

Six Dimensions of the Nation Brands IndexSM 2020

International Perceptions of Northern Ireland: Governance

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 20th of 50 countries for the Governance dimension, the same ranking as in all previous survey years. Governance was Northern Ireland's highest ranked dimension, as was also the case in the previous years.
- Northern Ireland's score for Governance decreased to 59.58 in 2020 (-0.55 since 2019). Governance was Northern Ireland's 3rd highest scoring dimension in 2020.
- Governance received significantly higher scores from those who had visited Northern Ireland than those who had not.
- Northern Ireland ranked 17th for one Governance attribute ("environment") and 20th for the other four. These are the highest ranks Northern Ireland achieved for any of the 23 attributes.
- In 2020, the largest change in rank for Governance was from China, who ranked Northern Ireland eleven places higher than in 2019. France, Mexico and Turkey ranked Northern Ireland two places lower than in 2019.

Introduction

In order to assess and monitor its international reputation, Northern Ireland has been included on the Nation Brands IndexSM (NBISM) each year 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 **Governance**. The score for the Governance dimension is calculated using scores from five 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.

Attribute	Statement
Competent & Honest	'This country is competently and honestly governed.'
Rights & Fairness	'This country respects the rights of its citizens and treats them with fairness.'
Peace & Security	'This country behaves responsibly in the areas of international peace and security.'
Environment	'This country behaves responsibly to protect the environment.'
Poverty	'This country behaves responsibly to help reduce world poverty.'

The score for the Governance 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 has been ranked 20th for Governance in each year since 2016 (the first year Northern Ireland was included in the survey).

Northern Ireland's score for Governance (59.58) was lower in 2020 than in 2019. Its rank (20th) was unchanged.

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



Rankings and scores on the Governance dimension from around the world

Governance was Northern Ireland's highest ranked dimension in 2020, as was the case in the previous years.

Northern Ireland's Governance was ranked relatively highly globally, with all but one of the 20 panel nations providing a ranking between 11th and 25th (Figure 2). In previous years, Governance has consistently received top half rankings (25th or above) from 18 of 20 panel countries.

In 2020, the highest rankings for Governance in Northern Ireland were received from China (11th), the United Kingdom (15th), Germany (16th) and Italy (18th). Northern Ireland's lowest rankings were received from Egypt (28th) and Turkey (25th).

The largest change in rank for Governance was from China, who ranked Northern Ireland eleven places higher than in 2019. France, Mexico and Turkey ranked Northern Ireland two places lower than in 2019.

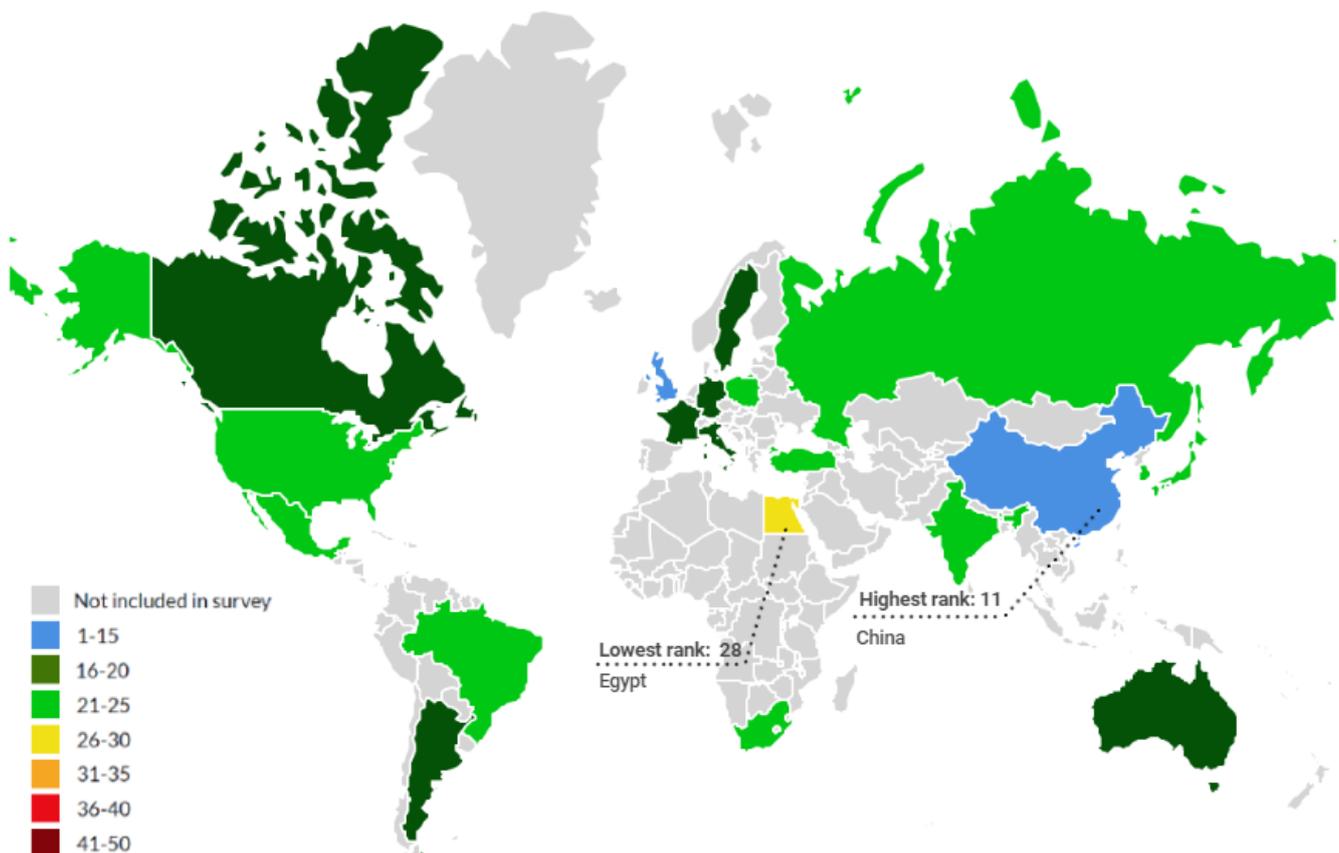
While rankings provide an insight into how Northern Ireland is viewed by panel countries relative to the other participating nations, they can be impacted year on year due to the inclusion of new countries in the survey. The dimension score provides a more absolute understanding of how Northern Ireland 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, Governance was Northern Ireland's 3rd highest scoring dimension in 2020.

The highest score was received from India (70.09) as was also the case in all previous survey years. Northern Ireland also received high scores from China (69.89), the United Kingdom (63.84) and Egypt (61.47) in 2020. Northern Ireland's lowest scores were received from Turkey (53.06), Japan (53.28), and Argentina (56.82).

Northern Ireland's relatively high rank (19th) and low score (56.82) from Argentina, contrasts with the lower rank (24th) and high score (70.09) 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 Governance 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 Governance dimension have been positive (i.e. above the neutral value of 4) each year since Northern Ireland was included in 2016. The highest scoring Governance attribute in 2020, as in all previous years, was "rights and fairness" (4.71).

Out of 50 nations examined, Northern Ireland was ranked 17th for "environment" and 20th for the other four Governance attributes (Figure 3). The Governance attributes, particularly "environment", have consistently been amongst the highest ranking in any dimension. Interestingly, "environment" received its highest rank yet but its second lowest score, indicating panel countries have scored many nations lower for this attribute in 2020.

Figure 3: Rankings and scores for Northern Ireland's Governance 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 Governance attribute statement

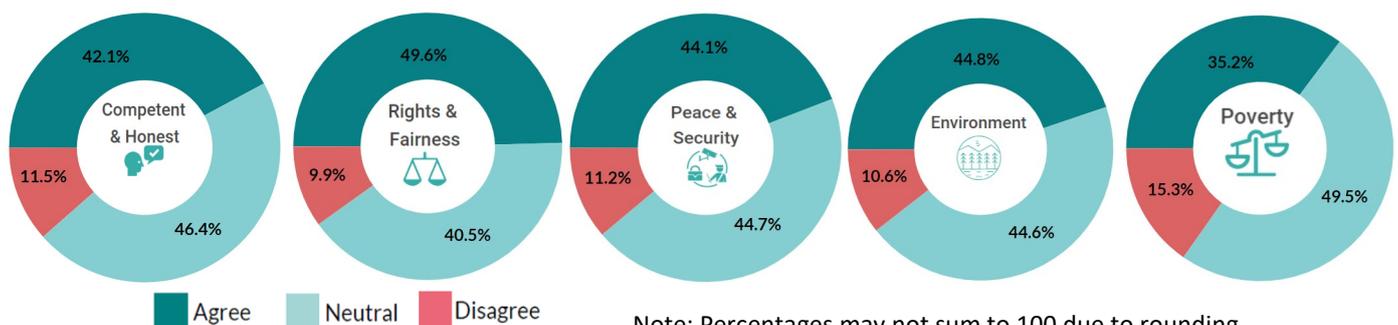
It is also useful to consider the proportion of participants who either agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement¹ (see Figure 4).

Around half of participants (50 per cent) agreed that Northern Ireland respects the rights of its citizens and treats them with fairness; the highest proportion for attributes within this dimension. This was followed by "environment" (45 per cent), "peace and security" (44 per cent), "competent and honest" (42 per cent) and "poverty" (35 per cent).

Attributes in the Governance dimension received a large proportion of neutral responses which could suggest a lack of awareness or strong views on Northern Ireland's Governance. The statement with which the highest proportion of participants disagreed was that Northern Ireland behaves responsibly to help reduce world poverty (15 per cent).

The proportions reported below for the attributes within the Governance dimension are similar to those observed in other years. Agreement rates are slightly lower than 2019 but, for the most part, are an increase on previous years.

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



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 government of Northern Ireland

Participants were asked to select, from a predetermined list, the adjectives they thought most accurately described the government of 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 words most commonly associated with Northern Ireland's government were 'Reliable' (24 per cent), 'Trustworthy' (21 per cent) and 'Reassuring' (18 per cent). These proportions were all similar to those observed in 2019.

Figure 5: Words associated with the government of 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 Governance dimension (68.11) than those who had not visited (58.33). This was also the case for each of the composite attributes (Figure 6). This pattern was evident in all previous 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.