International Perceptions of Northern Ireland: Tourism
Six Dimensions of the Nation Brands Index^{SM} 2019

March 2020

In order to assess and monitor its international reputation, Northern Ireland has been included on the Nation Brands Index^{SM} (NBI^{SM}) since 2016.

The NBI^{SM} measures and ranks the reputations of 50 nations across Six Dimensions: Exports; Governance; Culture; People; Tourism; and Immigration and Investment.

This bulletin examines Northern Ireland's reputation in relation to **Tourism**. The score for the Tourism dimension is calculated using scores from four attributes (see opposite). For each attribute, survey participants were presented with a statement and asked to state to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale, where one is strongly disagree, four is neither agree nor disagree, and seven is strongly agree*.

The score for the Tourism dimension is out of 100, while the score for each of the attributes is based on a scale from one to seven (with seven being the highest and best, and one being the lowest and worst).

50 countries are included in the NBI^{SM}; rankings presented in the report show Northern Ireland's position among these 50 countries.

Attribute	Statement
Visit if Money was No Object*	'Please give each country a rating from 1 to 7 where 7 means you would 'strongly like to visit' if money was no object and 1 means you would 'strongly not like to visit' if money was no object.'
Natural Beauty	'This country is rich in natural beauty.'
Historic Buildings	'This country is rich in historic buildings and monuments.'
Vibrant City Life	'This country has a vibrant city life and urban attractions.'

*In relation to the "visit if money was no object" attribute, participants were not asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed but to what extent they would like to visit Northern Ireland, if money was no object, on a seven point Likert scale, where one is 'strongly not like to visit', four is 'neither like nor not like to visit' and seven is 'strongly like to visit'.

Figure 1: Northern Ireland's ranking and score on the Tourism dimension of the NBI^{SM}

RANK (out of 50)

2019	2018
28	28

TOURISM

(out of 100) SCORE

2019	2018
64.39	64.17

Headlines

- **In 2019, Northern Ireland ranked 28th of 50 for the Tourism dimension (unchanged from all previous survey years). Tourism was Northern Ireland's 2nd lowest ranked dimension of the Six Dimensions, as was also the case in all previous survey years.**
- **Northern Ireland's score for Tourism increased to 64.39 in 2019 (+0.22 since 2018). As in all previous survey years, Tourism was Northern Ireland's highest scoring dimension but its relatively low rank suggests that other nations were also scored highly, thus making the Tourism dimension more competitive and resulting in a lower than expected ranking for Northern Ireland.**
- **Tourism received significantly higher scores from those who had visited Northern Ireland compared to those who had not.**
- **A relatively large proportion indicated they would not be willing to visit Northern Ireland if money was no object (18 per cent).**

Rankings and scores on the Tourism dimension from around the world

Northern Ireland received the widest range of rankings globally on the Tourism dimension compared with the other five dimensions of the NBI[SM].
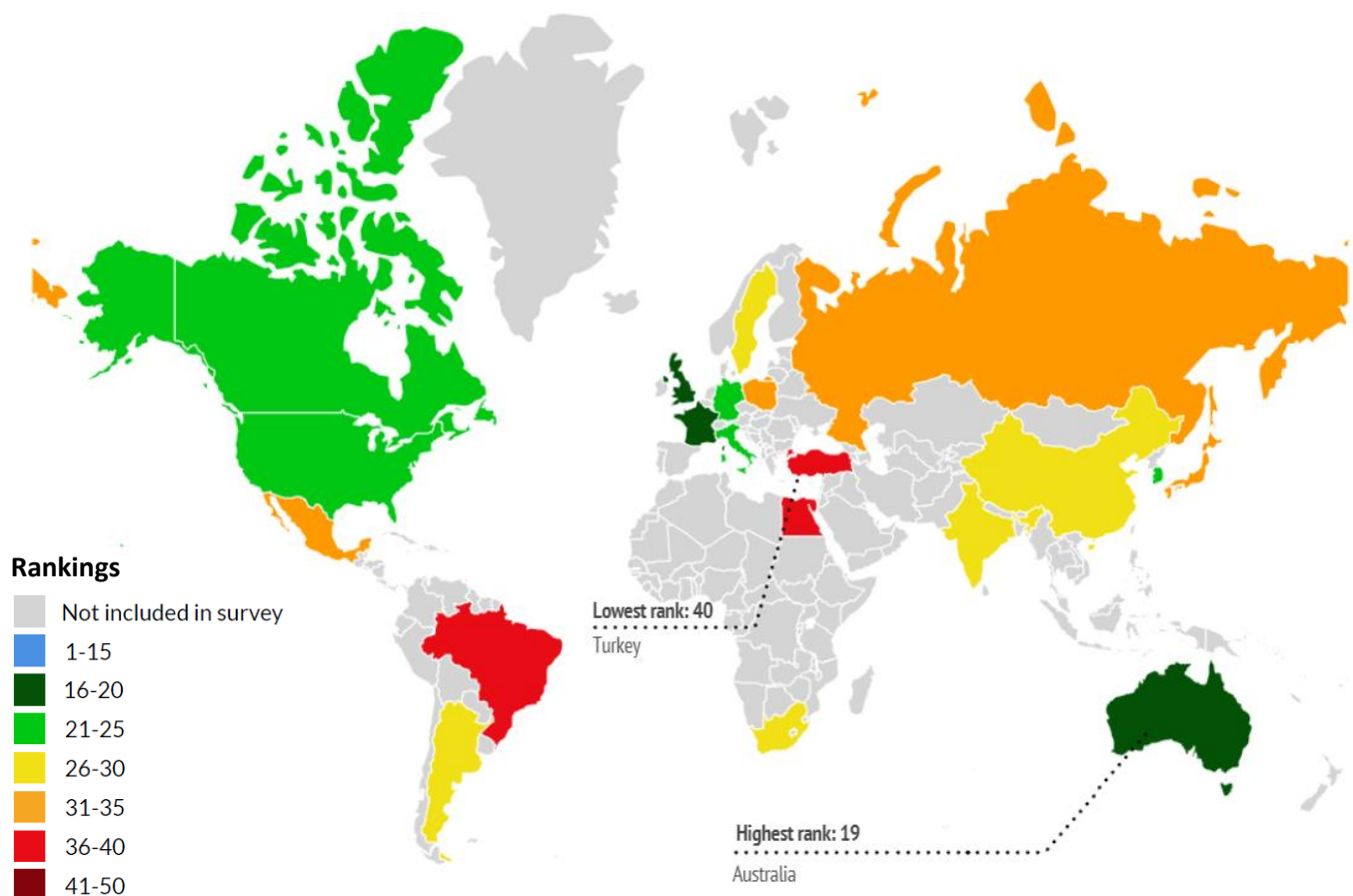
The highest rankings were received from Australia (19th), the United Kingdom and France (both 20th) and the United States, Germany and South Korea (all 21st). Northern Ireland's lowest rankings were received from Turkey (40th), Egypt (38th), Brazil (36th) and Russia (35th).

While rankings provide an insight into how Northern Ireland is viewed by panel countries relative to the other participating nations, they can be impacted year on year due to the inclusion of new countries in the survey. The dimension score provides a more absolute understanding of how Northern Ireland is viewed, both overall and by each of the individual panel countries. In this sense, it is useful to consider both rankings and scores.

Northern Ireland's score on the Tourism dimension was higher in 2019 than in 2018. The Northern Ireland's highest score was received from India (71.41). Northern Ireland also received relatively high scores from Mexico (69.55), Italy (67.52), South Africa (66.45), Russia (66.35) and Argentina (66.30). Northern Ireland's lowest scores were received from Japan (54.59), Sweden (60.74) and South Korea (61.13).

Northern Ireland's relatively high rank (21st) and low score (61.13) from South Korea contrasts with the relatively low rank (34th) and high score (69.55) from Mexico. This suggests that scores from different panel countries are not necessarily comparable, again, highlighting the importance of considering both score and rank when evaluating responses from other countries.

Figure 2: Northern Ireland's rankings on the Tourism dimension from around the world

Rankings
- Not included in survey
- 1-15
- 16-20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-50

Lowest rank: 40
Turkey

Highest rank: 19
Australia

Attribute scores and rankings

The score for each attribute is an average of participants' scores, on a scale from one (lowest and worst) to seven (highest and best) with four being neither positive nor negative.

Northern Ireland's attribute scores on the Tourism dimension have been positive (i.e. above the neutral value of 4) each year since Northern Ireland was included in the survey in 2016. The highest scoring Tourism attribute in 2019 was "natural beauty" (5.11).

When attribute scores were compared with the other participating nations, Northern Ireland was ranked relatively highly in relation to "natural beauty" (20th out of the 50 nations) and participants' willingness to visit Northern Ireland if money was no object (22nd). Lower rankings were received for "vibrant city life" and "historic buildings" (both 31st) (Figure 3). Similar patterns were evident in previous years.

Figure 3: Rankings and scores for Northern Ireland's Tourism attributes

SCORE	ATTRIBUTE	RANK
4.89	Visit if Money was No Object	22
5.11	Natural Beauty	20
4.70	Historic Buildings	31
4.66	Vibrant City Life	31

Note: Attribute scores range from 1 to 7 and all rankings are out of 50.

Differences between those who have visited Northern Ireland and those who have not

In 2019, ten per cent of NBI[SM] participants reported that they had previously visited Northern Ireland.

Participants who had previously visited the region scored Northern Ireland statistically significantly* higher on the Tourism dimension, as well as on each of the composite attributes, than those who had not visited (Figures 4 and 5). This pattern was also evident in all previous survey years.

Figure 4: Tourism dimension scores – those who have visited Northern Ireland and those who have not
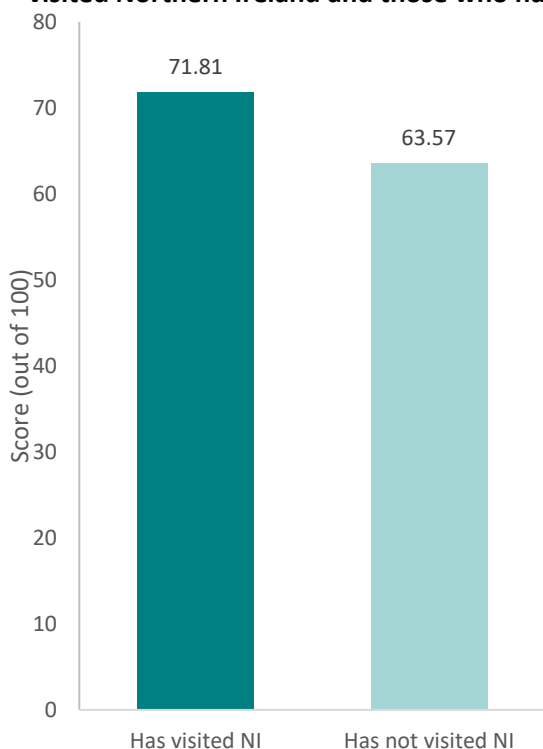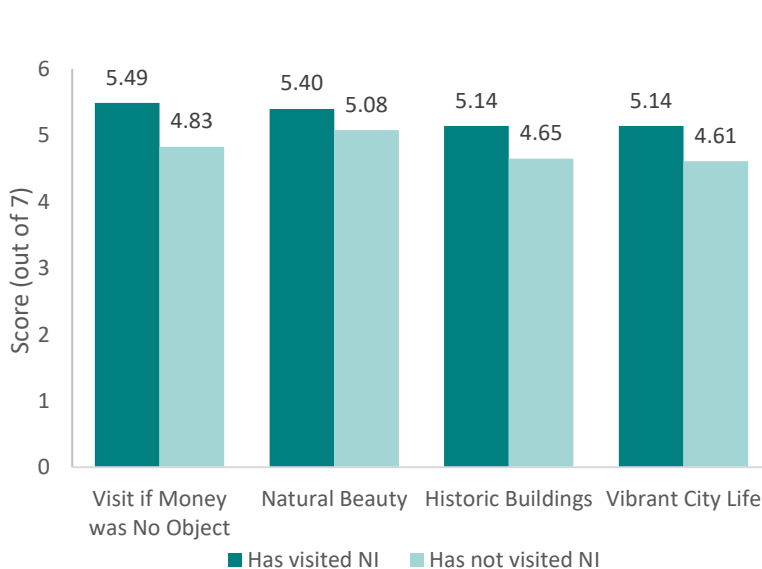

- Has visited NI: 71.81
- Has not visited NI: 63.57
- Score (out of 100)

Figure 5: Attribute scores (Tourism dimension) – those who have visited Northern Ireland and those who have not

Score (out of 7)

Attribute	Has visited NI	Has not visited NI
Visit if Money was No Object	5.49	4.83
Natural Beauty	5.40	5.08
Historic Buildings	5.14	4.65
Vibrant City Life	5.14	4.61

*Statistically significant differences are at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% confident that the differences between groups are actual differences and have not just arisen by chance.

## Proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each Tourism attribute statement

It is also useful to consider the proportion of participants who either agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement* (see Figure 6). The proportions reported below for the attributes within the Tourism dimension were all similar to those observed in previous survey years.

A large proportion of participants agreed that Northern Ireland is rich in natural beauty (64 per cent) and approximately six in ten (61 per cent) indicated they would be willing to visit if money was no object. A relatively large proportion of participants also agreed that Northern Ireland was rich in historic buildings (51 per cent) and had a vibrant city life (48 per cent).

Only 21 per cent of participants felt neutral about visiting Northern Ireland if money were no object and only 27 per cent were neutral about Northern Ireland's natural beauty. These were the smallest neutral proportions of all 23 attribute statements.

A relatively large proportion indicated they would not be willing to visit Northern Ireland if money was no object (18 per cent).

Figure 6: Proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement within the Tourism dimension

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
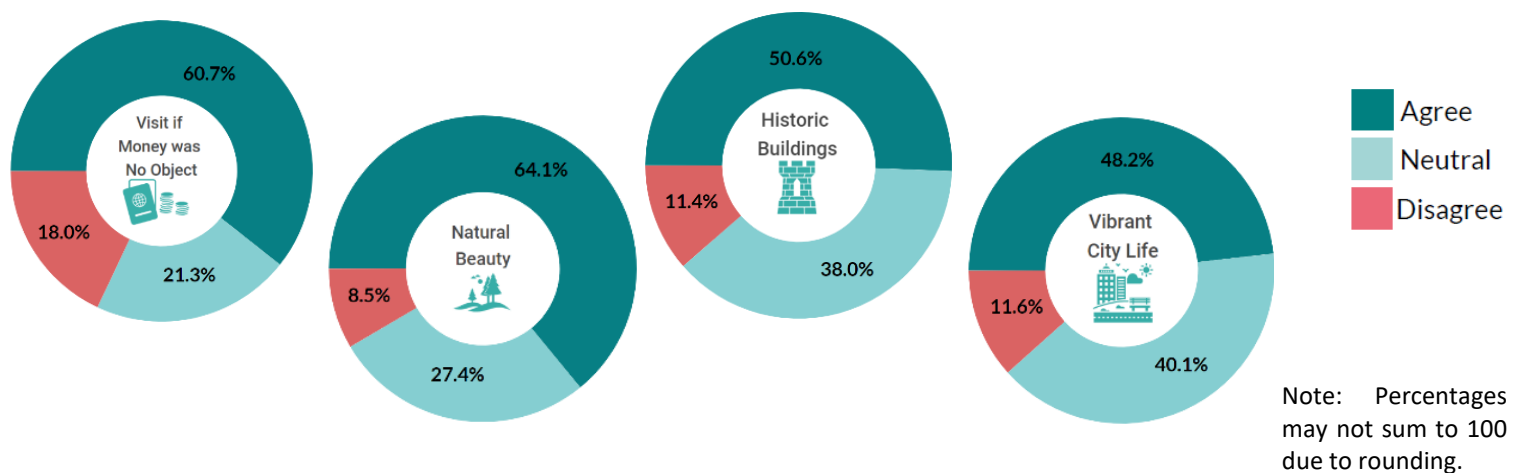
Words associated with the experience of visiting Northern Ireland

Participants were asked to select, from a predetermined list, the adjectives they felt would most accurately describe the experience of visiting Northern Ireland (participants could choose more than one response). The most common response was 'none of these' (24 per cent of participants). Figure 7 presents adjectives chosen by remaining participants. The word most commonly associated with the experience of visiting Northern Ireland was 'Fascinating' (23 per cent of participants). Large proportions of participants also selected 'Relaxing' and 'Exciting' (both 21 per cent), 'Educational' (19 per cent), and 'Romantic' (13 per cent). These proportions were similar to those observed in all previous survey years.

Figure 7: Words associated with the experience of visiting Northern Ireland

Further information

The other five bulletins for the Six Dimensions of the NBI[SM], as well as data tables and infographics, are available from:

https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/six-dimensions-nation-brands-index-2019

The overall NBI[SM] report (published February 2020), data tables and methodological documents are available from:
https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nation-brands-index-2019-report-northern-ireland

*For each attribute statement, survey participants reported to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale, where one is strongly disagree, four is neither agree nor disagree, and seven is strongly agree. Participants who provided scores between one and three were categorised as disagreeing with the statement, scores between five and seven were categorised as agreeing, while scores of four were categorised as neutral.