

Six Dimensions of the Nation Brands IndexSM 2020

International Perceptions of Northern Ireland: Tourism

11 March 2021

This bulletin is part of a series of six. The others are available on [the TEO website](#).

Key findings

- In 2020, Northern Ireland ranked 27th of 50 for the Tourism dimension (a rise from all previous survey years). Tourism was Northern Ireland's 2nd lowest ranked dimension of the Six Dimensions, as has also been the case in all previous survey years.
- Northern Ireland's score for Tourism decreased to 64.11 in 2020 (-0.28 since 2019). 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 (19 per cent).

Introduction

In order to assess and monitor its international reputation, Northern Ireland has been included on the Nation Brands IndexSM (NBISM) since 2016. The NBI 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. For each attribute, survey participants were presented with a statement and asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale. As seen below, the "visit if money was no object" statement was presented slightly differently.

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	'This country has a vibrant city life and urban attractions.'

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; rankings presented in the report show Northern Ireland's position among these 50 countries.

Northern Ireland's score on the Tourism dimension decreased to 64.11 in 2020 (-0.28 since 2019). Its rank increased to 27th.

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



Rankings and scores on the Tourism dimension from around the world

Tourism's overall rank in 2020 was an improvement on all previous years. It remained Northern Ireland's 2nd lowest ranked dimension, as has been the case in all previous survey years.

Northern Ireland's Tourism was ranked relatively lowly globally (Figure 2). Northern Ireland received bottom half rankings (26th or lower) from 11 of the 20 panel nations. This is fairly consistent with previous years.

The highest rankings were received from China (16th), the United States (18th) and the United Kingdom, Germany and France (all 20th). Northern Ireland's lowest rankings were received from Egypt (42nd), Mexico (38th), Turkey (36th) and Brazil (35th). The ranking from Egypt (42nd) was the lowest received from any panel country for any dimension.

The largest changes in rank were from China, who ranked Northern Ireland 11 places higher, and South Korea, who ranked Northern Ireland six places lower than in 2019.

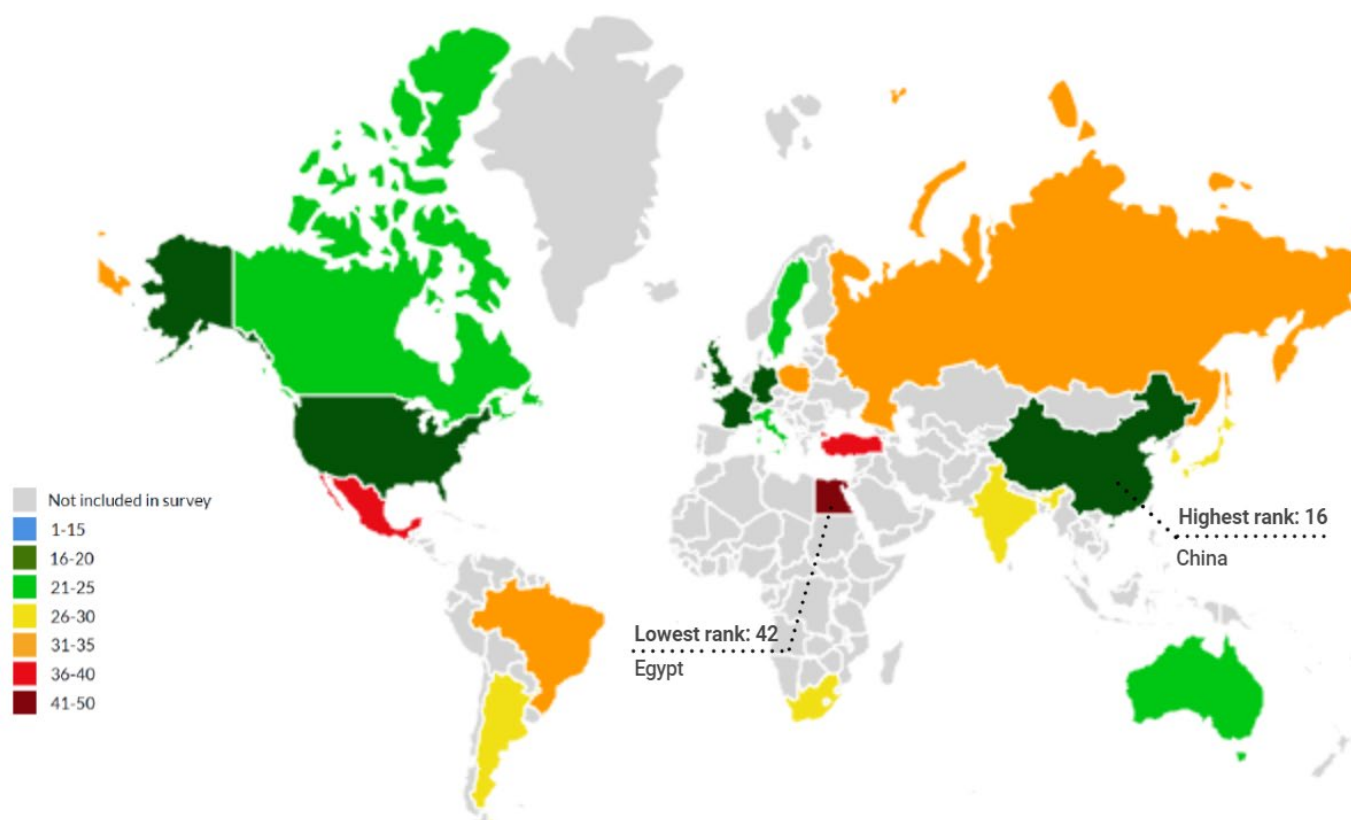
While rankings provide an insight into how Northern Ireland is viewed by panel countries relative to the other participating nations, they can be impacted year on year due to the inclusion of new countries in the survey. The dimension score provides a more absolute understanding of how Northern Ireland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

Overall, Tourism was Northern Ireland's highest scoring dimension. This was also the case in all previous survey years.

Northern Ireland's highest score was received from India (72.28), closely followed by China (71.41). Northern Ireland also received relatively high scores from Mexico (66.87) and Russia (66.10). Northern Ireland's lowest scores were received from Japan (54.54), South Korea (57.06) and Turkey (58.70).

Northern Ireland's relatively high rank (20th) and low score (62.42) from France contrasts with the relatively low rank (30th) and high score (72.28) from India. 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



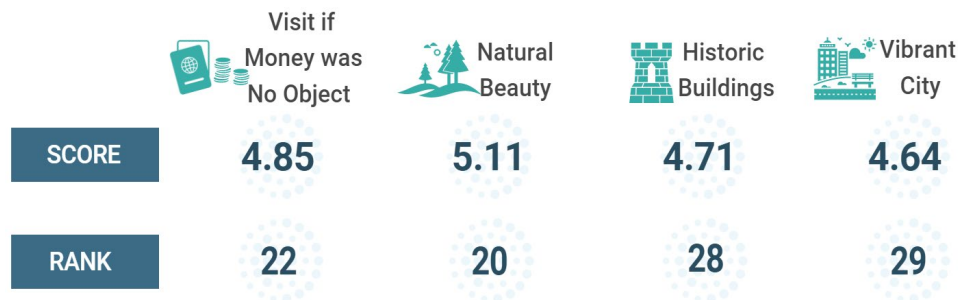
Attribute scores and rankings

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 2020 was "natural beauty" (5.11). As in previous years, this was the highest scoring attribute in any dimension.

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" (29th) and "historic buildings" (28th) (Figure 3). As in previous years, these two attributes were among the lowest ranking in any dimension.

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



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

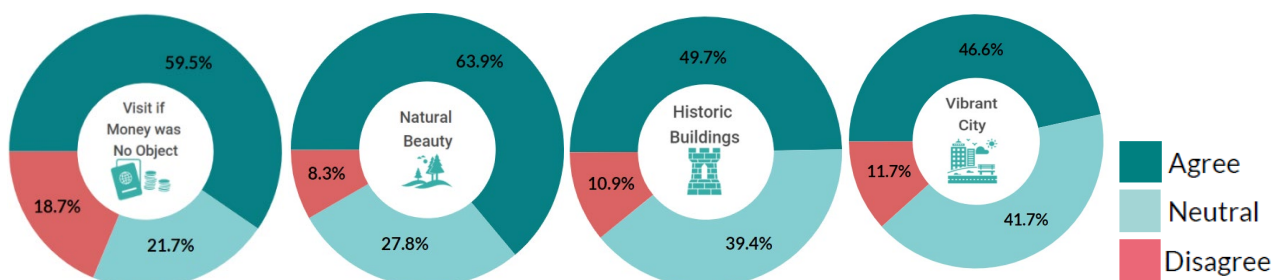
Proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each Tourism attribute statement

It is also useful to consider the proportion of participants who either agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement¹(see Figure 4).

A large proportion of participants agreed that Northern Ireland is rich in natural beauty (64 per cent) and approximately six in ten (60 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 (50 per cent) and had a vibrant city life (47 per cent). Only 22 per cent of participants felt neutral about visiting Northern Ireland if money were no object and 28 per cent were neutral about Northern Ireland's natural beauty. The "visit if money was no object" and "natural beauty" attributes had the highest agreement rates and lowest neutral rates of all 23 attributes.

A relatively large proportion indicated they would not be willing to visit Northern Ireland if money was no object (19 per cent). The proportions reported below for the attributes within the Tourism dimension were all similar to those observed in previous survey years.

Figure 4: Proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement in the Tourism dimension



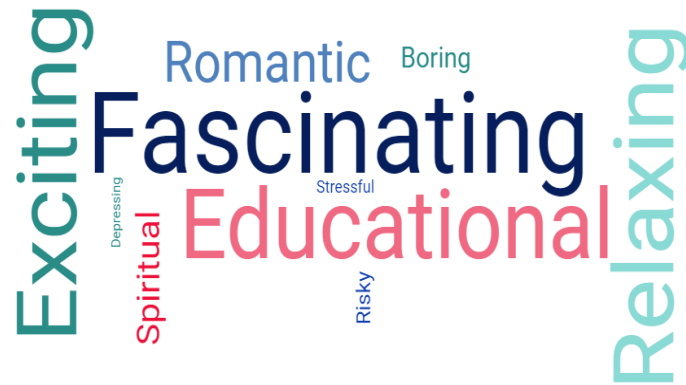
Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

¹ For each attribute statement, survey participants reported to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale. These are converted to scores, where one to three were categorised as 'disagree', four as 'neutral', and five to seven as 'agree'.

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' (26 per cent of participants). Figure 5 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', 'Exciting' and 'Educational' (all 20 per cent). These proportions were similar to those observed in 2019.

Figure 5: Words associated with the experience of visiting Northern Ireland

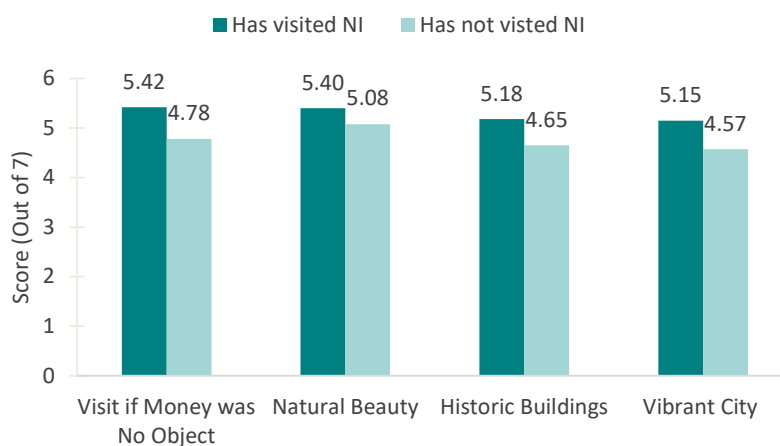


Visitors to Northern Ireland

In 2020, 12 per cent of NBI participants reported that they had previously visited Northern Ireland.

Participants who had previously visited the region scored Northern Ireland statistically significantly² higher on the Tourism dimension (71.72) than those who had not visited (63.17). This was also the case for each of the composite attributes (Figure 6). This pattern was also evident in all previous survey years.

Figure 6: Attribute scores (those who have visited Northern Ireland and those who have not)



Further Information and Feedback

Further information can be found in the [overall report](#) (published February 2021) which includes data tables and methodological documents.

Feedback on these publications is gratefully received, and can be provided through our [User Feedback Survey](#) or by contacting: Emma Morgan, pfganalytics@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk.

² 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.