

INTERNATIONAL TOURISM EVENTS FUND 2025-26

Guidelines for Applicants



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1 OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Events are powerful tools. They have the ability to provide Northern Ireland with a competitive advantage, benefiting the image, economy, tourism performance and future potential of the region. They can enhance our 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's role is to work collaboratively with our partners to accelerate growth of the tourism industry. We do this through supporting tourism businesses in the development of world-class products, experiences and events and promoting the North as a must-see destination to those markets which offer the greatest potential for growth.

One of the ways that Tourism NI assists the events industry to achieve this competitive advantage is through the delivery of an International Tourism Events Fund (ITEF). The aim of the ITEF is to provide financial assistance to eligible events to help realise these benefits, and support the industry to become more competitive and achieve longer term sustainability.

Events have the potential to play a role in the overall visitor experience by presenting the visitor the opportunity to immerse themselves in local culture, heritage and tradition. For the purposes of the ITEF, international tourism events are defined as those that are authentically unique to this region and are demand generators to attract out of state visitors (i.e. from outside of the North) whilst enhancing our international reputation.

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

1.2 Vision and objectives

Our vision is for a portfolio of distinctive, high-quality tourism events which tell a compelling story of our region to the world. We seek to support events that will help to achieve an increase in the value of tourism to the Northern Ireland economy, while also meeting other important industrial, cultural and social agendas, including creating a sustainable, inclusive and welcoming event programme for all our communities and visitors. All experiences that Tourism NI supports and funds must be open and inclusive to all visitors, including all communities, and should not offend or insult the public, or damage community relations.

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

The key objectives are to maximise opportunities to:

Enhance the visitor experience and provide opportunities to spend

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

Leverage of other funding

The event should demonstrate the ability to generate growth by ensuring maximum financial support from other sources. This leverage of other funding will support the long-term sustainability of events. 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 by providing financial assistance where possible.

Significance

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

1.3 Definition and expectations of an international tourism event

An international tourism event is an event which attracts out of state visitors and participants, where the event has played the key role in attracting them to visit. It will motivate visitors to travel to and stay here, and have an authentic local experience. It will generate additional visitor and participant spend, increase the occupancy rate for local accommodation providers, provide a positive image of our place and people, and leave a lasting legacy.

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

Events are expected to deliver an economic return of at least £10:£1 on Tourism NI's investment.

2 DETAILS AND PARAMETERS OF THE FUNDING SCHEME

2.1 Scheme parameters

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

Events supported through the ITEF must:

- Generate substantial economic benefit for Northern Ireland through increased visitor and participant numbers, including bednights and increased numbers of visitors from out of state;
- Enhance the North's opportunities to host further major events;
- Be underpinned by a viable budget and realistic event planning;
- Identify and deliver on measurable outcomes; and
- Help Tourism NI fulfil our vision set out at Section 1.2 above.

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

- The event must take place between **1 April 2025** and **31 March 2026**.
- The event must occur on **one day or over a period of several consecutive days**; there must be no break in days.
- **Maximum funding of 50% of eligible costs** for private, public and voluntary sector events can be provided through the ITEF.
- Total **visitor numbers** greater than **10,000** (not subsidised).
- **Minimum 10% out-of-state visitors (visitors travelling from outside of the region)**
- A **minimum return on investment of 10:1**.
- A **positive media matrix assessment** for events where media exposure is a central driver.
- A **minimum income of £200,000** through ticket sales, private sponsorship, other public sector, merchandise etc. **Tourism NI support cannot be included as part of the minimum income requirements.**
- An overall **minimum expenditure of £200,000** prior to receiving monies from Tourism NI.
- The **maximum funding request** from Tourism NI is capped at **£100,000**. However, funding will align with application deliverables and assessment of the application. The minimum award that may be offered is £30,000. There is no guarantee of funding, or any specific level of funding.

2.2 Available financial support

The 2025-26 budgets are not confirmed at this point in time. If Tourism NI does not receive adequate budget to cover the event grant scheme or other strategic challenges arise, we can, at any stage of the process, suspend the scheme, withdraw or reduce the amount of financial support we offer, or choose not to operate the scheme. If an award is made it will be subject to confirmation of budget, with funding award levels to be informed by the final budget available.

2.3 Eligible and ineligible costs

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

Example eligible costs

- Marketing costs: for marketing only outside the host town or city (with a focus on out-of-state marketing e.g. ROI, GB & Overseas)
- Performance costs: performance fees, appearance fees (excluding travel, food and accommodation expenses)
- Health and safety costs – first aid, stewards
- Venue costs: venue hire, venue preparation, venue restoration, marquee hire
- Production costs: staging, sound, lighting, equipment hire, communication (e.g. radios), toilet hire, bin hire
- Investors in Volunteers Accreditation
- Volunteer training costs
- Security costs
- Independent event evaluations: subject to advance discussion and approval from Tourism NI including approval for evaluation content and methodology
- Bidding costs (including host fees)
- Freight costs
- Staffing or external resource support*: costs for development of commercial opportunities and marketing only, subject to discussion and approval from Tourism NI on a case-by-case basis.

**Proposals from event organisers may be considered on a case-by-case basis with a requirement that any posts are funded for an interim period only and are able to deliver transparent levels of added value to the organisation and the future sustainability of the event.*

Example ineligible costs

- Accommodation costs
- Travel e.g. flights, car hire, public transport etc.
- Prize money, awards, trophies, medals, ceremonial cost
- Licence fees, permit fees
- Stationery, postage, gifts (including goodie bags)
- Promotor fees, event management fees
- Accountancy fees
- Auditor fees
- Legal fees
- Bank fees, bank charges, interest charges
- Capital repayments
- Corporation tax
- Capital expenditure and assets e.g. computers, digital cameras
- Hospitality
- Rates, fuel costs, electricity, rent
- Membership fees
- Phone bills
- Charitable donations
- VAT repayments: where applicants are VAT registered and reclaiming VAT

- Insurance costs
- Vehicle insurance
- Commission: sales, bonuses
- Liquor licences
- Cash payments are deemed ineligible and will not be accepted.
- Staff salaries including all consultancy fees, casual staff, production staff/crew etc except as noted above under eligible costs.

3 APPLICATION PROCESS

3.1 Who can apply

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

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

Event organisers may only submit **one application per event** to the ITEF. Any financial award offered would depend on the funds available within Tourism NI and on the number of applications received. Award offers will be based on how the event scores against the criteria and the tourism benefits that will be delivered.

Who is not eligible to apply?

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

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

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

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

3.2 How to apply

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

Events must meet all the below essential criteria in order to be considered eligible to apply. If the event does not meet all of the essential criteria it will be deemed ineligible and will not proceed through the full assessment process.

- **Event date:** The event must take place between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026. The event must occur on one day or over a period of several consecutive days with no break in days.
- **Visitor numbers:** In-person visitor numbers of a minimum of 10,000 must be achieved.
- **Out of State Visitors:** A minimum of 10% of overall visitors must originate from outside the North.
- **Event budget:** Events must have a minimum income of £200,000 and expenditure of £200,000 not including any funding from Tourism NI. In kind support listed should not be included in the

event budget as part of the £200,000 requirement but will be requested separately within the application form.

- **Marketing:** The applicant must complete a marketing plan template (provided in the application form) that clearly demonstrates what marketing will be delivered as part of the promotion of the event and to which markets e.g. ROI, GB, Overseas etc.
- **Event programming:** The applicant must ensure that event content will appeal to and attract an international audience and align with the Embrace a Giant Spirit brand.
- **Tourism economic impact:** The net economic change in Northern Ireland that results from spending attributed to the event, including from visitors, participants and organiser spend. Tourism NI will use the Event Impact Model to assess the potential return on investment on funding requested. The model reflects the levels of expenditure during and at the event by day visitors and those on overnight trips. The baseline economic return expected of events receiving funding is £10:£1 for International Tourism Events. These returns are calculated based on the amount of potential funding Tourism NI may contribute to an event.
- **Funding request from Tourism NI:** the applicant should confirm the level of support requested from Tourism NI and demonstrate the need for public sector investment.

Applicants are required to substantiate, by example and evidence, how their event meets the key criteria.

The first section of the online application process is to answer a number of preliminary questions including if the applicant has ever been declared bankrupt, is awaiting any criminal or civil proceedings, or has any outstanding court judgements, followed by contact details, event name, date and location.

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

- **Detailed budgetary information**
You must provide a detailed budget demonstrating sufficient financial support from other sources. A budget template will be available for download from the application form on the grant management system. It is **essential** that all applicants complete this template. Applicants must include the previous year's budget, if applicable (both income and expenditure) for comparison purposes. **Please note that a budget presented in any other format will not be accepted and will render your application ineligible.**
- **Financial statements**
You must provide a copy of your most recent Accounts.
- **Marketing plan**
It is essential that appropriate marketing is delivered to attract out-of-state audiences. You must ensure that all information requested is provided. A Marketing plan template will be provided in the application form. It is essential that all applicants complete and submit this template as part of the application form. **Please note that a marketing plan presented in any other format will not be accepted and will render your application ineligible.**
- **Declaration**
The application form concludes with a declaration that requires you to confirm a number of statements and authorisations, such as that Tourism NI shall have permission to discuss your proposals with your bank, other funders or appointed experts. By completing the declaration, you will also confirm that any necessary approvals required to run the event will be applied for and granted prior to commencement of the event.

You will also be required to declare that at the time of submission of this application you are not aware of any reasons or potential or actual liabilities which may cause the event or organisation to become financially unviable. You are fully responsible for the financial viability of this event.

Further, the statements are your confirmation that the information submitted is correct and complete, that you have read these Guidelines for Applicants, and that you are not aware of any reason how the Event would contravene Tourism NI's vision for the ITEF, its obligation to promote

good relations, 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.

Equality of opportunity, accessibility, and good relations

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

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

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

As set out at above, events funded under the ITEF 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 ITEF, 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.

4 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND SCORING

Tourism NI staff will consider applications using their professional judgement, based on the information provided within the application, knowledge of your organisation's track record (in relation to both achievement of tourism objectives and management of previous Tourism NI funding), as well as knowledge of the wider tourism landscape. The assessment criteria are listed below, and the competitive context in which all applications are evaluated.

4.1 Assessment criteria

Subject to applications meeting the essential eligibility criteria, Tourism NI will appraise and score your application as per the criteria in the scoring table below.

As the fund is designed for event development or international promotion, it is not aimed at providing long term or core funding for events. Event organisers will need to demonstrate there is a need for Tourism NI investment into the event.

4.2 Scoring

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

	SCORED CRITERIA	SCORE
1.	Event visitor experience	Total score: 0-15
2.	Tourism economic impact	
	Visitor and participant numbers	Total score: 0-10
	Minimum 10% out-of-state visitor numbers	Total score: 0-5
	Visitor and participant commercial bednights (non-subsidised i.e. paid for directly by the visitor or participant, and not subsidised by the event organiser)	Total score: 0-10
	Return on investment	Total score: 0-5
3.	Finance	
	Level of income/expenditure	Total Score: 0-20
	Funding request as % of overall budget	
	Additionality	
4.	Event programming and marketing activity	
	Marketing Plan	Total score: 0-15
	Marketing budget	
	Marketing monitoring and evaluation	
5.	Event delivery, oversight and evaluation	
	Event delivery and oversight	Total score 0-10
	Monitoring and evaluation	
6.	Accessibility	For information purposes
7.	Environmental sustainability	Pass/Fail
8.	Social impacts	Pass/Fail

Tourism NI staff will consider applications using their professional judgement, based on the information provided within the application, knowledge of the organisation's track record (in relation to both achievement of tourism objectives and management of previous Tourism NI funding), and knowledge of the wider tourism landscape. The table below outlines the weighting that will be applied to each area scored.

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

5 TIMELINE

Applications to the ITEF will open on **Friday 6th December 2024 at 12 noon**. Full applications must be completed and submitted online by **Monday 6th January 2025 at 12 noon**.

No applications received after this date will be considered.

All eligible applications will be assessed and then presented to a decision-making panel which will include senior representation from Tourism NI and may include representation from Tourism Ireland.

Tourism NI reserves the right to commission independent consultants to undertake reviews, evaluations and/or appraisals of the information provided through the application process.

6 SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

If successful at assessment stage, you will be notified by email, including the award offer value. This will only be an offer at this stage. Key Performance Indicators and deliverables will be agreed with you, informed by what was presented in your application form. You will then be issued with a Letter of Offer which constitutes a formal contract. You will be required to sign and return the Letter of Offer within 14 days of issue. All offers of funding will be strictly subject to Tourism NI receiving adequate government funding to allow the ITEF to proceed. For more information, please refer to paragraph 2.2 above.

7 APPEALS

Tourism NI operates an appeals policy for unsuccessful applicants who consider their application has been treated unfairly. For further information please contact Tourism NI Events Unit at eventsunit@tourismni.com.

Please note: the appeals procedure will only apply to applicants that receive notification of an unsuccessful application to the ITEF. If an application is successful in securing an offer of funding, applicants are not permitted to appeal the amount awarded.

8 POST EVENT

8.1 Post event evaluation

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

You will also be required to provide:

- Evidence proving sources of income;
- A completed claim form and claim documentation, including invoices and bank statements;
- Final budget for the event with an independent verification of claim; and
- A tourism economic calculator based on actual figures achieved at the event, including visitor numbers, participant numbers, bednights, and income and expenditure associated with the event.

8.2 Claim payment

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

9 GUIDANCE FOR COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION

This section is intended to help applicants ensure that all the required detail is submitted. **It is your responsibility to ensure that all content has been included.** These are the areas which will be assessed and scored, as detailed previously in these guidelines.

9.1. EVENT VISITOR EXPERIENCE

This section should give the reader an understanding of your event and the experience the visitor will have, as well as how the event is delivering and embodying the Embrace a Giant Spirit brand. It is important to address all of the areas outlined in your application form.

i. Event overview and programme content

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

- Date
- Time
- Location
- Duration
- Summary detail of programme and content on offer

Tourism NI's objective is to increase the growth in international visitors to the region. Events must be able to demonstrate how they will attract visitors 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.

Within this section of the application, you should identify the visitor experience and what you can realistically deliver for those attending, 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?

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

ii. Event visitor experience and journey

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

- What will the visitor experience at your event?
- What is the seamless visitor journey for your visitors?
- How do you engage and inform your visitors with event information?
- How do you make the experience at your event as easy and accessible as possible for the visitor?
- Please inform the reader of what you do to make the visitor experience as enjoyable as possible - please consider:
 - online pre-event experience
 - what is the welcome for the visitor
 - ticketing
 - visitor experience when at the event
 - transport links and information

- car-parking
- food and drink offering and experiences
- accommodation offering
- partnerships and information
- other things to see and do in the area
- packages and offers
- cross selling
- itineraries etc.

The information you include should provide the reader with sufficient detail for them to understand what each day, or a typical day, of the event could look like for a visitor. You must ensure that what is described is realistic and deliverable.

iii. Alignment with Embrace a Giant Spirit

It is important to understand how your event will deliver on the Northern Ireland Embrace a Giant Spirit brand. For guidance, please refer to the Northern Ireland Embrace a Giant Spirit toolkit available on our website here: [embrace-a-giant-spirit-experience-development-toolkit.pdf \(tourismni.com\)](#)

How does your event aim to showcase the very best of Northern Ireland, its people and landscapes, and awaken a giant spirit to visitors?

In this section you should consider how your event showcases and highlights the very best of the region, and what your event offers that is unique to here and cannot be delivered anywhere else.

Please consider:

- landscapes and scenery
- sharing stories, myths and legends
- showcasing local people and crafts
- local food producers
- sustainable initiatives
- hidden places/showcasing unknown areas to visitors
- participatory elements
- what experience will you offer that is iconic and authentic to the region.

9.2 TOURISM ECONOMIC IMPACT

Events can drive economic impact within the area the event is hosted and also across the region.

i. Visitor and participant numbers

Events applying to the ITEF must have a minimum of **10,000 visitors** attending the event. International events must target and attract visitors from outside the North. You must present a clear evidence-based approach as to how you have calculated local visitor numbers as well as those from outside the region.

Please demonstrate the event’s potential to attract visitors before, during and/or after the event. The focus for 2025-26 is to attract a **minimum** of 10% out-of-state visitors to the event (from Republic of Ireland, Great Britain and Overseas).

Area	Projected Visitor Numbers	Projected Participant Numbers
Projected Total		
% from local area where the event takes place		
% from elsewhere within Northern Ireland		

Area	Projected Visitor Numbers	Projected Participant Numbers
% from Republic of Ireland		
% from Great Britain and Overseas		
TOTAL		

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

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

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

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

Some typical subgroups of participants will include:

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

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

Rationale

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

- Total projected visitor numbers
- Breakdown of where visitors are coming from i.e. Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Great Britain and Overseas. Please note the out-of-state visitors breakdown is an extremely important aspect of the international application and this area of your response will be assessed individually
- Total projected participant numbers
- Breakdown of where participants are coming from i.e. the North, Republic of Ireland, Great Britain and Overseas). Applications that do not provide a justification for the numbers and breakdowns provided may be deemed ineligible.

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

- Previous ticket sales
- Online booking systems
- Postcodes of attendees
- Police counts
- Event surveys
- Independent evaluations
- Capacity of site
- Duration of the event

- Previous similar events
- Collaborations with Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland
- Tour operator partnerships
- Partnerships with events
- Trade events
- Other industry opportunities

ii. Commercial and non-commercial bednights

It is important that international tourism events attract visitors to the North to stay in paid-for accommodation to generate economic benefit for the region. In this section, please outline the paid-for accommodation your event generates. Within this section of the application form, you must be able to provide a clear justification as to how you have calculated the projected commercial bednight figures associated with the event.

Please provide a breakdown for visitor and participant bednights, including non-subsidised and subsidised bednights. Tourism NI calculates bednights based on £87 (current research) per person per night.

It is important that you give an evidence-based rationale as to how you have arrived at your bednights figures for both 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 partnerships
- Independent evaluations
- Hotel availability
- Duration of event

Please note: non-commercial bednights (camping, motorhomes, staying with family and friends etc.) **will be considered separately** by Tourism NI alongside the rest of your application. Therefore, please ensure you clearly outline the rationale for achieving these additional bednights.

iii. Direct 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 the North, and in particular on accommodation, is one of the biggest factors in generating economic impact.

However, spending by event organisers and participants is another important consideration. If participant costs are subsidised it is important to include this within your application form. **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.

Tourism economic calculator

Tourism NI will complete a tourism economic calculator based on the information provided within your application form. Tourism NI uses the Event Impact Model to assess the return on investment of potential funding awarded. The model reflects Northern Ireland levels of expenditure by day visitors and those on overnight trips. International tourism events receiving funding from Tourism NI must achieve a minimum return on investment of £10:£1.

9.3 FINANCE

This section is crucial. Every event must have a detailed annual budget. You need to show that the event is financially viable.

A set of Accounts for the most recent event (where available) will be considered and must be provided at time of application.

Note to applicant: Tourism NI is NOT a core funder of events and any monies contributed by Tourism NI should be used following the principles of ‘additionality’ as outlined in Section 9.3, ii. Additionality, below.

Events which show a profit will be considered on a case-by-case basis by Tourism NI and funding may be reduced in line with the principle of ‘additionality’ and ‘sustainability’. Any profit should be carried forward into the next year’s event reserves.

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

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

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

i. Event budget

A budget must be provided on an excel spreadsheet (a template will be provided as part of the application form). **Please note that a budget presented in any other format will not be accepted and will render your application ineligible.**

This section of the application form is required to:

- Demonstrate the viability of the event
- Understand the commercial mix of how the event is funded
- Have confidence in the ability to deliver the programme and event (as set out within the application form)
- Ensure the budget links with all sections of the event
- Ensure the £200,000 minimum income and expenditure threshold is met (prior to any Tourism NI grant request)
- Assess the mix of public and private sector support

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

You must include within the budget template (provided) a detailed budget breakdown showing:

- Details of actual income and expenditure from previous event e.g. 2024/25 for comparison purposes (where applicable)
- Projected cash budget for the 2025-26 event
- A copy of your most recent signed accounts for the event

In-kind support is an important element in the delivery of events but **should not be included** within your financial breakdowns. It should be outlined separately from your cash budget.

Please include the source(s) and value of the in-kind support and the service/s provided in the relevant section within the application form.

Income projections

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please note: The **maximum request for funding** from Tourism NI through the ITEF is capped at **£100,000**. All applicants should consider their needs carefully and be realistic in their request. **Due to budgetary pressures, any amount awarded may be substantially less than requested at application or awarded in previous years (if previously successful under the ITEF).**

Please include details of all assumptions you have made in your projections. This must be a robust budget. **Should your application to the ITEF be successful, and you receive an award, this may be reduced should the event income and expenditure drop by a considerable amount in-year. Any offer of grant is made on the basis of the budget presented at application stage and should this reduce at Letter of Offer stage, grant awards will be reviewed and may be reduced.**

Example:

Income Source	Total	Confirmed/ Unconfirmed	Date confirmed/ to be confirmed	Narrative
Local Authority Funding	£200,000	N	01/02/2025	An application has been made for £200,000. Awaiting outcome of decision
Sponsorship	£50,000	Y	01/11/2024	Meeting undertaken with Bloggs & Co to present packages and opportunities available. Sponsorship agreement in place.

Expenditure projections

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

Please include the most recent previous year's detailed breakdown (there is a separate tab for completion within the budget template) of actual income and actual expenditure (if applicable) with clear explanations of any variances against the projected budget, such as areas of underspend and overspend.

Other information to consider:

- Who will underwrite your event?
- If your event makes a loss, who will be responsible for paying suppliers and ensuring the event is delivered as outlined within the application?
- What is your VAT status?
- Do you have systems and process in place for procurement?
- Do you follow public sector procurement procedures or always use the same supplier for goods and services? Is it in line with NIPPP? **Note to Applicant: see here for Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy information: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/procurement>**
- You will be required to upload a copy of your most recent signed accounts
- *Please note that the Applicant screening question within Section 1 of the application form will require you to state if you have ever been declared bankrupt. You will also be required to declare that as at the time of submission of this application you are not aware of any reasons or potential or actual liabilities which may cause the event or organisation to become financially unviable. You will be fully responsible for the financial viability of this event.*

Eligible and ineligible expenditure

Please refer to Section 2.3 above in these guidelines for details of eligible and ineligible costs. If successful in your funding request these eligible expenditure categories will be used to pay out against your claim, following receipt of proof of such eligible expenditure. In your application, you must outline the request for support and identify what eligible costs this request will go towards.

ii. Additionality

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

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

Additional impact of Tourism NI funding

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

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

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

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

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

9.4 EVENT PROGRAMMING AND MARKETING ACTIVITY

This section must clearly set out the marketing activity you will undertake for your event. You will be required to evidence what activity is being undertaken in international markets and how the activity will optimise opportunities to grow international visitors while maximising all appropriate available channels.

i. Marketing Plan

You will be required to complete a Marketing Plan for the event. A template will be provided within the application form. You will need to download a copy of the template, save it locally and upload once it is complete. **Please note that a marketing plan presented in any other format will not be accepted and will render your application ineligible.**

You will be required to detail what activity is being undertaken to target your visitors, utilising all available marketing channels.

It is important that you clearly indicate how you decided on:

- Your main target audience/s, supported by any research you conducted, or previous evaluations that you carried out
- How will your programme serve as an attractor to these audiences?
- How will it deliver to their needs?
- How will it gain international standout and appeal?

The local market is important; however, as you are applying under the International Tourism Events Fund you **MUST** think beyond Northern Ireland. As an international event you must clearly demonstrate how you will market to and reach out-of-state visitors. Your marketing plan must clearly demonstrate how you will grow your international visitor community.

ii. Marketing budget

You must demonstrate how the marketing budget will be allocated against the most effective marketing channels proposed in your event marketing plan, ensuring that it will help you target the visitor segments you are trying to reach. In completing this budget, you must consider:

- Is it a viable marketing budget?
- Is there appropriate budget assigned for marketing to return on international event ambitions?
- How will you target and drive international visitors to the event?
- What % of your marketing budget is allocated to out-of-state-marketing?

When assessing the information you provide, Tourism NI will look at the proposed breakdown of marketing spend and whether it is sufficient and appropriate across the channels proposed in your event marketing plan. As a guide the marketing budget should include the following:

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

Note to applicant: please ensure that the marketing budget presented aligns with the detail presented in the overall budget within your application form.

iii. Marketing monitoring and evaluation

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

9.5 EVENT DELIVERY, OVERSIGHT AND EVALUATION

i. Event delivery and oversight

You will be asked to provide details of your event governance structure and management team, setting out who is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the management and delivery of the event. This should include the administration systems that ensure the smooth running of the event, and the governance and financial management policies and procedures that underpin event delivery. This should also include the processes in place to monitor and manage your budget.

ii. Monitoring and evaluation

You will be asked to detail how you propose to monitor progress and achievement against event objectives, gather data on an ongoing basis, and conduct a post-project evaluation of your event.

9.6 ACCESSIBILITY

People with accessibility requirements, including disabled people, often find it hard to choose places to stay and visit due to a lack of readily available information on accessible facilities and services. This includes not just wheelchair users but also people who are deaf or have hearing loss, have a sensory or cognitive impairment, older people, families with young children, and more.

You will be required to complete an Accessibility Questionnaire for the event. This questionnaire has been developed by Visit Britain and Visit England, who have carried out a series of research projects to gather insights on accessible and inclusive tourism. This approach has been adopted by Tourism NI.

It will help you to identify the key accessibility features at your venue/event location. These features have been identified through [robust consumer research](#) as the most important accessibility features which inform trip-taking and are most likely to increase bookings and visits.

An accessibility questionnaire template will be provided within the application form. You will need to download a copy of the template, save it locally and upload once it is complete. **Please note that completion of the Accessibility Questionnaire is for research and industry development purposes only. Responses will not affect the scoring of your application.**

9.7 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 the region's sustainability ambitions.

Applicants will be asked if they hold any sustainability accreditation, and if so, what organisation they are currently accredited with, as well as details around what measures they have incorporated into their event.

Applicants should consider the following:

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

Applicants should consider and clearly outline how they are addressing environmental sustainability in 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 example could include Wrap UK or local equivalents
- Transportation and distribution
- Procurement and supply chain
- Sourcing materials and supplies from sustainable sources
- Communication
- Land replenishment
- Noise pollution
- Accreditation

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

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

9.8 SOCIAL IMPACT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- The number of volunteers from targeted groups such as those with a disability or on low income
- The economic value of the time contributed by volunteers to the event
- Volunteer experiences, perceived benefits and their likelihood of volunteering in the future

A post event online survey could be designed to gauge volunteer perceptions and experience at your event.

10 CONTACT DETAILS

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

Email: eventsunit@tourismni.com

Web: www.tourismni.com/eventsupport