



Belfast City Council

Report to: Development Committee

Subject: [NITB Tourism Innovation Fund](#)

Date: 16 September 2009

Reporting Officer: Marie-Thérèse McGivern, Director of Development, ext 3470

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Relevant Background Information

[NITB Tourism Innovation Fund aims to enhance the growth, quality, competitiveness and sustainability of tourism in Northern Ireland by stimulating product development and improving the visitor experience.](#) It will provide financial assistance for non-capital projects such as creative interpretation initiatives, innovative presentation and showcasing of Northern Ireland's tourism offerings. The Fund will provide financial assistance to the public sector of up to 75% of eligible project costs, with a minimum grant of £20,000 and up to a maximum grant of £150,000. [Approximately £2 million of funding is available for revenue projects which can be delivered before the end of March 2010.](#)

Key Issues

[The Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit has submitted six draft applications to Stage 1 of the Tourism Innovation Fund. The deadline for applications was 14 August 2009. The application process has two stages:](#)

- [1. applications received by 14 August will be assessed against the scheme's criteria;](#)
- [2. applications which score highly will be shortlisted and asked to submit a detailed business plan.](#)

[Specific timescales have not been communicated; however NITB has indicated that they aim to complete the first stage by the end of September 2009 and the second stage by mid November 2009.](#)

[A summary of the projects is attached as Appendix 1.](#)

Resource Implications

Any successful application will require 25% match funding from Belfast City Council which has been provided within the 2009/2010 Tourism budget.

Belfast City Council's applications are based on the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit's current priorities and, if successful, the additional funding would support and significantly build on existing initiatives and budgets for the remainder of this financial year.

Recommendations

It is recommended that

- Members note the contents of the above report; and
- Agree shortlisted applications proceed to Stage 2 – preparation of business plans.

Decision Tracking

Further to agreement by Committee that the outcome of Stage 1 (shortlisting of applications) will be reported at the October Development Committee with a full breakdown of budget and resource implications.

Timeframe:

Sept – Outcome of Stage 1 (shortlisting of applications)

Oct – Report to Committee on outcome of Stage 1 (with a full breakdown of budget and resource implications)

Further to agreement by Committee, apply to Stage 2

Nov – Outcome of Stage 2 reported to Committee

Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

Key to Abbreviations

NITB: Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - Belfast City Council's applications to NITB's Tourism Innovation Fund

APPENDIX 1

Tourism Innovation Fund – Belfast City Council Applications to Stage 1

Project Proposal	Fund Project Category	Description	NITB Fund	BCC Budget	Total
Sunday in the City	Visitor Servicing	To support and build on the full Sunday Action Plan approved by Development Committee in June 2008. To increase the Sunday cultural tourism offer and coordinate product development with the cultural tourism sector, particularly between the hours of 9.30am and 1pm, in particular opening of venues, street animation, Art Tourism, Christian Heritage, Creative Tourism, Family Tourism and Music Tourism.	£150,000	£50,000	£200,000
Evening Economy	Visitor Servicing	“Delight in the Twilight” – the umbrella title for a product portfolio of tactical packages, events and promotions to grow the evening and weekend economy and bring raise the prominence of our unique culinary product to improve the visitor experience. The aim is to animate the city centre with small scale indigenous, quality arts and culinary related activities in doorways, entries, streets and public spaces. This would include <i>Creative spectacles</i> of innovative activities, which form the basis of more passive tourist experiences. In addition the project will deliver slightly larger scale time-tabled activities utilizing sites in our public realm, cultural quarters and landmark venues. The programme of animation will be supported by a further drive to extend opening hours of independent retail and key service providers.	£110,000	£40,000	£150,000
Literary Tourism	Visitor Servicing	To support and build on the Literary Tourism Strategy approved by Development Committee in June 2009. The story of our literary heritage will be brought to life, it will create new found self-awareness of people and place and promote our modern culture, characters and writers, poets and playwrights on the world stage. Based on leading Case Studies from the UK’s Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change	£100,000	£58,000	£158,000

		<p>such as 'Developing the Potential of Literary Tourism' this will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Development of Literary Tours and Trails 2. A Literary application for mobile devices 3. Increasing Literary Events and Programming 4. Effective e-marketing of Literary Tourism 			
Music Tourism	Visitor Servicing	<p>To support and build on the Music Tourism Strategy approved by Development Committee in May 2008. 'Take a trip through Belfast's musical history' will bring our musical heritage to life, will create new found self-awareness of people and place and promote our modern culture, characters and artists on the world stage.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research and development to extend the contemporary music exhibition to form a celebration of our greatest artists and serve as a focal point for contemporary music in Northern Ireland. This would include interpretative style and audio content for five themed areas and working with Oh Yeah Music Centre to ensure transference of visual style to other interpretative elements. 2. An immersive and interactive online exhibition, content for Music Mobile Application and development of an online community. Using the model www.britishmusicexperience.com as a case study. Belfastmusic.org will be expanded to create a new online interactive museum of popular music (sourced on the Oh Yeah Music Exhibition). 3. Development of music and animation programmes to bring our musical story to life and invigorate existing visitor experiences. 	£114500	£38500	£153,000
The Belfast Story	Product Planning and Development	<p>Funding for the research and development of a series of innovative tour-associated product developments, with the aim of innovative visitor interpretation, which will bring stories to life and invigorate existing visitor experiences. These will also improve access to, and the dissemination of, visitor information. The projects will add to the variety of tourism products by developing tours, trails and activities that link to existing products and also provide unique products that enhance the visitor experience. These products will link with Belfast City, the river Lagan, the all island canal network, the urban, rural, built and natural environment thereby creating a Unique Selling Proposition for Belfast</p>	£50,000	£20,000	£70,000

		and Northern Ireland. The content will also dovetail with NITBs Titanic Signature Project and the 2012 celebrations by realising all of the tourism benefits.			
Research into Cultural and Creative Product Development Project on Cultural Tourism	Product Planning and Development	To commission research into Belfast City Council's future development of cultural and creative products to order to establish best practice in similar cities, identify product gaps and bring Belfast product development in line with NITB product development. Linked to the Belfast Integrated Tourism Strategy and the Belfast Integrated Cultural Strategy, the results will be adopted by the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit in order to develop an action plan for the Tourism Integrated Framework for the next five years.	£50,000	£20,000	£70,000

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