



# Scotland The Perfect Stage

## Scotland's National Events Strategy

2024 – 2035



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Angus Robertson



Richard Lochhead

## Ministerial Foreword

The events sector is a great asset to Scotland, delivering a diverse portfolio of successful events the length and breadth of the country. It helps drive our visitor economy. It supports international engagement and gives us global profile. It contributes to our individual wellbeing and community cohesion.

There have been huge challenges in recent years, including COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis, and their impact continues to be felt. Organisers of events of all sizes have shown great capacity to innovate and collaborate in these very difficult times, providing the platform for recovery. With public finances becoming ever tighter, it is vital that we work together to address the wider challenges we face.

This National Events Strategy for Scotland 2024 - 2035 aims to build on the many achievements of the events sector to date, and respond to challenges and emerging priorities. Developing this strategy has been a collaborative effort, shaped by voices from across the events sector, Trade Unions, Local Authorities and the wider public sector. Clear agreed priorities have emerged from this process to form a strategy that provides focus for the whole sector, bringing everyone together to deliver a shared ambition.

A continued collaborative and cohesive approach will be essential to taking forward implementation, involving a wide range of voices and interests. We must continue to build on the strong partnerships that exist across the country – and also forge new relationships – to maximise our collective resources. The Scottish Government is committed to this approach, which is key to realising the potential of the events sector across Scotland.

The National Strategy for Economic Transformation recognises events as a key industry in which Scotland already occupies a position of global leadership. Part of that leadership is an events sector that plays its part in

tackling child poverty through championing Fair Work practices, as set out in our Best Start, Bright Futures delivery plan. We also need to take action to address the climate emergency, and ensure that equality, diversity, and inclusion continue to be at the heart of everything we do.

We must continue to adapt and innovate, and target resources toward delivering this government's missions of equality, opportunity and community. In this way a thriving events sector can support the delivery of a fairer, greener and wealthier Scotland.

This strategy can sustain and develop a dynamic, resilient, and responsible events sector – from regular local community events to one off international business, cultural and sporting events – that is a valued part of Scotland's wellbeing economy, maintaining Scotland's reputation as the Perfect Stage for events.

**Angus Robertson**  
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution,  
External Affairs and Culture

**Richard Lochhead**  
Minister for Business



Peter Duthie

## Events Industry Advisory Group Chair Foreword

Scotland's events industry is an established global leader, delivering world-class events and experiences that contribute vital economic, social, and cultural value for Scotland. We are proud of what we have achieved and ambitious for our future. Scotland the Perfect Stage has given strategic focus to the events industry since 2008, and this updated version again provides the focus necessary to retain our global status in the period to 2035.

Scotland's Events Industry Advisory Group (EIAG) was established at the request of industry and in partnership with the Scottish Government and VisitScotland's Events Directorate. It first convened in June 2020 and has subsequently evolved to provide a vital forum for industry engagement, consultation, and collaboration, giving a coordinated sector voice to inform and shape future events policy and priorities. It has been my pleasure to Chair the EIAG throughout this period and I am grateful for the support and input from many industry colleagues, and the constructive engagement of Scottish Government officials and Ministers. I am pleased to see a continuing key role for the EIAG under this strategy.

The industry had a pivotal role in shaping Scotland the Perfect Stage and now has the central role in delivering on its mission, in partnership with Scottish Government, Local Government, VisitScotland and a wide range of other 'Team Scotland' partners. The refreshed strategy is the result of an extensive consultation exercise that has engaged individuals and organisations across the sector and throughout the country.

It requires us all to work collaboratively and responsibly, with confidence and ambition, whilst also recognising and taking responsibility for the part we each play in the continued success of our sector.

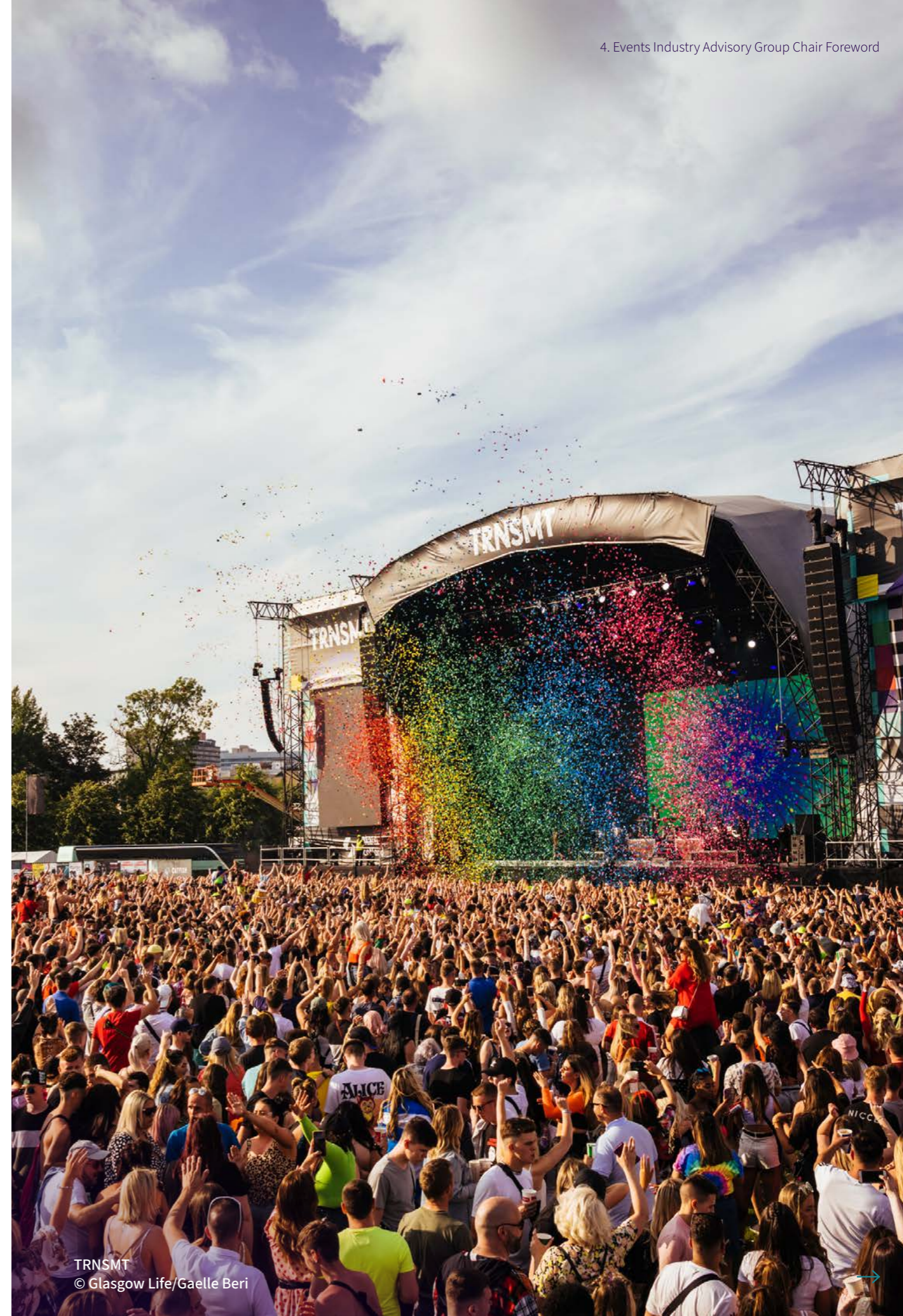
The EIAG has engaged and contributed throughout the review and update process, and I believe we once again have an excellent strategy that is fit for purpose for the period ahead.

On behalf of the Advisory Group and wider events sector in Scotland, I am pleased to endorse this strategy and look forward to working with events colleagues and playing my part in achieving the vision of Scotland as the Perfect Stage for events.

*Peter G Duthie*

**Peter Duthie**

Chair, Events Industry Advisory Group  
Chief Executive Officer, Scottish Event Campus



## Story So Far

Scotland has an enviable global reputation as a major events powerhouse. Across the country our iconic venues and picture-perfect backdrops play host to world-leading cultural, business and sporting events all year round. Our preeminent position for quality, scale, and capability is admired by our peers around the world.

Alongside our world-class annual cultural festivals, Scotland has successfully bid for and hosted a range of high-profile international events including the 2014 Commonwealth Games; 2014 Ryder Cup; 2014 MTV Europe Awards; 2018 European Championships; 2019 Solheim Cup; UEFA Euro 2020; COP26 in 2021; and the inaugural 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships - the biggest cycling event in history.

### Achieving our ambitions

The National Events Strategy was first published in 2008 in response to Scotland's increasing potential to be a global leader in the events industry. It was then updated to cover the period 2015 – 2025. The ambition reflected in the preceding strategies has been instrumental in driving the successful delivery of a diverse portfolio of events, thanks to the ambition and dedication of the sector, and a collaborative 'Team Scotland' approach. Additionally, we have capitalised on the investment, and interest in our high-quality venues such as those built for the 2014 Commonwealth Games, our award-winning conference and music venues, and our academic centres of excellence.

The impact of this consistent and sustained focus on developing Scotland's events sector over the last twenty years has been transformative, to the point where Scotland's reputation as a global events leader is well established. However, this capability and reputation has not always existed, but instead has been specifically targeted, developed, invested in, and grown.



The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo  
© Kenny Lam/VisitScotland

The tangible and measurable benefits of this continuous approach since 2003 were evidenced by research commissioned by the [Events Industry Forum in 2018](#), which showed that (pre-pandemic) Scotland's outdoor events alone generated 52,801 full-time equivalent jobs, total annual spend of £3.5bn and gross value added of £2.8bn.

Similarly, the [2020 UK Events Report](#) highlighted 2019 as a landmark year for the events industry reporting direct spend of £70bn, accounting for over 50% of spend in the UK visitor economy. The proportion of this activity attributed to Scotland was estimated by VisitScotland to be in the region of 9%<sup>1</sup>, equating to £6bn of direct spend and up to 50% of total spend in the Scottish visitor economy.

### Driving positive change

Events not only provide world leading and authentic experiences for Scotland's citizens and visitors, but they can drive positive change on multiple fronts. They serve as catalysts for economic growth, have the power to transcend boundaries, instil a sense of civic and national pride, and help develop solutions to worldwide challenges including contributing to UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Events are also ideally placed to contribute to Scotland's [wellbeing](#) and, at a policy level, to deliver tangible results against the objectives and targets set out in a range of aligned strategies. These include, but are not

limited to, the Scottish Government's [National Strategy for Economic Transformation \(NSET\)](#), our national tourism strategy [Scotland Outlook 2030](#), [Sport for Life](#), [A Culture Strategy for Scotland](#), [Scotland's Strategy for the Historic Environment](#), the [Active Scotland Delivery Plan](#), [VisitScotland's Corporate Plan](#), and [regional economic partnership](#) priorities. Senior policy leads across government and agencies therefore need to actively engage with this strategy to optimise the impacts across policy areas.

### An evolving landscape

Although Scotland's events sector has seen many successes, recent years have brought unprecedented challenges which, at the time of writing this strategy, continue to have a huge effect. A combination of the pandemic, the UK's departure from Europe, the energy crisis, workforce, and skills shortages, as well as reduced funding and decreasing public sector budgets continue to present a significant threat to the capacity and viability of the events sector in Scotland. Competition from other UK and international destinations also grows stronger, threatening Scotland's world-leading events host reputation. Rising costs and associated pressures are also significantly hampering the ability of the sector to recover, affecting supply chains, workforce, and audiences. The industry is also having to respond to a range of new policies and regulations.

However, with challenge also comes opportunity. As the global economy continues to evolve, the

events sector continues to embrace technological advancements including Artificial Intelligence, harness data analytics to gain insight on consumer preferences, deliver across multiple policy areas, and lead developments in priority areas such as the transition to [Net Zero](#), [Fair Work](#) and creating a more diverse and inclusive society. It also plays a vital role in fostering international engagement, providing platforms for ideas exchange, creative and cultural collaboration, and diplomatic relations.

### A shared ambition

This strategy draws on the valuable contributions and feedback gathered from a [public consultation and wider stakeholder engagement exercise](#) which took place across 2023. It is designed to provide strategic focus for all involved in any aspect of planning, securing, supporting, and delivering events of all sizes in Scotland through to the end of 2035.

The dynamics of the events industry are constantly evolving, driven by changing consumer preferences, technological advancements, global challenges, and societal and environmental change. This strategy builds on robust foundations and achievements, and despite a changing and challenging landscape we are an innovative, resilient, and forward-looking sector.

<sup>1</sup> Scotland's share of UK tourism value in 2019 was c.9%, based on the value of domestic day tripper and domestic and international overnight visits. Scotland's events sector is considered to be worth c.£6billion, which is a proportionate share of the estimated value of UK events (c.£70billion). This estimation is purely illustrative.

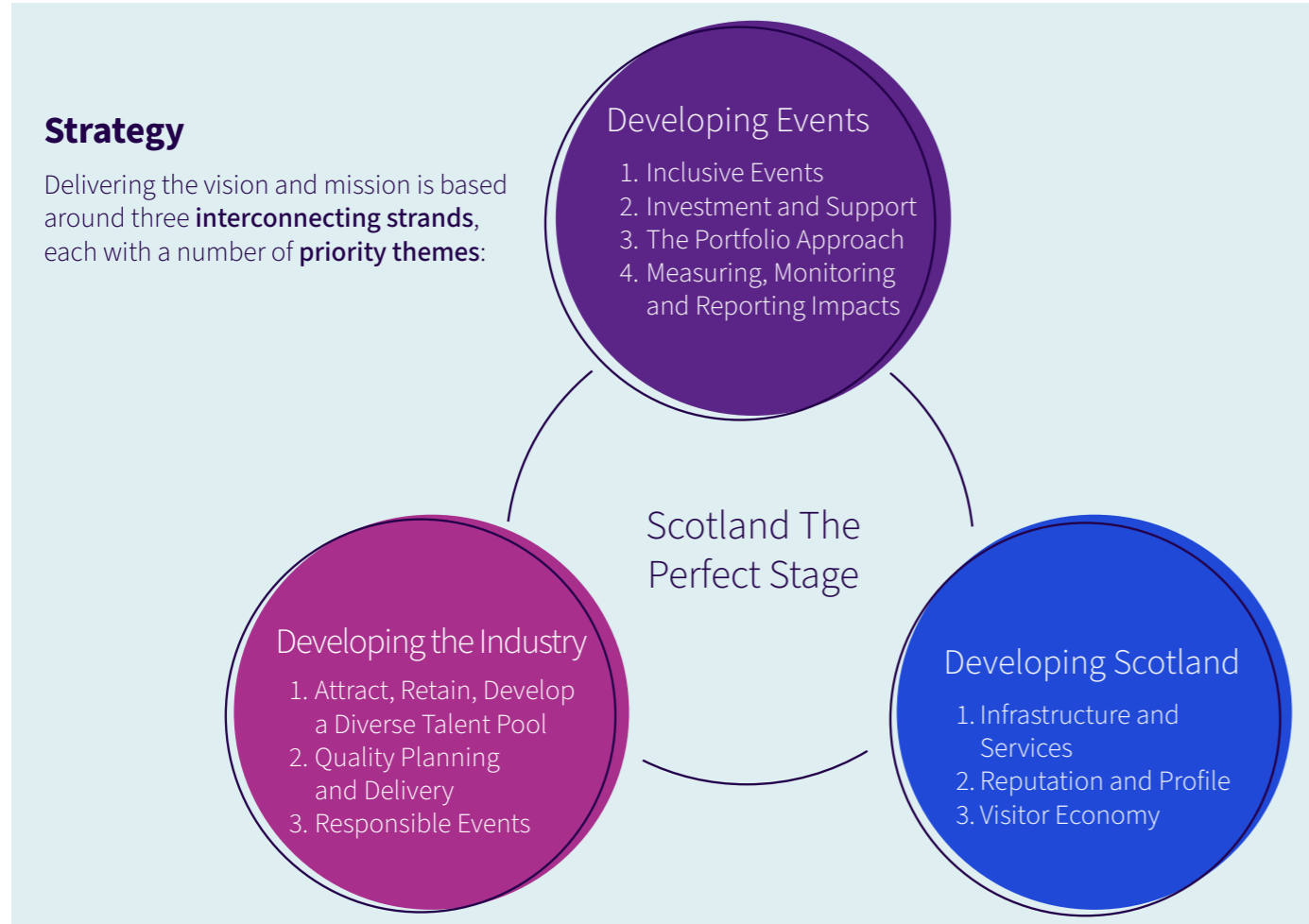


# Vision, Mission and Strategic Approach

The strategy to support Scotland’s events sector is clear and ambitious.

**Vision**  
Scotland is the Perfect Stage for Events

**Mission**  
Sustain and develop, through a ‘Team Scotland’ approach, a dynamic, resilient, and responsible events sector that is recognised as a global leader and valued for its contribution to Scotland’s wellbeing economy. This will be achieved through the delivery of a world-class, diverse, and inclusive portfolio of cultural, sport and business events - for participants, workforce, communities, and visitors.



## The Outcomes

The strategy’s **interconnecting strands** and **priority themes** are vital for creating the environment that allows the sector to contribute to the delivery of national priority outcomes as part of a wellbeing economy for Scotland. Effective delivery of the strategy will ensure the following:

National Priority Outcomes	Events Sector Outcomes
 <b>Economy</b>	The events sector is financially robust, sustainable, and growing. It delivers significant economic benefit across regions, islands, and to Scotland as a whole.
 <b>Community</b>	Events contribute positively to the physical, mental, and social health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.
 <b>Environment</b>	The events sector is environmentally responsible and delivering the sector’s just transition to Net Zero.
 <b>Workforce</b>	The events sector is an attractive sector for employment with <u>Fair Work</u> practices for its workforce through effective voice, security, fulfilment, opportunity, and respect.
 <b>Reputation and Profile</b>	Events deliver excellent experiences and showcase Scotland, our values, and assets globally, achieving national and international profile and reputational benefits.

The following pages detail the approach, priorities and next steps that need to be taken in collaboration to deliver this strategy.





## What Makes Scotland the Perfect Stage

Our vision is that Scotland is the Perfect Stage for Events. By this we mean that Scotland is world leading in the creation, hosting, and delivery of cultural, sport and business events and has a global reputation for excellence.

Across our full portfolio, from community to mega events, we provide meaningful, authentic, and relevant experiences for residents, visitors, talent, and participants whilst delivering against National and Regional strategic priorities. Being the Perfect Stage means we are known for our expertise and how well we collaborate across public, private and third sectors, and with communities to create the conditions for excellent delivery, innovation, and positive short and long-term impacts.

Scotland has many unique assets that make us the Perfect Stage. These are a core part of why we are a world leading events destination, creator, and host. They include: our people, our cultural identity and heritage, our natural environment, our built facilities, our signature events, our academic and sectoral credentials.



## Assets include:

### Our people

Scotland is known for its inclusive warmth of welcome, strong sense of identity and the passion of our people. We are also known for our skilled, experienced workforce and diverse communities, including volunteers. Our people are at the heart of all events, supporting their delivery and benefitting from their success. The knowledge, capability, and capacity of our people across the sector and communities to develop and deliver innovative, successful events is crucial and needs continued support. Our people at home and abroad are also ideal ambassadors for 'Scotland the Perfect Stage' and large numbers of people across the world with Scottish heritage or affinity can promote our sector, as can our business and academic communities through their excellent national and international links.

### Our cultural identity and heritage

Scotland's unique culture and heritage is a critical asset. Not only is it core to the success of many of our cultural events and festivals, but its richness and diversity helps us attract events to Scotland. Rooted in tradition whilst forward looking, residents of Scotland have a diverse cultural identity that includes our history; world renowned food and drink; reputation as a leading nation in the fields of education, architecture, and innovation; our diverse languages including Gaelic and Scots; our museums and galleries; our iconic poets, artists, writers and musicians and our vibrant contemporary cultural scene including our festivals and creative industries. We also have six UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the world's first UNESCO Trail and four Creative Cities - Dundee City of Design, Edinburgh City of Literature, Glasgow City of Music and Perth City of Crafts and Folk Art.

### Our natural environment

Scotland's nature is unique, with awe-inspiring landscapes and habitats found in few other places on Earth. The beauty and quality of our natural environment is the essence of Scotland's global brand, critical to the success of our tourism and events sectors and central to our identity and ambitions for a wellbeing economy. Events can showcase what Scotland offers in all its beauty and diversity whilst helping us lead by example to address the twin climate and biodiversity crises. From mountain biking to motorsports, orienteering to marathons, surfing to swimming, our diverse coasts, islands, landscapes, and city greenspaces are a key asset in hosting and attracting responsible major events to Scotland.

### Our built facilities

Scotland has a strong architectural tradition. This means that we have a wealth of historic and contemporary iconic buildings that provide stunning backdrops and venues where events can be staged. These include Glasgow's SEC and OVO Hydro, Edinburgh's EICC, Dundee's V&A, Aberdeen's P&J Live, Perth Theatre and Concert Hall, Edinburgh and Stirling Castles and many excellent arts venues such as Inverness's Eden Court.

We also have world-class sports facilities and indoor arenas including those developed for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, Murrayfield and Hampden stadiums, and our many world-renowned golf courses. Continued maintenance and investment in our infrastructure and supporting services is essential for success.

### Our signature events

Scotland has a range of annual and recurring events that can be described as 'signature' because they are internationally renowned, are a core part of our cultural and sporting national identity and are inextricably connected to Place. These events are critical to retaining our status as a world leading international events destination and form the backbone of our events portfolio and strategy. Events such as the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, one of the greatest celebrations of arts and culture on the planet; Edinburgh International Festival, with its unparalleled heritage and celebration of music, theatre, opera, and dance; Edinburgh's Hogmanay which broadcasts our midnight celebrations around the globe and The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, give our Capital its world leading festival city status. Glasgow's Celtic Connections, the UK's premier celebration of folk, roots, and world music, connects cultures across the world and has a unique vibrancy that is part of the fabric of the city.

Our strong portfolio of golf events, including our regular staging of the Open Championship and the annual co-sanctioned Scottish Open, underline Scotland's position as the Home of Golf. In addition, there are annual events around the country which define and reflect local and regional culture and key assets such as the Wigtown Book Festival, Shetland's Up Helly Aa and Stornoway's HebCelt Festival.



HebCelt  
© HebCelt

### Our academic and sectoral credentials

Scotland has world-class academic and sectoral credentials. These are critical drivers for business event clients whose event destination selection criteria regularly includes the academic or sectoral credentials of a city or region and nearby academic centres of excellence including universities and innovation centres. For example, Scotland's universities are very strong in Life Sciences and these credentials drive the high percentage of related congresses coming to Scotland.

These credentials are central to aligning business events with Scotland's ambitions at a national level, bringing the world's experts here to discuss or progress local, regional, or global issues.

Alongside our key assets, there are a range of critical factors that are essential if we are to realise our vision to be the Perfect Stage for events. These are detailed in the next section.



Edinburgh's Christmas  
© VisitScotland/Peter Dibdin



Edinburgh International Conference Centre  
© David Barbour



## Delivering the Strategy

The following critical factors are essential requirements and conditions to deliver this strategy effectively:

### Maintaining Ambition

We must not take our capability and well-earned reputation for granted – it has been specifically developed, invested in, and grown as part of a national strategic approach. Continued political and financial support is essential. If ambition diminishes, with an associated decline in the scale and breadth of the events portfolio, this will undermine the impact of events and threaten the people, skills, and talent across the sector. Such losses would be difficult to reverse and would take a long time to rebuild.

### A Collaborative ‘Team Scotland’ Effort

A strong partnership approach delivers excellent events and is necessary for success. By their nature, events often require a vast and diverse range of agencies, organisations, and individuals to work together. These may include public, private and third sector, multinational corporations, SMEs, trade unions, voluntary and community groups and the wider supply chain. Ensuring all relevant partners are identified, actively engaged and that they understand their role and impact is essential.

### A Strong Sector Voice

It is important the events sector has a unified voice, influence, and credibility. [The Events Industry Advisory Group](#) (EIAG) was created as a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Independently chaired, its membership is drawn from across the sector and is

administered by VisitScotland’s Events Directorate. During the pandemic it provided a vital forum for consultation and discussion, directly informing Government response.

Looking forward, and in the absence of any other representative body for the sector, EIAG’s term has been extended and its remit refreshed. The Group will focus on identifying and addressing key industry challenges, working to help inform and shape policy, safeguarding Scotland’s global status as the Perfect Stage for events and oversight of the action plan for this strategy.

### Effective Strategic Alignment

Effective strategic alignment with national and regional strategies – from economic and transport to culture and community – must be developed to become a way of working, optimising outcomes across policy areas. There is a need to ensure forward thinking and a joined-up approach to facilitate effective planning and to generate maximum positive impacts. The development or refresh of regional/local authority event strategies is also encouraged.

### A Clear, Measurable Action Plan

To ensure focus and accountability, it is envisaged a detailed action plan will be created for this strategy which builds on the ‘next steps’ outlined on [pages 37-40](#). This will be developed and overseen by the Events Industry Advisory Group (EIAG) who, together with partners, will agree the action plan, measures and regularly monitor progress.





## Developing Events

### 1. Inclusive Events

Scotland has a global reputation as one of the world's most welcoming and friendly nations. Our events portfolio should be relevant, accessible, safe, and welcoming to all residents and visitors, representing the diversity of our people, places, and cultural heritage. This strategy supports the widest diversity of event types, producers, and audiences so that everyone has an opportunity to enjoy the wellbeing benefits of events.

Event organisers are required to ensure that they make reasonable adjustments to allow people who have disabilities to enjoy events in Scotland barrier-free and must not discriminate because of a protected characteristic. Delivering inclusive events is not just about following legal obligations – it's about creating events that are welcoming to all and are richer for it. Events, as places that bring people together, are in a unique position to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The events sector wants to put diversity and inclusion at its heart, proactively empowering and encouraging the widest range of communities to take part and engage.

It is also important that event organisers are aware of, and can support, their audience's mental health needs, for example by providing designated quiet spaces at events.



Aberdeen Mela  
© Ross Johnston Newslime Media

Delivering inclusive events also makes business sense:

- **Improving attendee experience and satisfaction.** Ensuring events are inclusive and welcoming means everyone involved has a positive experience and customer satisfaction increases.
- **Increasing revenue and returning attendees.** An inclusive approach expands audience potential, encourages return visits, and creates advocates who can help further expand customer bases and increase incomes.
- **Creating partner and community engagement.** Inclusive events can both contribute to community cohesion and help to deliver public and private partners' wider objectives and strategies leading to increased investment and engagement.

### Barriers

There can be a range of barriers for audiences including affordability, mobility, transport, feelings of exclusion or not being invited, lack of facilities or information about event venues and sites. There is therefore an opportunity to develop relevant knowledge and interventions for policy makers, funders, and the wider events sector to improve participation in events and support community cohesion.

### Communications considerations

Effective communication is essential and should be grounded in engagement with diverse audiences. Events should consider the imagery used on promotional material, ensuring that people can see themselves represented. Good information on pricing, travel, site facilities and accessibility are critical, as is the accessible design of websites, digital communications, and other promotional material.

## 2. Investment and Support

To deliver this strategy there must be continued ambition, investment, and support from private, public and third sector parties. In turn, all parties investing funds and resource need to understand the value events generate.

### Investment and Support Requirements:

#### Stability

Sustained support for, and investment in, events provide the confidence required to drive the change and outcomes described in this strategy. It is important to secure core, multi-year funding. Longer-term strategic investment would support the development of events, achieving stronger impacts for local communities and Scotland, whilst reducing insecurity for the workforce. Regulatory and political stability are also important.

#### Diversification

Public sector funding from local and national government and agencies is under extreme pressure. Acknowledging that events have different business and financial models, where viable, they should seek to diversify their revenue streams to support financial sustainability. Recognising funding and income generation can be extremely challenging and resource heavy, increased focus on unlocking new sources of funding – for example aligned to broader policy outcomes – may be beneficial.

#### Wider support

There is a need for adequate resources (in addition to funding), including guidance and leadership from agencies and industry groups to support the sector. This includes timely, relevant, accurate information and communication. Improved co-ordination and collaboration between funders, stakeholders and event organisers would also strengthen the partnership approach and create a more supportive environment. Supporting the sector with advice and resources in measuring impacts and in the transition to Net Zero are examples of the wider support that's required.

### Marketing and selling Scotland as an events destination

Alongside direct funding for events, investment is also required to continue to market and sell Scotland as an events host and maintain the future event pipeline of peripatetic events moving around the globe. This includes the provision of marketing platforms such as dedicated branded stands at major international tradeshows, participation in global sales forums, sales missions, familiarisation trips, site visits, overseas sales, and PR representation and other forms of engaging with prospective partners and clients.

### Key Agencies

There are a range of agencies with responsibility for key investment, support, and with a critical part to play in supporting delivery of this strategy.

Collaborative working between these agencies is vital for success. Further details on roles and responsibilities are listed in the Key Agencies section ([Appendix 1/P43-44](#)).



Tweedlove  
© Ian Rutherford



Knockengoroch Festival  
© Peter Dibdin

### 3. The Portfolio Approach

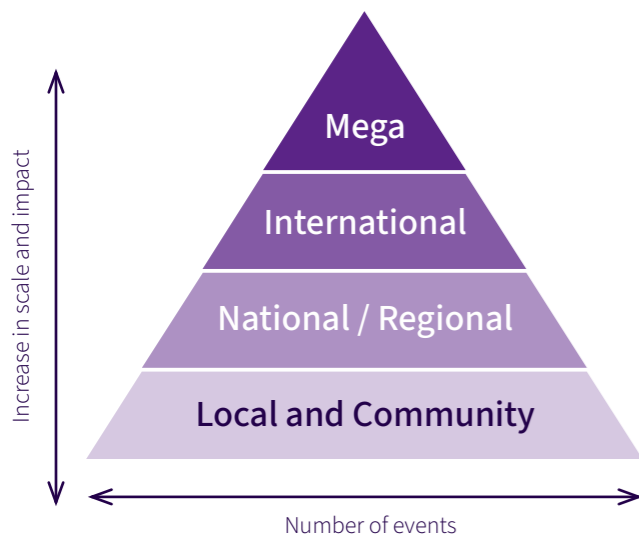
The portfolio approach has been central to Scotland’s national events strategy and is a successful model. It allows for a variety of large and small, free and paid, recurring and one-off, cultural, sporting and business events of various types and categories to be identified and supported across the year and the country. This creates a balanced programme and the conditions for a thriving sector operating in a responsible and supportive environment. The result is that, over time, skills and expertise are developed and a wide range of impacts are delivered across the whole of Scotland, and the sector.

In this strategy the events that form the portfolio are:

- Public facing events and festivals which anyone can attend either for free or by buying a ticket or by viewing it on television or digitally.
- Business events for designated groups which the general public cannot access.

#### Event Classification and Categories

Broadly, the portfolio approach classifies events by scale and impact from Local to Mega events. These classifications are indicative and not rigid or absolute.



#### Mega Events

These are the very largest events and are generally exceptional/one-off. Staging costs are high and may require significant additional public funding. They are expected to attract more than 100,000 spectators/audiences, command a global broadcast audience, support the development of the industry, and deliver strongly on Scotland’s national priority outcomes. They generally involve a major bidding effort and can demand a high level of public sector resource. They are likely to involve a significant level of delivery complexity that requires integrated support.

#### International Events

These are large-scale peripatetic or homegrown events delivering significant international impacts for Scotland including economic and media profile, plus important social benefits. They may have a bidding process attached to them. International culture and sporting events would be expected to attract at least 20,000 attendees and business events up to 10,000 delegates, both with a significant percentage of visitors to Scotland.

#### National / Regional Events

Medium to large scale events generating significant economic benefit and profile for regional economies and delivering positive social impacts. They are expected to attract at least 5,000 attendees, depending on location.

#### Local and Community Events

Smaller events, generally locally or community led, that generate important community and social impacts.

#### Signature Events

These can exist across all tiers of the pyramid. They are internationally/nationally renowned, part of our cultural or sporting identity and inextricably connected to Place.

Each of the above classifications of events will also fit into a broad category:

Event Categories		
<b>Annual Events</b> Happen annually at the same time in perpetuity	<b>Recurring Events</b> Happen at the same location on a biennial, quadrennial, or irregular basis	<b>One-Off Events</b> Often bid for and hosted for a single staging
<b>Sustain and Develop</b>		<b>Bid and Secure</b>
<b>Research, Work in Partnership, Evaluate</b>		

#### Reflecting the shape of the sector

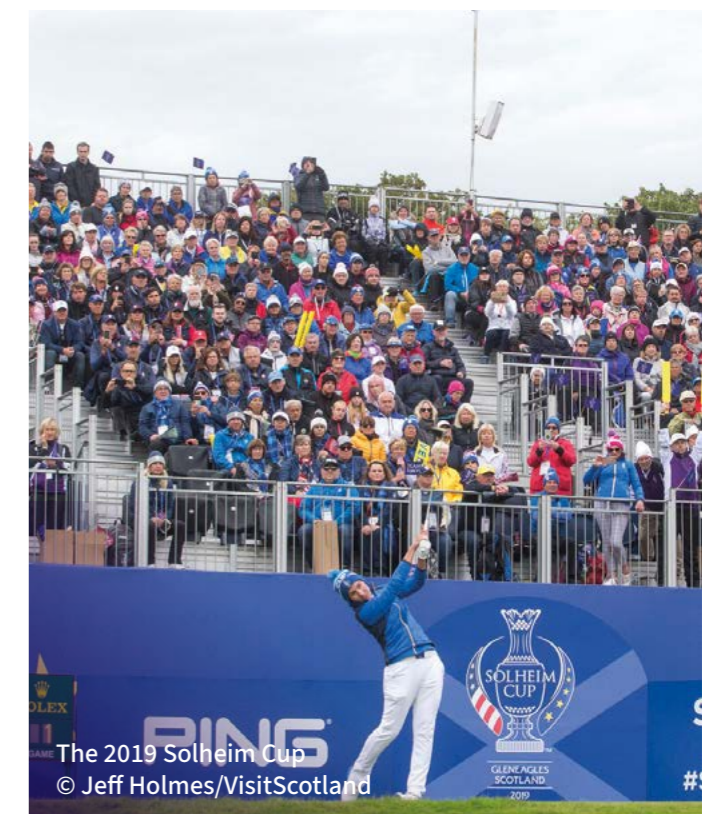
Our sector is made up of a breadth of organisations delivering the widest range of events. From major brands, global clients, and commercial event producers to local authority events teams, national agencies, charities and voluntary groups, the portfolio approach sets the framework to drive success for all.

The portfolio approach provides the framework to:

- Sustain and develop a broad and balanced programme that delivers significant, lasting impacts.
- Promote equality, diversity, and inclusion for audiences and workers by seeking a range of events that engage different demographics and protected characteristics and offer diverse opportunities for participation, volunteering, and work.
- Encourage a good balance of event sizes and types, including participation events to stimulate physical and cultural activity and engagement.
- Have wide geographical and seasonal diversity to spread the benefits across the year and the country.
- Encourage and nurture innovation and entrepreneurship across the sector.

#### Bid Partnerships

Partnerships are crucial to identify, bid for, and secure events. EventScotland will co-ordinate the public sector in respect of event bids and will work closely with Local Authorities, recognising their different relative strengths and resources. Where Scottish Government support is required for mega events, EventScotland will engage Scottish Government from the outset to ensure funding support is assessed against Scottish Government priorities.



## 4. Measuring, Monitoring and Reporting Impacts

Pages 37-40 set out how establishing and demonstrating progress in delivering this strategy as a whole will be taken forward. In addition, measuring and reporting on the impacts of individual events will be crucial to the success of the sector, including to make the case for continued funding and investment. Gathering both quantitative and qualitative data on impacts and benefits should be considered – ensuring the sector can tell the full story of its significant impact to multiple audiences.

Events have many stakeholders with different objectives and interests including event owners, sponsors, Local Authorities, and development agencies. As the International Association of Event Hosts (IAEH) note;

*Whilst each organisation has its own specific objectives, their interests are served collectively by delivering the best possible value from the event in which they are all investing. Therefore, data measuring the resulting benefits of events needs to be shared in a way which can be used by different organisations, using commonly understood terms.*

This underlines the importance of providing consistent advice and guidance to the sector. EventScotland is already contributing towards the establishment of best practice in measuring and reporting on events through its membership of IAEH and their guidance on [Event Impact Standards](#). At a UK level it's a partner in the established [eventIMPACTS toolkit](#) which is planned to be updated during 2024.

### Improving knowledge and tools

There is a good track record in Scotland of robust economic impact and media coverage reporting. There are also good examples of reporting on social or community impacts, image and identity and environmental impacts, but it is recognised that the sector needs more guidance and support in these areas.

The priority outcomes of this strategy will be mapped onto the existing impact areas in the eventIMPACTS toolkit, and a consistent approach will be further developed to assist events in reporting against our economy, community, environment, workforce, and reputation and profile outcomes.

There is an established internationally endorsed methodology for completing economic impact studies set out in the eventIMPACTS toolkit, with an accompanying online calculator for use. This methodology should continue to be followed. In terms of the other impact areas, work is underway on the eventIMPACTS toolkit with the commissioning of updated and simplified tools and guidance including in the areas of environmental and social impact. The aim is that eventIMPACTS will become a one-stop shop for sporting, cultural and business events and allow ongoing comparability between events of different size and types. This work will be carried out during 2024 and can be used to provide the consistent advice and guidance required by the sector.

Opportunities to expand on the guidance within the eventIMPACTS toolkit with a specific education programme for Scotland's events sector will be explored, acknowledging the variety of events that are held across Scotland. The provision of standardised guidance and toolkits with opportunities to share case study examples can contribute towards the improvement of knowledge within the sector.

### Measuring long-term impacts

Recurring events that gather information on an annual basis can contribute towards tracking progress in delivering this strategy. This kind of longitudinal research should also be encouraged for one-off events, where possible.



Paisley Halloween Festival  
© Dylan Glynn



### The opportunity...

- Only 40% of households whose net annual income was up to £10,000 had one or more cars available for private use, compared with at least 85% of households whose annual net income were above £25,000\*.
- The number of young people learning to drive and owning cars is falling for the first time, as making short journeys in cities becomes increasingly difficult.
- Businesses increasingly looking to base themselves in liveable cities in order to attract high-skilled, aspirational workers.

\*transport.gov.scot

## Developing the Industry

### 1. Attract, Retain, Develop a Diverse Talent Pool

Responsible employment and volunteering practice across the events industry aligns with Scotland's vision of a wellbeing economy and a leading Fair Work nation. Our people are a core asset and are at the heart of all our events, supporting their delivery and benefitting from their success. The knowledge, ability, and capacity of people across the sector and throughout our communities to develop and deliver innovative, successful events must be recognised, valued, and supported.

This strategy promotes the need for positive action in the period ahead to recruit, retain and further develop events professionals and volunteers in Scotland. The COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequent temporary industry shut-down, resulted in many skilled and experienced professionals leaving the sector. It also similarly impacted volunteering levels. Rebuilding confidence and creating opportunity for Scotland's future events workforce is now a strategic priority.

Scotland's event volunteers are recognised as one of the key assets making Scotland the Perfect Stage. It is important to ensure that volunteers have meaningful experiences, and that the distinction between paid employment and volunteering is understood and respected, as set out in the Volunteer Charter. There are many reasons why people choose to volunteer with events, including supporting their local communities and to develop skills and experience which can help towards future employment in the industry.



Year of Stories 2022  
© Chris Watt



Edinburgh International Festival -  
Bloom © Kenny Lam/VisitScotland



The Belladrum Tartan Heart Festival  
© Iona Spence/VisitScotland

An inclusive approach to educational routes into the sector and to conditions for those working in events contributes to a competitive and attractive industry, expanding the pool of potential workers.

As Scotland responds to the 2023 reviews of [qualifications](#) and [skills](#), there is an opportunity for events industry employers and the education sector to collaborate and further develop the design and delivery of clear pathways into and through a career in events.

Constructive collaboration and coordinated partnership working is essential, including employers, employee representatives, Further and Higher Education providers, volunteering groups, national agencies, and the Scottish Government. All have a vital role to play in securing a world-class future workforce for events in Scotland.

#### Requirements include:

- Responsible employment ([Fair Work](#)) and [volunteer involvement](#) promoted as standard across the sector.
- Clear, inclusive, and accessible routes into the sector.
- A good understanding of the variety of roles, range of skills and many different types of events and experience on offer across the sector.
- Focus on the opportunities for development and progress within the sector.
- Showcase and celebrate the potential for a long-term, successful, and rewarding involvement with an industry recognised as world-class and valued for its contribution to Scotland's social, cultural, and economic wellbeing.
- Identify and address any systemic barriers to access work or volunteer opportunities for underrepresented groups, e.g., recruitment processes that unintentionally discriminate against certain individuals.

## 2. Quality Planning and Delivery

Under the term of this strategy, the sector seeks to strengthen and develop to successfully meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing operating environment and to continue to deliver value for Scotland.

All partners agree events must be safe, reflect responsible practice, and provide a positive experience for all. Aspects ranging from effective crowd management to the provision of suitable welfare services are essential for the safety and comfort of attendees. Given their critical roles, engagement with Local Authorities, Police Scotland and Transport Scotland is central to successful planning and delivery. At a local level, relevant community safety and wellbeing strategies, as well as event strategies and planning processes can be of great benefit when engaging with, and raising awareness amongst, local communities and people attending events.

The events sector is dynamic and continually evolving. A clear understanding by the industry of the regulatory and policy environment for events in Scotland is essential, as is the sharing of good practice among

regulators, event partners and stakeholders who deliver events. Consultation with industry is vital to ensure the development of policy and regulation that is relevant and proportionate for its intended purpose.

The opportunity for those working in the sector to learn from established good practice, industry trends, innovation, and from industry colleagues at home and around the world is also vital to success. This strategy recognises the sector's need for continuous learning and development. The creation and promotion of an easily accessible and coordinated programme of development opportunities for the sector is a strategic priority. This should include investment in the development of relevant guidance resources, such as toolkits and case studies, access to specialist support, advice and research, plus the creation of opportunities for constructive engagement and the sharing of good practice.



Water refill station at The 150<sup>th</sup> Open  
© The R&A



Borders Book Festival  
© Ian Rutherford/VisitScotland



Vision Mechanics STORM

### 3. Responsible Events

Being a responsible events sector requires a collaborative approach to ensure our events minimise their negative impacts and maximise their positive benefits for everyone including host communities, attendees, participants, the workforce, and organisers.

Reflecting VisitScotland's definition of responsible tourism, this strategy defines responsible events as:

- Delivering environmentally sustainable events and supporting Scotland's transition to Net Zero.
- Ensuring events are inclusive and safe.
- Ensuring events contribute to thriving communities.
- Supporting the protection and considerate enjoyment of Scotland's natural and cultural heritage.

#### Delivering environmentally sustainable events and supporting Scotland's just transition to Net Zero

Scotland's climate change legislation sets a target date for Net Zero missions of all greenhouse gases by 2045 (Glasgow and Edinburgh City Councils have set a 2030 target). To achieve this, a rapid transformation across all sectors of our economy and society is required. Whilst there are examples of excellent practice in environmentally responsible event delivery, it is recognised that the sector has some way to go on its journey to Net Zero.

There are a number of particular challenges for events, not least transport, which is also the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland. The [national transport strategy](#) recognises that a Net Zero transport

system must be affordable and accessible to all, in every part of Scotland. Likewise, events need improved provision of public transport, and shared and active travel options to service the portfolio, particularly in more rural areas. Solutions are not immediate and there is an opportunity for events and transport providers to come together, collaborate and innovate.

The measurement and collection of data is the first step in reducing emissions. By measuring the emissions from energy and utilities, travel, and waste, events can identify actions to manage and reduce these. The consultation that informs this strategy underlined that the sector requires more co-ordinated advice and resources to achieve and report on environmental sustainability.

Of course, delivering environmentally responsible events is much broader than reducing emissions. The sector can help to normalise more sustainable behaviours amongst those attending events by embedding sustainability into its decision-making processes. For example, by ensuring that sustainable travel options are available to the event location and ensuring steps are taken to minimise energy and waste. Taking steps to protect our environment and natural heritage also makes business sense.

This can help to save costs, improve business reputation, minimise local community disruption and negative impacts, promote sustainable behaviour change, ensure competitiveness, meet funder requirements, and provide a better experience for event goers.

#### Ensuring events are inclusive and safe

The importance of delivering inclusive events is covered on [P16-17](#). Ensuring events are delivered safely and responsibly from an operational point of view is a core requirement that is covered on [P26](#).

#### Ensuring events contribute to thriving communities

Events can bring communities together, improve physical, mental, and social health and wellbeing, community cohesion, pride in place and generate valuable economic impacts.

To achieve this effectively, events need to meaningfully engage with communities across their development and delivery phases to maximise local ownership and buy in. Community consultation, communication, co-design, and consistent engagement are important aspects of this. There is much good practice in this area and there is an opportunity to better share this across the sector.

Participation and co-creation are also key to the wellbeing economy approach – transitioning Scotland to an economic system, within safe environmental limits, which serves and prioritises the collective wellbeing of current and future generations. It is therefore important that planning for events is also led by communities and Local Authorities at a strategic level and is integrated into longer term local economic policy and planning.

#### Supporting the protection and considerate enjoyment of Scotland's natural and cultural heritage

Alongside ensuring that events are sustainably delivered, events and festivals have an important role to play in promoting the protection and considerate enjoyment of our natural and cultural heritage more widely. They can reach and influence extensive and diverse audiences, providing platforms for conversation and learning. This can help lead behaviour change and encourage responsible engagement and positive actions to protect and preserve our heritage for the future.





# Developing Scotland

## 1. Infrastructure and Services

Investment in and development of, Scotland's national and regional infrastructure, both physical and social, is critical to this strategy.

Our built facilities are highlighted in this strategy as one of the key assets that make Scotland the Perfect Stage. Continued maintenance and investment of these, and their supporting services, is essential for success.

Infrastructure investments and development priorities typically require significant long-term planning and financial commitment. The events sector therefore needs to be an active participant in local, regional, and national development planning, to inform and influence future priorities, and ensure the sector's contribution to regional and national outcomes is recognised and valued. For example, there is an opportunity for more proactive engagement with the work of Regional Economic Partnerships which help bring together regional interests, focussing and aligning resources, sharing knowledge, and identifying new plans to accelerate inclusive economic growth. For events this could better inform multi-year planning and financial commitments around identified 'signature events', as well as infrastructure developments that support the wider events industry.

Many influences directly and indirectly impact the event sector's capacity for success, which underlines the need for excellent communication, collaboration and partnership working. The operating environment for events is complex, continually evolving, and not well understood. The sector must be able to effectively identify, engage, inform, and influence decision makers to ensure full consideration is given to the impact and opportunity provided by events. This includes, transport providers, accommodation providers, technology and connectivity providers, utility providers, the emergency services, regulation and policy makers, and many more.



## 2. Reputation and Profile

Events deliver excellent experiences and showcase Scotland, our values, and assets globally, helping to attract people to live and work, study, visit and do business here. They strengthen Scotland's position as a world-leading tourism destination, enhancing the reputation of our cities and communities both domestically and internationally, as well as building a sense of pride and confidence at a national level. They also generate profile for different sectors or regions, making a significant contribution to tourism and local economies across the whole of Scotland.

Beyond this, large-scale events must provide a platform for Scotland to 'live our values on the world stage'. They have the potential to be one of the most powerful national branding vehicles we have – an opportunity to tell a unified brand story and present a visually consistent and impactful brand identity, delivering on our nation brand strategy as set out by the [Brand Scotland Partnership](#).

From large-scale sporting events that draw global audiences, to our much-loved annual cultural festivals, Scotland's preeminent position for quality, scale and world-leading capability is renowned. Our credentials in hosting business events should also continue to provide forums for the world's experts to convene and make progress on issues of national and global importance.

Scotland is viewed as highly experienced and reliable due to our unique eco-system of public bodies and private companies and their collaborative approach, which makes us amongst the most attractive locations for international federations and rights holders to award their events.

Events are reputationally important for Scotland as they can:

- enhance Scotland's profile and image globally.
- contribute to the visitor economy.
- deliver government policy.
- facilitate diplomacy, providing platforms for influence and soft power.
- showcase and position the nation, city, or region in key industry sectors.
- celebrate our dynamism, creativity and accomplishments.
- showcase Scotland as a place to live and work, study, visit and do business.
- support and create new jobs.
- bring global expertise and renown into a community.
- attract new investment and talent.
- boost education, innovation, and knowledge transfer.



“Scotland is a global leader in the hosting of major events.”

(agreed by 75% of respondents - Host City Conference survey 2023)

“There has never been greater competition globally from nations and cities in pursuing the right to host Major Events. The challenge for all participants interested reaping the economic and social benefits that flow from these valuable properties is to be a trusted, consistent, and reliable partner for Rights Holders at every stage of the process - from conception to delivery. Scotland demonstrates to the world the best practice of navigating this extraordinarily complex and competitive environment. In truth, the clarity of purpose that drives Scotland’s strategy and allows it to outperform its global peers is a much-envied thing of beauty providing Scotland the tools to navigate the world in which it operates.”

**Brendan McClements,**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Visit Victoria, Melbourne, Australia

“Scotland was a great location for MTV to host the 2014 EMAs – it has a rich history, stunning venues and, critically for us as a global entertainment business, is known to our audiences around the world. We were delighted with the supportive and strategic partnership we enjoyed with our Scottish hosts.”

**Bob Bakish,**  
President & Chief Executive Officer of Paramount Global

“Scotland exceeded all expectations when it hosted the inaugural UCI Cycling World Championships in August 2023. Over the space of just 11 days, venues in Glasgow and across Scotland provided the stage for 13 UCI World Championships for cycling’s different disciplines. This biggest cycling event ever held was a resounding success that broke all the records when it comes to participation, fan engagement and television viewing figures. Our Scottish hosts’ excellent organisation, the magnificent venues, stunning scenery and warm welcome throughout the country remain etched in our minds. Thanks to Scotland’s expertise and professionalism, we witnessed an unforgettable event unfold on perfect stages throughout the country!”

**David Lappartient,**  
President of the Union Cycliste  
Internationale (UCI)

“The World Congress of Soil Science was hosted in Glasgow in 2022. As an organisation we were attracted by Scotland’s credentials and the opportunity to showcase unique landscapes, and their culture and soils, during our tours programme. We were also drawn by Scotland’s world-class facilities and support of Glasgow’s City Convention Bureau, VisitScotland and others who facilitated our planning and preparation. Working with these organisations for a number of years in advance of the event, we developed an excellent partnership and delivered a very successful, award-winning congress.”

**Bruce Lascelles,**  
Past President, British Society of Soil Science

“The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is the largest arts festival in the world and an essential marketplace for international programmers. Over the past 7 years, through the #DANISH showcase, it has provided a platform for Denmark to develop a deeper understanding of Scottish culture and to strengthen the national branding of, and international opportunities for, Danish performing arts. With a very high production level and a down-to-earth approach – it provides a perfect combination for entrepreneurial spirit to flourish.”

**Karen Toftegaard,**  
Founding Producer #DANISH



2023 UCI Cycling World  
Championships © SWpix.com  
(t/a Photography Hub Ltd)



### 3. Visitor Economy

**Value:** Tourism is a growth sector in Scotland. Taken together, spending by tourists generates around £11.6 billion of economic activity in the wider Scottish supply chain. Events are acknowledged as a major driving force in the Visitor Economy, providing compelling reasons to visit destinations, supporting businesses, and generating high levels of domestic and international event-led tourism.

#### National Strategic Context

- **Scotland Outlook 2030** is the national tourism industry strategy, with a vision to be a world leader in 21st century tourism and a mission to grow the value and positively enhance the benefits of tourism across Scotland. Its key priorities are Scotland's passionate people, thriving places, diverse businesses, and memorable experiences – all with a focus on responsible values, aligning well with this strategy.
- **VisitScotland** is the national tourism agency and is a key partner in the delivery of Scotland Outlook 2030. As detailed in Appendix 1/P43-44, its Events Directorate acts as the lead agency for this strategy. One of VisitScotland's key priorities is building responsible, quality product and visitor experiences by investing in Scotland's tourism and events communities. The investment in events includes grant funding programmes, bidding for major events, support for events through national initiatives such as Themed Years, sector support and co-ordination, and marketing and selling Scotland as an events destination across global platforms.

#### Regional Strategic Context

Events have a role to play in supporting regional visitor economies through generating additional income and footfall for businesses across sectors including hospitality, food & drink, culture, and transport. Local Authorities are promoting place-based objectives for

their communities where the contribution of events to those objectives can be demonstrated through the alignment of the priority outcomes in this strategy with those in regional economic strategies.

- **Local Event Teams and Strategies** – most Scottish Local Authorities have an events team or officer. Many are hosted within the Council's Economic Development Department and therefore the focus of many local authority events and festivals is set in the context of regional economic development and maximising the contribution of events to the visitor economy. The creation of local authority event strategies that reflect the principles of this national strategy are encouraged, as is the integration of event priorities into local tourism strategies.
- **Regional Economic Partnerships (REPs)**– Planning for tourism and events is essential in the collaborative context of REPs. This will ensure destination development opportunities (including investment in infrastructure and events as part of product and experience development) are harnessed and drive sustainable economic growth.

#### Packaging Events

There is further potential for some events to provide a holistic all round visitor experience including ticket, accommodation, transport, food and drink and other activities all in an easy to access format. These kinds of bookable and packaged event products would further support event-led tourism and require further development, planning and support.



Shetland Tall Ships  
© The Shetland Flyer



# Implementation: Measuring Success, Reporting and Review

This strategy underlines the importance of evidencing the wide impacts and benefits of events as a key contributor to the wellbeing economy. There are three clear, interconnecting aspects in terms of measuring, reporting, and reviewing success and progress:

### 1. Articulating the event sector’s contribution towards high level National Priority Outcomes:

They should be combined with other evidence, including qualitative data and research to understand the full picture. Where possible, we would breakdown data by demographic or geographic characteristics.

These high-level measures should support an evidence-based narrative, over time, of how events collectively, and the sector as a whole, are performing on the priority outcome statements set out on P8. Given the breadth of the sector, some measures may be more relevant to one part of the sector than another. Where possible, they should draw on data that is already collected regularly, enabling a baseline to be established and for the data to be understood in the context of related sectors, e.g., tourism and culture.

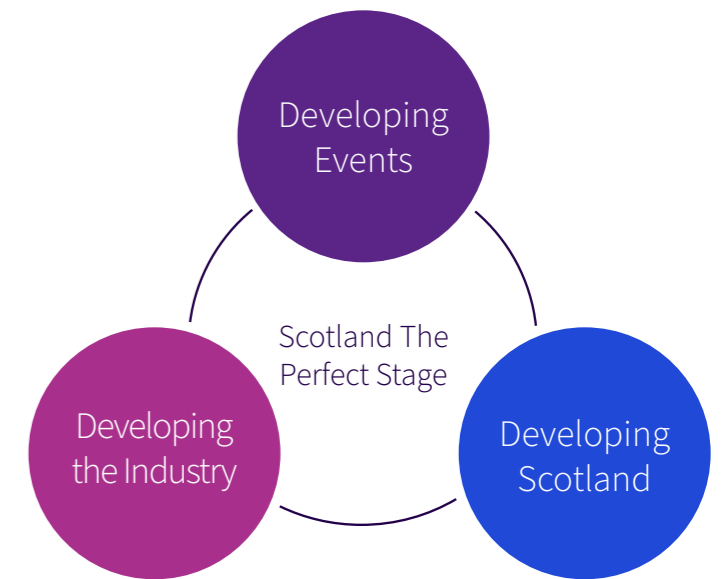
As acknowledged elsewhere, there are areas in which this strategy will seek to improve measurement, particularly in relation to the Environment and Community outcomes. Isolating the events sector within existing national data sets for these areas is extremely difficult at present. While development of a set of high-level measures that covers all five outcomes will be part of implementation, the following provisional measures are offered as the beginning of that process:

Provisional Outcome Indicators	National Priority Outcomes				
	Economy	Community	Environment	Workforce	Reputation/ Profile
Annual Business Survey: Events industry* turnover (£) and GVA (£) in Scotland	X				
Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings: Proportion of events industry* employees (18+) earning less than the Real Living Wage in Scotland	X	X		X	
Business Register and Employment Survey: Rolling 3-year employment growth rate for the events industry* in Scotland	X			X	
Annual Population Survey: Demographics of the events industry* workforce in Scotland		X		X	
Scottish Household Survey: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance at a cultural event in the last 12 months</li> <li>Proportion of people reporting that culture and the arts make a positive difference to their lives</li> <li>Rating of neighbourhood as a place to live</li> <li>Proportion of the population doing formal volunteering in the past 12 months</li> </ul>		X		X	X
Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index: Scotland’s Nation Brand Index score					X
International Congress and Convention Association: International ranking as an events destination					X

\* “events industry” defined using Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes

2. Supporting the sector to develop improved measurement, evaluation and reporting so that the true value of events can be articulated, and their contribution towards national priority outcomes evidenced (as detailed on P21).

3. Measuring progress against an Action Plan that will be developed to respond to the ‘priority themes’ set out in this strategy. Actions for each ‘priority theme’ may include:



Strand	Priority Theme and Next Steps
Developing Events	<b>Inclusive Events</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the many and diverse cultures and traditions of all of Scotland’s people, including <i>New Scots</i>, are reflected across our events portfolio, in recognition of the transformative and empowering role of events in building inclusive, supportive communities.</li> <li>Encourage and support communities and other groups to get involved in events via <i>Third Sector</i> Interfaces and other local and national bodies.</li> <li>Promote the importance of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion to the sector, providing up to date guidance on and how to deliver inclusive events.</li> </ul>
	<b>Investment and Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure long-term funding commitments to support the sector, seeking a multi-year funding approach for events where appropriate.</li> <li>Continue to market and sell Scotland as an events host to maintain the future events pipeline.</li> <li>Scope how to improve communication and collaboration between public and private funding partners and the sector to strengthen the partnership approach and create a more supportive environment.</li> <li>Create resources and learning opportunities to support the sector – priority areas include diversifying revenue streams, environmental sustainability, and community engagement.</li> <li>Use a policy driven approach to engage and access support across policy areas beyond the tourism and events sphere.</li> </ul>
	<b>The Portfolio Approach</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to adopt the portfolio approach, working in partnership to encourage a balanced events programme (type/scale/impacts/spread) across culture, sport, and business events, ensuring available funding opportunities and programmes support this ambition.</li> <li>Encourage innovation and entrepreneurship across the portfolio.</li> <li>Build on national initiatives such as Themed Years that have been successful and help provide a strong spread of activity, support, and national policy aligned outcomes.</li> <li>Nurture our <i>signature events</i> given their unique qualities and connection to Place.</li> </ul>



	<p><b>Measuring, Monitoring and Reporting Impacts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop ‘one stop shop’ impacts, measuring and monitoring framework and toolkit, utilising the eventIMPACTS toolkit being updated in 2024 as a core resource, backed up by an education programme for the sector to deliver guidance on how to measure impacts, including economic, community, environmental, workforce and profile.</li> <li>Identify opportunities to co-ordinate and streamline across public agencies regarding guidance and reporting where appropriate. Consider ways in which the key agencies can co-ordinate the guidance provided to event organisers as well as the data collected and reported.</li> <li>Scope what could be achieved by organisers reporting an agreed, consistent set of impact results, regardless of whether they received public funding or not, to help evidence the value of the sector. Identify relevant actions to confirm lead responsibility among key agencies for co-ordination, collection, and dissemination of data.</li> </ul>
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Strand	Priority Theme and Next Steps
Developing the Industry	<p><b>Attract, Retain, Develop a Diverse Talent Pool</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop sector specific guidance and encourage partnership working between employers, Scottish Government, national agencies and the trade unions to promote and support inclusive, responsible employment and volunteering practice across the sector, aligned to national policies including <a href="#">Fair Work First</a> and the <a href="#">national Volunteer Charter</a>.</li> <li>Undertake research to identify key skills gaps and workforce barriers, to inform development and implementation of a targeted industry workforce development plan.</li> <li>Develop the partnership between industry, education bodies, and communities to promote what it’s like to work in the sector, gain the relevant skills and experience needed, and increase visibility of the opportunities available. Identify and promote case studies and industry role models as evidence of the sector’s many benefits and to advance diversity of workforce – normalising accessible inclusion.</li> <li>Working in partnership across schools, Further Education and Higher Education, support employers to develop targeted programmes of work-based learning, and mentoring – particularly for young people and middle management to improve the gender, ability, and minority ethnic balance.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Quality Planning and Delivery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a central resource hub for industry providing easy access to accurate, current, and relevant information, guidance, and best practice across the sector, including training and development opportunities.</li> <li>Establish a coordinated network of regional events industry forums that provide a local platform for industry discussion, consultation, innovation, learning, and the sharing of good practice. Supplement the above with a national events conference every two years.</li> <li>Develop an industry research programme to identify and understand emerging industry issues and opportunities.</li> <li>Further examine and develop the future regulatory context for events to support an optimal environment for the delivery of this strategy, taking into account best practice from around the world.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Responsible Events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and sign-post easy to access guidance for the sector on achieving environmental sustainability, including how to measure and report on emissions.</li> <li>Share best practice regarding community engagement, wellbeing, and ownership of events.</li> <li>Scope how to collect and report on environment, community, and wellbeing impacts at a sector level to better understand the impact and value of events.</li> </ul>

Strand	Priority Theme and Next Steps
Developing Scotland	<p><b>Infrastructure and Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and proactively engage with relevant local, regional, and national planning and development forums, mapping opportunities for effective alignment.</li> <li>Improve formal industry links with key ‘Team Scotland’ partners to increase awareness, understanding and collaboration, e.g., transport providers, emergency services, accommodation providers.</li> <li>Work with partners to identify the key opportunities and barriers facing the sector’s ability to innovate and grow connected with Scotland’s digital infrastructure and use this to inform and shape future planning for Scotland’s vision to be a truly digital nation.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Reputation and Profile</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a sector, continue to cultivate, maintain, and develop strong networks where Scotland’s reputation as a world-leading events destination can be communicated and showcased globally i.e., conferences, summits, international trade shows, conventions.</li> <li>Capitalise on the potential of Scotland’s signature events to promote Scotland’s brand values, as they are internationally renowned, are a core part of our cultural and sporting national identity and are inextricably connected to Place.</li> <li>Ensure any opportunities to spotlight Scotland’s event hosting credentials and the sector are secured and presented consistently across both online and offline channels, and through partnerships, thought leadership, editorial opportunities, brand campaigns and speaking opportunities.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Visitor Economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain strategic alignment with the National Tourism Strategy.</li> <li>Review if/how planning for events can be more effectively integrated into the work of Regional Economic Partnerships and other relevant structures.</li> <li>Further explore the potential of further packaging of event products to support responsible event-led tourism.</li> <li>Use events as a hook to promote Scotland as a great place to live and work, study, visit and do business. Showcasing the warmth of our welcome, our natural and cultural assets, continue the promotion of Scotland to potential visitors as an events destination and the Perfect Stage for events.</li> </ul>

### Action Plan Development and Delivery

To ensure focus and accountability, it is envisaged a detailed action plan will be created for this strategy that will be developed and overseen by the Events Industry Advisory Group (EIAG), together with partners. This group will agree measures and regularly monitor progress.

### Review

This strategy was published in Spring 2024 following an extensive consultation and reflects the challenges and priorities relevant at that time. It covers the period to 2035 with the option to review as necessary.





# Appendix 1:

## Key Agencies

There are a range of agencies with responsibility for key investment, support, and with a critical part to play in supporting the delivery of this strategy. Collaborative working between these agencies is vital for success. They include:

- **The Scottish Government** - the devolved government for Scotland, led by Scottish Ministers. It develops policies to achieve its strategic objectives, and provides funding to public bodies to promote, deliver, fund, and scrutinise public services, or to provide impartial expert advice to Ministers, the Scottish Parliament, the public and other organisations that deliver public services. It also hosts the Brand Scotland Partnership, encompassing a range of the organisations noted below, and supporting the collaborative marketing of Scotland as a dynamic, fair and inclusive place in which to live and work, study, visit and do business.
- **Local Authorities** have a critical role in planning, delivery, and support for events. They also have a legislative role in certain aspects of licensing for events and a public safety role usually delivered through a Safety Advisory Group process. Some have specific event strategies which articulate their priorities, others have integrated events into regional economic planning. The approach taken by each varies but their buy-in and active support is essential.
- **VisitScotland** - the national tourism agency. Through strategic leadership and industry partnerships it supports and encourages a responsible approach to growing the visitor economy and promotes the value and benefits of tourism and events across Scotland. Its Events Directorate acts as the lead agency for this strategy and currently has three teams: EventScotland leads on bidding for and funding sporting and cultural events; Event Industry Development leads on engagement, partnerships and best practice, national initiatives such as Themed Years, and VisitScotland's corporate event delivery; Business

Events is the national marketing agency for Scotland as a business events destination, delivering global sales reach, marketing platforms, bid support and access to Government.

- **Creative Scotland** - the national agency that supports the arts, screen, and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works, or visits here. It distributes Scottish Government and National Lottery Funding. This includes support for organisations producing or creating work for cultural events and festivals.
- **sportscotland** - the national agency for sport invests Scottish Government and National Lottery funding to contribute to delivering an active Scotland. This includes investment in sport through strategic partnerships, including those with Local Authorities and Scottish Governing Bodies. The investment made ensures the sporting sector can respond to the increased profile and engagement events can drive.
- **Enterprise Agencies** – Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and South of Scotland Enterprise are non-departmental public bodies of the Scottish Government. Their remit is to develop Scotland's economy and as such they focus their resources on projects with high impact on economic growth. These may include infrastructure, services and opportunities that support events.
- **City Convention Bureaus** in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee work with VisitScotland Business Events and academic stakeholders to lead their cities in the pursuit of Business Events, including bidding, marketing, and research.
- **Police Scotland** has a key responsibility for public safety. Recognising this is the most important thing in event planning, it provides advice and support to event organisers, landowners, and Local Authorities who are asked to notify Police Scotland about their event at the earliest opportunity in the planning process. From there it can be established if any

level of Police support is needed, and if there is a cost. This may include the need for road closures, temporary traffic regulation orders and police presence.

- **Transport Scotland** is the national transport agency and delivers the Scottish Government's vision of a sustainable, inclusive, safe, and accessible transport system. In terms of event delivery their responsibilities include providing guidance and co-ordination on traffic planning for major events, including regarding restrictions to facilitate events held on a trunk road or motorway.
- **Historic Environment Scotland and Forestry and Land Scotland** are the Scottish Government agencies responsible for our historic environment, forests, and land, including a vast range of key sites regularly used for events.
- **UK Sport** – a UK Government arm's length body accountable to the DCMS. As part of its work on Major Sport Events it invests both National Lottery and UK Government funding to enable the bidding and staging of strategically important international sporting events.
- **DCMS** – Responsibility for culture and sport, including events is devolved to the Scottish Government. However, there are opportunities to work in partnership where Scotland's events and festivals can drive wider UK impacts.
- **Industry Groups** - Given the breadth of the sector there are a range of industry groups and forums across Scotland, the UK and overseas that help the sector work in partnership, stay connected and influence policy. These include Scotland's Events Industry Advisory Group, National Outdoor Events Association, British Arts Festivals Association, The Events Industry Forum, The Association of Independent Festivals, The Events Industry Alliance, UK Events, International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA) and the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA).





Edinburgh's Hogmanay  
© Kenny Lam/VisitScotland

## Appendix 2

### Consultation Approach and Contributors

An extensive consultation exercise informed this strategy refresh. In December 2022, representatives from the sector were invited to attend a series of meetings to consider four strategic themes to help inform the national events strategy review public consultation. This consultation launched in March 2023 and provided an opportunity for all parts of the public, private and third sector to put forward their views. To accompany this online consultation, a programme of face-to-face industry engagement workshops were held across the country, along with a further series of online webinars

with targeted stakeholder groups. More than 300 organisations and individuals engaged. All findings were subsequently analysed and used to form the basis of this strategy update.

The organisations and individuals listed below either made a direct response to the public consultation or were represented at an accompanying engagement session. The list represents all those that gave permission for their organisation/name to be listed.

2023 UCI World Cycling Championships	21CC Group Ltd	Aberdeen City Council
Aberdeen FC	Aberdeenshire Council	AJL Marketing Ltd / Hill & Glen Scotland
Andrew Ormston	Argyll & Bute Council	Arran Pride
BECTU	Belladrum Festival / The Gathering Festival	BEMIS Scotland
Better Than Zero	Blair Castle International Horse Trials	Bob MacFarlane
Bòrd na Gàidhlig	Border Union Agricultural Society	Branches & All
British Kabaddi League	British Marine Scotland	British Rowing
Buskers Spoken Word and Performance Company	Caledonian Concepts	Capital Theatres

Castle Douglas Development Forum	Ceangail CIC	Celtic Connections
City of Edinburgh Council	Citymoves Dance Agency	Clackmannanshire Council
CM Communications	Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights	Convention Edinburgh
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)	Courtyard by Marriott Inverness Airport	Crawick Multiverse Trust
Creative Carbon Scotland	Creative Edinburgh	Creative Scotland
CRER	Cryptic	Culture Counts
Curated Place	Curl Aberdeen	Dandelion Ltd
Danny Anderson	Deaf Action	DF Concerts
Dumfries & Galloway Council	Dundee City Council	Dundee Heritage Trust
Durty Events	East Ayrshire Council	East Dunbartonshire Council
Eden Court Highlands	Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce	Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society
Edinburgh International Festival	Edinburgh Napier University	Edinburgh Science Foundation
Education Scotland	Equity	Erskine Veterans Charity
Euan's Guide	Events Industry Advisory Group	EVENTIT
Falkirk Council	Fèis Rois	Festivals Edinburgh
Fife Council	Four Pillars	Fringe by the Sea
Genuine / SRD	GEO Foundation	Glasgow Caledonian University
Glasgow City Council	Glasgow Film Festival	Glasgow International
Glasgow International Comedy Festival	Glasgow Life	Glasgow Science Centre
Gordon Hodge	HebCelt Festival	Hickory
High Life Highland	Highlands and Islands Enterprise	Hillside Outside Ltd



Imaginate/WCCF	IMG UK Ltd	Interfaith Scotland
International Canoe Federation	Ironworks Venue	JMP3 Ltd (Jeffrey Music Promotions)
JR Events & Sales	Killin Music Fest	Kirkcudbright Summer Festivities
Lammermuir Festival	LCC Live	LEAP Sports
Leisure & Culture Dundee	Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland	Moray Council
Mull Rally	Musician's Union	National Trust for Scotland
Nikki Pearce	North Ayrshire Council	Orkney 2025
Orkney International Science Festival	Orkney Islands Council	Ourea Events
P&J Live Aberdeen	Party at the Palace	Performance Collective Stranraer
Perth & Kinross Council	Police Scotland	Prostate Cancer UK
Recast	Renfrewshire Council	Robert Gordon University
Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust	Royal Highland Agricultural Society of Scotland	Royal Highland Centre
Royal Scottish Highland Games Association	Saltire Society	Scone Palace
Scottish Arts Trust	Scottish Borders Council	Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN)
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations	Scottish Development International	Scottish Event Campus
Scottish Grocers' Federation	Scottish Land & Estates	Scottish Live Events Network
Scottish Refugee Council	Scottish Society of Playwrights	Scottish Squash
Skills Development Scotland	South of Scotland Destination Alliance	Spirit of 2012
sportscotland	St Andrews Botanic Garden	Still Going Strong Ltd
Stirling Council	Stranraer Development Trust	Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC)
The Enchanted Forest	The Highland Council	The National Outdoor Events Association
The National Piping Centre	The R&A	The Rockfield Centre
The Scottish Football Association Limited	The Scottish Traditional Boat Festival / Portsoy Community Enterprise	This is EventoS
Tiree Music Festival CIC	Transport Scotland	UK Sport
UNESCO City of Design Dundee / Dundee Design Festival	Unique Events Ltd	Unite
University of Aberdeen	University of Dundee	University of Edinburgh
University of Edinburgh Hospitality & Events Collection	University of the Highlands and Islands	University of the West of Scotland
VisitAberdeenshire (Aberdeen Convention Bureau)	VisitCairngorms / Cairngorms Business Partnership	Volunteer Scotland
Wasp Studios (Inverness)	Wraptheworld	Writers Guild
Wyn Fanshawe	YouthLink Scotland	Zero Waste Scotland



The Enchanted Forest  
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