

Belfast's sustainable tourism journey



visit
Belfast



Belfast
City Council

Visit Belfast

Core Purpose

‘... to create and service visitors for Belfast and Northern Ireland in order to generate economic benefit and inclusive growth, creating jobs and prosperity for the city region, and enabling Belfast to become a more sustainable place to visit, meet and live in.’

Short Breaks
Business Events

500

Private sector
partners

Cruise
Visitor Servicing

60%-40%

Public-private
sector funding

£424m
Environmental / Social
Impact

30:1

Return on
Investment



Strategic Context

- 2019 - BCC declares a climate emergency
- 2020- BCC Resilience Strategy & Climate Plan
- 'Sustainable Tourism' transformation project - VB&BCC
- Transition from DMO to DMMO
- Central to 21-24 VB Strategy - Rebuilding City Tourism



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Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS)



77 indicators that evaluate destinations across four key areas



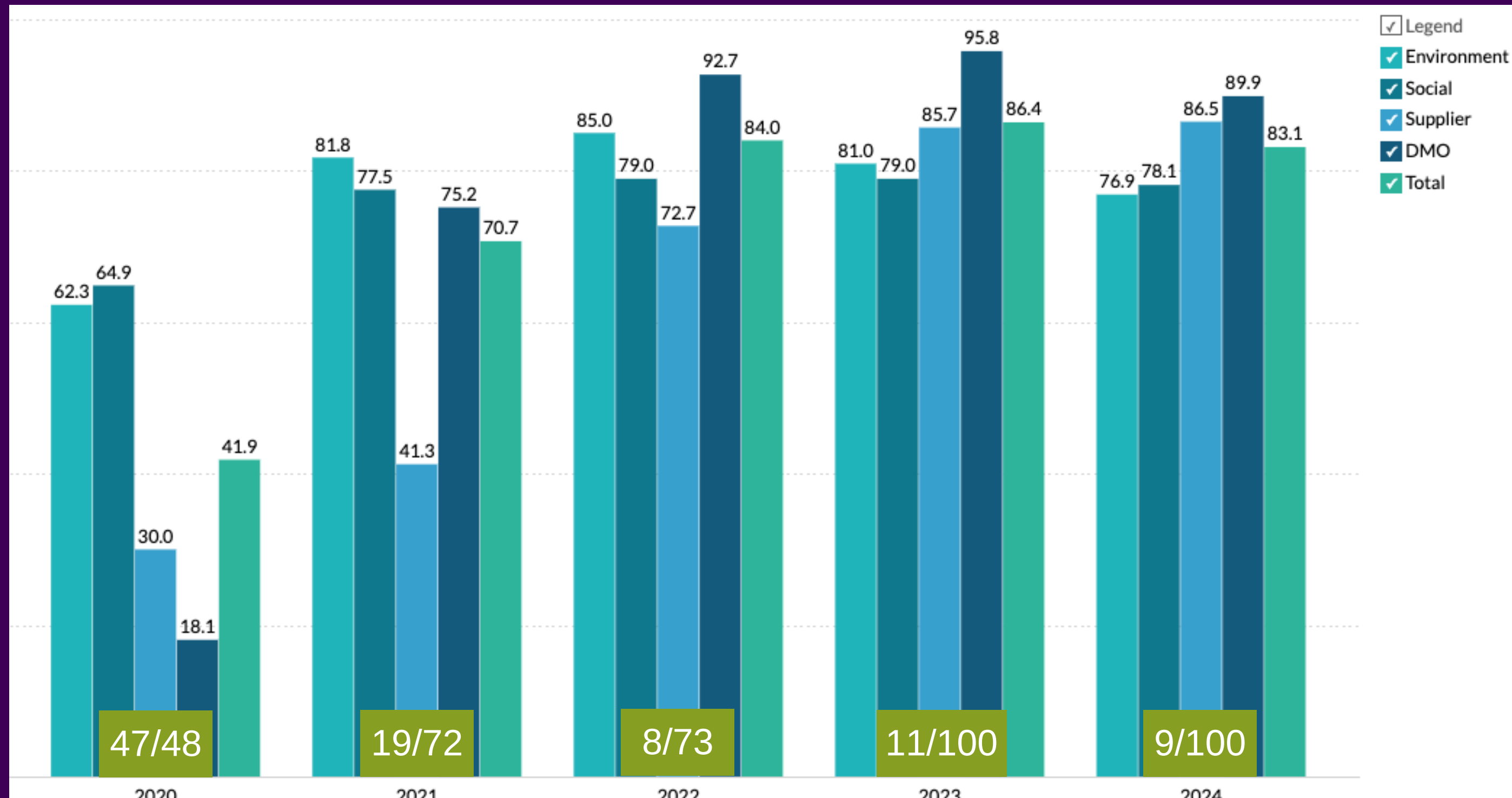
20 Questions

12 Questions

16 Questions

29 Questions

Belfast - 5 year performance



From second
last to 9th / 100

Global
Innovation
Award Winner
2022

A group of four people (three women and one man) are standing outdoors in front of a large, curved wall covered in blue and white mosaic tiles. They are all smiling and holding a large, light blue circular graphic that contains text. The man is in the center, wearing glasses and a dark jacket. The woman on the far left has dark hair and is wearing a black jacket. The woman next to her has blonde hair and glasses, also wearing a black jacket. The woman on the far right has blonde hair and is wearing a black jacket. The background shows a body of water and a bridge in the distance.

Belfast **TOP 10** SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION in the world



GLOBAL
DESTINATION
SUSTAINABILITY
INDEX

Taking Action

Our Organisation

- Strategy & business plan
- Sustainability policy
- S&I Manager & team
- KPIs & Annual impact report
- Green Tourism Gold Certification
- BITC Bronze Award
- VB Carbon footprint
- Triple bottom line approach



Taking Action

Our Industry

- 2021 - BCC and VB Green Tourism Programme
- 76% of Belfast hotel bedrooms sustainability certified
- ICC Belfast - first green meetings venue on island of Ireland
- 20 venues certified
- 2025 Industry survey on sustainability



Taking Action

Our City

- Annual GDS Assessment
- BCC - Inclusive tourism programme
- New Neighbourhood tourism focus
- Belfast tourism carbon footprint measurement
- VB Resident sentiment survey

92%

Residents believe
tourism is beneficial for
Belfast

93%

Tourism allows people to
learn about Belfast's
culture & history

87%

Tourism helps to create a
more vibrant Belfast with
more things to see and do

91%

Tourism supports local businesses
such as bars, restaurants and
attractions to remain open

84%

Residents interested in
taking part in more
tourism activities



Taking Action

Our visitors and clients

- Sustainable choices - green stays to active travel
- Cruise sustainability plan
- Cruise community fund
- Events sustainability framework
- Carbon measurement of business events
- Sustainable Belfast experiences and itineraries for tour operators
- Impact and legacy guide launched
- 1400 volunteer hours





£72,000 raised for food banks and homeless charities in Belfast
Equivalent to 59,426 meals funded



Belfast Reusable Cup Launch - UK & Ireland first multi-venue pilot
2million single use plastic cups annually / 40 tons plastic waste



1,000 students participating in educational outreach and schools programmes from incoming conferences to Belfast

Thank You & Questions



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