



The voice for tourism in Northern Ireland

Impact Report 2022/2023

With members across all sectors of the tourism economy, NITA is the voice for tourism in Northern Ireland.

NITA's role is to represent our members, ensuring the voice of industry is listened to in order to shape the future growth of tourism and lobbying at all levels of government and beyond. We aim to raise awareness of and contribute to the solution of major strategic issues affecting the industry.

Our focus for 2023 will be to continue to be a strong Voice of the tourism industry showing the true impact of Tourism as a Force for Good.

This will be underpinned by:

- Development of a robust evidence base with industry insights and case studies
- Facilitating engagement with the Department and industry on the development of the Tourism Strategy
- Continuing to make the case for a solution to the impact of the introduction of the electronic travel authorisation for tourists travelling to NI via the Republic of Ireland and crossing the land border
- Engaging with the Migration Advisory Committee on the review of the Shortage Occupation List to address the skills shortages in the industry
- Continuing to work in partnership with our members, the industry, UK and Irish Governments

To find out more about NITA, please visit www.nitourismalliance.com.

Progress Report against each of our five priorities

Competitiveness	Priorities	Achievements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business support - to address competitive disadvantage by lobbying for government investment. • Promotion - to lobby for continued and increased investment in promoting NI as a destination to key markets. • Taxes - to demonstrate the effects of the removal of APD on domestic flights and a reduced VAT rate for tourism services. • Legislation - to assist in updating the NI Tourism Order. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the 2022 COVID recovery period we lobbied the Government for financial support for businesses and kept members updated of support available, while working with the Executive Covid team on reopening. • We campaigned successfully for additional Marketing funds to promote NI at home and overseas. This has resulted in a 50% increase in visitor numbers from RoI and an earlier return of international visitors. • We continued to be the voice for tourism in the media • We campaigned to achieve a 50% reduction on domestic APD and collaborated with Tourism bodies working across the UK to secure a reduction in the VAT rate during the pandemic.
Access and Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigration policy - to lobby for an exemption on Electronic Travel Authorisations (ETA's) on those entering NI via the land border. • Access - to promote additional air routes to NI from EU & GB. • Connectivity - to lobby for more regular rail/bus connections between RoI & NI and joined up investment/development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NITA CEO and Chair have been working with NI MP's, UK Minister of Immigration, Labour Shadow Cabinet, NIO and Irish political parties to lobby for changes in the ETA proposals • We have engaged with external stakeholders ALVA, UK Inbound, ETOA, ITOA and ITIC and also the House of Lords, NI Affairs Committee, Ireland/NI Protocol Sub-committee, US Consulate, US Ambassador to UK and the Irish Ambassador to GB to gain their support for ETA exemption. • We are currently exploring a legal challenge to the rules for tourists crossing the land border into NI.
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in talent and skills - to lobby for government action to address staffing shortages in the industry. • Flexible immigration policy - to encourage more flexibility in the implementation here. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have developed a partnership with the Hospitality and Skills Network (HATS) to articulate and find solutions to the sector's skills challenges. This has included supporting the 'Make it Here' recruitment campaign and employer Charter.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership - to work closely with HATS to drive forward the skills agenda. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HATS and NITA have jointly engaged with the DoE Minister and officials make the case for demand-led skills solutions. • NITA Chair presented at a guest lecture for the 'Hospitality Management, Masters course and over 20 students attended the NITA conference.
Research and Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual Tourism Barometer - to bring together different sources of data and industry insights. • A GVA figure for the tourism economy - to work with the Government to produce a GVA figure for the tourism economy. • A Force for Good - to provide case studies to show the positive impact of the NI tourism economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are working with Grant Thornton in developing a Tourism Barometer. • We facilitated a trip to Fermanagh for the Department of Economy to better understand the important impact of tourism on sustainable economic development. This trip demonstrated the benefits of tourism to local communities, the importance of marketing and evidenced how tourism businesses are innovating and working towards sustainability.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global recognition - to work with members to create a co-ordinated approach and message on our sustainability and accessibility credentials with the aim of making Northern Ireland a sustainable destination. • Funded Tourism Strategy - to support a funded strategy to maximise the regenerative nature of tourism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We held a successful NITA conference 'Tourism: A Force for Good' in September. The NITA strategy was launched with The Minister for Economy addressing the conference including the commitment to develop a new Tourism Strategy for NI. • The conference supported a local food bank 'The People's Kitchen' by donating a total of £500. • The CEO attended a TNI Sustainable Tourism Learning trip to Slovenia. • NITA Chair and CEO presented to Tourism Ireland board and ITIC Council.