

# INTERNATIONAL TOURISM EVENTS FUND 2024/25

## Guidelines for Applicants



17 December 2023

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## **1 OVERVIEW**

### **1.1 Introduction**

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

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

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 them realise these benefits for Northern Ireland and to 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 Northern Ireland and are demand generators to attract out of state visitors (i.e. from outside of Northern Ireland) whilst enhancing Northern Ireland's international reputation.

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

### **1.2 Vision and objectives**

Our vision is for a portfolio of distinctive, high-quality tourism events which tell a compelling story of Northern Ireland to the world. 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 across Northern Ireland and should not offend or insult the public, or damage community relations.

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

The key objectives are to maximise opportunities to:

#### **Enhance the visitor experience**

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

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

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

Events are expected to deliver an economic return of at least £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 Northern Ireland's opportunities to host further major events;
- Be underpinned by a viable budget and realistic event planning;
- Identify and deliver on measurable outcomes; and
- Help Tourism NI fulfil our vision set out at Section 1.2.

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

- The event must take place between **1 April 2024** and **31 March 2025**.
- 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 Northern Ireland)**
- 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 Northern Ireland public sector continues to face significant financial pressures and Tourism NI itself will face another challenging financial year ahead. In the event that Tourism NI receives notice of a reduction in projected budget, or a standstill budget which is a cut in real terms, we may have to make cuts to our funding schemes. It is important to note that there is no guarantee of funding. If an application proceeds to award it may be substantially less than the amount requested, or awarded in previous years (if previously successful under the ITEF).

**All awards are allocated using funding from Central Government. If Tourism NI does not receive adequate budget to cover the event grant schemes, we can, at any stage of the application process, suspend the scheme, end or reduce the amount of financial support we offer, or choose not to operate the scheme.**

## 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 (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

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

*\*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
- 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, 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 criteria in order to be considered eligible to apply:

1. **Event date:** The event must take place between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. The event must occur on one day or over a period of several consecutive days with no break in days.
2. **Visitor numbers:** In-person visitor numbers of a minimum of 10,000 must be achieved.
3. **Out of State Visitors: A minimum of 10% of overall visitors must originate from outside Northern Ireland.**
4. **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. In kind support will be requested separately within the application form.
5. **Marketing:** The applicant must confirm that international marketing will be delivered as part of the promotion of the event and to which markets e.g. ROI, GB, Overseas etc.
6. **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.
7. **Economic benefit:** Visitor numbers, participant numbers, out of state, subsidies, commercial bednights, on-commercial bednights. The event must return a minimum of 10:1 on Tourism NI investment.
8. **Funding request from Tourism NI:** the applicant should confirm the level of support requested from Tourism NI, for information only (not to be included within the core budget).

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 screening questions including event date, location, contact details and desired financial support from Tourism NI.

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

- **Detailed budgetary information**

You must provide a detailed budget. 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. Please note that a budget presented in any other format will not be accepted and may

render your application ineligible.

Financial statements – you must provide financial statements which at a minimum must include two full year signed accounts and the most recent management accounts which covers up to and including November 2023. You must also submit evidence of HMRC Compliance. This may be uploaded as a statement or a screenshot from your online HMRC account. Applicants must include the previous years budget (both income and expenditure) for comparison purposes.

- **Tourism economic calculator**

A tourism economic calculator for which a template will be provided in the application form.

- **Marketing plan**

It is essential that appropriate marketing is delivered to attract an out of state audience. 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.

- **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.

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 of Northern Ireland consider that promoting good relations means “*the growth of relations and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledges the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms*”.

As 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 International Tourism Events Fund must align with Tourism NI's statutory obligation to promote good relations and also provide for equality of

opportunity and accessibility in line with fair employment, equality of treatment and anti-discrimination legislation.

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

## 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, 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 initial eligibility criteria, Tourism NI will appraise your application based on the following criteria:

1. Visitor experience
2. Tourism economic impact estimation based on:
  - Visitor and participant numbers
  - Out of state visitor numbers and the event's ability to attract same
  - Commercial bednights (ability to generate non-subsidised commercial bednights)
  - Return on investment
3. Finance
  - Event finance/budget
  - Financial Viability
4. Event programming and marketing activity
5. Event delivery, oversight and evaluation
6. Environmental sustainability
7. Social impacts
8. Previous breach of Tourism NI's terms and conditions of support.

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

### 4.2 Scoring

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

	SCORED CRITERIA	SCORE
1.	Visitor experience	Total score: 0-15
2.	Tourism economic impact	
2.1	Visitor and participant numbers	Total score: 0-15
2.2	Visitor and participant commercial bednights	Total score: 0-10
2.	Return on investment	Total score: 0-5
3.	Finance	
3.1	Event budget	Total Score: 0-25
3.2	Financial Viability	
3.3	Additionality	

	<b>SCORED CRITERIA</b>	<b>SCORE</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Event programming and marketing activity</b>	
4.1	Target audience and Tourism NI priority visitor segments	Total score: 0-15
4.2	Marketing budget	
4.3	Marketing monitoring and evaluation	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Event delivery, oversight and evaluation</b>	
5.1	Event delivery and oversight	Total score 0-10
5.2	Monitoring and evaluation	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Environmental sustainability</b>	Pass/Fail
<b>7.</b>	<b>Social impact</b>	Pass/Fail
<b>8.</b>	<b>Previous breach of Tourism NI's terms and conditions of support.</b>	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.

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

## 5 TIMELINE

Applications to the ITEF will open on 18 December 2023 at 10am. Full applications must be completed and submitted online by noon on 29 January 2024 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

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

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

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

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

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

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
- Updated tourism economic calculator based on actual figures.

### 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.

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

## **9 WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR**

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.

### **Contents**

#### **1. Event visitor experience**

- 1.1 Event overview and programme content
- 1.2 Event visitor experience and journey
- 1.3 Alignment with Embrace a Giant Spirit

#### **2. Tourism economic impact**

- 2.1 Visitor and participant numbers
- 2.2 Commercial and non-commercial bednights
- 2.3 Direct economic impact

#### **3. Finance**

- 3.1 Event budget and financial plan
- 3.2 Financial viability
- 3.3 Additionality

#### **4. Event programming and marketing activity**

- 4.1 Target audience and Tourism NI priority visitor segments
- 4.2 Marketing budget
- 4.3 Marketing monitoring and evaluation

#### **5. Event delivery, oversight and evaluation**

- 5.1 Event oversight and delivery
- 5.2 Monitoring and evaluation

#### **6. Environmental sustainability**

#### **7. Social impacts**

- 7.1 Community and skills
- 7.2 Environmental sustainability

#### **8. Previous breach of Tourism NI's terms and conditions of support**

## 1. EVENT VISITOR EXPERIENCE

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

### 1.1 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 Northern Ireland. Events must be able to demonstrate how they will attract visitors in person (and online) through their event content and how they will enhance the visitor event experience. This is your opportunity to demonstrate how your event can deliver on this.

You must clearly provide sufficient detail to understand what each day (or a typical day) of the event will consist of and how it will.

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

- What is the event experience?
- What are the elements of your event in which visitors can get involved? Describe how visitors will get 'hands-on' if appropriate.
- How will the event animate and showcase other tourism assets in the area?
- Think about your welcome at the event including online – what is the visitor's first experience?
- How will your event programme be curated?

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

### 1.2 Event visitor experience and journey

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

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

- ticketing
- visitor experience when at the event
- transport links and information
- car-parking
- food and drink offering and experiences
- accommodation offering
- partnerships and information
- other things to see and do in the area
- packages and offers
- cross selling
- itineraries etc.

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.

### **1.3 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 \(tourismni.com\)](https://www.tourismni.com/embrace-a-giant-spirit-experience-development-toolkit.pdf)

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

In this section you should consider how your event showcases and highlights the very best of Northern Ireland, and what your event offers that is unique to Northern Ireland 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 for Northern Ireland
- hidden places/showcasing unknown areas to visitors
- participatory elements
- what experience will you offer that is iconic and authentically Northern Ireland.

## **2. TOURISM ECONOMIC IMPACT**

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

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

### **2.1 Visitor and participant numbers**

Events applying to the ITEF must have a minimum of **10,000 in-person visitors** attending the event. International events must target and attract visitors from outside Northern Ireland and have a clear

evidence-based approach as to how you have calculated the visitor numbers from Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Great Britain and overseas.

Please demonstrate the event potential to attract visitors and participants to Northern Ireland before, during and/or after the event. The focus for 2024/25 is to attract a minimum of 10% out-of-state visitors to the event (from ROI, GB, & Overseas).

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

**What is classified as a ‘visitor’ for tourism events?**

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

**What is classified as a ‘participant’ for tourism events?**

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

Some typical subgroups of participants will include:

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

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

**Rationale**

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

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

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

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

## **2.2 Commercial and non-commercial bednights**

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

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

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

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

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

## **2.3 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 Northern Ireland, and in particular on accommodation, is one of the biggest factors in generating economic impact.

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

### **Tourism economic calculator**

You are required to complete the tourism economic calculator for which a template will be provided in the application form.

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

International tourism events receiving funding from Tourism NI must achieve a minimum return on investment of 10:1. Please ensure you clearly outline where all of the figures inserted in the calculator have come from and any assumptions, evidence and rationale you have used to substantiate the figures.

### **3. FINANCE**

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

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

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

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

Where an event is undertaken by an existing organisation, the profitability of that organisation over the previous three years may be reviewed in addition to its current financial position. Areas for concern might include declining profitability, high-gearing and negative cashflow from trading. Financial Statements for the last two years (where available) will be considered and must be provided at time of application.

**Note to applicant: Tourism NI is not a core funder of events and any monies contributed by Tourism NI should be used following the principles of 'additionality' as outlined at Section 3.3.**

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'. Profit should be carried forward into the next year's event reserves; this should be clearly shown in the financial statements.

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

Tourism NI is not in a position to provide additional funding over and above 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 by 10% or more, Tourism NI reserves the right to reduce the funding offer and payment made.

### 3.1 Event budget and financial plan

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

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
- Ensure the budget links with all sections of the event
  - Ensure the £200,000 minimum income and expenditure threshold is met
  - 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. 2023/24 for comparison purposes (where applicable)
- Projected cash budget for the 2024/25 event
- In-kind budget for the event
- A copy of your most recent signed accounts for the previous two years and a set of the most recent management accounts (up to and including November 2023).

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

#### Income projections

Please present detailed event income projections for the period of the 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
  - Invest NI
  - Sport NI
  - Department for Communities
  - Executive Office etc
- Self-generated Income which may include but is not limited to:
  - Ticket projections: x number of attendees at £x
  - Sponsorship: a breakdown must be provided
  - Merchandise
  - Food and drink sales
  - Trade stands
  - Donations
- Other:

- Other grants e.g. Department of Foreign Affairs (ROI), National Lottery Funding, EU funding etc
- Other material sources of income.

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

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

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

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

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

**Example:**

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

## Expenditure projections

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

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

### 3.2 Financial viability

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 your most recent signed accounts ideally the last two years as well as your most recent management accounts up to and including the period November 2023
- You will be required to provide evidence of HMRC compliance (by way of a statement or screenshot from online account (PAYE/TAX))
- *Please note that the Applicant screening question at Section 1 will require you to state if you have ever been declared bankrupt.*

### Eligible and ineligible expenditure

Please refer to Section 2.3 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.

### 3.3 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 TNI will 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 also provide details of what impact, if any, would an award for nil funds have on your event.

**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.

#### **4. EVENT PROGRAMMING AND MARKETING ACTIVITY**

This section must clearly set out not only the marketing activity you will undertake but also clearly show how this activity will effectively reach your target audience and priority visitor segments. 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.

##### **4.1 Target audience & Tourism NI priority visitor segments**

It is not enough to simply list various target markets and visitor segments. As part of this application, you will be required to select which Tourism NI priority visitor segment (for NI & ROI & Overseas) with which your event most closely aligns. You will be required to detail what activity is being undertaken to target these visitor segments utilising all available marketing channels. Information on these priority visitor segments can be found at: [Northern Ireland Domestic Tourism Strategy, ROI Market Strategy 2021 – 2026 and Great Britain \(GB\) Market Review 2019-2025.](#)

It is important that you clearly indicate how you decided on your target audience, supported by any research you conducted, or previous evaluations that you carried out. How will your programme serve as an attractor to these audiences, delivering on their needs, and 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.

##### **4.2 Marketing budget**

Provide details of the marketing budget for your event. You should demonstrate how the budget will be allocated against the most effective marketing channels proposed in your event marketing plan (template provided in application form), ensuring that it will help you target the priority segments you are trying to reach. In completing this budget, you must consider whether it is a viable marketing budget, with appropriate budget assigned for marketing to return on international event ambitions. It must target international visitors. When assessing the information you provide, Tourism NI staff 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 budget should include the following:

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

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

### **4.3 Marketing monitoring and evaluation**

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

## **5. EVENT DELIVERY, OVERSIGHT AND EVALUATION**

### **5.1 Event delivery and oversight**

Please 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.

### **5.2 Monitoring and evaluation**

Please 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.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

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

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

Applicants 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](#).

## **7. 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

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