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### **Scotland: The Perfect Stage Consultation Draft**

The Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) is an independent economic development organisation which strengthens Scotland's competitiveness by influencing government policies to encourage sustainable economic prosperity.

SCDI welcomes the opportunity to comment on Scotland: the Perfect Stage. The challenge for the Scottish tourism sector is to continue to compete successfully in an increasingly expanding and complex market. The goal to achieve 50% real terms growth in tourism revenues by 2015 is ambitious, particularly given the slowing world economy, but is supported by SCDI. Crucial to this will be the provision of an appropriate policy structure and financial support for Scottish tourism. SCDI recognises the role that sporting and cultural events have as a central platform of this strategy for tourism growth. Indeed, major events of the type within the remit of EventScotland may be less affected by economic downturns than other tourism products and attractions thereby providing a more stable and robust source of revenue. A rise in the number that are held in Scotland would, therefore, be very welcome.

SCDI fully supports both the 2020 Vision for the Events Strategy and the Mission to deliver as setting out clear and succinct statements of intent.

#### Our Strategy

The bullet points in paragraph 1.1 provide a comprehensive list of Scotland's assets that can be utilised and developed to deliver the strategy. SCDI agrees with all five and is especially pleased that Scotland's food and drink are explicitly mentioned as an asset. SCDI's recent submission to the Scottish Government food policy discussion paper, "Choosing the Right Ingredients: The Future for Food in Scotland", noted that around £700m is spent by tourists on food and drink in Scotland every year and VisitScotland say a third of visitors have an interest in local cuisine.

Even more could be achieved to promote Scotland's food & drink sector through a better joined up approach to export promotion, international trade and food and drink related tourism. The opportunities to promote and showcase Scottish food and drink during Homecoming 2009 and, along with physical activity, in advance of and at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014 must be seized.

However, under built facilities, the text seems to emphasise Scotland's historical buildings and heritage. Mention should also be made of the modern and "state of the art" facilities that Scotland can also provide and will certainly be available after 2014 for sporting events.

### Our Rationale

SCDI agrees that events can provide a significant source of economic benefits to Scotland with lasting, positive legacies. It is important that there is proper evaluation and cataloguing of both the benefits and any problems or challenges that arose so as to ensure improvements can be made and any lessons learned. Robust and transparent data must be available for future analysis and assessment. The production of an annual report, as stated in paragraph 6.11 of the consultation, detailing much of this type of analysis is welcomed.

### Government Policy and The Partners

SCDI is pleased to note that the Strategy takes cognisance of and looks to complement the other relevant policy and strategy documents of the Scottish Government. This is extremely important in ensuring coherence of approach and providing clear guidance to those that are, or wish to be, involved in the events and tourism sphere.

SCDI has previously noted in submissions regarding the tourism and related sectors the considerable number of public sector bodies that are involved in tourism. This is underlined in paragraph 5.2. It must be ensured that those involved have a clear and defined role to play and that overlap of function is kept to a minimum. If roles are not properly defined there is a risk of duplication of functions and inefficient use of resources. Working towards a common goal must be emphasised.

SCDI welcomes the reference to the private business community and the third sector as other key partners in delivery.

SCDI has submitted a response to the Scottish Government's consultation "Glasgow 2014 – Delivering a Lasting Legacy for Scotland".

The submission states that the aim of achieving a lasting legacy from 2014 can be supported by ensuring that Government agencies agree on their common objectives regarding the legacy of the Commonwealth Games and pursue working practices which achieve a united sense of direction, an efficient approach and effective results. The goals and results should be explicit from the start, and communicated to the wider Scottish community. This is true of any major event and should be a major aim of The Perfect Stage.

#### Measurement

SCDI has already referred to the importance of proper evaluation above and the seven key areas of impact seem to comprehensively cover the relevant aspects. However, SCDI would suggest another possible impact – Volunteering. In its response to “Glasgow 2014 – Delivering a Lasting Legacy for Scotland” SCDI states that volunteering will be integral to the success of the Games. The suggestion that the SQA and SCQF might develop suitable accreditation to recognise the skills volunteers will be learning and demonstrating has been welcomed. Volunteering may be an excellent means of encouraging young people outwith formal education, employment and training to identify a suitable opportunity for personal development. This would offer a stepping-stone to valuable employability skills and could be a significant beneficial impact to result from major events.

#### Resources

If the aspirations for Scottish tourism and an increase in the number of major events held in Scotland are to be achieved then a fundamental consideration is the resource that is provided to tourism bodies and the Strategy is correct in stating that enhanced core funding will be required.

Thank you again for the opportunity to input to the development of this strategy. We look forward to working with Event Scotland to deliver the objectives identified and to achieve sustainable economic growth for Scotland.

Yours sincerely

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**Chief Executive**