



Northern Ireland
Tourist Board

cc: Mr Loughran
Mr McDonnell
~~Mr Bryant~~
Mr Lavery
MC

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Bob L. G. H. Farn
Information
Mr. D. G. M.
4/12/95 J. / 11

To: PS/Baroness Denton (DED)

From: Ian Henderson

Date: 29 November 1995

ALL IRELAND MARKETING

1. Background

The Minister has asked for briefing with regard to an article in the 17 November issue of Marketing Week which is a trade magazine for marketing personnel and is distributed primarily in the UK but also the Republic of Ireland.

2. All Ireland Marketing

The article covers the Brand Ireland project which is currently being undertaken by Bord Fáilte. The issue was considered by the Board of NITB at its October meeting and the recommendation in the paper on the subject, which is attached, was approved.

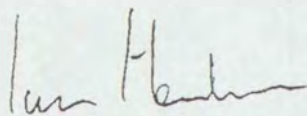
NITB has not committed to the project and it is too early at this stage to finalise our position. It may well be the case that our minimum requirements - specific recognition of NI in the advertising executions - may be too much for Bord Fáilte to accept. Bord Fáilte has not to date demonstrated real sensitivity to Northern Ireland's position and therefore some of the reported comments came as a surprise.

Other questions remain to be addressed such as how the project is ultimately to be funded. Despite the uncertainty over funding the involvement of Northern Ireland would be seen as important insofar as it could open the possibility of different funding opportunities such as IFI.

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3. **Conclusion**

At this stage, NITB is continuing to monitor the project and should be in a position to take a definite decision on the extent of our participation by early in the New Year. We will of course keep the Minister informed of progress.



Ian Henderson
Chief Executive

A Tourism Brand for Ireland

1. General

The purpose of this paper is to inform the Board of the above and seek its approval for a recommended NITB approach.

2. Background

The Irish Tourism Council which was established by the then southern Irish Minister for Tourism and Trade, Mr Charles McCreevy, commissioned consultants in 1994 to undertake some initial research work with a view of developing a brand vision for Irish tourism.

The Consultants - The Identity Business and Frank Nolan and Associates - presented their report, having completed the first phase of research, to the Irish Tourism Council and the Chairman of its Marketing Committee, Eamon McKeon - Chief Executive of Great Southern Hotels. In early May, the report was presented to the southern industry at the Irish Tourist Industry Confederation (ITIC) conference. Following this conference on 4 May, NITB's Chief Executive and Director of Marketing were given a briefing of the report by the consultants together with Bord Fáilte.

At Bord Fáilte's request, a presentation of the report was made by the consultants to some Northern Ireland private and public sector industry representatives in Belfast in June.

3. "A Tourism Brand for Ireland"

The report on phase one outlined the findings of the initial research and some existing perceptions of Ireland. The report placed particular emphasis on various broad positioning concepts of Ireland which might be used to develop the best marketing approach. These included Ireland's people, culture, landscapes, outdoors, history and heritage, Dublin, profundity and the island. All of these were to be researched further in the second phase of the project.

NITB was invited to sit on a steering group for the project which was now to be progressed by Bord Fáilte, together with representatives from Bord Fáilte, Aer Lingus, Irish Ferries, Great Southern Hotels and Jury Hotels.

NITB has not made any commitment to the report's findings or made any financial contribution to it. The NITB view is that in international marketing terms if a serious brand approach is to be developed for "Ireland", then Northern Ireland has an obvious interest in its success. It is recognised that in many international markets, Northern Ireland is seen by most consumers in the tourism context as part of the island of Ireland. However, it is also considered that in developing a brand approach for Ireland as a whole that the unique attributes of Northern Ireland would have to be reflected in the ultimate consumer proposition. NITB's involvement without commitment in the project will enable an assessment to be made as to whether the benefits to Northern Ireland tourism can be significant or not.

DED has also been briefed on the project by the Department of Tourism and Trade.

4. Current Position

The second phase of research consisted of 16 qualitative research focus groups in Germany, France, Holland, USA and Great Britain which took place in June/July. The purpose of the research was to investigate four concept positionings for Ireland as a brand which arose from the initial phase. The concepts were:

- (i) Ireland - Emotional experience
- (ii) Ireland - Magical island
- (iii) Come for the Landscape - Experience the People
- (iv) Ireland - (Ancient) Birthplace of Good Times

Each of the four concept positionings were supported by rough, advertising visuals.

Whilst there were expected differences of approach in each market, the research showed that nature (landscapes) and people were key elements in Ireland's appeal but the most motivational concept to emerge was the emotional experience. Although this concept positioning was recognised as offering a potential distinctiveness from other destinations, it was very clear that it would require subtle management and interpretation.

The next stage of the project will be more relevant to Northern Ireland's possible involvement. This will involve detailed briefing material being prepared for advertising/branding agencies to work on creative proposals for consideration. It has been agreed with Bord Fáilte that any brief will specify that the all island nature of the project must be addressed in the proposed creative executions. If this can be done in a manner satisfactory to NITB and the industry in Northern Ireland then a commitment may be made to the project. If, however, Northern Ireland is not suitably represented in the creative proposals to be prepared in response to the brief, then the project

would be seen as unlikely to deliver a tangible and significant benefit to Northern Ireland.

Bord Fáilte is organising a briefing for leading members of the southern industry on 24 October to advise on the progress of the project and to seek endorsement of the way forward. The involvement of Northern Ireland industry representatives as well as NITB was mooted but declined, as it is too early to state whether Northern Ireland will be participating fully in the project.

5. Issues

A number of issues arise in relation to the branding project:

- (i) NITB's marketing campaigns
- (ii) OTMI/Funding

With regard to NITB's own advertising campaigns, it is considered very important that separate, stand alone Northern Ireland advertising is continued as appropriate in certain markets. In reality, NITB carries out no major advertising campaigns outside of the British Isles.

The branding project will be focused on the key international markets as well as Great Britain which will probably be the only market where the two campaigns would be running together (although not necessarily in the same television regions or at the same time).

If NITB does not commit to the project, Northern Ireland is still likely to enjoy some spin off benefit from the more professional and higher spend new campaign for "Ireland" in international markets. If NITB does commit to the project, the question of joint servicing of enquiries will also need to be addressed. NITB's involvement will come under scrutiny on the political level and there has already been comment from Alderman Peter Robinson, DUP MP for East Belfast on this matter. Following correspondence with the NITB Chairman in July, Mr Robinson issued a press release on 31 August criticising NITB. None of the main newspapers carried the story but it was reported in the Newtownards Chronicle and the Ulster Star.

The time scale for the brand development involves gradual introduction in late 1996 with full scale launch in international markets in 1997. In the interim there will be an overlap with OTMI and/or Bord Failte campaigns in some markets. Bord Failte wants to achieve greater integration of the OTMI with the branding project and, given the composition of the OTMI, this is likely to happen irrespective of any formal Northern Ireland involvement.

The issue of funding is entirely open. No estimates of costs have been indicated although a major advertising campaign in the key international markets will require an investment of at least several million pounds per year.

If the project is done on an all island basis there may be funding opportunities through IFI or EU sources. If NITB is also to be expected to contribute to the project, additional budgetary provision will have to be made if NITB is also to maintain its current level of marketing spend.

6. Conclusion

It is felt that this project may ultimately be of benefit to Northern Ireland tourism as for the first time a professional marketing approach is being used to develop a major international destination advertising campaign for Ireland. This approach is being developed to achieve sustained growth from key markets and has been influenced by the success of similar campaigns in for eg. Spain.

If the project is to be progressed on an island wide basis, then Northern Ireland's unique attributes have to be reflected in some form in the campaign. It is still too early to say whether this can be achieved and whether the benefit to Northern Ireland will be tangible and significant. There is no budgetary provision to date for any such participation in the project.

It is recommended that NITB continue to evaluate the project along the lines suggested above before putting forward to the Board/DED a firm proposal to participate (or not to) by January 1996.

Paul Lavery
4th October 1995