Events Strategic Vision to 2020

Contents

Forewords
Minister Foster p4
Alan Clarke p5

Introduction p7

Strategic Context p10
Northern Ireland Tourist Board p12
Northern Ireland Tourism Brand p15

Experiential Tourism p16

Vision p18

Objectives p19

Events Structure to 2020 p20
Bidding for Global Events p23
International Tourism Events p28
National Tourism Events p31

Northern Ireland Events Industry Development p32

Conclusion p36
Foreword from Minister

On behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive I welcome the Northern Ireland Tourist Board’s new Events Strategic Vision which will provide a clear vision and support for the Northern Ireland events industry.

As we look towards 2014 tourism is in an increasingly confident place as we anticipate the excitement and spectacle of the Giro d’Italia and make plans to build on the successes of this year’s G8 summit, the UK City of Culture and the World Police and Fire Games.

As Tourism Minister my goal is to build on the momentum created over the past number of years which has moved us to a whole new level in terms of world-wide profile, economic impact and self-belief.

Events are now part of our tourism fabric and have the capacity not only to showcase Northern Ireland on a world-wide stage but also to enhance our reputation as a place to visit, live, work, study and invest in.

The aim of this Strategic Vision is to create sustainable visitor inspired events, to bid for and attract high profile global events and to develop uniquely Northern Ireland events with international appeal. Key targets are to host one major global event per year, develop 5 new ‘signature events’ by 2017 and generate a return on investment of 3:1 on funded events.

With the support of a progressive, diverse and cohesive events industry we can create more jobs and cement our reputation as an attractive destination.

I encourage the industry to embrace the vision of this strategy and help make Northern Ireland stand out as the home of great events.

Arlene Foster MLA
Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

A word from Alan Clarke

I am pleased to introduce the new Events Strategic Vision for Northern Ireland which aims to fully support the events industry and strengthen the position of Northern Ireland as a must-see destination.

Events are a very important driver in developing Northern Ireland’s tourism industry. They attract visitors, spectators and event participants as well as extend the event season, create jobs, increase spend and lengthen the time visitors stay.

Over the past three years we have created programmes to support both national and international events and proactively bid for major global events successfully securing the legendary MTV EMA’s, the sell-out Irish Open and the “Big Start” of the Giro d’Italia, which we eagerly await in 2014.

Our vision is to make Northern Ireland known as the home of great events and feature a strong annual tourism event programme consisting of major bid events which will be supported by core homegrown and international events.

We have developed NITB’s current tourism event funds and both will remain as open call schemes. The international fund will now extend to 3 years and we will introduce a new model to support the development and sustainability of events under this category. The national fund will now be administered as a sponsorship scheme. We also intend to develop and deliver a major global event bidding plan.

I believe that the new funding packages available, and a focus on bidding for more events, will deliver a competitive advantage for Northern Ireland and create significant visitor appeal.

We look forward to working with you to help make our strategic vision for events a reality.

Alan Clarke
Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Tourist Board
Introduction

The events industry in Northern Ireland has an important strategic role to play in delivering the vision for tourism set out by the Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020. This document gives clear strategic direction for the future of the events industry in Northern Ireland with the overall vision of recognising Northern Ireland as the home of great events.

The ‘ni 2012; our time, our place’ programme has marked a clear step change for the tourism industry in Northern Ireland with a series of high profile events contributing to moving the tourism industry to the heart of economic development here. Northern Ireland events industry has delivered high quality, authentic event experiences ranging from major world class events, international events, national events to local events. This strong foundation is a catalyst for the future growth and development of the industry in Northern Ireland to ensure increased visitor numbers, economic spend and raise the profile of Northern Ireland whilst ensuring all events underpin the experiential tourism offering in Northern Ireland.

By progressing and developing the events industry, whilst ensuring the retention of the authentic Northern Ireland experiences, new and emerging opportunities will be firmly grasped to develop and enhance the future of this industry and ensure Northern Ireland is recognised as the home of great events.
What will make Northern Ireland Home of Great Events?

If successful in delivering the vision for events, success will have the following characteristics:

- Northern Ireland will be known as the home of great events, having successfully hosted major high profile events, showcasing its capability and expertise with the aim to be ‘best in class’.
- There will be a clear structure of events spanning from one off global bid events, to international and national events to local events.
- Events will showcase Northern Ireland’s landscapes, characters and authentic experiences and will provide a clear call to action.
- The events industry will deliver for the Northern Ireland economy.
- The events industry will be strongly supported by an industry body therefore general skills, capabilities and networking opportunities will all have been significantly improved.
- NITB, its partners, stakeholders and the events industry will have a track record of delivering success at all levels of events from major bid events, right through to international and home grown events.

double the income we earn from tourism by working together to grow tourism to the benefit of all
Strategic Context

The events industry in Northern Ireland has a major role to play in shaping and delivering the objectives set out by the Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020.

Tourism is now viewed as a sector that can make a real and tangible positive contribution to the Northern Ireland economy. In 2012, Northern Ireland welcomed approximately 4 million visitors spending circa £683 million supporting 40,000 jobs. By 2020, it is hoped a clear vision for tourism will in turn increase employment supported by tourism to 50,000 jobs, drive visitor numbers to an unprecedented 4.5 million per annum and double the revenue generated to £1 billion. The vision for tourism in Northern Ireland is to create a Northern Ireland experience and get it on everyone’s destination wish list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012 NUMBERS</th>
<th>2020 PROJECTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4m</td>
<td>4.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£683m</td>
<td>£1 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NITB’s direction is set by DETI’s Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020. It is expected that as a result of significant public and private sector collaboration the ambitions set out in the strategy will be realised:

- Increasing visitors from 4m to 4.5m.
- Increasing earnings from tourism from £683m to £1bn.
- Supporting indigenous high quality businesses to grow.
- Being visitor inspired in all our actions.

Events have an important and strategic role to play in delivering this vision for tourism. Event led short breaks is one of NITB’s key market segments. Whether home-grown events or major one-off international events, events in general have the capability to showcase our people and places on a global stage. They also have the capacity to increase civic pride.

Major global events in particular are able to fulfil the objective of showcasing Northern Ireland as a unique destination to live, work, study and visit. Events can provide a specific reason for visitors to come to Northern Ireland or extend their stay to attend a particular event. They can also drive visitor numbers, generate increased spend and provide platforms for the visitor to interact with the local culture, local people and explore our scenic landscapes and cities. Events also have the capacity to enhance a visitor’s experience of Northern Ireland and therefore positively change perceptions.
Northern Ireland Tourist Board

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) vision is to confidently and passionately champion the development and promotion of the Northern Ireland tourism experience. In this regard we are ‘visitor’ inspired, developing products and delivering unique and authentic experiences for visitors, inspired by our visitors.

- We unlock the potential.
- We build the tourism product.
- We develop a quality visitor experience.
- We promote the destination.

NITB supports the events industry in Northern Ireland and recognises the economic importance of events.

- NITB’s Events Unit develop and promote events by developing policies, funding and programmes that will enhance the sector.
- NITB’s Business Support Department works closely with Events to capitalise on the opportunities for growth that exist in Northern Ireland tourism. Industry Development team and Quality and Standards team are available to provide further advice and support to help improve our visitors’ event experience in Northern Ireland. NITB will aid in Industry Development to improve event quality experience.
- NITB’s Marketing Department have vast expertise and experience in promoting events in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland on all platforms. They work very closely with Tourism Ireland marketing in Great Britain and overseas.
- NITB’s Product Development and Events work in partnership to collaborate with providers in key product sectors to develop world-class event experiences that will support the delivery of increased visitor numbers and visitor revenue. All aspects of culture, heritage and activities play a vital role in event experiences.
Northern Ireland Tourism Brand

The Northern Ireland tourism brand was developed in 2009 to stand out from the competition and has important significance for event organisers, specifically with regard to tourism events.

The vision is to ensure Northern Ireland should be top of everyone’s destination wish list.

Northern Ireland is emerging as a vibrant, dynamic destination with its own culture. It is a land of contrast and contradictions and our culture and its heritage is a strong and differentiating factor that we use as our unique selling point. Events add to the positive image of Northern Ireland as a tourist destination.

Events can deliver the Northern Ireland brand in an authentic, memorable way by promoting who we are and what we stand for delivering on the principle of ‘Northern Ireland is confidently moving on’. Events can ensure we stand out from the competition and exceed the visitor expectations.

The Northern Ireland tourism brand consists of the following elements:

**Big Idea**
We are confidently moving on.

**Vision**
To create the new Northern Ireland experience and get it on everyone’s wish list.

**Values**
We are self-believing, self-aware, forward thinking and authentic.

**Themes**
Experience our awakening and uncover our stories.
NITB has developed a visionary piece of work to enable Northern Ireland tourism to engage better with its potential visitors and compete on the global market. Global tourism trends indicate that travellers want to explore a destination and live a life that’s less ordinary. They want to encounter something different, not necessarily a destination or even a product, but an ‘experience’.

In Northern Ireland, we have a huge opportunity to align ourselves competitively with other similar destinations and to bring alive our most unique and distinctive assets. We know more about our visitors than ever before and we also know what they think of us. Now is the time for everyone to work together to develop our tourism experiences around our visitors needs and motivations to encourage them to stay longer, spend more and return again and again.

NITB has developed ‘Experience Pillars’ which form the future marketing activity and present huge significance and potential for the events industry in Northern Ireland.

Events by their very nature can create and sustain memorable Northern Ireland experiences and are a crucial element of each of the ‘Experience Pillars’. They reflect the friendliness of our people, the vibrancy of our cities, the beauty of our landscapes and the commonality of our rich heritage. Key experiences are best placed to promote Northern Ireland to the greatest number of potential target visitors. These experiences best reflect what Northern Ireland has to offer and include our unique selling points.

The Priority experiences for events have been identified as follows:

- Living Legends
- Coasts and Lakes
- Unique Outdoors
- Culture and Creative Vibe
- Naturally NI

A range of visitor segments for key markets have been identified. These segments are useful in creating and tailoring events that will add to the visitor experience in Northern Ireland and create a motivator for visitors to come to Northern Ireland. This will allow event organisers to cater more closely to the characteristics and requirements of the visitor segment most relevant to them. The end result will be unique event experiences, closely aligned with ‘Experience Pillars’ and the most appropriate visitor segments.

The Visitor Segments are:

- Time Together (NI + ROI)
- Mature Cosmopolitans (NI + ROI)
- Family Fun (NI + ROI)
- Great Escapers (GB)
- Social Energisers (GB)
- Culturally Curious (GB)
- Young and Lively (ROI)
Northern Ireland is a forward thinking, self-believing, authentic and self-aware country. We have a defined set of values that reflect who we are, what we stand for and what we offer; a defined way of behaving that will make each and every visitor’s experience in Northern Ireland wholly unique and memorable and working towards ensuring Northern Ireland is featured on destination wish lists.

The vision for events in Northern Ireland is that:

“Northern Ireland will be known as the home of great events featuring a strong annual tourism event programme consisting of Major Global Events, attracted to be held in Northern Ireland, supported by core international, national and local events. These events will cover a range of interests and regions. They will be visitor inspired, showcasing Northern Ireland as a unique destination on a global stage, as a place to live, work, study and visit.”

The ‘home of great events’ is a clear strategic direction for the future of the events industry in Northern Ireland and will encourage the development of new and emerging opportunities. This will build Northern Ireland’s reputation of delivering best in class events on a global stage whilst positively impacting on the Northern Ireland economy, visitor numbers and profile of the area.

**Vision**

The objectives of the Events Strategic Vision are to:

1. Create a sustainable visitor inspired events future for Northern Ireland.
2. Develop a progressive, diverse and cohesive events industry, attracting significant additional visitors & revenue into the economy of Northern Ireland.
3. Bid for and attract high profile, international scale events to Northern Ireland that have the potential to showcase our landscapes, cities and characters in a positive light to audiences around the world.
4. Develop events with international appeal/profile ‘hosted’ in Northern Ireland and drive the Northern Ireland brand by being built around key/major themes and demonstrating quality and authenticity.
6. Create a culture of attending events.
It is vital that Northern Ireland has a new events structure to take forward events from 2014 – 2020. This structure for events will give clear direction and milestones for delivering the vision for events in Northern Ireland.

There are 4 tiers of events and within each tier the industry has a significant role to play. High quality local, national and international events are as important as the major global events at the top of the structure. An events structure allows us to categorise events, ensuring geographical coverage, calendar spread and encourages partnership across industry and stakeholders to deliver this overall vision for events in Northern Ireland. This proposed events structure compliments existing policies within NITB and recognises that events are a clear means for delivering the Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020.

The new Events Structure to 2020 will deliver against the following criteria:

- Visitor focused
- In line with ‘Experience Pillars’ and segments
- Increase visitor numbers
- Generate spend
- Drive Northern Ireland brand

NITB will encourage partners and stakeholders in the events industry to use this pyramid as a guide when developing their own events and take into consideration the definitions for each tier.
Northern Ireland aims to bid for/host at least one major global scale event each year

Bidding for Global Events

Northern Ireland has been successful in bidding for and hosting a range of high profile events in the last few years. Events such as the MTV EMA’s, the Irish Open and the range of other high profile ni2012 events, the Fleadh Cheoil and Turner Prize, not to mention the Giro d’Italia in 2014 and Tall Ships 2015 Festival, all serve to increase the likelihood and potential for Northern Ireland to host bigger events in the future.

Within its new role NITB is, in conjunction with key partners, leading the strategic vision to bid for/host at least one major global event within Northern Ireland each year. Bidding structures, including a Northern Ireland bidding group, are being put in place to ensure this vision is realised. NITB will bring key partners together who have the strategic expertise and knowledge to identify major events which could showcase Northern Ireland on a world stage and drive visitor numbers and spend.

Events identified for bidding should deliver key objectives including:

1. Showcase Northern Ireland’s iconic landscapes and stand-out features
2. Highlight Northern Ireland’s unique character and culture
3. Change perceptions of Northern Ireland as a place to live, work, study and visit
4. Have capacity to attract out of state visitors specifically for the event
5. Generate significant visitor spend
6. Act as a focal point for marketing campaigns and activity in Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and Great Britain in particular
7. Act as a catalyst for wider industry to develop related product and embrace the opportunities presented
8. Act as a catalyst for bidding for other major events
Northern Ireland has already had significant success in bidding for and hosting a range of major global events including:

MTV EMA’s 2011

MTV EMA’s, alongside Belfast Music Week, was a landmark event for Belfast and Northern Ireland – placing Northern Ireland firmly on the world musical stage.

- 1.2bn people watched around the globe
- 23,989 the number of media articles released
- 669m media news opportunities generated
- 8,000 number of room nights booked in Belfast hotels
- £22m total economic impact for Belfast

Reaching a global TV audience of 1.2 billion people and covered by 130 media organisations, this event clearly put Belfast and Northern Ireland on the global stage and it is from this stage that we can confidently move forward in securing other similar type and larger scale events.

Irish Open 2012

Hosted at Royal Portrush, the Irish Open was another major success for events in Northern Ireland. This was the first time the Irish Open had been held in Northern Ireland in over 60 years and came at a time when Northern Ireland home-grown golfers were enjoying global success. Their continued success further enhances Northern Ireland’s profile on a global stage and helps promote our golf tourism product.

130,785 tickets sold
£9.5m tourism revenue generated
£22m total economic impact for Belfast
447m Broadcast to 447m households
£107m gross global media coverage
99% of visitors indicated that the Irish Open had met or exceeded their expectations
£12m economic benefit to NI businesses
£1:£4.29 Tourism impact of NITB monies of
Titanic Belfast Festival 2012

In 2012, the birthplace of the Titanic celebrated 100 years after the shipbuilding achievement and commemorated the tragic fateful maiden journey marked by over 120 events developed by Belfast City Council. Highlights included Titanic Digital Projection Light Show and MTV presents Titanic Sounds.

- **95,474** spectators
- **120** events
- **£66.9m** PR
- **449,175** views of the Titanic Lightshow webfilm
- **6,311** bed nights generated
- **£716,264** tourism revenue generated
- **£2.8m** economic benefit to Northern Ireland businesses
International Tourism Events

An International Tourism Event is an event that attracts out of state visitors (not participants) to Northern Ireland, where the event has played a key / vital role in attracting them to visit.

An event of this nature also showcases Northern Ireland on a global stage as a unique destination. This would include generating significant out of state media coverage (such as TV and print) both pre-event and during the event. The coverage would showcase Northern Ireland’s authentic people and places, highlighting our iconic landscapes and attractions.

These events at their very core have the capacity to attract visitors to Northern Ireland and attract significant out of state media attention whilst helping to change perceptions of Northern Ireland. These events would include already established high profile events. International Tourism Events should cover several streams of NITB’s Product Portfolio including Culture, Arts and Heritage as well as appeal to the Visitor Segments and fit with the ‘Experience Pillars’ developed by NITB.

International Tourism Events should:

• Generate **substantial economic benefits** for Northern Ireland through increased visitation including tourists, spectators and participants
• **Highlight Northern Ireland as an event and tourism destination** through high profile, international media coverage
• **Enhance Northern Ireland’s opportunities** to host further major events
• Demonstrate **additionality, sustainability and creativity**
• **Create a lasting legacy** for Northern Ireland leaving a footprint of benefits for years to come
• **Fit with visitor segments and ‘Experience Pillars’**
• Total visitor numbers **greater than 4,000** (not participants)
• Aimed **return on investment of 5:1**

By establishing better working relationships with event organisers, NITB’s Events Unit will maximise event potential including development, planning, sustainability and marketing. The aim is to establish a development framework for international events to include NITB’s expertise as well as bringing in the expertise and support from partners such as Invest NI, Sport NI, Arts Council NI and Tourism Ireland.
National Tourism Events

National Tourism Events showcase Northern Ireland’s regions and destinations allowing our visitors to get closer to our authentic people, places and personality through experiencing the real Northern Ireland.

These events cover a wide range of themes and areas such as activities, music, culture, food, art, theatre and certain events will appeal to niche markets and appeal to the Visitor Segments whilst fitting with the ‘Experience Pillars’ developed by NITB. National Tourism Events will allow for geographical spread and exploration of all destinations and enhance off peak times where there is surplus capacity in our tourism industry.

National Tourism Events support the delivery of the Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020 and showcase the Northern Ireland tourism brand.

National Tourism Events highlight the best that the regions of Northern Ireland have to offer and should:

- Get closer to our authentic people, places and personality
- Encourage attendance of out of state visitors / visitors who are already in Northern Ireland;
- Generate economic benefits for Northern Ireland through increased visitor numbers and spend;
- Enhance the profile and appeal of the area;
- Focus on building legacy and sustainability;
- Ensure year round motivators;
- Enhance the visitor experience;
Northern Ireland Events Industry Development

Northern Ireland’s event industry has proven itself capable of delivering high profile major global events, as well as developing home grown local, national and international events. To ensure a sustainable and progressive events portfolio for Northern Ireland it is extremely important that the industry continues to develop, both in terms of up-skilling as well as a focus to become more self-sustaining.

NITB will continue to support and work with the industry and other key partners including In Any Event, DEL, People 1st and Invest NI to encourage up-skilling and benchmarking, with the ultimate aim of Northern Ireland delivering visitor inspired, best in class events. Strategic partnerships and networking groups continue to be developed to ensure the key players bring together their expertise, knowledge and work collectively towards a clear strategic vision for the Industry.

The key aims of these strategic partnerships and groups are to:

1. Advise on strategic direction and priorities
2. Co-ordinate and develop an annual events calendar for Northern Ireland
3. Promote sharing of best practice with regard to all elements of events
4. Ensure effective communication between funders and organisers
5. Support the development of Northern Ireland events industry
6. Share insights and research into the events industry
7. Support development of International Events
8. Deliver the vision that Northern Ireland will become known as the Home of Great Events

Education

Education is a vital tool in developing the capabilities of the events industry in Northern Ireland and ensuring its longevity. The University of Ulster and a number of Further Education Colleges provide qualifications in Event Management. It is important that the education sector links with the industry both in terms of research, student educational support and to support the specific skills required by the industry.

NITB, with key partners including DEL, People 1st and In Any Event, will continue to work closely with the education sector in this regard.
In Any Event

In Any Event is an industry body established in 2012. The events industry is affected by a number of specific issues which an industry association will be able to support.

As a recognised trade body, In Any Event represents all those working within the events industry from event organisers, suppliers, destinations, venue providers, government and local authorities and other funding associations. It provides one umbrella body that brings the key players, the key minds and the key thinkers together in relation to the development of events and festivals in Northern Ireland.

A main focus of their remit is learning and education. It also provides an open forum to all people working within the industry to access research, information seminars, educational programmes and networking opportunities. Discussions are also being had in terms of the regulation and standards of service, facilities and accountability and the role In Any Event can play in this regard.

NITB is supporting the establishment of In Any Event. The objectives of the organisation are:

1. To encourage best practice in the events industry
2. To provide educational and training opportunities
3. To introduce standardisation around event health and safety, evaluation, methodology and economic impact
4. To lead research and insights into the events industry and challenge perceptions from sound evidence
5. Share insights and research into the events industry
In conclusion, the Northern Ireland Events Strategic Vision to 2020 outlines a clear vision on how to ensure the continued evolution and success of the events industry in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland’s CV of hosting events of global scale has been undoubtedly strengthened in recent years and it is now an opportune time to go to market to promote Northern Ireland as an ideal location to host events of all levels and become known as ‘Northern Ireland: Home of Great Events’.
Northern Ireland
Home of Great Events