

# International Perceptions of Northern Ireland: Governance

## Six Dimensions of the Nation Brands Index<sup>SM</sup> 2019

March 2020

In order to assess and monitor its international reputation, Northern Ireland has been included on the Nation Brands Index<sup>SM</sup> (NBI<sup>SM</sup>) each year since 2016.

The NBI<sup>SM</sup> 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 (see opposite). For each attribute, survey participants were presented with a statement and asked to state to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale, where one is strongly disagree, four is neither agree nor disagree, and seven is strongly agree.

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<sup>SM</sup>; rankings presented in the report show Northern Ireland’s position among these 50 countries.

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

Figure 1: Northern Ireland’s ranking and score on the Governance dimension of the NBI<sup>SM</sup>



### Headlines

- In 2019, Northern Ireland ranked 20<sup>th</sup> 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 increased to 60.13 in 2019 (+0.91 since 2018). Governance was Northern Ireland’s 3<sup>rd</sup> highest scoring dimension in 2019.
- Governance received significantly higher scores from those who had visited Northern Ireland than those who had not.
- Northern Ireland ranked 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> for all the Governance attributes – these are the highest ranks that Northern Ireland achieved for any of the 23 attributes.
- In 2019, the largest changes in rank were from the Egypt, who ranked Northern Ireland five places higher, and Turkey, who ranked Northern Ireland four places lower than in 2018.

## Rankings and scores on the Governance dimension from around the world

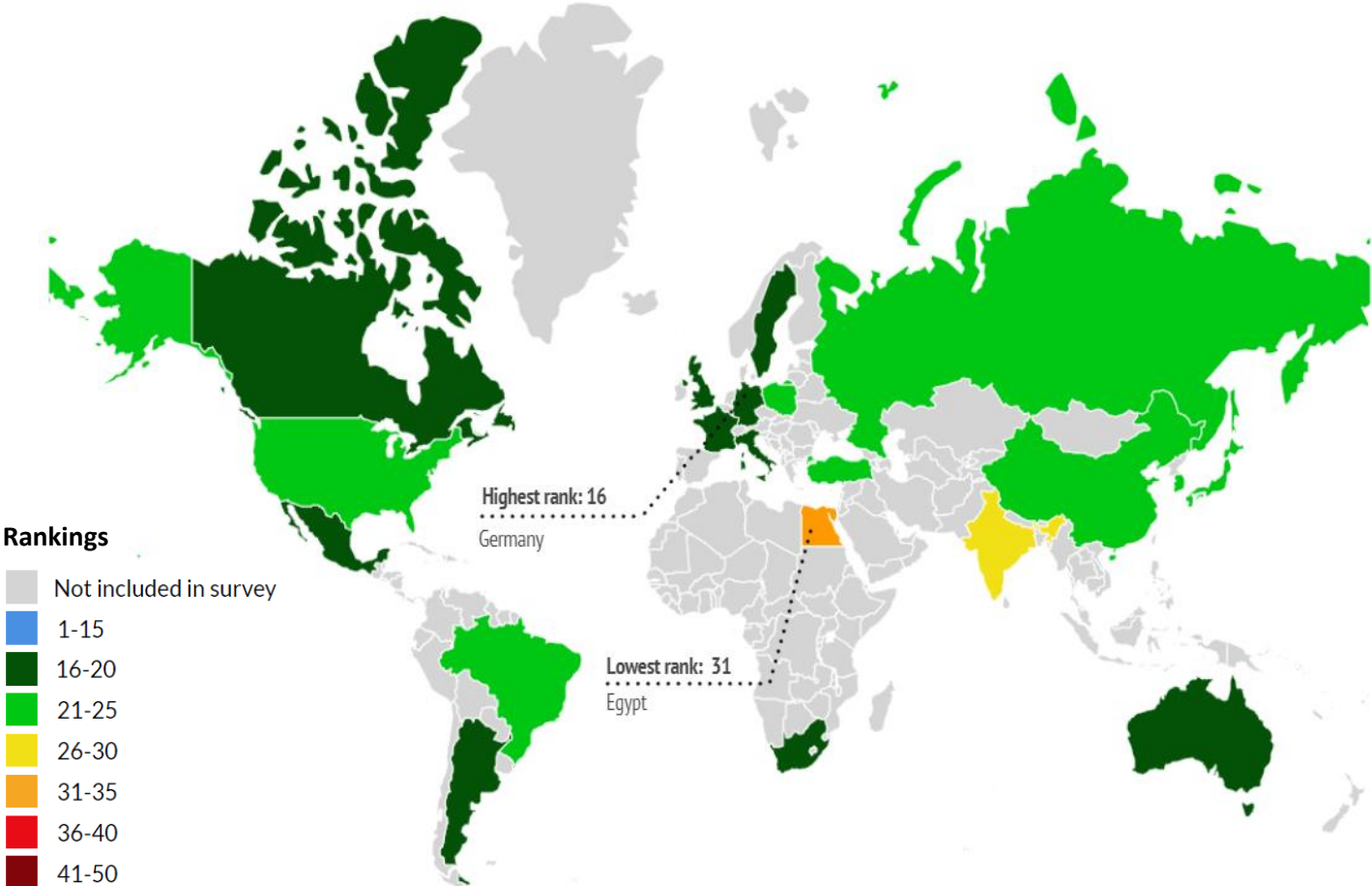
Northern Ireland’s Governance was ranked relatively highly globally, with all but two of the panel nations providing a ranking between 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> (Figure 2). The highest rankings for Northern Ireland were received from Germany (16<sup>th</sup>), France (17<sup>th</sup>), Italy (18<sup>th</sup>) and the United Kingdom (18<sup>th</sup>). Northern Ireland’s lowest rankings were received from Egypt (31<sup>st</sup>) and India (26<sup>th</sup>). Northern Ireland has been ranked 20<sup>th</sup> for Governance in each year since 2016 (the first year Northern Ireland was included in the survey).

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.

Northern Ireland’s score on the Governance dimension was higher in 2019 than in 2018. The highest score was received from India (70.33) as was also the case in all previous survey years. Northern Ireland also received high scores from China (65.06), Egypt (63.00) and Mexico (62.07) in 2019. Northern Ireland’s lowest scores were received from Japan (53.39), Sweden (55.97), United States (57.11) and Turkey (57.19).

Northern Ireland’s relatively high rank (20<sup>th</sup>) and low score (55.97) from Sweden, contrasts with the low rank (26<sup>th</sup>) and high score (70.33) 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 2019 was "rights and fairness" (4.74).

When attribute scores were compared with the other participating nations, Northern Ireland was ranked relatively highly (19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of the 50 nations examined) for all five Governance attributes (Figure 3).

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

SCORE	ATTRIBUTE	RANK
4.55	Competent & Honest 	20
4.74	Rights & Fairness 	20
4.63	Peace & Security 	20
4.64	Environment 	19
4.36	Poverty 	20

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

## Differences between those who have visited Northern Ireland and those who have not

In 2019, ten per cent of NBI<sup>SM</sup> participants reported that they had previously visited Northern Ireland.

Participants who had previously visited the region scored Northern Ireland statistically significantly\* higher on the Governance dimension, as well as on each of the composite attributes, than those who had not visited (Figures 4 and 5). This pattern was evident in all previous years.

Figure 4: Governance dimension scores – those who have visited Northern Ireland and those who have not

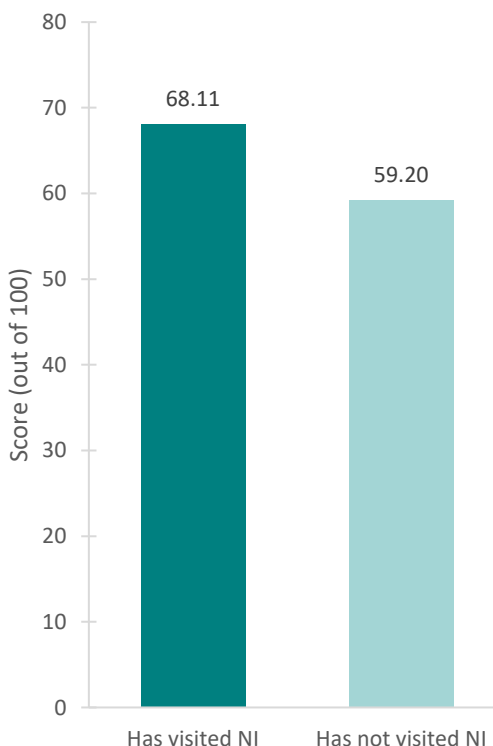
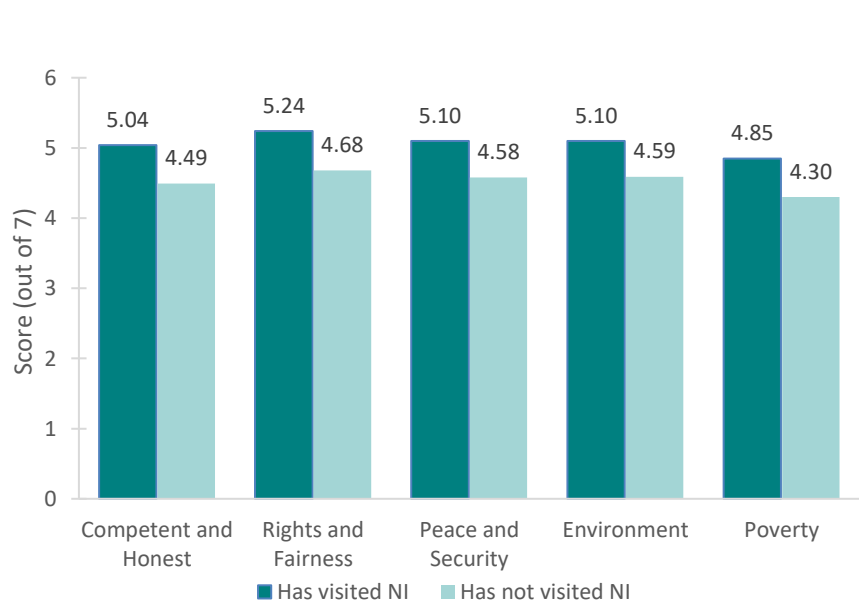


Figure 5: Attribute scores (Governance dimension) – those who have visited Northern Ireland and those who have not



\*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.

## Proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each Governance attribute statement

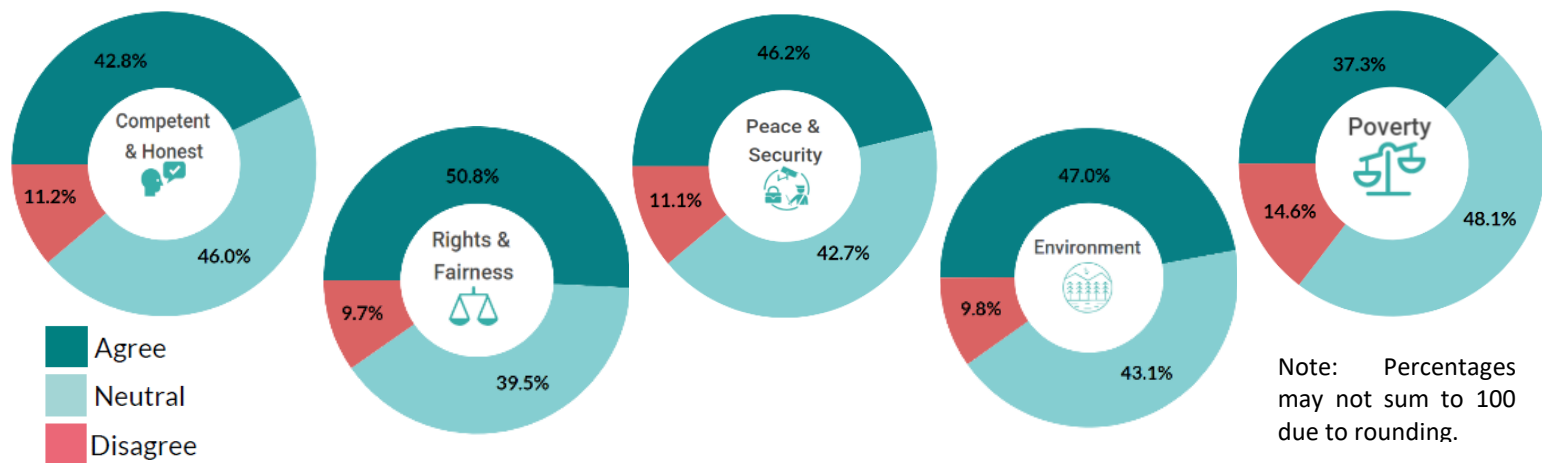
It is also useful to consider the proportion of participants who either agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement\* (see Figure 6). The proportions reported below for the attributes within the Governance dimension are all similar to those observed in previous years.

More than half of participants (51 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” (47 per cent), “peace and security” (46 per cent), “competent and honest” (43 per cent) and “poverty” (37 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).

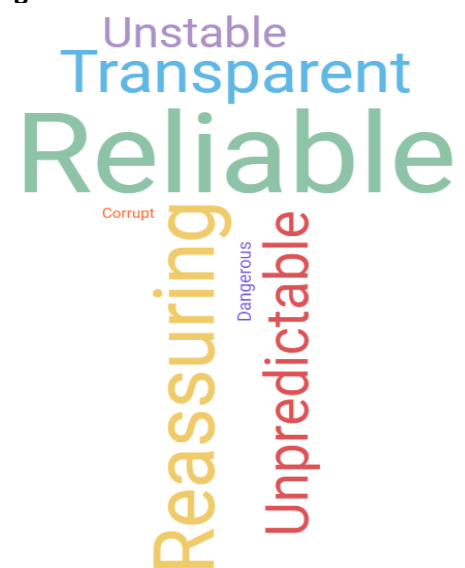
**Figure 6: Proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement within the Governance dimension**



## Words associated with the government of Northern Ireland

Participants were asked to select, from a predetermined list, the one adjective they thought most accurately described the government of Northern Ireland. The most common response was ‘none of these’ (24 per cent of participants). Figure 7 presents adjectives chosen by remaining participants. The words most commonly associated with Northern Ireland’s government were ‘Reliable’ (23 per cent), ‘Trustworthy’ (19 per cent), ‘Reassuring’ (16 per cent) and ‘Transparent’ (13 per cent).

**Figure 7: Words associated with the government of Northern Ireland**



### Further information

The other five bulletins for the Six Dimensions of the NBI<sup>SM</sup>, as well as data tables and infographics, are available from:

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/six-dimensions-nation-brands-index-2019>

The overall NBI<sup>SM</sup> report (published February 2020), data tables and methodological documents are available from:

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nation-brands-index-2019-report-northern-ireland>

\*For each attribute statement, survey participants reported to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale, where one is strongly disagree, four is neither agree nor disagree, and seven is strongly agree. Participants who provided scores between one and three were categorised as disagreeing with the statement, scores between five and seven were categorised as agreeing, while scores of four were categorised as neutral.