted PR score. Strategic Vision for Tourism Events refreshed	RB P

Corporate Services

Delivery Team	Activity/ Programme	KPIs (Target completion date is Q4 unless otherwise stated)	Priority
32 People & OD	Develop and commence implementation of a Tourism NI People Strategy.	Develop the people strategy (Q3); Commence implementation of People Strategy activities; Complete review of corporate values and launch new values framework (Q3)	OC
33 People & OD	Retain, retrain and transform TNI's workforce to develop capacity and address skills gaps in response to industry demands, market conditions and technological change.	Delivery of a Leadership Development programme (Q3 and 4); Delivery of a programme of Learning activity to support individual employees, departments and the organisation.	OC
34 People & OD	Delivery of a holistic Wellbeing at Work programme to support the physical health and safety, mental health and overall wellbeing of employees.	Following a period of staff engagement, establish a working group and provide training for wellbeing champions (Q2); Launch a programme of wellbeing activity (Q3)	OC
35 IT	Review, design and develop robust measures to protect corporate assets & data using best practice.	Accreditation by National Cyber Security Centre (Q2) Maintain a Microsoft identity secure score of at least 85%.	OC
36 IT	Provide technology and services to enable staff to deliver the Corporate Plan objectives.	Develop internal IT Team triage service for Microsoft Dynamics support for F&O & HR to reduce the number of support calls to EY by 90%. This will help reduce our dependency on EY and improve IT's Dynamics knowledge. <i>Baseline: 2023 - average of 40 calls per month (480 in the year)</i>	OC
37 IT	Review Information Governance Policy to deliver continuous improvement and compliance with developments in legislation.	Score organisational compliance against 10 categories of the ICO's Accountability framework to establish an organisational baseline for the UKGDPR accountability principle (Q3)	OC
38 Finance	Ensure compliance with all DoF financial, governance guidance and risk management processes.	Unqualified Audit Opinion (with the exception of Tourism Ireland); Satisfactory rating in all Internal Audit Reports.	OC
39 Finance	Review Tourism NI's policy framework.	Develop and maintain a Policy Framework.	OC
40 Finance	Work with DfE in the development of a new funding scheme. *	Funding scheme approved by DfE and DoF	OC

Corporate Services continued

Delivery Team	Activity/ Programme	KPIs (Target completion date is Q4 unless otherwise stated)	Priority
41 Strategy & Policy	Review and monitor stakeholder satisfaction across NI through a biennial survey and supporting action plan.	Establish a baseline for TNI stakeholder satisfaction and develop an action plan (Q3); Implement Action Plan.	OC
42 Strategy & Policy	Deliver a robust evidence base for TNI, industry and stakeholders to help inform policy and strategy development and operational decisions. Deliver a robust evidence base for Data Hub investment.	Deliver a minimum of two waves of consumer sentiment research, two industry surveys, four editions of Tourism 360 and Belfast Stories concept testing. Develop an approved Data Hub business case (Q3).	OC
43 Strategy & Policy	Develop and implement an Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) Framework for Tourism NI to include a Review all Tourism NI funding and support policies to increase the contribution to the achievement of sustainability objectives.	Develop and implement an ESG Framework (Q3)	OC
44 Digital Services	Roll-out of the CRM system across the agreed priority areas to maximise user adoption and transform key business processes.	Complete delivery of CRM projects: Q&S, GDPR Solution, Market and Product Experience Process Transformation and E-Learning System Integration.	OC
45 Digital Services	Build an understanding of the use of AI for Tourism NI as an organisation.	Develop and implement a corporate AI Policy (Q3)	OC

Budget Allocation 2024/25

- For 2024-25, Tourism NI received an opening Resource DEL budget of £22.5m, and £4.3m for Capital DEL.
- A total of £1.4m was also received to cover non-cash depreciation and lease expenditure, as well as a further £1.2m AME budget for pension expenditure.
- £18.5m has also been allocated to Tourism Ireland Grant in Aid expenditure.

Tourism NI Resource DEL Budget

	FY23/24 Opening Budget £'000	%	FY24/25 Opening Budget £'000	%
Administration and Lease	1,910	10%	1,906	8%
Salaries	5,773	32%	6,271	28%
Promotion & Marketing	10,627	58%	12,812	56%
Major Sporting Events	0	0%	1,766	8%
Gross Resource Expenditure	18,310	100%	22,755	100%
Less Receipts	-236		-236	
Net Resource Expenditure	18,074		22,519	

