

Scotland's National Events Strategy 2024 – 2035

Implementation Update 2025-26

To ensure focus and accountability in its implementation, the National Events Strategy set out that the Events Industry Advisory Group and partners would develop an Action Plan. This document presents the first steps taken to develop an Action Plan building on the 'Next Steps' set out in the National Events Strategy. It describes specific **priority actions** and **measures** for the first year of the strategy's implementation and is intended to be a pragmatic starting point. Each of the actions relate to the National Events Strategy's three strands: Developing Events, Developing the Industry and Developing Scotland and to the 'priority themes' identified for each of these.

This 2025-26 Action Plan was agreed by the Events Industry Advisory Group (EIAG) in June 2025 following its development by a sub-group that was set up to lead on and oversee this work. Following a review of progress to be undertaken in Spring 2026, the approach for developing and delivering the strategy's Action Plan is expected to be further refined.

A note on the developing measurement and reporting framework: In tandem with the measurement of and reporting on specific priority actions set out in this document, work is in early stages to establish a higher level measurement and reporting framework that will allow the sector to better describe its value and articulate its contribution towards National Priority Outcomes. The proposed high level measures set out in the [National Events Strategy \(p37\)](#) and in this Action Plan are therefore still indicative and are a work in progress. The read-across between these and the more tactical measures set out for each of the priority actions is intended to develop over time.



Economy



Community



Environment




Workforce




**Reputation
and Profile**

All Outcomes


(Economy, Community, Environment,
Workforce, Reputation and Profile)

	National Priority Outcome	Economy
	Event Sector Outcome	The events sector is financially robust, sustainable, and growing. It delivers significant economic benefit across regions, islands, and to Scotland as a whole.
	Indicative High Level Measures	Annual Business Survey - events industry (£) and GVA (£) in Scotland. Public sector support support is maintained and available on a Multi-Year Basis. Evidence of diversified revenue streams generated by events. Event impacts are spread across the country and the year (sampled from EventScotland (ES) / Creative Scotland (CS) Event and Festivals investment reporting).
	Strand	Developing Events
	Priority Theme	1. Investment and Support

National Events Strategy 2024-35 Next Steps	Priority Actions 2025/2026	Measures for Priority Actions
1.1 Secure long-term funding commitments to support the sector, seeking a Multi-Year Funding approach (MYF) for events where appropriate.	<p>1.1 Advocate - EIAG to continue to advocate for continued public sector investment and MYF where appropriate.</p> <p>1.1 Review and Renew - Public sector funding providers to review funding opportunities and consider the barriers and opportunities to provide MYF. VisitScotland to adopt a renewed Medium to Long-Term Focus in order to leverage more investment and impact/growth.</p>	<p>1.1 EIAG is active, visible and can evidence influence.</p> <p>1.1 Political support is visible, maintained and developed.</p> <p>1.1 Public sector investment is maintained and available on a Multi-Year Basis, where appropriate, to support sustainability and growth.</p>
1.2 Continue to market and sell Scotland as an events host to maintain the future events pipeline.	1.2 Events Pipeline - VisitScotland (VS), Scottish Government (SG) and relevant key partners continue to identify and target UK and international rights holders to maintain and develop events pipeline.	1.2 Events pipeline is active , resourced and forward-looking.
1.3 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.	1.3 Collaborate - Key Funders to discuss and agree more effective ways to support the sector and align reporting requirements (VS, CS, SG, LAs, ALEOs).	1.3 Communication between Key Funders with a view to aligning deadlines, measurements and evaluation requirements where possible. VisitScotland to undertake a programme of stakeholder engagement as part of internal events review work.
1.4 Create resources and learning opportunities to support the sector – priority areas include diversifying revenue streams, environmental sustainability, and community engagement.	1.4 Resource - VS to create, co-ordinate and promote a free Business Support Programme targeted to the sector, co-ordinating with LAs and specialist organisations to ensure it provides appropriate advice and resources.	1.4 VS Business Support Programme launched and engagement reporting established.
1.5 Use a policy driven approach to engage and access support across policy areas beyond the tourism and events sphere.	1.5 Connect Policy Areas - Major Event/Festival strategy leads to proactively identify and explore opportunities for collaboration and support across Scottish Government policy areas. Skills Development and Transport provision two key areas to be prioritised in 2025/26 and beyond.	1.5 Evidence of collaboration , including in Skills Development and Transport.

	National Priority Outcome	Economy
	Event Sector Outcome	The events sector is financially robust, sustainable, and growing. It delivers significant economic benefit across regions, islands, and to Scotland as a whole.
	Indicative High Level Measures	Range of events is maintained (type/scale/impacts/spread). Sample of culture and sports events taken from EventScotland (ES) / Creative Scotland (CS) reporting (identify business events measure / ways to capture portfolio performance beyond funded events).
	Strand	Developing Events
	Priority Theme	2. The Portfolio Approach

National Events Strategy 2024-35 Next Steps	Priority Actions 2025/2026	Measures for Priority Actions
2.1 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.	2.1 Embed - Scottish Government (SG)/VisitScotland (VS)/ Local Authorities (LA) and relevant Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs) to embed portfolio approach in local/regional and national event strategies.	2.1 Evidence that portfolio approach is built into local/ regional /national strategies.
2.2 Encourage innovation and entrepreneurship across the portfolio.	2.2 Nurture - National Agencies (NA), LAs and relevant ALEOs to support and identify good practice and innovation and share across sector in order to strengthen the portfolio.	2.2 Examples of Good Practice and innovation shared via VS Business Support Hub , Scotland The Perfect Stage Newsletter, LinkedIn etc.
2.3 Build on collaborative national initiatives eg Themed Years that have been successful and help provide a strong spread of activity, support, and national policy aligned outcomes.	2.3 Identify and Promote - SG, National Agencies/Host LAs and ALEOs/National Initiative Leads to maximise opportunities for collaboration that can strengthen the events portfolio (eg Commonwealth Games 2026, UEFA EURO 2028).	2.3 Collaborative opportunities identified and promoted.

	National Priority Outcome	Economy
	Event Sector Outcome	The events sector is financially robust, sustainable, and growing. It delivers significant economic benefit across regions, islands, and to Scotland as a whole.
	Indicative High Level Measures	Events Industry body is active and well linked with 'Team Scotland'.
	Strand	Developing Scotland
	Priority Theme	3. Infrastructure and Services

National Events Strategy 2024-35 Next Steps	Priority Actions 2025/2026	Measures for Priority Actions
3.1. Identify and proactively engage with relevant local, regional, and national planning and development forums, mapping opportunities for effective alignment.	3.1 Map and share - VisitScotland (VS)/Events Industry Advisory Group (EIAG) to map and share landscape of current planning and development forums relevant to the events sector.	3.1 Relevant local/national/development forums mapped and shared by Spring 2026.
3.2. Improve formal industry links with key 'Team Scotland' partners to increase awareness, understanding and collaboration, e.g., transport providers, emergency services, accommodation providers.	3.2 Review - EIAG to review membership and governance to ensure effective engagement across relevant 'Team Scotland' partners. Consider membership, observers and Subgroups as required.	3.2 EIAG future governance model and reviewed membership agreed by Spring 2026.
3.3. 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.	3.3 Actions to be identified in 2026/2027 and taken forward thereafter.	3.3 Measures to be confirmed based on discussions and engagement.

	National Priority Outcome	Economy
	Event Sector Outcome	The events sector is financially robust, sustainable, and growing. It delivers significant economic benefit across regions, islands, and to Scotland as a whole.
	Indicative High Level Measures	Number of active event strategies at local authority level. Number of regional economic strategies that support events sector development. Regional Growth Deals and City Region Deals that support events sector development.
	Strand	Developing Scotland
	Priority Theme	4. Visitor Economy

National Events Strategy 2024-35 Next Steps	Priority Actions 2025/2026	Measures for Priority Actions
4.1 Maintain strategic alignment with the National Tourism Strategy.	4.1 Maintain dialogue between VisitScotland (VS), Events Industry Advisory Group (EIAG) and Scottish Tourism Alliance (STA) regarding implementation of national tourism and events strategies. Seek alignment/learnings from creation of Outlook 2030 Tracker.	4.1. Learnings from Outlook 2030 Tracker identified and integrated into events measurement and evaluation work as relevant.
4.2 Review if/how planning for events can be more effectively integrated into the work of Regional Economic Partnerships and other relevant structures.	4.2 Engage with Regional Economic Partnership Network - VS to present on STPS.	4.2 Evidence integration of events into Regional Economic Partnership work.
4.3 Further explore the potential of further packaging of event products to support responsible event-led tourism.	4.3 Package - VS to gather and share packaging best practice and develop guidance/workshops to support the sector to explore opportunities - part of VS Business Support Programme.	4.3. Events Packaging workshop and guidance delivered by March 2026 as part of VS Business Support Programme.
4.4 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.	4.4 Promote - VS and SG to review and refresh promotional activity and opportunity delivered via Brand Scotland in the context of the revised National Events Strategy.	4.4 Evidence of promotional activity captured with VS and Brand Scotland.




National Priority Outcome
Event Sector Outcome
Indicative High Level Measures

Community
Events contribute positively to the physical, mental, and social health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.
Scottish Household Survey: - attendance at cultural events - % of people who believe arts and culture make a positive difference to their lives - rating of neighbourhood as a place to live - % of population doing formal volunteering

Strand
Priority Theme

Developing Events
5. Inclusive Events

National Events Strategy 2024-35 Next Steps	Priority Actions 2025/2026	Measures for Priority Actions
5.1 Ensure the many and diverse cultures and traditions of all of Scotland’s people, including New Scots, are reflected across our events portfolio, in recognition of the transformative and empowering role of events in building inclusive and supportive communities.	5.1 Event Funders to ensure funding criteria supports a diversity of events, and that supported events engage diverse audiences/spectators.	5.1 Evidence of relevant criteria across funding bodies; tracking of audience diversity information initiated.
5.2 Encourage and support communities and other groups to get involved in events via Third Sector Interfaces and other local and national bodies.	5.2 Map relevant Third Sector Groups and develop relevant relationships in order to better understand their needs and opportunities regarding events.	5.2 VS/SG/ EIAG Subgroup - Third Sector mapping exercise undertaken, identification and engagement with priority groups.
5.3 Promote the importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) to the sector, providing up to date guidance on how to deliver inclusive events.	5.3 Develop and share relevant EDI guidance , information and case studies at a sector level on VS Business Support Hub and develop online information/build local networks for event organisers at community level (LAs).	5.3. EDI guidance and good practice is provided by the sector and is available on VS Business Support Hub /LAs provide guidance on how to use council spaces online.

	National Priority Outcome	Environment
	Event Sector Outcome	The events sector is environmentally responsible and delivering the sector's just transition to Net Zero.
	Indicative High Level Measures	UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions - National Statistics (Events Industry) SEPA Business Waste Data (volume of waste generated by Event Industry) % of VisitScotland (VS)/Scottish Government (SG)/Creative Scotland (SG) funded events with Climate Action Plan in place (or similar)
	Strand	Developing the Industry
	Priority Theme	6. Responsible Events

National Events Strategy 2024-35 Next Steps	Priority Actions 2025/2026	Measures for Priority Actions
6.1 Develop and sign-post easy to access guidance for the sector on achieving environmental sustainability, including how to measure and report on emissions.	<p>6.1 Measure and Reporting Guidance – VS/Events Industry Advisory Group (EIAG) to commission work to establish, promote and support a relevant and consistent core set of environmental measures for events, plus an associated reporting and monitoring mechanism.</p> <p>6.1 Develop and share guidance and good practice including Climate Action Planning, see previous page.</p>	<p>6.1 Work is complete this financial year and consistent measurement and reporting is initiated.</p> <p>6.1 Evidence that guidance and good practice has been shared and is being adopted (eg via EventScotland (ES) outcome reporting).</p>
6.2 Share best practice regarding community engagement, wellbeing, and ownership of events.	6.2 Set out above to align with ‘Community’ National Priority Outcome - see previous page, p6/5.3 . (Inclusive Events).	6.2 Community and wellbeing progress is reported on previous page, p6 . (‘Community’ National Outcome/Inclusive Events).
6.3 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.		6.3 See above 6.1 Work is complete this financial year

	National Priority Outcome	Workforce
	Event Sector Outcome	The events sector is an attractive sector for employment with Fair Work practices for its workforce through effective voice, security, fulfilment, opportunity, and respect.
	Indicative High Level Measures	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (% of event industry employees earning Real Living Wage; Gender Pay Gap). Annual Population Survey - demographics of event industry workforce. Business Register and Employment Survey - rolling 3-year employment growth rate for the event industry in Scotland.
	Strand	Developing the industry
	Priority Theme	7. Attract, Retain, Develop a Diverse Talent Pool

National Events Strategy 2024-35 Next Steps	Priority Actions 2025/2026	Measures for Priority Actions
7.1 Develop sector specific guidance and encourage partnership working between employers, Scottish Government (SG), National Agencies and the Trade Unions to promote and support inclusive, responsible employment and volunteering practice across the sector, aligned to national policies including Fair Work First and the national Volunteer Charter.	7.1 Guidance – VisitScotland (VS) to host and promote events sector guidance for Fair Work First, responsible employment and volunteering practice on the VS Business Support Hub , plus provide training as appropriate.	7.1 Sector guidance is available and current on VS Business Support Hub .
7.2 Undertake research to identify key skills gaps and workforce barriers, to inform development and implementation of a targeted industry workforce development plan.	7.2 Workforce Assessment – SG/Events Industry Advisory Group (EIAG)/VisitScotland seek to secure support from Skills Development Scotland for a Sector Skills Assessment for the events sector, with recommendations for a future Workforce Development Plan.	7.2 Plan for Sector Skills Assessment is initiated in 2026/2027.
7.3 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.	7.3 Promote – VS/EIAG to identify and promote case studies and industry role models as part of events industry development programme and industry communications.	7.3 Case studies/role models are included as part of events industry development programme including regional events, national conference, Scotland The Perfect Stage newsletter and communications.
7.4 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.	7.4 See above 7.2 Workforce Assessment	7.4 See above 7.2 Plan for Sector Skills Assessment



National Priority Outcome
Event Sector Outcome
Indicative High Level Measures

Reputation and Profile
Events deliver excellent experiences and showcase Scotland, our values, and assets globally, achieving national and international profile and reputational benefits.
Anholt-Ipsos National Brands Index - Scotland's Nation Brand Index Score. International Congress and Convention Association - Scotland's ranking as an international events destination. UK Domestic Travel Sentiment - UK adults who plan to take an overnight Business Trip to Scotland for a business event.

Strand
Priority Theme

Developing Scotland
8. Reputation and Profile

National Events Strategy 2024-35 Next Steps	Priority Actions 2025/2026	Measures for Priority Actions
8.1 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 ie conferences, summits, international trade shows, conventions etc.	8.1 Continued participation in conferences, summits, international trade shows, conventions, eg Destinations International, M&I forums, ABPCO, IMEX, CHS, Host City, SportAccord etc.	8.1 Participation is maintained and secured.
8.2 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.	8.2 Ensure VS is well equipped with up to date information and assets regarding our signature events so that opportunities for promotion are front of mind and activated (EIAG, EIAG Subgroup, Wider Industry, VS). 8.2 Consider how Brand Scotland activity can more effectively support Scotland the Perfect Stage and vice versa (VS/SG).	8.2 Promotional activity is evidenced across VS and Brand Scotland Channels.
8.3 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.	8.3 Continue to spotlight Scotland's event hosting credentials through partnerships, thought leadership, editorial opportunities, brand campaigns and speaking opportunities.	8.3 Activity tracked and evidenced.

	National Priority Outcome	All Outcomes (Economy, Community, Environment, Workforce, Reputation and Profile)
	Event Sector Outcome	STPS sets out that in order to develop a robust measurement and evaluation framework, we must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articulate the events sector’s contribution towards high level National Priority Outcomes - Support 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 - Measure progress against the Action Plan that has been developed to respond to the ‘Priority Themes’
	Indicative High Level Measures	Measurement and Evaluation Framework is established
	Strand	Developing Events
	Priority Theme	9. Measuring, Monitoring and Reporting Impacts

National Events Strategy 2024-35 Next Steps	Priority Actions 2025/2026	Measures for Priority Actions
9.1 Develop ‘One Stop Shop’ impacts , measuring and monitoring framework and toolkit, utilising the eventIMPACTS toolkit as a core resource, backed up by an education programme for the sector to deliver guidance on how to measure impacts, including economic, community, environment, workforce and profile.	<p>9.1 Consistent Measurement and Evaluation Framework is established for the sector by VisitScotland (VS), Events Industry Advisory Group Subgroup (EIAG Subgroup), Creative Scotland (CS) and Scottish Government (SG).</p> <p>9.1 EventIMPACTS toolkit redevelopment/rebuild is completed FY 2025/26. Priority Outcomes mapped onto the impact areas in eventIMPACTS toolkit, where possible, in order to develop a consistent approach and ensure any gaps in terms of guidance and reporting on economy, community, environment, workforce and reputation and profile are addressed.</p> <p>9.1 VS will provide the ‘One Stop Shop’ via the Business Support Hub and programme.</p>	<p>9.1 Work to establish Measurement and Evaluation Framework is underway.</p> <p>9.1 Consistent advice and toolkits are developed and available on the VS Business Support Hub ongoing.</p>
9.2 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.	9.2 See above 9.1 Measurement and Evaluation Framework	9.2 See above 9.1 Measurement and Evaluation Framework
9.3 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.	9.3 Scope the feasibility and potential of an annual industry-wide barometer to gather anonymised data on consistent set of indicators reflecting national priority outcomes and identify trends issues across the sector.	9.3 Potential of industry tracker scoped by September 2025.

	National Priority Outcome	All Outcomes (Economy, Community, Environment, Workforce, Reputation and Profile)
	Event Sector Outcome	Support Quality Planning and Delivery so that optimal conditions are created for success across all outcome areas
	Indicative High Level Measures	Engagement in VS Events Industry Development Programme (VS Business Support Hub metrics, participation in industry events programme)
	Strand	Developing the Industry
	Priority Theme	10. Quality Planning and Delivery

National Events Strategy 2024-35 Next Steps	Priority Actions 2025/2026	Measures for Priority Actions
10.1 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.	10.1 Central resource – VisitScotland (VS) to establish, develop, maintain and promote the online VS Business Support Hub as an on-going central resource for events sector guidance and support.	10.1 Central resource - VS Business Support Hub is established and promoted. Use, satisfaction and feedback monitored.
10.2 Establish a coordinated network of regional event 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.	10.2 National Events Conference – ES/VS to host Scotland’s National Events Conference. 10.2 Regional Forums – VS/Local Authorities (LAs) to host a regional in-person events industry forums to provide a local platform for industry discussion, consultation, innovation, learning, and the sharing of good practice.	10.2 National Events Conference – Scotland’s National Events Conference to be delivered in March 2026. Attendance, satisfaction and feedback monitored. 10.2 Regional forums – baseline of nine Local Authority annual events forums to be established and delivered.
10.3 Develop an industry research programme to identify and understand emerging industry issues and opportunities.	10.3 Industry Research – VS to use feedback gathered from year-round events industry engagement activity to identify, understand and communicate emerging issues and opportunities; commission research where there are gaps.	10.3 Industry Research - feedback gathered via VS and informs that programme of work.
10.4 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.	10.4 Regulatory Framework – Scottish Government (SG)/ Events Industry Advisory Group (EIAG) to maintain regular dialogue and provide a key forum for consultation and feedback regarding the development and impact of future policy and regulation. Consideration to be given regarding EIAG role in relation to policy and regulation at Local Authority/National Agency level.	10.4 Regulatory framework – Regular EIAG meetings scheduled with appropriate engagement from SG on key policy and regulatory proposals.