VisitScotland is pleased to respond to the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee as part of the enquiry into the Scottish Government’s National Performance Indicator on exports.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a reminder not only of the vital role of Scotland’s tourism industry and product in generating economic impact and international promotion, but also that tourism is in its own right a major export commodity for the country.

In the global context tourism should be regarded as perhaps one of the world’s leading export products. According to the World Tourism Council in 2006 tourism produced over USD 6 trillion. It is estimated that the world’s tourism industries provided around the world 221 million jobs, with an expectation that by 2015 tourism will be providing some 269 million jobs.

The Organisation for Economic and Operational Development reports that: "Tourism is a key component of the service economy (30 percent of international trade in services in the OECD area). Tourism, which has expanded dramatically over the past 30 years, looks set to continue growing as societies become more mobile and prosperous."

This emphatically positive assessment of tourism is mirrored in the recent Deloitte study which reported that the visitor economy delivers £11.6 billion to Scotland’s economy, directly employing 292,000 people across the country.

VisitScotland, working with our partners in the industry, is determined to build on this success and ensure tourism delivers even more to the Scottish economy in the coming years. Additionally we will continue to work with other major export industries to assist them in achieving increased exports.

A timely example are our partnerships across the Food and Drink sector, working with Scotland Food and Drink, individual suppliers and the whisky industry as we head into next year’s theme of food and drink. This will build on the highly successful initiatives undertaken in the first year of food and drink in 2010, and that have continued through Homecoming this year, putting Scotland’s larder and producers centre-stage in VisitScotland’s extensive international marketing campaigns.

This also illustrates perfectly what is meant by the visitor economy, with tourism a driver for economic and export growth in non-tourism related industry.

We will be working to ensure that the exposure Scotland is enjoying this year, through the Commonwealth Games, The 2014 Ryder Cup and Homecoming Scotland, continues. Using major sporting and cultural events is an important way of promoting our country, heritage and expertise around the world, in order to attract
future visits, the purchase of exported Scottish products and an increased familiarity with Scotland that in turn assists with encouraging inward investment.

In addition to major events, business tourism is a further success story for Scotland. As well as bringing thousands of international business visitors to the country each year for conferences, conventions and meetings, business tourism provides a shop window helping some of the country’s other dynamic industries present themselves to international investors, partners and buyers.

A further strength of tourism is that Scotland’s industry is here to stay as the experience cannot be shipped off shore. It is also renewable and if delivered in a sustainable way then thousands and indeed millions of overseas visitors can see the same attraction and enjoy the same quality of experience whilst contributing to the economy.

In conclusion it is vital that tourism and its potential to drive exports is recognised and invested in. VisitScotland will continue to work with partners across the tourism industry, the wider visitor economy and government agencies to ensure that tourism remains one of the country’s most dynamic industries and continues to deliver for Scotland’s economy in the years ahead.

VisitScotland
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