



**‘Maximising the sustainable economic benefit of tourism to Scotland’**



Front Cover Photo: Eilean Donan Castle, Loch Duich  
Above: Windsurfer on beach at Findhorn

## CONTENTS PAGE

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD	3
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OVERVIEW	4
VISITSCOTLAND'S PURPOSE, VISION AND PRIORITIES	5
THE IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM	8
FIGURE 1 - OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK	10
ACHIEVING OUR PRIORITIES - HOW WE GET THERE	15
IMPLEMENTING AND MEASURING OUR PROGRESS	22
OUR STRUCTURE - HOW WE DO IT	22
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	22

## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



Tourism is at the heart of Scotland's economy. Right now we believe it is the best investment the Government can make; an investment in tourism is an investment in economic recovery and growth.

My fellow Board members and I are delighted to present this three year Corporate Plan which outlines how we believe VisitScotland, working with all its partners across the public and

private sectors, can maximise the sustainable economic benefit of tourism to Scotland.

VisitScotland understands the scale of the opportunity and value that tourism presents to Scotland. We will look to find the opportunity hidden inside every challenge. Tough though this trading environment is, Scottish tourism is tough. It is resilient, robust, determined. We will continue to invest in our future prosperity by continuing to spend on marketing Scotland. We will sell and we will sell hard.

Despite funding cuts, the VisitScotland Board has directed the Chief Executive, Malcolm Roughead, and his Senior Management Team to maintain levels of marketing spend and we are delighted that this year will see VisitScotland continuing to invest almost 80% of its budget in marketing. Our ambition is to create £400m of additional spend as a result of this marketing activity.

Challenges in funding must, however, be addressed through new ways of working; it is essential that we think creatively about potential new partners if we are to maximise our budgets. In the past 12 months, I have been delighted to see new partnerships emerging between VisitScotland, trade associations and Destination Organisations. We look forward to building on these, fostering new relationships and collaborating on joint projects. The launch of the new £1m Growth Fund is an excellent example of how we hope to work with our partners, supporting excellent marketing opportunities which give a local flavour aligned to national themes and priorities.

With responsibility for setting the direction, the VisitScotland Board has worked with the Senior Management Team, led by Malcolm, to deliver a plan which we wholeheartedly believe will deliver for Scotland. We look forward to working with the team at VisitScotland and all our partners to put this plan into action.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Cantlay'.

Mike Cantlay  
Chairman

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OVERVIEW



The next three year period covered by this plan promises to be one of the most challenging ever faced by the industry, VisitScotland and our partners within the public and private sectors. In the face of a changing and turbulent economic and operating environment it is important that everyone involved in tourism works in Partnership to identify and realise the Opportunities which exist to deliver Sustainable economic growth

now and in the future.

VisitScotland is committed to working in partnership with the industry to, not only deliver platforms for the industry to convert into sales, but also offer the knowledge and expertise possessed within the organisation to business, Trade Associations, DMO's and others to help them shape and develop their own short and long term plans. Over the next three years VisitScotland, together with all of its partners, will build on the current platforms which delivered over £400m of additional spend and maximise the Opportunities afforded by set piece events such as The Olympics in 2012, the Commonwealth Games, Ryder Cup and Homecoming in 2014, a year throughout which, Scotland truly welcomes the World.

In the run up to 2014, VisitScotland will maximise the opportunities afforded by the Years of Focus - Active, Creative and Natural Scotland - thereby helping to increase the synergies between tourism and other sectors of the economy. An example of this is the Year of Creative which will build on and create even greater links with the creative industries to help promote cultural tourism.

VisitScotland recognises that Sustainable economic growth will only come about by addressing the key drivers of success:

- Continued investment in Marketing, Skills and Infrastructure
- Increased connectivity be it through transport in a physical sense or virtually via digital platforms
- Enabling businesses to compete more effectively via digital platforms and advice on trends, channels and opportunities and by Working in Partnership with everyone involved in Tourism to ensure that Scotland maximises its assets, continues to punch above its weight and releases and realises its potential within this most competitive of industries.

This Corporate Plan is built upon sound strategic analysis and insight and direction from the VisitScotland Board, with valuable input from our Partners, but it is also a dynamic document which will be reviewed and updated to reflect changes in the global economy and in our own operating environment. By focusing on our five strategic priorities:

- Maximising the sustainable economic benefit of tourism in Scotland
- Inspiring through information provision
- Delivering Quality Assurance
- Working in Partnership and by
- Establishing Scotland as Perfect Stage for Events

It is our belief that VisitScotland's contribution to unlocking the Potential for tourism will be maximised.



Malcolm C Roughead  
Chief Executive

## VISITSCOTLAND’S PURPOSE, VISION AND PRIORITIES

VisitScotland’s Corporate Plan presents our purpose, vision and priorities for 2011 - 2014. Our purpose is drawn from the Scottish Government’s which is:

To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

### OUR PURPOSE - WHAT WE DO

To maximise the sustainable economic benefit of tourism to Scotland

- market Scotland to all parts of the world, including Scotland and the UK to attract visitors
- provide information and inspiration to visitors and potential visitors so they get the best out of a visit to Scotland
- provide quality assurance to visitors and quality advice to industry
- work with partners to help the industry meet – and strive to exceed visitors’ expectations
- develop a portfolio of events that deliver impact and international profile for Scotland – Scotland established as the perfect stage for events

### VISION -WHERE WE WANT TO BE

One team for tourism, working in partnership to exceed visitor expectations

Our purpose directly supports the Scottish Government’s Economic Strategy and the industry growth ambition detailed in the tourism industry strategy, The Tourism Framework for Change (TFFC). The Tourism Leadership Group has been developed as a result of the recent Scottish Tourism Forum review of the TFFC and aims to work collaboratively across industry to establish a refreshed vision for Scottish Tourism and develop a robust strategy action plan.

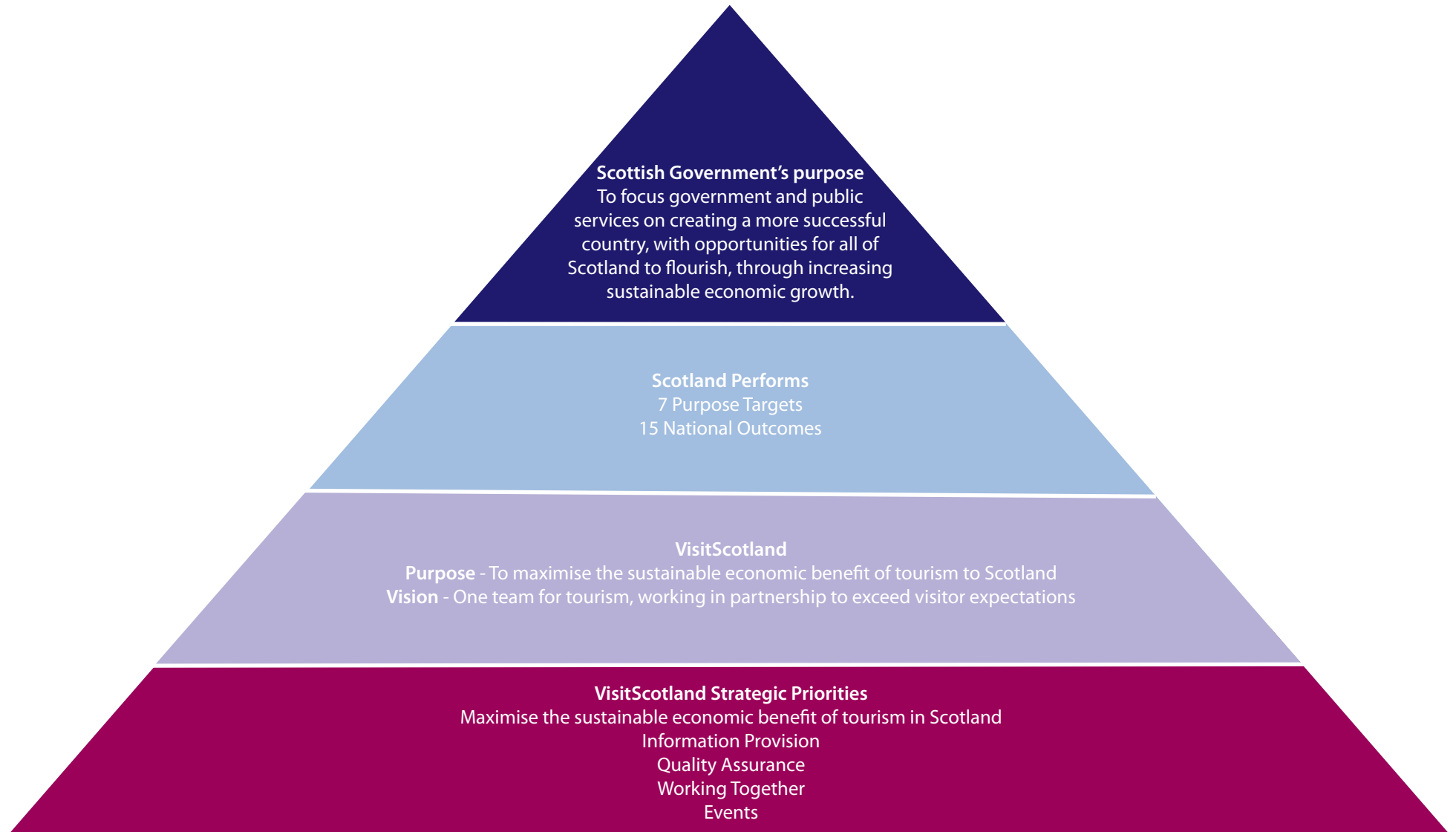
All VisitScotland’s work drives towards the sustainable growth of tourism and its impact on the economy. We do this working as part of Team Scotland, by attracting people to visit and revisit Scotland – including those living in Scotland to visit different parts of Scotland – and encouraging them to buy local goods and services during their visits.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

VisitScotland's progress towards its vision will be focused through our strategic priorities for 2011-2014.

- **Maximise the sustainable economic benefit of tourism in Scotland:** market Scotland and its outstanding assets to visitors in all parts of the world. This also includes promoting Scotland to those living in Scotland to visit different parts of the country.
- **Information Provision:** increase sustainable economic growth of tourism in Scotland by providing information globally via web and digital and inspiration to visitors via mobile and wireless and VisitScotland Information Centres.
- **Quality Assurance:** increase sustainable economic growth of tourism in Scotland by providing Quality Assurance to visitors and quality advice to tourism businesses. Harness user generated content to enhance our world leading scheme and greater integration of sustainable criteria.
- **Working Together:** encourage the right conditions for achieving sustainable economic growth by listening to insight provided by industry and using it to shape our offering and support. Influence a range of partners and stakeholders including tourism businesses, industry bodies, including Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), local authorities as well as offering businesses specialist advice.
- **Events:** work to influence, lead, coordinate and support people and organisations in order to deliver the national events strategy maximising the benefits from forthcoming major events including London 2012, Glasgow 2014, Ryder Cup 2014, Edinburgh Festivals and Homecoming to develop and sustain Scotland's international profile as the perfect stage for events.

## OUR PLAN IN CONTEXT



## THE IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM

Tourism is an £11 billion sector at the heart of the Scottish economy supporting over 240,000 jobs.\* Tourism is a dynamic sector and underpins the success of others such as transport, farming, food and drink.

### WHAT GUIDES US?

#### Scottish Government Economic Strategy

The Scottish Government's core purpose is to create:

“a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth”

All VisitScotland's work is directed towards increasing the sustainable economic growth of tourism in Scotland. Our marketing and information services motivate visitors to come to Scotland, to do more, see more, stay longer and spend more. Our quality assurance schemes encourage the industry to deliver great experiences and to invest in the quality of their businesses. The range and scope of our events will be regularly reviewed and adjusted to ensure they maximise delivery and a return on investment through estimated economic impact of at least 8:1. We work closely with the industry and agencies across Scotland to influence activity and support the implementation of sustainable tourism strategies at national and local level.

### National Performance Framework

This Corporate Plan has been prepared in the wider context of the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy and to support and show our contribution to this, we measure our performance through the National Performance Framework.

Of the Government Purpose Targets and National Outcomes we have aligned our strategic priorities and focused our activities to contribute to various Purpose Targets and National Outcomes, the diagram in Figure 1 demonstrates this contribution.

We provide leadership in tourism and we will work with Scottish Government, other public bodies, Local Authorities and businesses to deliver these targets and outcomes. With this in mind, we will continue to play an active role in the Strategic Forum in order to maximise the effectiveness of public sector activity - and for this reason our plan includes a number of outcomes that are common to our partner Forum organisations.

We will continue to work closely with the Scottish Government to ensure our model is based upon appropriate measurement systems that conform to the Performance Measurement Framework. In addition, through the work of the Business Planning and Alignment Group, we will continue to seek out good practice and where possible develop a consistent approach to measure the impact of activities.

\*Independent report from Deloitte 2010. Total direct indirect contribution of tourism valued at £11.09bn

### Economic Insight

Research at VisitScotland defines the priorities for marketing campaigns and evaluates their success. Measurement of tourism volume and value, strategic planning and direction are also heavily influenced through the role and outputs of research.

The global recovery has been underway for some time now, although unemployment remains persistently high in many countries. Growth has been much stronger in emerging market economies, but remains weak and uneven in the mature markets of the Western Hemisphere.

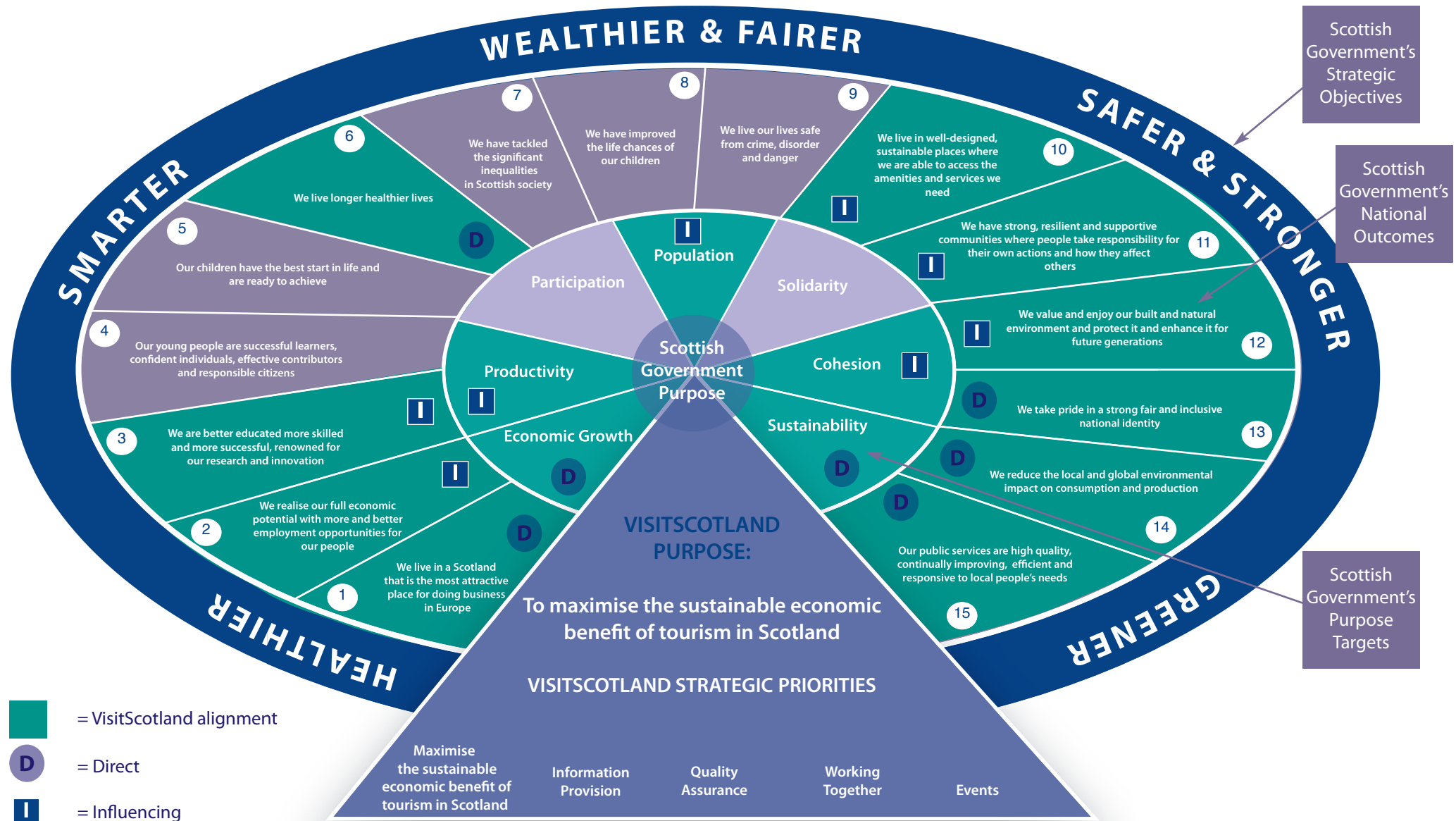
The UK recovery started late and slowly relative to most peers but has quickened considerably in 2010 with growth in the second and third quarter well above trend. GDP was provisionally estimated to have fallen by 0.5% in 2010 Q4. The Office of National Statistics estimated that, without the disruption caused by heavy snow, output would have been broadly flat. Although a return to recession seems improbable, the impact of fiscal consolidation, coupled with a fading of temporary factors which have contributed strongly in 2010, make it unlikely that growth will remain this high for very long.

The outlook suggests a continuation of the trends developed through 2010. Emerging markets are expected to continue to grow through developing domestic consumption and rising exports. Mature markets will remain on a more fragile recovery with continued rebalancing required to maintain stability. For Scotland's key tourism markets this will result in greater price sensitivity by visitors both domestic and international although overall impact in visitor flow should not be interrupted.



Sea Kayaking with Clearwater Paddling, Isle of Barra, Outer Hebrides

FIGURE 1 - OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK



The following table provides some examples of how the National Outcomes have informed the choice of activities that VisitScotland undertakes, and in turn some of the desired outcomes.

NPF National Outcome - Direct or influencing	Economic Rationale	Examples of VisitScotland activities	Examples of VisitScotland Outcome/measure
<p><b>National Outcome: 1 Direct</b></p> <p><i>We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing-business in Europe</i></p>	<p>VisitScotland will promote Scotland both as a destination for leisure and business visitors and our Business Tourism Unit (BTU) will build on partnerships with external stakeholders such as Scottish Development International (SDI) to increase the profile of the country for inward investment for the tourism industry.</p> <p>EventScotland will support events through its International Funding Programme which raises the profile of Scotland around the world and enhance its opportunities to host further major events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In conjunction with the newly formed "Team Scotland" in Canada, we will achieve greater overall penetration of the Canadian Meetings Incentives, Conferencing, Exhibitions and corporate trade.</li> <li>Continue to build on "Only in Scotland" advertising campaign to emphasise Scotland's points of difference.</li> <li>Acquisition of business tourism events across key SDI sectors - Renewables, Finance, Life Sciences, IT and Education.</li> <li>Supporting events such as the Grand Depart of the Tour of Britain, Bupa Great Edinburgh Run.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£29.4m value of UK BTU enquires (2009/2010).</li> <li>£1 million total net expenditure in Glasgow from Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art.</li> <li>Participation levels in our Scotland Means Business events - bringing together the Scottish trade and hosted buyers from key business tourism markets.</li> <li>Events Programme supporting 78 sporting and cultural events. EventScotland's investment contributing to boosting the economy by £51.7 million (09/10).</li> </ul>
<p><b>National Outcome: 2 Influencing</b></p> <p><i>We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people</i></p>	<p>Tourism is one of the Government's key sectors and continues to support over 240,000 jobs.*</p> <p>As part of our support to tourism businesses through our Quality Assurance (QA) scheme we will influence the improved quality of jobs as well as increased productivity and efficiency.</p> <p>The VisitScotland Growth Fund delivers growth and opportunities through direct investment to stimulate tourism businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to support the Tourism Leadership Group in its strategy and action plan.</li> <li>Development of our QA scheme will encourage companies to invest in their management and leadership skills and those of their workforce to ensure they have the right skills to become more competitive.</li> <li>Growth Fund seeks to encourage investment in marketing through match funding group initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More than £1 million awarded to support 47 tourism groups, benefiting over 2,000 individual businesses - Growth Fund (09/10).</li> <li>Return on investment for growth funded projects.</li> <li>Participation levels in QA schemes.</li> <li>Recognition across educational establishments that tourism is a great career choice with many disciplines such as finance, IT, marketing and not just catering and hospitality.</li> </ul>
<p><b>National Outcome: 3 Influencing</b></p> <p><i>We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation</i></p>	<p>We will continue to support and stimulate innovation in companies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VisitScotland will continue to work in partnership with SE and HIE to ensure Tourism Intelligence Scotland continues to provide useful insights and practical hints and tips on how to use this intelligence to get ahead and stay competitive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Businesses making use of Tourism Intelligence Scotland materials.</li> </ul>

\* Independent report from Deloitte 2010. Total indirect contribution of tourism valued at £11.09bn

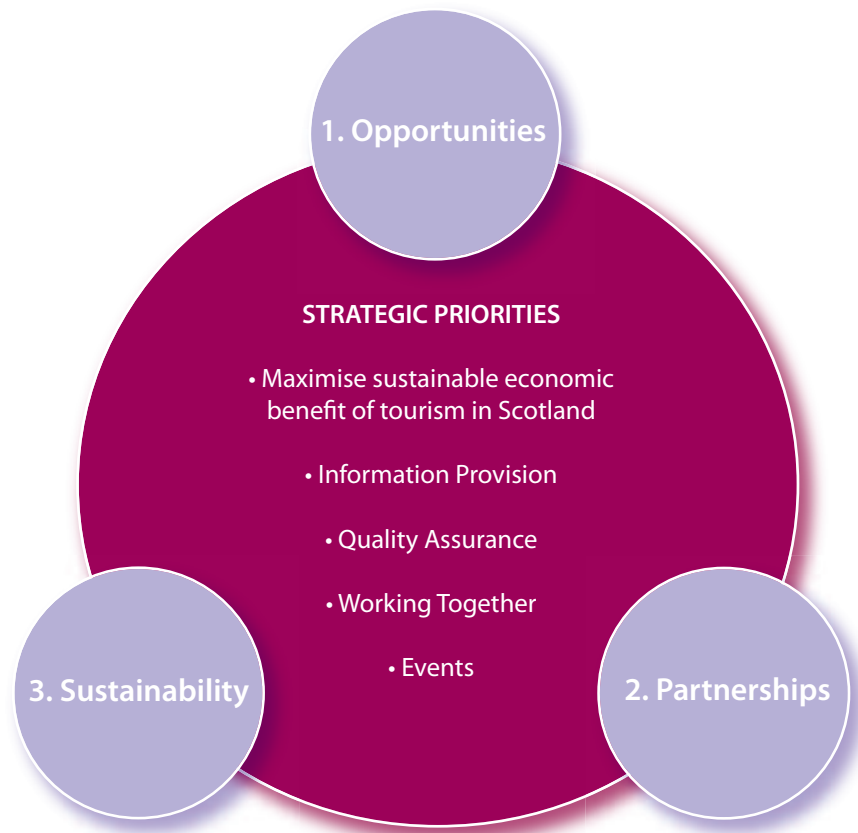
NPF National Outcome - Direct or influencing	Economic Rationale	Examples of VisitScotland activities	Examples of VisitScotland Outcome/measure
<p><b>National Outcome: 6 Direct</b></p> <p><i>We live longer, healthier lives</i></p>	<p>We will support the development of Scotland into a great adventure sports destination for thrill-seekers of all abilities - to help Scotland become Europe's Adventure Capital.</p> <p>EventScotland secures and supports major events within Scotland which not only provide economic growth but also encourage a more active nation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of the Year of Active Scotland, promotion of adventure and outdoor Sports holidays in Scotland as well as year round activities such as mountain biking, walking and the Home of Golf.</li> <li>• Active Scotland Growth Fund.</li> <li>• Supporting sporting events across all Local Authorities.</li> <li>• Capitalising on legacy opportunities presented by Commonwealth Games and Ryder Cup 2014 and Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three major rugby events delivered £36million to Scotland's economy (09/10).</li> <li>• New sporting event added to EventScotland portfolio each year.</li> </ul>
<p><b>National Outcome: 10 Influencing</b></p> <p><i>We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need</i></p>	<p>Local marketing strategy and VisitScotland Information Centres aim to harness communication channels to deliver directly or indirectly through partnership, content which is inspiring, informative and reassuring.</p> <p>Digital Scotland strategy aims to deliver a world-class destination management system containing everything Scotland has to offer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Marketing campaigns</li> <li>• VisitScotland Information Centres signposting of local food and drink, and selling of local arts and crafts.</li> <li>• EatScotland - the quality assurance "Where to Eat" scheme.</li> <li>• Digital Scotland project - development of inspiring content and functionality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gross expenditure impact of VisitScotland Information Centre network estimated £22.7m.</li> <li>• Footfall to VisitScotland Information Centres.</li> <li>• Retail income.</li> <li>• Events participation.</li> <li>• Visits to <a href="http://www.VisitScotland.com">www.VisitScotland.com</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>National Outcome: 11 Influencing</b></p> <p><i>We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others</i></p>	<p>There are many opportunities to maximise local community benefit from tourism via creative product development - local supply chains, local produce, community-based events, farm tourism, etc. The outcome will enhance visitor experience while providing support for local economies and living cultural heritage.</p> <p>Through our contribution to the development and delivery of single outcome agreements in partnership with Local Authorities we will ensure the tourism industry continues to support communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A key action of the VisitScotland Sustainable Tourism Strategy is to help enhance the quality of life for Scottish communities. We will do this through promoting local accommodation, events, attractions and products to visitors.</li> <li>• Partnership events programme promoting the use of sustainable business practices.</li> <li>• Supporting cultural and sporting events across all Local Authorities.</li> <li>• Continue to develop and foster relationships with DMOs and collaborate on joint projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 430 tourism Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have actively participated in the sustainability events programme (2010).</li> <li>• Business participants in the partnership outreach events programme.</li> </ul>

NPF National Outcome - Direct or influencing	Economic Rationale	Examples of VisitScotland activities	Examples of VisitScotland Outcome/measure
<p><b>National Outcome: 12 Influencing</b></p> <p><i>We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations</i></p>	<p>EventScotland promotes Scotland as a green events destination.</p> <p>EventScotland provides event organiser's with free access to Sustainable Sport and Event Toolkit (SSET).</p> <p>BTU emphasises Scotland's credentials as a leader in green and sustainable products to the meetings and conference marketplace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environment is key impact which is measured with requirement to minimise negative effects of events on environment and promoting and supporting best practice.</li> <li>Industry best practice examples, particularly those venues signed up to the Green Tourism Business Scheme, are actively promoted by BTU.</li> <li>More integration of sustainable criteria into our QA Scheme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of new businesses applied to join QA.</li> <li>Number of businesses in QA scheme.</li> <li>Level of participation in QA schemes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>National Outcome: 13 Direct</b></p> <p><i>We take pride in a strong fair and inclusive national identity</i></p>	<p>VisitScotland marketing ensures the Scottish tourism brand galvanises a sense of pride, passion, self-belief and confidence among the people of Scotland. VisitScotland promotes Scotland all year round as a destination both nationally and internationally for leisure and business visitors and increases the profile of the country for inward investment.</p> <p>Our local marketing campaigns which sell Scotland - national dish with local flavour - encouraging more people living in Scotland to discover their own country.</p> <p>EventScotland secures and supports major events within Scotland which have a positive impact on our global image and identity as a nation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seasonal campaigns (Winter White/Autumn Gold/Perfect Day).</li> <li>Scotland for the Scots campaign.</li> <li>European touring campaigns.</li> <li>Meet the Scots campaign.</li> <li>Business Conference and incentive trips.</li> <li>Collaborative activity with EasyJet, Norfolkline, Continental, Emirates and Ryanair.</li> <li>Building Scotland's reputation and expertise in relation to events.</li> <li>Support for themed years.</li> <li>Support for Scotland Week.</li> <li>Working collaboratively with other tourism bodies to maximise coverage of Scotland by media broadcasters in run up to London 2012 and Glasgow 2014.</li> <li>Develop diversity policies and training to meet VisitScotland's business and legislative requirements in The Single Equality Scheme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£66m additionality - Winter White (2009/10).</li> <li>£57m additionality - Autumn Moments (2009).</li> <li>£21.9m additionality - Spain touring (2009).</li> </ul> <p>Additional revenue generated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bookings through VisitScotland.com.</li> <li>Value of BTU overseas enquires.</li> <li>60% UK propensity to visit.</li> <li>47% ROI propensity to visit.</li> </ul>

NPF National Outcome - Direct or influencing	Economic Rationale	Examples of VisitScotland activities	Examples of VisitScotland Outcome/measure
<p><b>National Outcome: 14 Direct</b></p> <p><i>We reduce the local and global environmental impact on consumption and production</i></p>	<p>The QA scheme through the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) works with businesses to change their operations to more sustainable practices.</p> <p>Our Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2010 - 2015 explains how we are tackling the public bodies climate change duties outlined in Part 4 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the QA Scheme, including incorporation of sustainability criteria.</li> <li>• As part of Carbon Management Programme (CMP) VisitScotland will set challenging targets to reduce our carbon emissions across all our business areas by 2015.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of new businesses applied to join QA.</li> <li>• Number of businesses in QA scheme.</li> <li>• Level of participation in QA schemes.</li> <li>• Number of VisitScotland Information Centres in GTBS.</li> <li>• VisitScotland Environmental focus on reducing energy consumption/CO2 emissions (including assessing our baseline emissions and identifying projects to ensure reduction).</li> </ul>
<p><b>National Outcome: 15 Direct</b></p> <p><i>Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs</i></p>	<p>VisitScotland is committed to seeking greater efficiency and streamlined delivery and improved quality of public services and working collaboratively with other national/local organisations in Scotland with related remits and objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in Government shared services and efficiency savings.</li> <li>• Central procurement groups.</li> <li>• Organisation restructuring.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £2.9m savings (target £1.6m).</li> <li>• 2% cash releasing efficiency savings per annum.</li> <li>• Contribute to further savings c. £950,000.</li> </ul>

## ACHIEVING OUR PRIORITIES - HOW WE GET THERE

Our strategic priorities are supported by three themes and at least one of these will underpin each of our activities.



### 1. Opportunities: an investment in tourism is an investment in economic recovery and growth

Tourism is an £11 billion sector at the heart of the Scottish economy supporting over 240,000 jobs.\* VisitScotland understands the scale of the opportunity and value that tourism presents to Scotland. We will look to find the opportunity hidden inside every challenge. The Ash Cloud incident in April 2010 forced us into uncharted waters but we emerged stronger and wiser. The incident demonstrated great team spirit and proved we could move swiftly and decisively to turn this negative situation into a positive one. As part of our response to helping tourism businesses across Scotland affected by cancellations due to air travel disruption we provided free advertising on our Perfect Day website. We had an overwhelming response to this short term marketing campaign with over 800 tourism providers getting in touch to take part.

Times are going to be tough, but tourism can provide a route to expansion. We will continue to invest in our future prosperity by continuing to spend on marketing Scotland. The Government recognises that tourism is an industry with huge potential for supporting communities and jobs, with a major role in powering the economic recovery.

The quality of industry recruits continues to increase and we are seeing a sea of change in the people choosing to work in tourism. Young people are seeing it as an exciting and satisfying career choice, as well a chance to travel the world.

\*Independent report from Deloitte 2010. Total direct indirect contribution of tourism, valued at £11.09bn

VisitScotland will provide lots of opportunities through partnership working on campaigns or through funding options like events outreach programme and the Growth Fund. We sell Scotland to the world bringing visitors to the country and we will encourage businesses to take more of a lead role to attract visitors once they arrive. Better web information, more responsibility for understanding customer's needs, the quality of the experience and encouraging repeat business are all a part of this.

We will continue to learn and share best practices from the many businesses that are distinguished by high quality of service, continuous investment in their product, and training of their staff, brilliant marketing and a can-do attitude around controlling their own destiny.

We will continue to improve on the way we portray our country externally. Through the years of special focus - Active 2011, Creative 2012 and then Natural 2013 we will build momentum up to and maximise the tourism benefits from 2014 which is a major year in Scotland with the Commonwealth Games, Ryder Cup and next Homecoming.

We live in one of the most beautiful countries in the world. A huge proportion of us have never visited some of the magical places on our doorstep. Whether it is a lively city centre or the most isolated wilderness we have so much to offer, and we should be shouting about it. From the train guard to the stranger you ask for directions; from the hotelier to the local bar patron, **tourism really is everyone's business.**



Whisky tasting at Gordon and MacPhail, Elgin

## 2. Partnership: it's crucial we all work together to make tourism everybody's business

Whilst Scottish Government commitment to tourism remains unwavering, VisitScotland's revenue streams are threatened in ways previously unseen. The way forward will be to build and further develop partnerships with businesses, local organisations and community groups. We will think creatively about potential new partners. For instance, our recent collaboration with the Scottish Licensed Trade Association (SLTA) with its 900 members (pubs and hotels), has enabled us to influence businesses that play a vital role in the visitor experience.

Also, shared events such as the recent Sustainability Workshops have received very positive feedback from local businesses and we will extend our level of engagement even further, through an outreach programme of events bringing peer groups together to discuss, debate and learn from each other.

Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) are critical partners going forward and we will continue to develop and foster these relationships with them and collaborate on joint projects. By aligning our plans for forthcoming themed years (Active 2011, Creative 2012, Natural 2013, Homecoming 2014) resource and funding can be better focused in achieving shared outcomes.

That is why it's crucial that the growing number of DMOs concentrate their efforts on developing the tourism product and quality of the visitor experience in their area and focus on working with VisitScotland and other partners to give a local flavour to well-researched national and international marketing messages - one team for tourism, one message.

VisitScotland with the support of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has provided £1m through its Growth Fund to support excellent

marketing opportunities brought forward from trade groups and DMOs and as a result of its success a further fund has been created to extend this important work. This joining up of international, national and local marketing is crucial at a time of ever-decreasing public funds.

Working as part of Team Scotland we will invest in: maximising route capacity, conference bid funding, themed years, attracting major events and marketing to emerging markets.

Team Scotland development work in emerging markets is vital for the future long term growth as key mature markets become more expensive to market to extensively and consumers look to broaden their experience base. We work closely with VisitBritain, the Scottish Government, other public sector agencies and partners to develop and implement strategies to deliver this growth.

The Scottish Tourism Forum (STF) carried out a review of the existing strategy TFFC – Tourism Framework for Change in 2009 and recommended that the industry take ownership and lead the required action to grow tourism in Scotland. In response to this recommendation, STF set up the Tourism Leadership Group (TLG) and VisitScotland plays a key role in this group. The aim of the group is to work collaboratively across industry to establish a refreshed vision for Scottish Tourism and develop a robust strategy and action plan, this work is in progress.

Our Business Tourism Unit will continue to encourage efficient and effective partnership working with, and between, the City Convention Bureaux and Local Authorities whilst building on partnerships with external stakeholders such as Scottish Development International (SDI) to maximise impact in this area.

Our people will be working nationally and locally under one common purpose - **to maximise the sustainable economic benefit of tourism to Scotland.**

### 3. Sustainability: economic, social and environmental

This is at the core of our plan. Everything we do will lead back to sustainability which has three themes - economic, social and environment.

- **Economic** - The additionality generated from our marketing directly benefits the Scottish economy, protecting livelihoods and increasing jobs. We are working with businesses and other partners to extend the traditional season. We are also working with accommodation providers and the industry to understand more about their capacity and business cycle. The more we understand about the variations around the country, the better we can support businesses and tailor our marketing accordingly. We showcase local food and drink, arts and crafts through literature featured in or on sale in VisitScotland Information Centres, thus providing a stage for the local offering and putting money back into communities from where the products came.
- **Social** - With a rich built and natural heritage and culture Scotland has a unique offering for our visitors. All our activities have to encourage our cultural heritage to flourish including our contemporary culture and vibrant creativity. Tourism is a uniting force for cities in Scotland helping bring social cohesion. As a result of the reach of VisitScotland marketing visitors spend money in fragile communities, helping to sustain them.

Through our Diversity Strategy we will demonstrate that by integrating the equality agenda, we will help support the social sustainability agenda of the Scottish Government and make us an employer of choice for all sections of the community.

VisitScotland will support the implementation of the TFFC Skills Strategy 2010 - 15 through the work of the TFFC Skills Group. This will tackle the following key priorities for skills development within the tourism sector in Scotland - improving the appeal of the sector / attracting new talent; improving skills; customer service; and management and leadership. We also strive for the highest standards in managing and developing our own staff.

We already contribute towards a healthy cultural environment through the Growth Fund but also through our work with DMOs. We have worked with the Scottish Government and Bord na Gaidhlig to develop a Gaelic Plan. As part of this Plan we will look at our corporate identity and consider the use of Gaelic in signage, in the VisitScotland Information Centre network and on relevant websites. The Gaelic Plan is another important measure of how we are playing our part in preserving and promoting Scotland's heritage.

- **Environment** - We know that over 90% of our visitors come to Scotland because of its natural landscape and scenery. We share the responsibility (along with other public agencies) to protect and nurture our precious environment. As Scotland's national tourism organisation we must balance the need to encourage visitors with protecting our assets. This means we have to promote public transport options for visitors and ensure we work closely with those agencies responsible for transport and infrastructure. We also collaborate closely with organisations such as The National Trust for Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage. We may also wish to contribute to some of the planning debates.

Through the Green Business Tourism Scheme (GTBS) we already work closely with a range of tourism businesses up and down the country. We have an opportunity to maintain our position as world leader in Quality Assurance through meaningful integration of sustainability into our Quality Assurance model. Thus, creating a unique selling point for Scotland, making the VisitScotland scheme a world leader with sustainability at the forefront of Quality Assurance. This process has already begun and provides us with a mechanism to drive up sustainability performance across the sector over time.

There is a clear mandate for VisitScotland to help drive sustainability within the tourism sector in Scotland and the proposed inclusion into Quality Assurance would demonstrate our ambition to be a leader in making tourism more sustainable, making the sector more efficient and improving Scotland's credentials as a sustainable destination.



Tossing the caber at Aboyne

## VisitScotland Sustainable Tourism Strategy

Tourism is a key driver for the Scottish economy, and has a special relationship with the environment and society compared with other economic activities. This is due to its unique dependency on quality environments, cultural distinctiveness, social interaction, security and wellbeing. Thus, the sector's competitiveness is closely linked to its sustainability, as the quality of destinations is influenced by their natural and cultural environment. Tourism can damage, conserve or enhance these special qualities, with major consequences for Scotland's economy, society and environment. Thus, highlighting the importance of growing tourism in a manner that is socially, environmentally and economically sustainable.

There is a clear mandate for VisitScotland to help drive sustainability within the tourism sector in Scotland. This is provided by the Scottish Government Economic Strategy and the Tourism Framework for Change, and is reflected in this Corporate Plan.

**VisitScotland's Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2010 - 2015** provides a clear rationale and plan for delivering our aspirations for sustainable tourism over the next five years. It explains how we are tackling the public bodies climate change duties outlined in Part 4 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and other Government Strategies like the Low Carbon Economic Strategy. **We will contribute to a more sustainable future for Scotland through taking direct action on issues under our control and playing an influencing role where this is not possible.** This will include support for the implementation of sustainable tourism strategies at national level with the Tourism Leadership

Group and at local level with DMOs. Designed to offer practical steps for improving sustainability in tourism, in our offices and also our VisitScotland Information Centres, the strategy will also guide how we travel on business, the way we provide advice to businesses and visitors and much more.

The Vision and Objectives of this strategy will be delivered through our:

- internal operations
- engagement with visitors
- engagement with tourism businesses
- engagement with strategic partners.

### Vision

VisitScotland aspires to make Scotland the most economically, environmentally and socially sustainable destination in Europe. As an organisation, we aim to be recognised as a leader in sustainable tourism development, not just within Scotland but at a European and World level. We aim to make VisitScotland the sustainable national tourism organisation, recognised for our efforts to reduce the environmental impact, and maximise the economic and social benefits, of our own operations.

### Objectives

The table overleaf provides a list of the objectives within our Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

### VisitScotland Sustainable Tourism Strategy Objectives

<b>Objective 1: Reduce the seasonality of demand</b>	We will continue to promote year-round tourism activity to support growth in revenue, while taking steps to identify and address damage to sensitive environments and communities, especially in tourism hotspots.
<b>Objective 2: Reduce the impact of tourism transport</b>	Our efforts to reduce the impact of tourism transport will focus on promoting a shift towards more environmentally friendly forms of transport (train, coach/bus, ferry, cycle, foot), both to and within tourism destinations in Scotland.
<b>Objective 3: Minimise tourism resource use and waste production</b>	We will take action to encourage reduced resource use and waste production, both of our internal operations and those of tourism businesses operating in Scotland. We are also contributing to climate change mitigation through reducing our own carbon emissions and supporting businesses across the sector to cut their own emissions.
<b>Objective 4: Protect and enhance Scotland's natural and cultural heritage</b>	We will promote Scotland's natural and cultural heritage to visitors and support the activities of organisations responsible for its protection and enhancement.
<b>Objective 5: Enhance quality of life for Scottish communities</b>	We will support Scottish communities through promoting local accommodation, events, attractions and products to visitors. We will advocate local engagement and empowerment in tourism planning and management and the wider community development process.
<b>Objective 6: Improve the quality of tourism jobs</b>	We will continue to implement best practice in human resources management within VisitScotland and support initiatives to improve the quality of jobs across the tourism sector.
<b>Objective 7: Make holidays in Scotland available for all</b>	We will help to improve the accessibility of tourism opportunities in Scotland, especially for disabled and economically disadvantaged persons.
<b>Objective 8: Support adaptation to climate change in the tourism sector</b>	We will take action on climate change by reducing our own greenhouse gas emissions through implementation of a Carbon Management Programme. We will also help tourism businesses to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the unavoidable consequences of climate change.
<b>Objective 9: Build an effective evidence base for sustainable tourism</b>	We will identify knowledge gaps, support research and collate the evidence required to build a strong case for action to promote sustainable tourism.
<b>Objective 10: Promote the integration of sustainability in the tourism sector</b>	We will integrate sustainability principles into all our activities and influence improvements in the tourism sector across Scotland

## IMPLEMENTING AND MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

In order to implement this plan, we will produce and deliver annual operational plans, which provide specific actions, responsibilities and budgets to bring our objectives into effect.

We have produced a one year Business Plan which summarises these activities and provides Key Performance Indicators for our outputs. Our Business Plan is a dynamic document and will be regularly maintained.

As well as regular reporting to our Board, we will publish an annual review and we will present annual accounts to the Scottish Parliament.

VisitScotland's annual review for 2010 can be viewed on our dedicated site [www.visitscotlandannualreview.com](http://www.visitscotlandannualreview.com)

## OUR STRUCTURE - HOW WE DO IT

We have five directorates, plus the Chief Executive's Office (which includes Corporate Communications and Human Resources). Our Directorates are:

- Marketing
- Partnerships
- Digital and Media
- EventScotland
- Corporate Services

For more information on these directorates please visit **About Us** section of our website

[www.visitscotland.org](http://www.visitscotland.org)

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

VisitScotland has designed a new Single Equality Scheme (SES) in order to ensure that we have a diversity strategy for taking action over the next three years. It encompasses all seven strands outlined in the Equality Act 2010, and actions are designed to meet equality outcomes which are focused on achieving change for both our staff and our customers. It is available from the About Us section of our website [www.visitscotland.org](http://www.visitscotland.org).



Craigievar castle, Aberdeenshire