

# Tourism

July 2008

## Sector Profile

### Overview

**Summary** Tourism in Northern Ireland has experienced phenomenal growth since 1994 and 2007 continues this trend. During January – December 2007 visitors to Northern Ireland increased by 6% (+128,000) in comparison to 2006. Overseas visitors (excluding GB and ROI) increased by 19% to 500,000 over the same period, twice the number recorded five years ago. The most significant increases over 2006 were recorded in visitors from Europe (+27%), with North America (+12%) and Australia/New Zealand (+36%) also performing well. Republic of Ireland and Great Britain visitors made up 76% of total visitors to Northern Ireland in 2007.

**Employment** There were 52,100 jobs (full-time and part-time) in Tourism and Leisure recorded by DETI's Quarterly Employment Survey for March 2008.

### Our approach to the sector

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and Tourism Ireland Limited (TIL) have developed a joint strategy for marketing and growing the sector which can be downloaded using the following link:-

<http://www.nitb.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=1396>

The role of Invest NI is primarily to assist the business development element of tourism within the context of NITB tourism policy. Invest NI works closely with NITB to improve existing tourism accommodation stock and strengthen the ability of the industry to compete in global markets.

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As a broad principle Invest NI will consider assisting businesses with a clearly defined strategy for growth or product repositioning through tourism. Businesses eligible for Invest NI support include:

- Existing accommodation providers certified by the NITB
- Potential or start-up tourism accommodation businesses with the potential to enhance and add value to the existing NI tourism infrastructure and economy of Northern Ireland.

Download Invest NI's Guidelines for Tourism Support using the following link:-

[www.investni.com/tourism\\_support\\_brochure\\_brochure\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.investni.com/tourism_support_brochure_brochure_pdf.pdf)

## **Business Development Solutions**

Invest NI offers an extensive portfolio of advice, assistance and support which can be tailored to meet the needs of companies either in particular sectors, or who are tackling specific challenges within their business. This covers areas such as strategy development, people development, research and development, exporting, energy management and e-business. Full details of our programmes and services are available from the [Business Development Solutions section](#).

## **Initiatives**

Invest NI is currently providing developmental support to the NI tourism industry via several initiatives, particularly in relation to marketing.

To help the NI tourism industry benefit from the development of new air access routes into Northern Ireland by Air Route Development (NI) Ltd and other international marketing opportunities being targeted by NITB and TIL, Invest NI has developed a programme of support to help tourism businesses develop strategic and tactical marketing plans. A marketing programme aimed at accommodation providers - VISA - was delivered in 2006 and 2007 and was very well received. A third and final programme is scheduled to commence in winter 2008.

Invest NI also supports the tourism initiatives of NITB. These fall under the NITB 2004-2007 Strategic Framework for Action, and include 5 'Signature Projects' and 5 'Winning Themes'.

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## Industry Links

**Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) – [www.nitb.com](http://www.nitb.com)**

NITB is the lead body responsible for the marketing and development of tourism in Northern Ireland and in conjunction with the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment (DETI) responsible for formulating tourism policy. The NITB also undertakes a number of functions and activities including:

- The certification and classification of tourist accommodation and the provision of related advice.
- The administration of grants to assist with tourist marketing, events, and tourist amenity development.
- Developing the strategic plan for Northern Ireland tourism and providing advice to DETI on tourism policy.

Tourism Ireland Ltd (TIL)

[www.tourismireland.com](http://www.tourismireland.com)

Northern Ireland Hotels Federation (NIHF)

[www.nihf.co.uk](http://www.nihf.co.uk)

Regional Tourism Partnerships (RTPs)

<http://www.nitb.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=599>

## Useful Information Sources

NITB Tourism Facts and Figures:-

<http://www.nitb.com/research.aspx?ID=16585>

Guides to the market research sources which are available from Invest NI's Business Information Services can be downloaded from the Publications A – Z section of the website:-

<http://www.investni.com/index/publicationsa-z.htm?filter=All>

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