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Embrace a Giant Spirit:

EXPERIENCE PORTFOLIO



TOURISM
NORTHERN
IRELAND

Introduction

The Embrace a Giant Spirit (EAGS) Experience Portfolio is a continuous learning and development opportunity for established tourism experience businesses, aimed to enhance the profitability, visitor appeal, innovation and commercialisation of Northern Ireland's tourism experience industry.

Since the launch of Northern Ireland – Embrace a Giant Spirit in 2019, the tourism landscape has significantly changed. More than ever, visitors are prioritising unique and authentic experiences that immerse them into the destination they are visiting. To remain globally competitive, Northern Ireland must offer inspirational experiences that meet the changing expectations of visitors, whilst increasing our capacity to meet demand.

With a focus on unique and authentic tourism experiences across all regions of Northern Ireland, the portfolio is suitable for large and small attractions and visitor experiences that drive visitor demand, as well as smaller, niche experiences that help extend stays in Northern Ireland by offering further compelling things to inspire visitors.

By participating, your business will become part of Tourism NI's collection of quality-assured experiences, benefitting from enhanced key account management and playing a key role in strengthening the destination appeal through the Northern Ireland – Embrace a Giant Spirit tourism brand.

The portfolio aims to

- Support authentic and innovative product experience development across Northern Ireland
- Support sustainable business growth through tailored and exclusive investment and development
- Foster collaborative partnerships across the regions of Northern Ireland to further enhance our resources and deliver mutual benefits
- Enhance the professionalism and commercial success of tourism businesses to help the destination stand out competitively in the tourism market
- Ensure that Tourism NI have accurate, up to date information on tourism experiences to confidently promote the destination



What makes a Northern Ireland – Embrace a Giant Spirit Experience?

Northern Ireland – Embrace a Giant Spirit experiences are saleable visitor experiences which respond to market demand and the desire to share the world-renowned giant spirit of Northern Ireland, in addition to awakening that giant spirit in our visitors. Embrace a Giant Spirit tourism businesses should embody the brand inspirers, the four key pillars at the heart of the giant spirit of Northern Ireland and the things that we want visitors to discover, think about and talk about during their experience and long after.



Big-Hearted

Being Big-hearted means that you put the people of Northern Ireland and their warm approach to visitors front and centre in your experience. The people your visitors meet and the stories they encounter of our people past and present should all reflect bigheartedness.

Big-hearted experiences help visitors to meet and get to know the people of Northern Ireland.

Original

Being original lies in showcasing our ability to be forward-thinking, imaginative, creative, ambitious, hard-working – and thinking creatively to offer unique, authentic experiences.

Original Giant Spirit experiences can spotlight the pioneering inventiveness of Northern Ireland's people, its contemporary creative industries and industrial heritage.

Legends & Stories

Using Legends and Stories means experiences will draw on Northern Ireland's great tradition of storytelling, creating compelling offers that both attract and delight visitors which leave lasting memories. Stories are well told through careful planning and focusing on characters, imagination and inspiration.

Land, Water & Sea

Experiences that reflect Land, Water and Sea maximise the potential of our rich natural resources, celebrate locality of provenance and apply sustainable practices.

Experiences that engage with land, water and sea are 'rooted' in the destination and connect visitors with diverse landscapes and outdoor adventures.

Embrace a Giant Spirit experiences also deliver on the brand 'awakeners' – the desires and motivations of our key visitors:

- Distinctly Northern Irish
- Welcoming to Everyone
- Innovative
- Authentic
- Connect with Local People
- Sustainable
- Participatory
- Available all year round

For more information on Northern Ireland – Embrace a Giant Spirit and how to develop experiences that align with the brand values please refer to our brand book: [Awakening our Giant Spirit Brand Book](#)



What are the benefits of signing up to the Embrace a Giant Spirit: Experience Portfolio?

The Northern Ireland – Embrace a Giant Spirit tourism brand enhances the unique and authentic image of Northern Ireland that we offer our visitors and creates an opportunity for us to work together to create unforgettable visitor experiences. Bringing it to life requires us to be continuously reflective, innovative and challenging of our offering and ideas.

The portfolio aims to enhance the relationship between Tourism NI and experience operators and create deeper engagement with the tourism brand; ensuring the integrity of our offer to visitors through meeting a general market-ready criteria and maintaining up to date information to best promote to our key markets.

Participation in the Embrace a Giant Spirit Experience Portfolio is an opportunity for tourism businesses to develop their offer and use the brand characteristics to deliver what our key tourism markets are seeking when visiting Northern Ireland. Benefits of participation within the Portfolio will vary from business to business, however key advantages include:

- Access to a range of guidance and training modules to build and expand your business and develop your experiences
- Opportunity for the Tourism NI Experience Development team to conduct a site visit to new participants and feedback on your experience within the Embrace a Giant Spirit brand characteristics
- Access to networking opportunities with the aim of enhancing cross-collaborative working and improving destination knowledge
- Enhanced confidence of delivering experiences that meet visitor expectations
- Strengthened alignment to brand-related criteria within TNI funding and development opportunities
- Priority consideration for Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland opportunities such as trade shows and annual development programmes, where appropriate
- Prestige and market credibility



Eligibility Criteria:

The portfolio aims to work with established tourism experience businesses who have the ambition to promote their experiences within the context of the tourism brand and build their business as well as undertake enhanced learning and development opportunities. The programme is open to all sizes of businesses and upon confirmation of your participation, you will be allocated a size-grading based on annual visitor figures; Micro (up to 1000), Small (1,001-10,000), Medium (10,001-50,000) and Large (50,000+). Some opportunities will be tailored to particular sizes of business and this will be communicated on a regular basis.

To be eligible to enter the Embrace a Giant Spirit Experience Portfolio, business must meet our general “sales-ready” criteria:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Be a tourism business operating in Northern Ireland, offering experiences that align to our tourism brand values with an identifiable unique selling point (USP)✓ Have been operating and delivering at least one core visitor experience for at least one year✓ Offer a regular experience schedule, delivering visitor experiences no less than monthly during your opening season (Min 6 months per year)✓ Maintain a strong online presence with clear booking availability and advance scheduled dates, ideally up to three months in advance✓ Have an active business listing on <u>our consumer website</u> http://www.discovernorthernireland.com/✓ If B2B only, provide clearly advertised experiences which detail how to book and general availability✓ Have relevant pricing structures in place✓ Have rights-free, high-resolution images to promote your business✓ Hold appropriate licensing and permissions where required | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Commit to sharing key business metrics and information through an annual participant survey✓ Have engaged with your local authority tourism team and regional Embrace a Giant Spirit brand ambassador in addition to Tourism NI <p>Evidence of meeting these criteria will be requested through the Expression of Interest and site visit. For businesses who do not meet these criteria, or for any queries please contact us via our online contact form: Contact Us Page</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Embrace a Giant Spirit Portfolio is specifically for tourism experience operators and the following businesses are therefore ineligible to register:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Authority or Destination Management Organisations• Businesses operating for less than one year• Visitor Information Centres• Businesses who are primarily craft, hospitality or retail outlets who do not offer scheduled visitor experiences• Tour guides who do not offer scheduled visitor experiences• Tourism Clusters |
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Ongoing inclusion within the portfolio:

Tourism NI will annually review the Northern Ireland Embrace a Giant Spirit Experience Portfolio to ensure continued integrity of the collection. To retain inclusion in the portfolio, operators must:

- Continue to meet the eligibility criteria for participation in the programme
- Continue to sell their experience(s), as per the approved submitted and published details
- Maintain an up-to-date business listing on www.discovernorthernireland.com
- Maintain a digital business presence all year-round, even if the experiences are seasonal. This is to ensure that travel trade, media and consumers can obtain information about the experience all year-round
- Communicate changes in their experience(s) in a timely manner to the Tourism NI Experience Development Team
- Complete an annual member survey that provides feedback and core business performance metrics for their experiences
- Participate in media or travel trade FAM trips if requested by Tourism NI or Tourism Ireland
- Use the Embrace a Giant Spirit logo in their marketing materials when promoting their experiences
- Participate in periodic Tourism NI trade webinars, information updates and trade events

Adding new experiences to your offer:

Participation within the Northern Ireland – Embrace a Giant Spirit: Experience Portfolio is structured around ensuring your tourism business is aligned with the brand and sales- ready therefore there is no requirement to re-submit an expression of interest should your business grow and develop new experiences. Should you wish to notify us of a new experience within your business, this can be done through direct communication with the Tourism NI experience development team who will provide you with a template to complete to share key information for us to share your experience with our stakeholders.



Application Process:

To express your interest in joining the Embrace a Giant Spirit: Experience Portfolio, please complete the expression of interest form via our website. Your application will be assessed by a member of our Experience Development team where if successful, an on-site visit to your business will be arranged to progress your application or if declined, you will receive feedback on areas for improvement.

Please note that to complete the expression of interest you will be required to sign up to Tourism NI's business portal, if you have not already done so. You can find more information on signing up to our business portal here: [Sign up with Tourism NI](#)

Remember that the answers you give help us to determine how well you meet the criteria for membership of the portfolio. Support with completing the application may be available from your local council tourism team and it is actively encouraged to liaise with them prior to application.

We aim to respond to all expressions of interest within four weeks of submission. To finalise and confirm your participation in the programme, you will be asked to sign a participation agreement following your site visit, which will be reviewed annually.

Appeals Procedure:

An appeals procedure is in place for those applicants who deem the process of assessing their business for inclusion within the experience portfolio has been conducted unsatisfactorily. Further detail on the appeals procedure is available on request.



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