



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

# Scottish Connections Framework

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Front cover image:  
Arisaig Lighthouse, Nova Scotia – Henryk Sadura / Alamy Stock Photo

# Introduction

Scotland's diaspora is an extension of Scotland itself – our living bridge with people, organisations, and communities around the world.

International relations are fundamentally about relationships. Between governments, of course. But the ties between people and communities are also vital in increasing global peace and prosperity.

The Scottish Government has long believed that better engaging our diaspora – family and friends of Scotland globally – can not only benefit Scotland economically and enrich our culture but also improve Scotland's connections and reputation. And we want our efforts to benefit our diaspora too.

In the [Programme for Government 2021-22](#)<sup>1</sup>, the Scottish Government committed to “engage with our Scottish Connections international community and expand on our work with Scottish diaspora networks across the world.” The [Global Affairs Framework](#)<sup>2</sup>, published in May 2022, committed to “support and expand this global community [because] these connections raise our profile and reputation. They encourage individuals and companies to visit, study, live, work and invest in Scotland.”

The Scottish Connections Framework turns these commitments into reality.

The content is underpinned by two independent research projects. In 2021, an initial [Literature Review](#)<sup>3</sup> undertaken by ICR Research evaluated diaspora engagement from ten comparator states and sub-states.

Building on this work, a [Qualitative Research Report](#)<sup>4</sup> was carried out by the University of the West of Scotland, to look in further depth at diaspora approaches in four states or sub-states. The authors also engaged directly with diaspora and those working with diaspora across the Scottish Government and partners to evaluate current outreach.

Using existing activity across the Scottish Government and its public bodies as a foundation, this Framework outlines a cross-cutting policy that will shape and drive forward the Scottish Government's commitment to create a truly international network of Scottish Connections.

**“SCOTLAND'S DIASPORA IS AN  
EXTENSION OF SCOTLAND ITSELF...”**







# Picturing and Understanding Scotland's Diaspora

The true scale of Scotland's diaspora is unknown. Scots have traversed the globe for centuries. Their descendants are many and a key characteristic of the Scottish diaspora has been people's ability to assimilate and integrate into their local communities. Estimates suggest that upwards of 40 million<sup>5</sup> people around the world consider themselves to have Scottish ancestry. Many more will be unaware of their heritage, and some – for good reason – will have complex views about it.

But our diaspora goes beyond bloodlines. We value anyone who has, or wants to have, a connection with Scotland. The Scottish Government's definition of "diaspora" is therefore broad and welcoming. Just as we consider Scots as being people who were born here, who have lived here, or have paid us the compliment of choosing to live here, so do we consider our diaspora to be self-selecting and inclusive.

That is why we use the term "Scottish Connections". We want to embrace and encourage just that – connections with and between people linked to Scotland around the globe.

Scotland's diaspora includes:

- ▶ people of Scottish **heritage** – by ancestry, marriage or other family connection, however distant. They may belong to St Andrew's or Caledonian Societies or other explicitly Scottish-themed organisations, or have no connection other than their own history.
- ▶ our **lived** diaspora – those who came to live in Scotland at any time for any reason. This means those born in Scotland and who later emigrated, or equally those born elsewhere who have returned home or moved elsewhere after a period working in Scotland.
- ▶ our **educational** diaspora – alumni of Scottish educational institutions, and Scots studying or working in international institutions. Our international alumni network is substantial: some 82,000<sup>6</sup> international students entrust Scotland's world-leading ancient and modern

universities and colleges with their education each year, creating a community of educated professionals in 180 countries. Scottish students, academics, and researchers at international institutions help to increase awareness of Scotland, even if studying or working there for a short time.

- ▶ **affinity** – those who feel a connection to Scotland, who may be active through cultural, linguistic, friendship, or professional links, or who may simply be attracted to Scotland's heritage or culture.

We want to include them all.

Our approach to diaspora will be inclusive and reflect our commitment to the promotion of equality, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. **We will deliberately reach out to historically marginalised communities and groups, such as minority ethnic Scots and our LGBTQ community, and will promote women's and young people's participation. Our International Network of offices will have Scottish Connections objectives with inclusiveness and equality in diaspora relations at their core.**

In progressing this policy, we will be confronted with uncomfortable truths, which we must face with humility and a willingness to listen, learn, and heal. Scotland cannot shy away from its past. In reaching out to our heritage diaspora, we must acknowledge our history, both positive and negative, especially Scots' involvement in the transatlantic slave trade, empire, and colonialism.

In recognising that Scots were themselves forced to emigrate as victims of the Clearances, we must also understand the impact of our historical outward migration on indigenous populations in their countries of destination, an impact which recent debates show are keenly felt today.

**We will therefore work with appropriate academic partners to better understand Scots' involvement in these chapters in our history.**

# Picturing and Understanding Scotland's Diaspora

## Genealogy and heritage

Having Scottish heritage or ancestry is a primary reason that many of our diaspora engage with Scotland. Whether their link to the homeland is seen as something current or historical, there is a keen curiosity from many to investigate their genealogy and family history.

National Records of Scotland (NRS) is one of Scotland's five national collections, holding records spanning the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries and touching on virtually every aspect of Scottish life. Its [ScotlandsPeople website](#)<sup>7</sup> provides a wealth of information, with over 25 million images of records so people can explore their personal Scottish history.

Within the ScotlandsPeople resource, users from anywhere in the world can discover many different records of people's lives – tracking their own family history or learning about aspects of life in Scotland in years gone by. Ancestral tourists can visit the ScotlandsPeople centre in Edinburgh or one of the Local Family History Centres across the country as part of a visit to Scotland.

NRS has worked to develop a range of resources to support use of ScotlandsPeople and access to its archives. **National Records of Scotland will continue to prioritise developing online and digital resources** to help people from around the world engage with their records and services.

**We will work with NRS and other organisations like the Scottish Council on Archives to promote their services to diaspora** wishing to undertake genealogical research.

# Engaging Scotland's Diaspora

Scotland embraces opportunities to strengthen its international relationships. Engaging with our broad diaspora community forms a central part of this activity. From in-person events hosted by our International Network, Scottish Development International, and VisitScotland, to digital opportunities on social media channels and newsletters, there are many ways we engage with these communities.

Our next step is to expand this outreach, focusing on more substantial relationships, and helping members of our diaspora build their own networks. As part of a longer-term approach, **we will establish a dedicated Scottish Connections contact point within the Scottish Government for diaspora engagement**, where members of our diaspora can engage directly with the Scottish Government and its public bodies.

## Our International Networks

The Scottish Government and Scottish Development International's global network of offices promotes Scotland's international profile and already engages extensively with our diaspora.

The Scottish Government's International Network currently has nine offices – in Beijing, Berlin, Brussels, Copenhagen, Dublin, London, Ottawa, Paris and Washington DC – and we plan to open a tenth in Warsaw. From hosting annual events to

celebrate key cultural moments like St Andrew's Day and Burns Night, to bringing together alumni and business leaders, our offices are key to developing and maintaining Scotland's international connections.

Scottish Development International has 34 offices spanning 23 countries, with local trade and investment specialists to help people set up business in Scotland, find investment opportunities, and connect with Scottish suppliers. Each business relationship formed or investment created helps to build Scotland's international connections and increases its reputation in global business. Additionally, the GlobalScot network is formed of more than 1,200 senior-level, experienced and influential business professionals and leaders, entrepreneurs, and figureheads, who are dedicated to supporting Scotland's economic ambitions internationally.

Each office in the Scottish Government's International Network will build on their work with our diaspora communities by **including a diaspora objective in their business plans to help deliver the commitments in this Framework**.

And we will aim to **collaborate across our full network – our international offices, including SDI, GlobalScots, Trade and Investment Envoys and public bodies – to map and engage our diaspora**.

You can find out how to connect to the Scottish Government's International Network at [www.gov.scot/international](http://www.gov.scot/international)

Information on Scottish Development International locations can be found at [www.sdi.co.uk/about-us/global-offices](http://www.sdi.co.uk/about-us/global-offices)

# Engaging Scotland's Diaspora

## Promoting Scotland

Scotland's heritage, food and drink, literature, textiles, and music are as much a part of our country as our world-leading universities, gaming companies, and festivals of modern Scotland. All of it, and all the people involved in it, are proudly part of Scotland's story.

Many nations present their credentials in fields such as climate change, business innovation, and inclusivity. But by doing so in a way that illustrates what makes Scotland unique, alongside celebrating our distinctive cultural attributes and globally recognised iconography, we have a real opportunity.

The Brand Scotland partnership brings together the collective communications effort of the Scottish Government and key partners, including VisitScotland, Scottish Development International, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Universities Scotland, Colleges Scotland, Creative Scotland, and Scotland Food & Drink, to harness our energy, expertise, and resources, to increase the impact of Scotland's global reputation.

Embracing both traditional and modern Scotland, this nation brand champions Scotland's values and tells the stories of our unique heritage whilst celebrating our innovations, and raising awareness of the actions we take to create better local and global outcomes.

With the Brand Scotland approach and values at the core of our Framework, **we will work with our diaspora to provide them with relevant resources to promote Scotland among their own networks.**

## Engaging with diaspora online

Connecting digitally will be vital in reaching the broad geographic spread of Scotland's diaspora. To engage with our Scottish connections around the world and work with them to deepen relationships and promote Scotland globally, **we will maximise the use of existing platforms and channels, and investigate new digital approaches.**

### Scotland.org

As our primary international-facing website, [scotland.org](https://scotland.org) provides a wealth of information about Scotland to global audiences, and about how to live, work, study, visit, and do business here. The website was re-launched in April 2018 alongside the 'Scotland Is Now' campaign and has since received over nine million unique pageviews.

Scotland.org will be an online home for our diaspora – the place they come to engage with Scotland and are encouraged to explore their Scottish connections. We will **create dedicated content within the website for our diaspora**, developing new pages to reflect the unique experiences of our primary diaspora strands – heritage, lived, educational and affinity. We will **review and update content relating to the specific relationships between Scotland and other countries**, to ensure these accurately reflect our shared history and our enduring relationships.

**We will work with a research partner to review how to meet the digital preferences of our different diaspora groups** ensuring that any future approach to digital communication will provide them with the information they need, where they need it. This research will inform how we **develop a more interactive communications approach for our diaspora including creating a means by which diaspora can register themselves as a member of Scotland's international community**, and enable them to receive the information that's most relevant to them.

And **we will work with partners to ensure active connections and traffic-driving between relevant websites** to best meet the needs of our varied diaspora audiences.



# Engaging Scotland's Diaspora

## Social media

It is vital to develop and strengthen connection with future generations of diaspora. We want more younger members of Scotland's diaspora to connect to us, and with each other. Building our digital channels will provide the opportunity to reach these audiences – not just our educational communities where numbers are understandably high, but also young business leaders, artists, and future generations of heritage diaspora.

We will seek to reflect diaspora relationships and experience in our communications. We will also **trial the launch of Instagram channels in targeted international markets** to engage new diaspora members directly. **We will seek feedback from younger members of our diaspora** to improve these channels and understand what content they want from Scotland.

## Digital directory

For the first time, **we will develop a public-facing digital directory of organisations around the world affiliated with Scotland.**

Hosted on scotland.org, the directory will support different strands of diaspora engagement and encourage awareness of the depth and spread of Scotland's diaspora internationally. It will showcase the wide range of community and cultural offerings available to our diaspora – from traditional clan and St Andrew's Societies, to established alumni groups and innovative business networks.

The directory can also act as a touchpoint for those wanting to engage with Scotland's diaspora in different countries. From those seeking a sense of "home" when moving to a new country to members of affinity diaspora looking to become more involved in a Scottish cultural pursuit for the first time. Or, simply anyone who wants to learn about Scotland if they are considering visiting, studying, or even emigrating here.

The directory will also support collaboration between organisations based in, or travelling to, the same location, increasing opportunities for Scots and friends of Scotland to connect.

**We will update the directory regularly, working with organisations to develop a mutually beneficial relationship,** increasing engagement and the flow of information between the Scottish Government and its public bodies, and their own memberships.

## Working with other governments

There are many lessons that we can learn from other countries and partners to better engage Scotland's diaspora communities.

Ireland's well-established diaspora policy, bolstered by its global diplomatic network, is seen as a world-leader and one from which Scotland can learn. Wales's experience in developing digital platforms also offers examples.

While Scotland has a relatively small diplomatic footprint, **we can ensure our headquarters, International Network and SDI offices globally are supporting these initiatives** including by working with devolved and UK Government counterparts.

The UK Government's diplomatic missions have connections with Scottish communities worldwide and often host or participate in key cultural moments while the British Council's extensive overseas operation has links to cultural and educational networks. Scotland has access to these networks, and so **we will explore how both diplomatic missions and the British Council can help deliver the aims of this Framework.**

## Engaging Scotland's Diaspora

### Recognising and supporting our diaspora

We recognise that our diaspora contributes immeasurably to boosting Scotland's reputation around the world. The vast majority of this activity is voluntary, driven only by passion for Scotland itself. We believe this sort of commitment to Scotland is worthy of recognition.

We will therefore **launch a diaspora recognition award**, marking the achievements of our diaspora internationally. The award will be launched during this Parliament and recognise the achievements of our diaspora in different fields. **We will publish details on criteria and nomination following design of the award with diaspora communities.**

We will **use our new digital resources to tell stories of our diaspora's activities around the world**, to congratulate those participating but also to encourage others to get involved.

And we will use the connections spawned by our comprehensive approach to diaspora engagement **to promote business and employment opportunities in Scotland for members of our diaspora, and to offer a pathway for those seeking to make Scotland their home** either permanently or as a student.

Reaching out to traditional Scottish diaspora organisations will also be an important strand of our work. **We will support these heritage organisations to broaden their appeal to young people**, connecting them to Scotland. This includes **support to expand their membership through appointing Youth Officers** and considering **establishing scholarships and youth exchanges**. We will also **encourage the involvement of contemporary performers at major diaspora events** like Tartan Day, festivals and Burns Night or St Andrew's Day celebrations to increase awareness of Scotland's dynamic cultural scene.

**And we will pilot a Scottish Connections Fund** to further the aims of this Framework. The fund will support initiatives that bring together those with a connection to Scotland, promote Scotland's reputation and interests, and build greater connections back to Scotland itself. We will publish details of the fund in 2023.







# Scotland's Culture

From thriving Gaelic-speaking communities on the east coast of Canada to the Burns Suppers and Highland Games held from China to Australia to Argentina, people around the world embrace opportunities to celebrate Scotland's culture. Scotland's diaspora are naturally attracted to the country's culture, in all its forms, and Scotland's diaspora communities often play a significant role in maintaining and promoting Scotland's culture and language internationally. We want to mainstream a strong cultural focus in this Framework.

Our world-leading festivals attract tourists and performers from the world over, many of whom have connections to Scotland – while diaspora also utilise other festivals and gatherings to access touring Scottish culture on their own doorstep. Our sporting legacy also spans the globe: as well as being the home of golf and curling, Scotland's national teams took part in the first ever international games of football and rugby.

The Scottish Government **will develop an International Culture Strategy in 2023**. The strategy will aim to build the capacity of Scotland's culture sector to work internationally and will complement this Framework by giving Scotland's diaspora greater access to Scottish cultural products, and attracting them to visit Scotland as a result. We will **consider creating a shared calendar of events to be used by the Scottish Government and partners for improved cross-promotion of cultural and tourism opportunities**.

We will develop and deploy our existing networks including, for the first time, **involving our network of GlobalScots in promoting the sector and supporting cultural connections** with organisations and individuals around the world.

## Gaelic and Scots

Language is central to our cultural heritage and identity. As the homeland of both Scottish Gaelic and Scots, we have a role to protect and promote these indigenous languages, and our diaspora play an important part in this.

**Our International Network will continue to support diaspora organisations in their celebration of both Gaelic and Scots language** – from hosting performances from Gaelic musicians and Scots language poets, to promotion of key linguistic moments on social media.

The Scottish Government's [Gaelic Language Plan 2022-27](#)<sup>8</sup> commits to supporting Gaelic both in Scotland and internationally, including via trade and business engagements. **We will look for opportunities to meet commitments in the Gaelic Language Plan within Framework activity, including exploring how to further promote Gaelic with educational and heritage diaspora groups.**

[SpeakGaelic](#)<sup>9</sup> – a new multi-platform learning service supported by the Scottish Government – can be accessed worldwide, and has attracted 400,000 learners since its launch in October 2021. **We will work with our Scottish connections to promote use of the SpeakGaelic and LearnGaelic digital resources.**

# Scotland's Culture

## Case Study: Tartan Day

On 6 April each year, Tartan Day celebrates Scottish culture and heritage in North America. Originating in the mid-1980s in Nova Scotia, Tartan Day is now marked in both Canada and the United States. The largest event is New York's Tartan Week – a series of celebrations and ceremonies culminating in the Tartan Day Parade, which attracts thousands of participants and spectators. 2023 will mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the US's National Tartan Day, which was officially declared by the United States Senate in 1998.

Tartan Day provides an opportunity for the significant number of North Americans with Scottish heritage to celebrate their link to the homeland. But, links between Scotland and the

US and Canada are now much broader. Each year we take the opportunity of Tartan Day to connect with our diverse diaspora communities – our heritage groups, business networks, our education diaspora and those who feel an affinity with our culture, even if not linked by their ancestry.

Through events, stakeholder engagements and communications activity, the Scottish Government's International Network offices in Washington DC and Ottawa, and the Brand Scotland partnership, showcase Scotland as a great place to live, work, study, visit, and do business – at a key moment when Scotland is a talking point across North America.



Vlad Vasnetsov / Pexels

# Living and Working in Scotland

Scotland is an open, welcoming country. Our history and economy have been shaped by immigration, just as Scottish immigrants have shaped their new homes. While Scotland's population is at an all-time high, demographic challenges – including an ageing population, lower fertility rates, and depopulation in some rural areas – mean that immigration is increasingly important to Scotland.

In 2021, the Scottish Government's Ministerial Population Taskforce published Scotland's first national population strategy, [A Scotland for the future: opportunities and challenges of Scotland's changing population](#).<sup>10</sup> The strategy aims to address the significant demographic challenges that Scotland is expected to face in the next 25 years, including ensuring we have sufficient people with the skills to meet the needs of our economy and public services.

Population growth in this period is expected to come entirely from inward migration. Welcoming people from all over the world – including returning Scots and members of the diaspora – is a key component of the strategy.

The ability of immigrants to come to live and work in Scotland is determined by the UK's immigration system. The Scottish Government has set out our vision for how a tailored migration policy, within a UK framework, could operate to meet Scotland's distinct demographic needs in [Migration: helping Scotland prosper](#).<sup>11</sup>

## Moving to Scotland

As part of a wider programme to support migration to Scotland, we launched the [Moving to Scotland](#)<sup>12</sup> resource in January 2021. This provides practical information about key issues for anyone looking to relocate to Scotland, including a checklist to guide people through their move to Scotland. It also features real life stories of people who have made Scotland their new home.

## Talent Attraction and Migration Service

We want people not only to move to Scotland, but to stay here. The Talent Attraction and Migration Service (TAMS), which will launch later this year, will improve Scotland's ability to attract and recruit people with the skills that our economy and public services need now and in the future.

TAMS will offer advice to those who are considering moving to Scotland, or who have just arrived. Via a new digital platform, the service will provide information on topics that people need to understand to help them move and settle into their communities, including how to access public services.

TAMS will also help employers and individuals navigate the UK's immigration system, including by providing one-to-one advice where required.

TAMS will complement the work led by Scottish Development International and Scottish Enterprise to support inward investors attract and retain the right talent for their workforce. The work is supported by a network of Talent Ambassadors, who use their own connections to showcase Scotland as a great place to start and build a career.



# Living and Working in Scotland

## UK Ancestry visa

Some members of Scotland's diaspora may qualify for a [UK Ancestry visa](#),<sup>13</sup> if they have a grandparent was born in the UK. This unique opportunity allows those who are eligible to remain in the UK for five years and to work or study, and they are able to bring their partners and children with them.

Unlike other immigration routes, Ancestry visa applicants are not required to have secured a job in the UK at the time of their initial visa application and there are no restrictions on the type of work they can undertake.

We will **use our International Network and digital communications to ensure our growing diaspora networks are aware of opportunities for moving to Scotland** including through the Ancestry visa.





University  
of Dundee

# Welcome to Graduation





## Education and Alumni

Scotland has a world-renowned education system, top-class higher education institutions, and a reputation for producing creative thinkers. That's why over 82,000 students from over 180 different countries chose to study in Scotland in 2021-22.<sup>14</sup>

We recognise the important contribution international students make to Scotland – to our economy, our educational communities and institutions, and also to our society. The attraction of Scotland's academic excellence is augmented by our warm welcome and unique cultural offer.

Cutting-edge international campuses – such as Heriot Watt's Dubai and Malaysia campuses, and Glasgow Caledonian University's Fair Fashion Centre in New York City – mean the exceptional teaching, high levels of student satisfaction, and research excellence which characterise Scottish Higher Education institutions are accessible to tens of thousands more students across the world.

### Top ten EU sending countries in 2021-22 for HE students in Scotland<sup>15</sup>

	Country of domicile	Number of students	Change over year
1	Ireland	2,275	-4%
2	Germany	1,925	-18%
3	France	1,560	-19%
4	Spain	1,550	-8%
5	Italy	1,510	-21%
6	Greece	950	-21%
7	Poland	845	-18%
8	Bulgaria	685	-26%
9	Cyprus	610	-14%
10	Sweden	530	-22%

### Top ten non-EU sending countries in 2021-22 for HE students in Scotland<sup>16</sup>

	Country of domicile	Number of students	Change over year
1	China*	22,455	21%
2	India	10,165	77%
3	USA	6,320	20%
4	Nigeria	5,620	112%
5	Pakistan	3,325	155%
6	Canada	1,380	15%
7	Malaysia	1,380	23%
8	Ghana	850	85%
9	Bangladesh	805	148%
10	Saudi Arabia	740	-5%

\*China represents 27% of all international enrolments. Breaking down by region of China, there were 20,830 enrolments from mainland China (25.3% of all international enrolments), 1,165 enrolments from Hong Kong (1.4%), 395 enrolments from Taiwan (0.5%) and 65 enrolments from Macau (0.1%).



## Education and Alumni

### International opportunities

We will **publish Scotland's first International Education Strategy in 2023**. It will commit to work with our universities and colleges to promote and enhance Scotland's education and research offer internationally. The strategy will align with the priorities in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation and in our Global Affairs Framework to help boost skills and productivity, with a focus on opportunities that will transform our economy and our society.

We will **work with our universities and colleges to diversify our international student population** and promote our reputation as a welcoming, safe, and diverse country, with a vibrant cultural scene, positive social policies, and many green spaces.

Our International Network already promotes the academic and research excellence of our universities and colleges. It will continue to invest in international relationships, enhance our communications activity with our educational diaspora, and **unlock new, diverse opportunities for our universities and colleges**. This international collaboration will seek fair solutions to global challenges, including a just transition to net zero and tackling inequality.

### Scotland's alumni

International students support and promote the long-term development of Scotland's reputation and influence around the world. We recognise the enormous value of our international alumni as valuable members of our diaspora who raise the profile of Scotland and help to promote our social, cultural, academic, and economic links with other countries. They are always a friendly face who understand Scotland, and help us see ourselves as others see us.

Studying in Scotland's world-class institutions equips students with the knowledge, skills, and technical expertise they need to succeed. For many, their time spent living and studying in Scotland fosters a bond of affinity which they cherish for the rest of their lives.

**We will continue to support and expand our global alumni networks.** Our universities are independent institutions and have their own alumni networks. We will **seek opportunities to connect these alumni networks with each other and with wider Scottish interests**. We will encourage connections between GlobalScots and the alumni community, for example to build mentoring relationships, find new trade, investment, and employment opportunities, and strengthen the diversity and reach of the group.

We will **work with our universities to explore how best to engage their alumni communities**, including in approaches to highly anticipated events like St Andrew's Day, Hogmanay and Burns Night. These events not only encourage visitors but form cultural touchpoints for diaspora celebrating internationally. **We will also work with the British Council to explore the use of their new [Alumni platform](#)<sup>17</sup>** to reach more alumni of Scottish universities.

**Our international offices will increase their connections with alumni groups in-country**, seeking advice on delivering Scotland's objectives, but also celebrating and enhancing the vibrancy of Scotland's alumni networks as an end in itself.

# Visiting Scotland – Haste Ye Back

Tourism is one of Scotland's most important industries, creating wealth and jobs and strengthening our international reputation. In 2019, almost 3.5 million people visited Scotland from around the world.<sup>18</sup> The majority of visitors came on holiday, with a significant number visiting friends and relatives, and more than 350,000 people travelling for business. The latest insights from the International Passenger Survey<sup>19</sup> indicates that visitor numbers have recovered throughout 2022, with figures for Q3 (Jul-Sept 2022) showing that Scotland out-performed the rest of the UK.

The industry-led national tourism strategy [Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism For A Sustainable Future](#)<sup>20</sup> was launched in 2020. It sets out a vision for Scotland to be “the world leader in 21<sup>st</sup> century tourism”, including a commitment to provide high-quality, memorable experiences that benefit visitors. Encouraging people to visit Scotland forms one of the key pillars of our Brand Scotland partnership approach.

## Our visitors

People choose to visit Scotland for many and varied reasons. VisitScotland research has consistently shown that Scotland's traditionally recognised attributes – scenery and landscapes, and history and culture – are the strongest motivations for choosing to visit. The proportion of people citing these factors is higher than average when it comes to North America and Australasia, which have the highest numbers of Scottish diaspora.

These reasons are often given by our international students too, when they are asked why they chose to study in Scotland. Those who study here often develop a deep affinity for Scotland, leading them to make return visits themselves, and to encourage their friends and family to visit and develop their own love of the country.

## VisitScotland

One of the primary ways the Scottish Government supports tourism is through the sponsorship of VisitScotland, Scotland's national tourism organisation. VisitScotland leads a range of activities to encourage tourism to Scotland, and provides information for visitors while they are here.

Ancestral or diaspora tourism features as an integral part of VisitScotland campaigns. These have been consciously broadened in recent years to reach younger travellers, including those with ancestral links. **VisitScotland will continue to engage with heritage diaspora to illustrate the rich experience of exploring their ancestry**, as well as encouraging diaspora groups to act as ambassadors, spreading these messages more widely to their members, followers, and wider personal networks.

VisitScotland also works with commercial tourism in-market such as tour operators and travel agents, providing them with tools and information to help inspire bookings to Scotland.

## Heritage and ancestry

Many visitors identify their Scottish heritage as a key motivation for choosing to travel to Scotland. In VisitScotland surveys, between a quarter and a third of visitors to Scotland from the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand cite their ancestry as the main reason, or at least one of the reasons, for choosing to travel.<sup>21</sup>

Post-pandemic travel has seen an emerging trend of people using travel advisors to organise their trips; a desire for more meaningful travel; and multi-generational trips, all of which fit well with encouraging ancestral tourism visits.

## Visiting Scotland – Haste Ye Back

Working collaboratively with VisitScotland, **we will encourage those with Scottish heritage to travel here and explore their own history.** Through our digital offering, **we will highlight tourism opportunities in Scotland with a heritage link.**

Our national tourism strategy commits to help people explore more of Scotland while they are visiting. We will work with the National Records of Scotland to encourage use of the ScotlandsPeople website – **promoting the opportunity for heritage Scots to trace local records** and 'follow in the footsteps' of their ancestors while visiting Scotland. We will also continue to work with public bodies including Historic Environment Scotland and National Museums Scotland, which play a vital part in maintaining and educating visitors about our heritage sites and artefacts.

We will collaborate with partners – and where applicable, our International Network of offices – to **continue to engage with key heritage events around the world such as New York Tartan Week**, using these gatherings as an opportunity to promote Scotland as a tourism destination.

### Cultural tourism

Whether the traditional or more pioneering aspects of Scotland – or a combination of both – culture is a theme that runs through most tourist itineraries. Our cultural appeal is twofold – both Scotland's heritage, and our dynamic arts and cultural scene, bring visitors to Scotland.

Our thriving summer festivals attract a huge number of visitors, creating an affinity diaspora of performers and contributors. Cultural moments including St Andrew's Day, Hogmanay and Burns Night not only encourage visitors but are celebrated internationally by those with a connection to Scotland.

In recent years, film and literature have emerged as key drivers for tourism. Screen Scotland estimated that in 2019, 656,000 overnight visits in Scotland were linked to screen tourism, generating nearly

£65m for the Scottish economy.<sup>22</sup> VisitScotland research has shown that the films and TV shows most quoted by visitors are those with strong Scottish connections: Braveheart, Highlander, Outlander and Shetland, while others such as Skyfall and Marvel's Avengers are known for their inclusion of Scottish film locations.

From traditional haggis to sustainable gin, food and drink are a key part of Scotland's culture. Aligning with the Food Tourism Action plan, **we will showcase the varied opportunities for visitors to experience a true taste of Scotland** – from restaurants to distilleries to farm shops.

Whether people share our heritage themselves, or have developed a strong affinity to our arts, music, or traditions, Scotland's diaspora communities are passionate about culture. Through VisitScotland and the wider Brand Scotland partnership, **we will capitalise on these cultural opportunities to encourage people from across the world to explore their own Scottish connections.**

### Homecoming and themed years

Homecoming 2009 and Homecoming 2014 were two year-long events held to celebrate Scotland, led by the Scottish Government and VisitScotland along with a wide range of partners across Scotland.<sup>23</sup> Together, the events generated around £190m for the Scottish economy.

The "themed years" tourism and marketing approach – formed after the success of Homecoming 2009 – is designed to drive the sustainable economic growth of Scotland's tourism and events industries. Through co-ordinated national activity, it spotlights some of Scotland's greatest assets such as Scottish arts, culture, food and drink, nature, activities, history, and ancestry.

A second "year of homecoming" was designated in 2014, while recent themed years include the Year of Coasts and Waters (2020-21) and Scotland's Year of Stories 2022.



# Visiting Scotland – Haste Ye Back



Neil Davidson / Starz / Courtesy of Sony Pictures Television

## The Outlander Effect

With stunning mountains, lochs, islands, historic cities, and castles, Scotland's locations have played a starring role in a wealth of productions.

A series of novels and short stories by author Diana Gabaldon gave Scotland a boost on the world stage when they were adapted for the TV series *Outlander*, which launched in 2014. Production is based in Scotland, prompting visitors from across the world to join the increasing trend of "set-jetting" by visiting the film locations and real life historic sites featured in the show, and for many, to more purposefully explore their connections with Scotland.

The Moffat Centre at Glasgow Caledonian University, through their Visitor Attractions Monitor, revealed that from the start of *Outlander* broadcasts in 2014 through to 2020, visitor numbers at 23 *Outlander*-related attractions throughout Scotland rose by an

average of 19%. In 2014 overall visitor numbers at these 23 attractions totalled 1.47 million. By 2020, the total number of visitors had increased to 3.2 million. Being a location for *Outlander* also led to additional benefits for sites, including the opportunity to develop of new products and themed events, and interest from other productions. The varied filming locations means that economic benefits have been distributed throughout Scotland.

*Outlander* has also played a hugely valuable role in the growth of the screen sector in Scotland, including through talent development.

Supported by Screen Scotland, the *Outlander* training programme was established to foster TV production skills training for young people to help them progress in the film industry. Traineeships are offered in many creative and technical roles, helping young people to get a start in the sector.





## Doing Business with the World

Scotland is a trading nation with a long and proud exporting history. Scotland has also consistently ranked as the UK's most popular inward investment location in the UK outside London. We will continue to work to support the internationalisation of the Scottish economy – and we want our diaspora to benefit from Scotland's economic diversity and dynamism.

Scottish professionals and companies working internationally not only benefit Scotland, but also the regions and nations where they now live and work, driving often mutually beneficial economic prosperity and investment. Alumni of Scotland's universities do likewise, taking the skills and expertise they have gained in Scotland back to their home countries.

International connections are crucial for many Scottish businesses. Managed by Scottish Development International, the [GlobalScot](#)<sup>24</sup> network has engaged a global diaspora of business professionals, entrepreneurs, business leaders, and community figureheads for over 20 years. Our expanding network of Trade and Investment Envoys bring representational heft when promoting Scotland's business sector to governments around the world. And the independently managed Scottish Business Network lists 8,000 Scottish professionals they connect to worldwide, to support Scotland-based companies and organisations to develop and grow through the utilisation of the Scottish business diaspora.

### GlobalScot

Our GlobalScots are a vibrant, dynamic network of influential Scots and friends of Scotland working to help achieve our ambitious economic vision for Scotland's future.

GlobalScots are an important part of the economic development ecosystem. They provide insight and thought leadership on priority areas for Scotland's enterprise agencies and for government. They support companies by coaching and mentoring, helping them to accelerate their growth and manage risks, and providing them with significant shortcuts in their learning curve, drawing on their years of experience. **We will increase the number of companies engaging with the network and will continue to encourage and enable GlobalScots to self-organise around key growth areas** such as space, hydrogen and offshore wind, as well as key markets and themes of strategic importance to Scotland.

While GlobalScots have always focused on business engagement and support, the expertise, interests and connections of its members goes broader. Many members are involved in cultural and voluntary activities, and are themselves connected to Scottish diaspora organisations around the world. We will further enhance engagement in 2023 by **encouraging interaction with and between network members.**

To help support Scotland's global connections, **we will continue to promote the GlobalScot programme to Scottish businesses, our stakeholders and partners,** and support them to unlock the insight, expertise, and connections of GlobalScots around the world.



## Doing Business with the World

**We will grow the network in countries and sectors of strategic importance** – particularly in Canada and the US, Asia Pacific, mainland Europe, and the Middle East, focusing on the priority sectors which will drive sustainable economic transformational change as outlined in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation.

**We will ensure that future development truly represents and reflects the diversity of Scotland's business community** as a whole, **increasing the gender diversity of the network**, as well as recruiting the next generation of GlobalScots. **We will seek to add business professionals from the creative and culture sectors**, and involve GlobalScots in the development of Scotland's culture policy and cultural offer.

We will **increase our engagement with international alumni of Scottish universities** to revive their connections to Scotland and potentially recruit as GlobalScots. This work will build on recent successful collaborations between the Scottish Government, Scottish Development International, and universities to host alumni-focused events in our priority markets, including the USA, Singapore, and Indonesia.

### Trade and Investment Envoys

The Directorate for International Trade and Investment (DITI) leads the Scottish Government's drive to internationalise the Scottish economy by building our trade capacity and presence in international markets, and by increasing exports and inward investment.

The [Trade and Investment Envoy programme](#)<sup>25</sup> is a key strand of this work. Established in 2017, the network is made up of appointees who work in a non-political capacity. The majority of Trade and Investment Envoys operate in the country where they are based, and add value by drawing on connections from their personal networks in-country and day-to-day business activities.

Since the launch of our export growth plan A Trading Nation in May 2019, we have grown our network from four to eleven Envoys, all of whom are also GlobalScots. They are located in Indonesia, UAE, Spain, Singapore, Poland, Scotland, London, and the East and West Coast of the US. Some of the Envoys have specialisms, for example, capital investment and higher education.

# Doing Business with the World

## International business networks

The rapidly changing landscape of the domestic and global economy demands a joined-up approach from the public and private sectors if we are to maintain Scotland's competitiveness and enhance our position in the global economy.

The International Trade Partnership (ITP2) between the Scottish Chambers of Commerce (SCC) and the Scottish Government identifies and builds opportunities for business and industry, empowering them to develop their strengths and to trade internationally.<sup>26</sup>

The SCC regularly engages with our diaspora – calling on the expertise and in-market intelligence of Trade and Investment Envoys and GlobalScots to make international connections that will support business, and connecting with diaspora communities as part of outward trade missions. No formal data is currently captured to measure these engagement levels, however **we will work with the SCC to explore how diaspora engagement can be captured and evaluated** as part of their ongoing delivery of the ITP2.

### Case Study: Professor Wendy Alexander

Although primarily focused on Trade and Investment, some of the work carried out by our Envoys expands beyond this area.

Our International Higher Education Trade and Investment Envoy, Wendy Alexander, promotes the Scottish Higher Education sector, including representing Scotland's interests in various UK Government and international forums.

As part of this work, Professor Alexander has represented Scotland's Higher Education sector

in locations including Nigeria, Singapore, and Indonesia. Her trip to Nigeria, in May 2022, was the first time Scotland had been officially represented on a UK delegation of this sort.

With the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, events bringing together GlobalScots, Scottish universities, and overseas Scottish alumni have restarted. These events are vital to facilitate knowledge sharing, networking and discussion across Scotland's international communities.





# Scotland's Offer to our Diaspora

Scotland's diaspora is an extension of our nation.

Recognising and engaging our diaspora is an objective in itself – not a means to an end. We want to inspire ever more connections between Scotland and our global community.

This Framework for the first time offers a holistic and coherent approach to Scotland's diaspora, visualising and recognising them as an integral part of Scotland today and of Scotland's future.

It is an invitation to anyone who considers themselves to be Scottish to connect with us – to live, work, study, visit, or do business in Scotland. Or, simply to become more connected to Scotland, with the homeland or with other Scots around the world.

We know Scottish diaspora are engaged and enthused in a varied range of interests, including through their heritage or other affinity with Scotland, their education here, or cultural and business links. All have their own particular connection to Scotland. We want our Framework and activities to reflect that rich complexity.

Recognising the importance of our diaspora is fundamental, as is reflecting the diversity of our diaspora members and their interests. But we must also focus our efforts. This Framework therefore outlines a series of commitments and ambitions to support our work to build a global network of Scottish connections, which are listed at the end of the document.

We will build on our established networks to help Scotland do business with the world – growing bridges between our trade and investment landscape and other sectors.

We will work with Scotland's top class education institutions to engage their passionate alumni in almost every country around the world.

We will showcase all Scotland has to offer to our diaspora – encouraging even more people to visit and explore.

And we will support those who want to pay us the compliment of living and working in Scotland.

Threading through all of this work will be a strong focus on Scotland's culture, which we will continue to champion as a world-renowned asset.

Ultimately, we will work to connect people to Scotland and with each other – continuing with research into our communities to deepen our understanding of them, and encouraging people to explore their own Scottish connections.

To help us succeed, **we will review our progress biennially**, adjusting our approach where necessary and ensuring our resources are used sensibly. To support this continual improvement, we will also **establish an external advisory group drawing on knowledge and experience of our international diaspora and from expertise in Scotland and beyond**.

In short, this Framework is a commitment to our diaspora, an invitation to engage, and a commitment to deepening a global community of Scottish Connections.

[www.gov.scot/international](http://www.gov.scot/international)

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

[diaspora@gov.scot](mailto:diaspora@gov.scot)

# Commitments in this Framework

## Engaging Scotland's Diaspora

- Establish a dedicated Scottish Connections contact point within the Scottish Government.
- Launch a diaspora recognition award, marking the achievements of our diaspora, designed in consultation with diaspora members.
- Pilot a Scottish Connections Fund to support the aims of this Framework.
- Collaborate across our full network to map and engage our diaspora.
- Introduce diaspora-focused objectives in International Network office business plans.
- Maximise the use of existing platforms and channels and investigate new digital approaches.
- Develop a more interactive communications approach for our diaspora including creating a means where diaspora can register their interests.
- Develop a regularly updated, public-facing digital directory of organisations around the world affiliated with Scotland.
- Work with a research partner to review how to meet the digital preferences of our different diaspora groups.
- Create dedicated content and new pages on scotland.org for our diaspora, and review existing content relating to Scotland's international relationships.
- Use our new digital resources to tell stories of our diaspora's activities around the world.
- Work with partners to ensure active connections and traffic-driving between relevant websites.
- Provide diaspora groups with resources to promote Scotland among their own networks.
- Trial the launch of Instagram channels in targeted international markets.
- Support heritage organisations to broaden their appeal to young people, including supporting appointment of Youth Officers and establishing scholarships and youth exchanges.

- Seek feedback from younger members of our diaspora to improve our communications offering.
- Explore how diplomatic missions and the British Council can help deliver the aims of this Framework.

## Picturing and Understanding Scotland's Diaspora

- Improve inclusivity and equality, by reaching out to historically marginalised communities and groups, and promoting women and young people's participation.
- Introduce equality objectives for International Network office business plans.
- Work with appropriate academic partners to better acknowledge and understand Scots' involvement in uncomfortable chapters in our history.
- Work with NRS and other organisations like the Scottish Council on Archives to promote their genealogical services to the diaspora.

## Scotland's Culture

- Develop an International Culture Strategy in 2023.
- Consider creating a shared calendar of events for improved cross-promotion of cultural and tourism opportunities.
- Involve existing networks including our GlobalScots to promote cultural connections
- Encourage the involvement of contemporary performers at major diaspora events.
- Look for opportunities to meet commitments in the Gaelic Language Plan within Framework activity.
- Continue to support diaspora organisations in their celebration of both Gaelic and Scots language, via our International Network.
- Exploring how to further promote Gaelic with educational and heritage diaspora groups.
- Work to promote use of the SpeakGaelic and LearnGaelic digital resources.

## Commitments in this Framework

### Living and Working in Scotland

- Use our International Network and digital communications to ensure our growing diaspora networks are aware of opportunities for moving to Scotland.
- Promote awareness of the UK Ancestry Visa to heritage diaspora.
- Promote business and employment opportunities in Scotland for members of our diaspora through our communications approach.

### Education and Alumni

- Publish Scotland's first International Education Strategy in 2023.
- Work with our universities and colleges to diversify our international student population.
- Work with our universities to explore how best to engage and expand our global alumni, and seek opportunities to connect alumni networks with each other, and with wider Scottish interests.
- Unlock new, diverse opportunities for our universities and colleges, and increase connections with alumni groups in-country, via our International Network.
- Work with the British Council to explore the use of their new Alumni platform.

### Visiting Scotland – Haste Ye Back

- Encourage those with Scottish heritage to travel here and explore their own history, and highlight tourism opportunities in Scotland with a heritage link.
- Continue to engage with key heritage events around the world such as New York Tartan Week to promote tourism.
- Work with NRS to promote the opportunity for heritage Scots to trace local records.
- Capitalise on cultural opportunities including arts, screen, food and drink to encourage people from across the world to explore their own Scottish connections.

- Showcase the varied tourism opportunities for visitors to experience Scottish culture.
- VisitScotland will continue to engage with heritage diaspora to illustrate the rich experience of exploring their ancestry.

### Doing Business with the World

- Grow the GlobalScot network in countries and sectors of strategic importance.
- Increase the number of companies engaging with the network and encourage and enable GlobalScots to self-organise around key growth areas.
- Seek to add business professionals from the creative and culture sectors.
- Enhance engagement by encouraging interaction with and between network members.
- Continue to promote the GlobalScot programme to Scottish businesses, our stakeholders and partners.
- Ensure that future development of GlobalScot reflects the diversity of Scotland's business community, including increasing the gender diversity of the network.
- Increase our engagement with international alumni of Scottish universities.
- Work with the Scottish Chambers of Commerce to explore how diaspora engagement can be captured and evaluated.

### Going Forward – Our Offer to Scotland's Diaspora

- Review our progress within this Framework biennially.
- Establish an external advisory group drawing on the knowledge and experience of our international diaspora and from expertise in Scotland and beyond.



# Endnotes

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