



Media Release

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Titanic Belfast First In Ireland to Complete Chinese Tourist Welcome Training Programme

Titanic Belfast, the world's largest Titanic visitor experience, is the first in Ireland to complete the Chinese Tourist Welcome Training Programme offered by the Centre for Competitiveness Ireland.

With China being the largest outbound tourism source market in the world, 25 Titanic Belfast staff attended the bespoke training aimed at attracting and appropriately welcoming Chinese visitors. The course, in conjunction with China Outbound Tourism Research Institute (COTRI), the world's leading independent research institute for Chinese outbound tourism, provided Titanic Belfast with a solid foundation to position themselves at the forefront of the biggest global outbound tourism source and gave them market knowledge to help maximise the success of marketing and sales initiatives.

The accreditation is the next step in Titanic Belfast's strategy to demonstrate that it is accessible to the Chinese market. The company has already taken part in Tourism Ireland's China Sales Mission for three years in a row, accepts China Union Payment and offers the experience supplemented by a mandarin audio guide.

The world-class exhibition, which has now welcomed over 2.7 million visitors from over 145 countries, including approximately 25,000 Chinese visitors, was awarded the Chinese Tourist Welcome Certification at a special ceremony attended by a representative from Tourism Northern Ireland.

The course was supported by Enterprise, Trade and Investment Minister, Jonathan Bell, who has built strong personal ties to China, is vice president of the Confucius Institute at the Ulster University and has frequently visited the country in recent years.

Enterprise, Trade and Investment Minister Jonathan Bell said: "I am pleased with the commitment that Titanic Belfast has made to increase its tourism offering by completing the Chinese Tourist Welcome Training Programme. The pace of the growth of tourism in China is staggering with Chinese outbound tourists growing ten-fold since the turn of the millennium. Titanic Belfast is now in a prime position to make the most of this booming visitor market and enjoy reaping the business benefits like many Northern Ireland companies who have established strong trade and investment links with China."

Titanic Belfast Chief Executive, Tim Husbands MBE, stated, "We are delighted to be the first in Ireland to complete the Chinese Tourist Welcome Training Programme, which is recommended by

European Travel Commission. One in ten of all international travel begins in China with some 120 million people travelling overseas each year, spending \$165 billion. It is a market that we are committed to and continue to see year-on-year growth, having now welcomed 25,000 Chinese visitors. Through our yearly trade missions, we have really noticed an increase in awareness of Titanic Belfast and Northern Ireland. However, we recognise the Chinese visitor is very different to the recreational holiday maker from Europe or the USA and their reasons for travel is very complex.”

“When Chinese guests arrive at Titanic Belfast, they love the interactive experience, the captivating story of the Titanic and the impressive building, located right at the birthplace of the famous liner. The new accreditation aims to help us further adapt and capitalise on this as Northern Ireland becomes ever more popular on Chinese visitor’s travel lists. We are looking forward to putting our learning into practise later this month when 100 tour operators from China visit Titanic Belfast.”

Dr Tony Lenehan, Executive Director of Centre of Competitiveness, who delivered the course on behalf of China Outbound Tourism Research Institute (COTRI), congratulated all the participants who successfully completed the Programme, and in particular for the exceptionally high level of achievement in the written test following the presentations and lectures. He also noted that:

“This commitment to ensuring that a special and focused welcome awaits the Chinese Tourist at the Titanic Belfast is a further example of the professionalism and dedication to excellence which is synonymous with this iconic tourist attraction.”

Titanic Belfast is continuing to raise its profile on the national and international stage. It was recently included in Lonely Planet's Ultimate Travelist of 500 of the world's most striking locations, featuring everything from imposing temples to hidden gems, after only three years in operation and was named the ninth best rated museum in the UK Travellers' Choice™ awards, announced by TripAdvisor.

Titanic Belfast also notably beat off stiff competition from the Eiffel Tower and London Eye to be named Europe’s best visitor attraction for groups. For more information, visit www.titanicbelfast.com.

Notes to Editors

About Titanic Belfast

Titanic Belfast is an iconic six-floor building featuring nine interpretive and interactive galleries that explore the sights, sounds, smells and stories of Titanic, as well as the City and people which made her. It is the World’s Largest Titanic exhibition.

The building houses temporary exhibits, a banqueting suite, education and community facilities, catering and retail space, and a basement car park. Visitors learn about the construction of RMS Titanic and the wide and rich story of Northern Ireland’s industrial and maritime heritage. Supported by the Northern Ireland Executive, Titanic Belfast is a unique public/private partnership funded by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Belfast City Council, Belfast Harbour and Titanic Quarter Ltd. It is operated by Titanic Belfast Ltd and owned by the Titanic Foundation Ltd.

Useful links:

- Titanic Belfast: www.titanicbelfast.com
- The Explorers Club: <http://www.explorers.org>
- Belfast City Council: <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/events/Event-36148.aspx>
- Visit Belfast: <http://visit-belfast.com/>

- Titanic Quarter: <http://www.titanic-quarter.com/news-events>
- Northern Ireland Tourist Board: <http://www.nitb.com/>
- Titanic Foundation Limited: <http://www.titanic-foundation.org/>

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