Scottish Enterprise

Business Events Study

Executive Summary

Confidential

Scottish Enterprise

A report by

ipw...

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Executive Summary

Introduction

ES.1 IPW… was appointed to undertake a market supply and demand study on behalf of Scottish Enterprise and its partners, Scottish Tourism Alliance (STA), Business Tourism for Scotland and VisitScotland (collectively, the Partners).

ES.2 The key objective of the study is for the Partners to understand if and where further significant opportunities exist to attract additional business events revenues into Scotland. The outputs of this study will be used by the Partners to identify and agree the collaborative growth priorities for the sector, to deliver the objectives set out in 'Tourism Scotland 2020' and the Government Economic Strategy.

ES.3 The business tourism/events sector has become more prominent in Scotland over recent years. The national tourism and events strategies, Tourism 2020 Strategy and Scotland the Perfect Stage have set the strategic priorities. The formation of Business Tourism for Scotland and the highly regarded work of VisitScotland, the four convention bureaus and the cities have further raised the profile of business events within and outside Scotland. The business events market is estimated to be worth between £900m and £1.9bn per annum to Scotland.

ES.4 The brief for this study defines business events as the following types of events: conventions, association conferences, conferences and corporate events, meetings, exhibitions and trade shows (including consumer exhibitions), and incentive programmes.

ES.5 This executive summary sets out the key findings and recommendations of the study, with further details provided in the full report.

Strategic context

ES.6 The strategic context in Scotland is shaped by the Government Economic Strategy, Tourism Scotland 2020 and Scotland the Perfect Stage 2015-2025. These strategies together identify the key targets for growth in the business events sector, key industrial priorities for Scotland and ways in which Scotland must develop its business events sector to achieve its targets.

ES.7 Scotland has ambitious targets for growth at a national and sub-national level. Business Tourism for Scotland has set the national target for growth: to grow the economic impact of business events by 20% and for all regions of Scotland to grow business tourism by 20% by 2020. This is an ambitious target, in excess of the projected growth for the UK business events sector over the period. Therefore to achieve it, Scotland has to increase its market share of events.

Value of the business events market to Scotland

ES.8 There are a range of values estimated for the Scottish business events market. These estimates have been undertaken at different times and using different methodologies. The most comprehensive is the MPI Economic Impact of the UK Meeting & Event Industry Study 2013, which uses the recommended UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) methodology however the data relates to 2011, and is therefore relatively dated. It estimated the value of the Scottish meetings and events market at £1.9bn in 2011.

ES.9 The Business Event Tourism in Scotland Report 2013 estimated the value of direct delegate expenditure for the meetings and conference market in Scotland at £1.27bn in 2013. Whilst the UK Tourism Survey at estimated the value of business events/tourism in Scotland at £900m. The lack of a consistent approach to measuring the value of the market presents a key challenge in Scotland for measuring and monitoring progress, and as evidence to support investment in the sector.

Business events market

ES.10 The global and UK business events markets are projected to grow into the future. This includes meetings and conferences, exhibitions and incentive travel. The meetings, conferences and incentive travel markets had been affected by the global economic downturn in recent years; however growth is now expected across all business events sectors. The international associations' conference market has grown continuously for the last 60 years, with c10% growth per annum.

ES.11 Key trends impacting the business events market include: increasing use of technology and the requirement for venues to have sufficient bandwidth and equipment to meet these needs; changing needs of event organisers and delegates requiring a more immersive experience; overall value for money and return on investment for event organisers; continued investment in facilities in the UK; overall health of the economy and public sector spending cuts.

ES.12 Technology, education and financial services are growth sectors for business events as well as key industries for the Scottish Government. Medical sciences are also a growth sector for corporate events and exhibitions, and represents 17.2% of the international association market.

The Scottish business events market (supply and demand)

ES.13 There is limited data collated on the demand for business events in Scotland. A one-off study was undertaken in 2013 on the meetings and conference market (Business Event Tourism in Scotland 2013 (BETS)) however there are no regular studies which enable an assessment of performance over time and identification of trends in Scotland. There are no national studies available on the exhibition or incentive travel markets.

ES.14 BETS found that Scotland held 118,000 conference and meeting events in 2013, accounting for 7m delegates and 11m delegate days. The majority of conferences and meetings were corporate (54%), with 18% association events and 28% government/public sector events. This is a higher proportion of government and public sector events than the UK as a whole.

ES.15 The majority of events (61%) were for less than 50 delegates, with only 6% of events attracting more than 200 delegates (approximately 7,000 events with more than 200 delegates). 71% of events in 2013 were generated from within Scotland, 22% from the rest of the UK and 7% from overseas.

ES.16 There are 859 event venues in Scotland according to the VisitScotland database. An audit undertaken as part of the BETS report identified 409 venues with capacity for more than 50 delegates that were 'visible to the market'. 40% of all venues are located within Edinburgh and Glasgow. Hotels are an important element of the business events infrastructure as they both accommodate the majority of business events, and provide the necessary accommodation for delegates using other event venues. 57% of venues in Scotland are hotels, accounting for 61% of all business events taking place.

ES.17 The exhibitions industry in Scotland is based around its three largest exhibition venues; Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre (SECC), Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre (AECC) and Royal Highland Centre (RHC) in Edinburgh. The AECC programme is predominately trade exhibitions (c80%), whilst two thirds of exhibitions at SECC and RHC are consumer exhibitions.

The primary destinations

ES.18 Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen are the primary destinations for business events in Scotland. These cities contain the largest purpose built facilities, are supported by city convention bureau's, international airports and good transport links and are the top ranked Scottish cities in UK business events studies and by ICCA. Edinburgh and Glasgow ranked 4th and 5th in the UK as the top destinations used by UK meetings organisers, behind London, Birmingham and Manchester. Aberdeen has fallen down the rankings for corporate meetings from 10th to 17th following the downturn in the oil industry.

ES.19 Edinburgh alone accounts for 31.5% of the total GVA for the Scottish business events sector, £601m of £1.9bn according to the MPI Economic Impact of the UK Meeting and Event Industry 2013. Edinburgh is the primary destination in Scotland for incentive travel; SITE Scotland estimates that c90% of incentive travel trips will include at least one or two days in Edinburgh.

ES.20 Other destinations in Scotland contribute to the national business events sector, but they are generally limited in terms of comparable accessibility, suitable hotel accommodation and purpose built or large conference facilities.

ES.21 The main report provides an overview of the primary destinations and selected secondary destinations in Scotland (Dundee, Stirling, Inverness and Perth), setting out destination strategies and growth targets, major facilities, key challenges and future plans for development or investment.

ES.22 In addition to recent investments in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and the planned redevelopment of the AECC in Aberdeen, ambitions for three potential venue development projects were identified (further detail is provided in the main report):

- a purpose built conference venue in Stirling (between 200-800 capacity)
- a purpose built conference venue in Dundee (upto 1,000 capacity)
- further improvements to the SECC in Glasgow.

Key competitors

ES.23 Scottish destinations and venues compete against each other for business events, in particular for events from within Scotland. Glasgow, Edinburgh and to some extent Aberdeen would typically compete with each other (rather than the smaller destinations) to secure business events.

ES.24 All Scottish destinations consider other parts of the UK as competitors. Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen primarily compete with London, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool and Newcastle. When Scottish destinations are competing for European and international business events they can compete against other major European cities and venues. Whilst the specific competition for each event could be different, there are a number of cities that Scottish destinations regularly come up against, for Edinburgh and Glasgow these include: Dublin, Barcelona, Vienna, Paris, Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Berlin. Aberdeen cites Paris, Frankfurt and Stavanger (another oil based economy) as its key European competitors.

ES.25 The SECC Glasgow is the largest venue in Scotland; it has a larger conference capacity than most of its UK competitors, including London. It has the fifth largest exhibition facility in the UK, behind venues in Birmingham, London and Manchester. The EICC Edinburgh has a lower conference capacity than many of its major competitors and limited exhibition space, however it is a high quality venue in an excellent city that attracts many international events, albeit of a smaller scale than is possible in Glasgow. The existing AECC is smaller than the majority of the main competitors for exhibitions and conferences. However, the planned development of a new AECC will significantly increase the exhibition space available in Aberdeen and Scotland, enabling it to compete with all venues outside London and Birmingham.

ES.26 Investment in venues is at its highest level since 2010 in the UK. This is particularly in regions outside London e.g. Event City Manchester and ACC Liverpool.

ES.27 The main report contains case studies detailing how other countries and cities have sought to develop the business events sector, including: Ireland and Dublin, Denmark and Copenhagen, Liverpool and Australia.

Scotland's key strengths, weakness, barriers

ES.28 Scotland is well respected as a business event destination, with Glasgow widely cited as an example of best practice within the UK. This study identified the following key strengths:

- **positioning of Scotland internationally**: Scotland is a popular international visitor destination, it has strong brands recognised around the world in particular in the USA, it benefits from being part of the UK (with a strong reputation for hosting events) and recent high profile events (e.g. Commonwealth Games) have further strengthened Scotland's position
- **Scottish assets:** Scotland has a range of key assets that appeal to tourists and business visitors, including: scenery and environment, castles and historic buildings, culture and authenticity, history, golf, whiskey and friendly people
- **sectors and universities:** Scotland has a strong academic, research and industry base, in particular in its key sectors

- **ambassadors**: Scotland and its regions have made an asset of its ambassadors in the academic and research sectors, in particular in areas such as Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen
- **recent investments:** there has been significant investment in new facilities in recent years including: £85m Edinburgh International Conference Centre extension, £130m SSE Hydro Arena in Glasgow, and the proposed investment in a £200m replacement for the AECC in Aberdeen
- **Bid Fund:** the introduction of the Bid Fund has improved Scotland's ability to compete for events that require or would benefit from subvention funding
- **safe destination:** Scotland is considered a 'safe destination' and with instability increasing around the world, this is seen as a significant strength.

ES.29 This study also identified a number of weaknesses, summarised below:

- **weather:** the potential for inclement weather (any associated travel disruption) in Scotland, in particular in winter months can discourage event organisers
- **accessibility:** actual or perceived accessibility of destinations, in particular those outside of the primary destinations is considered as a barrier to growing events. This includes air, road and train travel
- **relatively expensive destination:** Scotland can be considered a relatively expensive destination compared to other regional UK and European cities, in particular taking into account the cost of accommodation, which in peak seasons can be high in the major tourist destinations. This has been confounded by the strength of the pound in recent times
- **VAT and tax**: are considered a weakness when compared with other key European competitors that offer tax breaks and other incentives
- **subvention:** the level of subvention in Scottish destinations, whilst improving through the Bid Fund initiative, is still considered to be below other UK cities and major European competitors
- **sharing data and statistics:** at a local and national level, the compilation, consistency and sharing of data and statistics is considered a weakness
- **working together/ collaboration:** whilst there are examples of good collaboration, this is also an area of inconsistency and some consultees suggest weakness. There is also a reported lack of clarity amongst some consultees about the roles of each organisation working within the sector at a national level
- **availability of facilities and infrastructure:** availability of accommodation is one of the key challenges for the business events sector nationally, whilst at certain times of the year accommodation is available and slightly cheaper, during the peak tourist seasons accommodation is less available and more expensive. Other venues, such as visitor attractions, historic venues and academic venues are also affected by seasonality challenges

- **infrastructure:** a wide range of issues relating to infrastructure were raised by consultees. The suitability of hotel stock was identified as a weakness, with gaps for specific types of hotels required to support the business events sector identified in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Perth and Aberdeen. Some areas identified the lack of a purpose built facility as limiting, including Stirling and Dundee, with other destinations identifying the need to improve existing facilities, for example Glasgow.

ES.30 The study found that most of the barriers to growth, were similar to the weaknesses identified above, with the following additions:

- **reducing public sector investment:** the recent and future projected cuts in public sector expenditure could have a large impact on the business events sector, in terms of possible reduction number of events undertaken by the public sector and reducing investment in facilities and softer services such as destination marketing and subvention
- **competition**: increasing pool of competition, with existing competitors investing further in their offer
- **EU referendum**: is expected to create a degree of uncertainty for event organisers, as some consultees experienced during the Scottish Independence referendum
- **factors affecting customer spending/choices:** the perception of spending on events, and in particular of the highest quality (e.g. 5* resorts) is challenging in the current economic climate. The Bribery Act has also impacted on what companies' consider as appropriate expenditure on business events
- **local funding:** the availability of local funding to support venues to attract business events is considered a barrier in some places. For example, matched funding is required to make an application to the national Bid Fund.

Opportunities for growth

ES.31 The study identified a range of opportunities for Scotland to maintain its current position, and grow its business events sector in the future. These are detailed in Table ES 1.

Table ES 1: Opportunities for growth

Opportunities	Description
Markets and events	
Targeting and attracting more international association conferences	International association conferences are a target across the country and for VisitScotland. This sector has seen continual worldwide growth since the early 1960's, and does not appear to be slowing. It is considered as less volatile than other types of business events in relation to world economic conditions. International association events bring international delegates, profile, decision makers and many more benefits to Scotland and its regions. Additionally, with long lead-in times, availability is less of a limiting factor, and it provides secured business (in the books) for the future.
Targeting events in Scotland's (or a region's) key industries	Increasingly, cities and regions have begun to focus on attracting events in Scotland's (or the local) key industries. In some locations this is partly for the purpose of economic development of the industry, but in other locations it is recognition that there is likely to be more chance of securing a business event if it is in a subject where the region/country is strong. This is a subtle but important difference in approach. All types of events in the key sectors

Opportunities	Description
	are included, association, corporate and exhibitions.
Investing in and developing new events to be based in Scotland	There is potential for Scotland to develop new events that can take place in Scotland on an annual or biennial basis. These could be exhibitions or conferences in any of Scotland's key sectors, where there is a gap in the market for a new or additional national, UK, European or world event. This could include for example creating an international Life Sciences event. This approach was taken by Amsterdam in establishing its International Broadcasting Convention (IBC) Exhibition that now takes place annually in Amsterdam attracting c70,000 delegates per annum. Amsterdam developed the event alongside developing its broadcasting industry by encouraging broadcasting companies to locate in Amsterdam.
Geographical markets	TS 2020 identifies that most of the growth in tourism will come from the areas that Scotland already has a strong position in as follows: • UK £3,127m in 2011 with a potential to grow to £3,586m - £4,238m in 2020 • Western Europe £731m in 2011 with a potential to grow to £875m- £1,035m in 2020 • North America and Australia £414m in 2011 with a potential to grow to £505m - £598m in 2020 • Russia, Brazil, China and India represented only £33m in 2011, with a potential to grow to £70m - £83m in 2020. Whilst it is recognised that major growth in the emerging markets is unlikely to happen in the short-medium term, due to challenges in transport links and visa requirements, in the longer term these could be growth sectors. The business events sector follows a similar pattern, in that the majority of business events from outside Scotland are from the rest of the UK, followed by Europe and then USA. At this point in time, attracting the emerging markets is only likely to represent marginal growth when compared with the other mature markets. This is compounded at this time by the worsening economic conditions in the emerging markets. Therefore, at face value, the emerging markets represent a longer term growth opportunity for the business events market. However, if there is a particular rationale within any of the key industry sectors to target events from and develop links with particular economies, these should be progressed in the short to medium term. Each of these markets will have specific requirements, air-routes, visas, culture, languages etc. that would need to be accommodated to make any significant inroads. VisitScotland has a dedicated conference marketing manager for the emerging markets; therefore any opportunities should be identified as they arise.
Exhibitions	Scotland has three major exhibition venues, all with plans for investment and improvements. This provides an opportunity for Scotland to grow its exhibition sector. For trade exhibitions this should focus on the key sectors that Scotland and the exhibition destinations are strong in.
Promoting Scotland's incentive travel offer	The incentive travel market is experiencing growth internationally. Scotland is well positioned to compete for incentive travel business. Increased promotion of Scotland as an incentive travel destination at a national and international level to major buyers will benefit the sector. For destinations within Scotland, establishing partnerships with Edinburgh to sell multiple destinations could be considered.

Opportunities	Description
Impacts	
Maximising delegate attendance at all types of events	Growing the number of attendees at events has two major benefits. Firstly, this provides additional visitors to Scotland and its regions which in turn increase the total level of expenditure and economic impact. Secondly, attracting delegates is a major factor for event organisers, particularly in the association sector therefore if Scotland can demonstrate higher average delegate numbers for these types of events; it will encourage further events to Scotland.
Increasing the impact of events – including increasing business visitor spend, promoting extended stays and measuring and valuing wider industrial development and social impacts of events.	Increasing the impact of events is also an opportunity to promote and support growth. This includes both the economic impact of delegates and visitors and the wider economic, industrial and social benefits of business events. With respect to visitor spending and impact, this includes: increasing visitor spend within Scotland, increasing the amount of time delegates spend in Scotland by extending their trips (this could also be used to spread the benefit of an event outside of the host location), promoting return visits. Importantly, these factors need to be attributable impacts of the business events, and not lost in wider tourism measurements. Increasing visitor spend per day is a challenging target, because it needs to be balanced against the need to provide value for money, however it is already recognised by a number of the cities as a focus of attention. With regards to the wider economic, industrial and social impacts, this includes: • positioning a destination in key industry sectors • bringing global expertise into the community • facilitating networks for local professionals and academics • attracting new investment and talent • showcasing local products and accomplishments • enhancing destination profile and image • boosting education, innovation and knowledge transfer • advancing professional standards and practices.
Facilities and infrastructure	
Recent and planned investment in venues	• recent investments in EICC and SSE Hydro Arena • recent investments in key resorts, Gleneagles, Fairmont St Andrew's and Macdonald Aviemore resort • planned replacement AECC development in Aberdeen • recent and planned investment at the RHC, Edinburgh.
Future potential investment in existing venues	• improvements to the SECC.
New venue investment opportunities	• a purpose built venue in Dundee (c1,000 capacity) • a purpose built venue in Stirling (c200-300 capacity).
Airports and new routes	• planned £125m investment in Edinburgh airport in 2016 • £13m terminal redevelopment at Aberdeen airport in 2017

Opportunities	Description
	• new routes for Aberdeen (Reykjavik – improving connectivity to the USA), Dundee (Amsterdam), Inverness (British Airways flights to London Heathrow).
Technology	Technology offers a range of opportunities for Scotland. This includes events within the growing technology sector, and the use of technology for events within Scotland.

Supporting growth and recommendations

ES.32 Scotland will need to continue to invest and improve its business events offer to maintain its current position as well as to achieve growth in the future, as competition continues to increase and expectations of event organisers and delegates continue to grow. The main report identifies what Scotland needs to do to support growth and maximise the opportunities identified.

ES.33 Table ES 2 sets out the key recommendations of the study with an explanation and suggestions of what Scotland should do to develop and grow the business events sector.

Table ES 2: Recommendations

Recommendation	Explanation
National	
N1: Promote and support national interventions to make Scotland more competitive internationally	The sector and its key actors should continue to promote the needs of the business events sector at Government level. Key interventions to improve Scotland's competitiveness that should be developed further and supported include: • the removal of Air Passenger Duty (already under consideration) • promotion of tax incentives for business travel/events (to be developed) • visa red carpet scheme or equivalent (to be developed) • consider options for including business events in any incentive packages for companies to locate to Scotland (to be developed).
N2: Promote the business events sector as an industrial development tool	Business events deliver a wide range of economic and industrial benefits beyond the creation of bed nights and visitor spending, such as: positioning Scotland or a destination in a key industry sector, bringing global expertise to Scotland, knowledge and skills transfer and advancing professional standards. Recognition and promotion of these wider benefits to industry sectors and public and private bodies in Scotland should precipitate their involvement and investment in the business events sector. For example, the sector teams within Scottish Enterprise would recognise what value business events bring to industrial development, therefore making it more likely that they will engage in attracting more events to Scotland and potentially providing additional investment in the sector. This principle applies across a wide range of organisations.
N3: Define the business events sector and its targets	There is no standard definition of the business events sector in Scotland. The type and scale of events included within the sector differs between organisations, destinations and venues. This presents a challenge when

Recommendation	Explanation
more clearly	measuring the performance of the sector, growth in the sector and its impacts. Therefore, a standard definition should be agreed between the key national partners and promoted across the county. This definition can then be used as a starting point for measuring performance, growth and impacts. The national partners should consider providing additional targets/guidance in relation to growth of the business events sector. The national targets set out by Business Tourism for Scotland are high level (20% growth in economic impact of business tourism for Scotland and 20% growth in business tourism in all areas of Scotland) and understandably focussed on the business tourism impact. The current targets do not therefore include the potential industrial impacts that could be targeted and provides relatively limited structure to how growth could be achieved (for example, an X% increase in visitors, a Y% increase in expenditure, Z% of visitors extending their stays).
N4: Invest in measuring and monitoring the Scottish business events market and trends, to support the market and measure growth effectively	There is very limited published data available on the Scottish business events market. Therefore it is not possible to identify trends, or track progress over time. There is no published data for Scotland in the exhibitions or incentive travel sectors, and only one study in 2013 for the meetings and conference market. There are a range of estimates of the value of the business events market in Scotland. The MPI UK Economic Impact Study 2013 estimated this to be £1.9bn and this is the baseline to be used by Business Tourism for Scotland to measure growth by 2020. However, this report contained limited information broken down to the Scottish level and it is not clear when this report will be repeated. We also understand that the outputs of the MPI report are not accepted by Scottish Government for investment purposes. Therefore, Scotland should invest in measuring and monitoring its business events market, through an annual survey or study. This could then be used as the baseline for setting future targets, measuring growth and supporting investment decisions.
N5: Promote increased collaboration and partnerships within the business events sector	A weakness of the business events sector is the level of collaboration achieved. Where collaboration happens, it is seen as a great strength, therefore increasing collaboration should provide further benefits. The key challenge is that many destinations, venues and businesses within Scotland are competing with each other, and therefore there is a reluctance to share information and expertise. Key areas for promoting increased collaboration are: • with UK government, Scottish government and key public sector bodies, between the cities and regions and within regions, cities and towns – and potentially wider with UK, European or other cities worldwide that provide mutually beneficial opportunities • sharing information, data and leads – for example, any economic or industry data produced by Scottish Enterprise would be beneficial to the business events sector to identify trends and potential growth areas. Any leads that cannot be followed up by a city should be passed on to the rest of Scotland. • sharing experiences and lessons learned – there is a large amount of good practice within Scotland (and the UK), this should be more effectively disseminated and shared to benefit the whole of Scotland.

Recommendation	Explanation
N6: Clarity of roles in the business events sector nationally	Ensure that there is a clarity of roles and responsibilities, particularly at the national level, in the business events sector, and communicate this more widely across Scotland
N7: Use other major events in Scotland to cross-sell and develop the business events sector	All major events supported by public bodies in Scotland should include a plan for promoting and attracting business events before, during and after the event.
Markets	
M1: Support and further develop the national and destination Ambassador's programmes and Think Scotland Think Conference	The Ambassador's schemes have proven highly successful for Scotland, attracting a wide range of events that would not have been possible without the use of Ambassadors. However the scheme can be developed even further, as some destinations noted that whilst they have a long list of Ambassadors, they are not active.
M2: Identify opportunities and influencers through public sector bodies	Scottish Enterprise and the other public agencies in Scotland have significant expertise, knowledge and contacts, in particular in the key industries. These bodies should be encouraged to identify potential markets/ trends, influencers and events that could be brought to Scotland. Leads should be shared and influencers introduced to VisitScotland and the relevant destinations to work to secure the events.
M3: Investigate the potential to develop strategic partnerships or incentive schemes with agencies at various levels	This report has identified that agencies play a key role in the delivery of events in Scotland. 27% of events in Scotland are delivered with/through third parties. Further, the BMEIS research shows that 15.5% of corporates and 9.2% of association destination choices were influenced by third party event organisers (higher than through influencers or ambassadors). Relationships with agencies at a national, destination and venue level are important for attracting events to Scotland. Therefore, the potential to develop strategic partnerships or incentivised relationships with these partners should be investigated, and if viable implemented.
M5: Support the continuation of the Bid Fund and any proposals for increasing subvention budgets across Scotland	The national Bid Fund has proven highly effective in attracting events to Scotland and supplementing funding from destinations and venues, to provide a higher level of subvention funding than was previously available. Feedback from consultees suggests that long-term certainty about the availability of the Bid Fund is important to their future plans. Therefore it is important to support the next stage of Bid Fund development alongside VisitScotland and to ensure any parameters for funding do not exclude any potential bids with a major or mega impact (regardless of matched funding or limits on funding). Any further proposals coming forward to provide additional subvention funding for events should be supported.

Recommendation	Explanation
M5: Support and invest in the development of new events to be held in Scotland	There may be opportunities for Scotland to create and grow events that take place regularly in Scotland. This could be a new event in one of Scotland's key sectors, for example life sciences. These opportunities need to be identified and progressed; this could be with destinations in Scotland and/or event organisers. It is likely that these events will require strategic support and potentially investment in the early years. However, once established these events will provide a long-term benefit to Scotland.
Impacts	
I1: Co-ordinate the consistent measurement of the full range of impacts from business events and disseminate the findings	The business events sector generates a wide range of economic, industrial and social benefits. These are not currently measured consistently or at a national level. Developing a national framework for measuring these benefits will enable the sector to better measure and promote its impacts, engage with those outside the sector and secure future investments to support growth. As part of this, it will be important to support the implementation of the strategies set out in TS2020 and Scotland the Perfect Stage to improve measurement in the sector and to ensure that the toolkits developed are tailored/appropriate for business events (compared with major sporting/cultural events).
I2: Encourage complimentary programming of business events in the non-peak tourism season	As set out within the report, a key challenge for the business events sector is the availability of accommodation and other facilities in the peak tourism season. Therefore, where possible, business events that complement the tourism season should be targeted. This will enable the maximum use of the existing accommodation and other assets.
I3: Promote schemes and initiatives to increase business visitors to events and increase visitor spending	Two key ways to maximise the impact of existing and future business events is to increase number of visitors/delegates and to increase delegate spend. Targets for the business events sector should specifically include these two elements, with strategies on how to achieve and promote these factors developed.
Facilities, infrastructure and investment	
FII 1: Identify and promote the needs of the business events sector in relation to transport infrastructure plans and projects.	The business events sector nationally, and at a destination level, is highly dependent upon having a strong transport infrastructure to support it. This is a basic requirement for the sector, a 'hygiene factor' for event organisers when selecting destinations and therefore should be priority for Scotland. To maximise the potential to attract more international events to Scotland the appropriate air routes into the major airports are required. In particular, more direct flights from USA and major European capital cities will improve Scottish international connectivity. The business events sector needs to continue to lobby to secure these routes and new strategic routes should be incentivised. Airports are the gateway to Scotland for international delegates. Therefore airports and destinations/ venues must work together to optimise the arrival sequence for visitors. This could range from incorporating an authentic Scottish experience/feel at arrival, to providing special transit/ assistance for delegates of major international events and conferences. Destinations outside Glasgow and Edinburgh need to identify ways to improve the links between these major airports and the destinations.

Recommendation	Explanation
FII 2: Maximise the impact of recent and planned investments in venues	Significant investment in existing facilities has been undertaken in recent years with more planned into the future, for example the new AECC. However, the development of venues is only part of the equation to secure growth in the industry. It is important that facility investment is supported by growth in sales teams and activities within the venue and wider destination. The recent investment in the EICC, supported by an appropriate increase in its sales team, will ensure that the impact of that investment is maximised. In Aberdeen, it will be important to ensure that a long-term contractual relationship to retain its Offshore Europe exhibition is in place to ensure the success of the new AECC.
FII 3: Support investment in existing venues of strategic importance	Scotland has four major event venues capable of accommodating the larger national and international events, namely: SECC, EICC, RHC and AECC. These venues and locations compete internationally for business events and face increasing competition from established locations that are investing in their offer, and new destinations. These venues and destinations are strategically important to the business events sector in Scotland and should be prioritised for investment, if required.
FII 4: Support the development of new venues that meet the strategic investment requirements	Scottish Enterprise and its partners should explore the potential for the development of any new venues with the potential to meet the strategic investment requirements set out in Section 8. These are: city/destination (primary and secondary), markets, impacts and supporting infrastructure. This could include for example, supporting the development of a business case to explore the potential for a new venue in Dundee.
FII 5: Commission a study of the hotel infrastructure requirements to support the business events sector	The hotel sector is critical to the success of the business events sector in Scotland. It has two key functions, firstly as venues for the majority of business events in Scotland, and secondly providing the accommodation infrastructure to support the other venues in the sector, in particular for large and international association and corporate events. This study has identified that the availability of appropriate hotel accommodation, in terms of scale and quality, to support key venues in some destinations is a limiting factor for delivering business events. Limitations have been identified by almost every destination, for example Edinburgh and Glasgow require larger upscale hotels to attract more corporate and international events, Perth requires a 4* branded hotel to improve its business events offer, Dundee would also benefit from additional quality hotel stock. Typically, hotel development is led by the private sector; therefore it is largely driven by commercial requirements. However, the development of appropriate hotel stock in key destinations is a strategic issue for the business events sector. This has been recognised in other UK cities, for example Liverpool, where the public sector has not only specified the required hotel development but invested in its development to support the business events sector. Therefore, a strategic review of hotel provision required to support the business events sector in major destinations should be commissioned. It should include the identification of the gaps in the market and potential options for filling these gaps, through soft market testing with hotel operators/developers, and identify a strategy to encourage and support

Recommendation	Explanation
	investment from the private (or if necessary public) sector to deliver the key requirements.
FFI 6: Support and promote investment in technology infrastructure and innovation	Support and promote investment in technology infrastructure and innovation, including provision of free and fast WIFI at all events venues and where possible accommodation. Investigate the potential to develop technology partnerships with key providers to develop the infrastructure required, and encourage development of innovative software solutions and apps to meet industry need and distinguish Scotland.

Contact details

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