

BUSINESS PLAN SUMMARY 2026/27

Our ambition

VisitScotland's purpose is to drive the visitor economy, growing its value to Scotland.

This will be delivered through strategic activities across our four pillars place development, business and experience development, market development, and organisation development.

The following details priority actions over the financial year 2026/27 to maximise our impact.
A measurement report summarising progress will follow after the year end.

PLACE DEVELOPMENT

Support regional economic strategies and develop our destinations by leveraging the opportunities of public and private sector investment across tourism and events.

Activity	Ambition	Priority actions
Destination development	By 2028 ensure the visitor economy is recognised and supported as a driver of sustainable regional growth across all regional economic partnerships. Guided by a place-based approach, we will champion opportunities tailored to each destination and their strategic ambitions and capability. This will include influencing and advocating for key investments, sector strength development, effective visitor levy scheme development and implementation and strong stakeholder partnerships.	• Support for key investments in development and/or opening, e.g. Paisley Museum, The Eden Project, Center Parcs. • Support development and/or delivery of tourism strategy across all destinations in Scotland. • Work with all 32 local authorities on advocating for support and investment in the visitor economy. • Engage with all local authority visitor levy discussions to ensure proposals brought forward are developed and implemented effectively. • Through work with regional economic partnerships, sector and destination partners, strengthen and develop the visitor economy aspects of the eight regional plans to inform our work and opportunities for VisitScotland’s support. • Support development of regional event strategies within the context of visitor economy plans. • Develop a measurement framework for understanding impact at a regional level, aligned to both capacity and desire for visitors.

Activity	Ambition	Priority actions
Events	Oversee and support the vision and mission of the national events strategy, Scotland the Perfect Stage 2024-2035, supporting the delivery of a world class portfolio of events for participants, workforce, communities and visitors; ultimately driving Scotland's international profile.	• Deliver a revised approach to funding programmes across sport, culture and regions maximising proactive strategic longer-term partnerships. • Leverage events to maximise policy impacts. • Leverage additional public sector funds to support international events. • Develop an events measurement framework, supporting Scottish Government and industry ambitions to deliver the National Strategy. • Support effective regional dispersal with 50% or more of supported events held outside of Edinburgh and Glasgow.
Visitor economy barometer	Provide timely and trusted insight to help VisitScotland and partners monitor Scotland's visitor economy, understand emerging trends and inform decisions with evidence to grow the value of the visitor economy.	• Develop a new barometer with supporting readouts for internal planning and reporting. • Scope and deliver a partner insight toolkit to support consistent use of visitor economy data and evidence. • Strengthen the framework used to monitor and report on VisitScotland activity, contribution and outcomes.
Visitor economy storytelling	The visitor economy is recognised as a driver of economic growth which raises Scotland's international profile and distributes wealth across Scotland while positively contributing to health and wellbeing and enhancing our diverse culture and heritage.	• Deliver the next phase of our visitor economy campaign, driving industry profile. • Briefing and engagement activities to support the onboarding of new Ministers and Government. • Deliver annual Scottish Thistle Awards programme, including promotion. • Establish cross-party group and engagement with key committees at Scottish Parliament post-election. • Facilitate Tourism and Hospitality Industry Leadership Group, developing with members medium to long-term mission priorities and key enablers to growth.

BUSINESS AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Deliver sector-specific advice and support including helping tourism and events businesses to develop new products and visitor experiences, reaching new audiences and markets, and implementing more sustainable practices.

Activity	Ambition	Priority actions
Business support and development	Work with industry to build capability and support a more engaged, thriving and resilient sector, driving sustainable growth and year-round employment.	• Deliver new business support content, workshops, partner content and seminars tailored and themed in line with business development needs. • Deliver the Climate Accelerator Programme. • Deliver a programme of ongoing engagement and education events across Scotland including roadshows. • Promote the business support programme, reaching and recruiting new audiences and driving ongoing engagement. • Deliver VisitScotland Connect, business development missions, and workshops to facilitate over 7,000 meetings between Scottish tourism and events businesses and global tour operators, destination management companies and travel advisors. • Provide a tailored travel trade programme of content and targeted Scottish tourism business referrals, maximising international trade opportunities. • Develop key account programme targeting responsible tourism itineraries, including shoulder season travel, and promoting regions with capacity and community experiences.

Activity	Ambition	Priority actions
Sector development	By 2028, through coordinated national and place-based action, actively support identified growth sectors in achieving their ambitions (in respective strategies and plans) by aligning all of VisitScotland’s sector support and intervention, resulting in more sustainable experience-based product development that delivers high-quality visitor experiences.	• Provision of insights, ambitions and known gaps to influence sector specific content and interventions in the business support programme. • Discovery and development of new and developing growth sector strategies. • Work with established sector bodies to maximise sector growth opportunities across food and drink, attractions, tours and accommodation. • Proactive work with Creative Scotland and Screen Scotland, local authority film officers, production companies, distributors and broadcasters to identify and secure opportunities for screen tourism. • Ensure success of Global Agritourism Conference (June 2026) and coordinate and deliver research in support of the 2030 strategy. • Deliver a programme of events industry engagement activity and pilot an Events Innovation Fund to accelerate the development and introduction of new projects that can benefit the sector as a whole.

MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Attract inbound leisure, association conferences, business and corporate travel, and major events, through a mix of strategic marketing, intermediary, partner and media relations activities.

Activity	Ambition	Priority actions
Domestic demand	Boost domestic demand, focusing on priority growth audiences and key geographies, working in partnership with destinations and sectors, for sustainable, year-round visitation.	- Targeted campaigns in Scotland, England and Ireland. - Commonwealth Games campaign activation to promote shoulder season visits, regional spread and train travel to and around Scotland. - Autumn/ winter campaign to inspire shoulder season visits, in collaboration with regional partners and transport operators. - Online Travel Agent (OTA) campaigns to inspire searches for Scotland from domestic markets and convert to bookings, responding to geopolitical changes. - Always-on marketing programme across owned and earned channels with a focus on families and older independents, aligning with regional capacity, sectoral and seasonal opportunities.

Activity	Ambition	Priority actions
International demand	Enhance Scotland’s international reputation and market share, sustaining Scotland’s rank for tourism as #12 of 60 nations (Anholt Nation Brands Index).	• Targeted campaigns in France, Germany, US and Canada. • Maximise events marketing opportunities and media sponsorship agreements around, Commonwealth Games and upcoming Tour de France Grand Départ, as well as global and cultural events, working with Brand Scotland partners. • Integrated programme of marketing, trade engagement and in-market activation to maximise heightened cultural attention to connect North American audiences with Scotland through the World Cup, driving destination awareness, visitor intent and inbound economic impact. • Maximise content creator network delivering engaging content at scale to highlight regions of Scotland with capacity and unique experiences. • Establish annual OTA partnership agreements to secure destination visibility, influence searches for Scotland and convert to bookings. • Deliver global PR programme to grow profile, advocacy and positive sentiment for Scotland’s destination brand, supporting the broader ambitions of the Brand Scotland partnership. • Grow Scotland’s international storyteller community, creators, diaspora networks, sector and high authority media voices to extend Scotland’s reach through trusted advocacy. • Deliver an ongoing engagement programme with the sector, to inform of forthcoming activity and encourage participation and partnership.

Activity	Ambition	Priority actions
Global discoverability	Strengthen Scotland’s global discoverability by increasing our visibility, authority and influence across search, social and emerging AI-driven discovery platforms.	• Strengthen Scotland’s presence in search and emerging AI-driven platforms by optimising website content, PR and social storytelling. • Deliver refreshed visitscotland.com roadmap, aligned to content strategy prioritising influence in the early (highest impact) stages of customer journey and maximising discoverability online. • Grow and retain consumer global marketing database. • Invest in training and technology to enhance AI development and capabilities.
Business events	Grow the value of business events in Scotland by adding £260 million to the future pipeline by end of 2028 whilst maximising alignment to Scotland’s societal and economic policy aims.	• Deliver ongoing marketing programme to promote Scotland to relevant business events buyers in key markets. • Provide Scotland presence and a partner platform at four major MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) tradeshow and 50 curated events in the UK and internationally to facilitate around 3,500 meetings of Scottish suppliers with international buyers. • Maintain Scotland’s reputation as a global leader in business events through strategic thought pieces and targeted speaker opportunities. • In partnership with industry, establish a strategic plan to raise the profile and value of business events. • Develop Business Events National Ambassador Network. • Scope Business Events Readiness Programme.

Activity	Ambition	Priority actions
Connectivity	Enhance Scotland’s connectivity and economic impact, growing direct air route capacity; with a focus on extending the season.	• Deliver dedicated campaigns to drive demand for direct new / extended routes coming to Scotland from US, Germany and France, maximising load factors. • New VisitScotland transport action plan to include aviation, rail, ferry, public transport and visitor management. • As part of our work on the national rail strategy, support development of measures and benchmarks. • As part of Team Scotland, develop a new approach to international route development for the next five to 10 years. • Ongoing engagement programme with travel trade to encourage uptake of responsible travel options on arrival.
Visitor and market intelligence	Use visitor and market intelligence to inform planning across markets, audiences, timing and channels. This will help VisitScotland and partners understand changing visitor behaviour and make choices grounded in evidence.	• Develop a new intelligence platform with curated dashboards for internal stakeholders, covering visitor flows, spend, market conditions and accommodation data. • Deliver refreshed research and segmentation to improve understanding of visitor needs, motivations and behaviours. • Further develop market prioritisation and modelling approaches to support planning and decisions.

ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT

Enhance our organisation insight, capability, planning and compliance, set up with the right roles, skills, technology and data to maximise opportunity; whilst maintaining an engaged workforce and a balanced financial out turn. Work with Scottish Government and other public sector partners to support the ambitions and outcomes of public service reform, leveraging our expertise, driving efficiencies and reducing duplication.

Activity	Ambition	Priority actions
People and culture	As a progressive and fair work employer, we will deliver the commitments outlined in the People and Culture Plan. We support the creation of a culture and workplace where our employees feel valued, supported, and inspired to contribute their best to our shared purpose.	• Launch refreshed organisational values, leadership framework and employee engagement channels. • Deliver new employee survey plan including refreshing benchmarks and targets on employee engagement. • Ongoing workforce planning and management to right-size the organisation in line with ambitions of public service reform. • Create new workplace strategy incorporating property and office management, workplace environment and practices (including climate action). • Update policies in line with changes to the UK Employment Rights Bill. • Create a new talent and succession management policy and processes.

Activity	Ambition	Priority actions
Technology operations	Make technology, data, and digital capability core drivers of organisational performance, informed decision making, and visitor economy growth.	• Evolve the organisation’s strategic technology direction amid rapid and unprecedented global technological change. • Strengthen cyber security and operate robust, secure technology services that enable efficient operations and support organisational priorities. • Deliver the specific outcomes for visitscotland.com, visitscotland.org, business support activities, Oracle, and other key products. • Explore platform consolidation, continuous improvement, supporting data strategy and AI trip planner. • Understand the organisational needs for business / industry data and systems, including public sector Master Customer Record and begin delivery of the priorities. • Deliver major technology projects including Telephony, Data Centre Relocation, WAN Migration and M365 Records Management.
Corporate governance and professional services	Deliver trusted governance, financial stewardship, public value in procurement, and legal assurance. Through integrity, efficiency, and partnership, enable VisitScotland to fulfil its role as an economic growth agency.	• Deliver a balanced budget, enabled by monthly reporting and regular re-forecasting. • Continue to identify and embed efficient ways of working, actively sharing learning and best practice in support of the Public Service Reform agenda. • Deliver the Oracle roadmap, refining organisational processes and providing enhanced reporting. • Develop a Governance Handbook to support the People and Culture Plan and the new Leadership Framework. • Continue to refine carbon monitoring and reporting to support 2030 net zero ambition. • Monitor the legislative environment to inform future policies and organisational best practice. • Appoint and onboard new internal auditors. • Maintain risk, assurance and best value frameworks.