



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



# Scotland's International Strategy

Delivering for Scotland



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# Joint Ministerial Foreword

In what can seem increasingly turbulent times, it is more important than ever for Scotland to engage with our fellow Europeans and the wider world on our common priorities, standing up for our values, contributing internationally as a good global citizen, and working to benefit those who call Scotland home.

From the tragic events unfolding in Gaza following Hamas's appalling attack on Israel, to the climate crisis, to Russia's illegal war against Ukraine, we have all been affected by a wide range of global challenges and events, either directly or indirectly. This is why we need to remain engaged internationally, actively promoting Scotland's interests and working with our key partners to deliver on our priorities. Our international work provides us with the opportunity to help deliver on Scotland's domestic objectives and the First Minister's three missions of equality, opportunity, and community. We cannot truly and effectively deliver our domestic priorities and these missions without acknowledging and playing our part in addressing the range of global challenges that contribute to them, as well as contributing internationally in return in a spirit of global solidarity.

We want to build on Scotland's strengths and seize opportunities to deliver tangible benefits to the people of Scotland through our international work. To do this, we will build on our 'Team Scotland' approach, working in tandem with key partners including our enterprise agencies, Creative Scotland, VisitScotland, our universities, GlobalScots, trade and investment envoys and cultural organisations.

Our international development work and our responses to humanitarian emergencies are a key part of Scotland's contribution to the global community, and we continue to place a great deal of importance on being a good global citizen.

This is why we are now publishing our international strategy to guide our approach to international engagement and delivery to the end of the current parliamentary term. This document looks across the wide range of Scottish Government responsibilities and priorities, ensuring that we will be as effective

as possible in delivering on key policies such as our forthcoming international education and international culture strategies, and our biodiversity strategy, among others. Engaging internationally also allows us to drive forward recent recommendations from the Scottish Government's Investor Panel.

The strategy focuses on three themes: (1) economy, trade and investment; (2) climate change, biodiversity and renewable energy; and (3) reputation, influence and relationships. By being clear and precise in where we focus our efforts, we can ensure that our international work makes a substantial, positive impact not only on the lives of people in Scotland, but also those on whom our international development engagement is focused.

The values, priorities and actions outlined in this strategy will apply regardless of Scotland's constitutional position, but the contribution that Scotland could make, and the benefits it could receive, would be significantly enhanced with the powers of independence.

Scotland needs to work to deepen ties with key partners, increase economic opportunities and build on our excellent networks for both Scotland's benefit and that of our international partners. In doing so, we will remain committed to our core values of fairness, equality and inclusion in everything we do.



**Angus Robertson MSP**  
Cabinet Secretary for Constitution,  
External Affairs and Culture



**Neil Gray MSP**  
Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing  
Economy, Fair Work and Energy

## Executive Summary

This document builds on the work of the [Scottish Government's Global Affairs Framework](#), in which we set out the values and principles which underpin our international work, and how we prioritise our international activity. It sits alongside our [Annual Report](#), which goes into further detail about the achievements of our International Network in the previous year.

**Scotland's International Strategy** establishes how our international role, our vision, and our values fundamentally inform our wider work, such as our long-standing International Development programmes with our partner countries. It describes the three key areas of focus for the Scottish Government's international engagement and what we aim to achieve in each by the end of the current parliamentary term.

First, we speak about how Scotland benefits from our international work on **Economy, Trade and Investment**. This section looks at how our activity supports the goals of our National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) to maximise the opportunities of the next decade to achieve our vision of Scotland as a successful country, with a strong economy focused on wellbeing and fair work.

Next, we will look at our cooperation with the international community on **Climate Change, Biodiversity and Renewable Energy**, and how we partner with countries and organisations around the world to meet the challenges of the climate and biodiversity emergencies and to achieve the transition to net zero.

Finally, we will look at **Reputation, Influence and Relationships**. This section looks at how we use our International Network of offices, our strong nation brand and identity, and our connections with our diaspora to benefit the people of Scotland, and how we deliver on our commitment to being a good global citizen.

# 1. Scotland's International Role

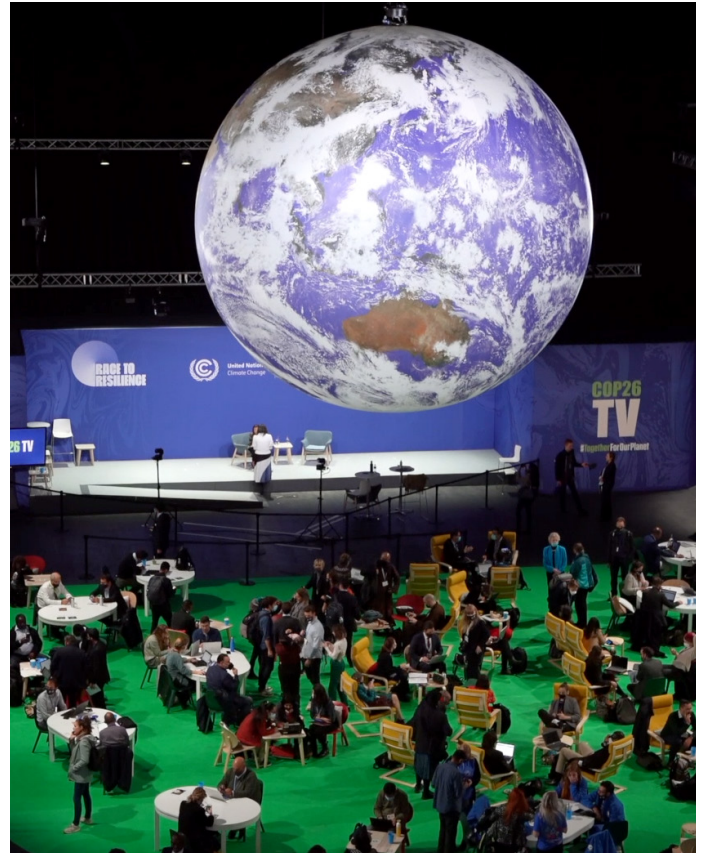
## 1.1 Introduction

Scotland is a nation that seeks to lead by example and is guided by a set of core values, which shape both our domestic and our international work. We believe in democracy, in the rule of law and in friendly cooperation between nations. We are part of a global society and global market, and what we do in these spheres matters to people in Scotland and affects the rest of the world.

Our international work provides tangible benefits to our people, businesses and institutions. It forms a key part of our commitment to be a good global citizen, by making a positive contribution to addressing global challenges. In a changing geopolitical landscape, we recognise the importance of standing with partners around the world to defend and promote the democratic and progressive values we share. Playing our part in supporting global solidarity is important to us.

We live in an interconnected world where the line between domestic and international policy is increasingly blurred. Our international engagement provides us with the opportunity to help deliver on Scotland's domestic objectives and the First Minister's three missions of equality, opportunity, and community.<sup>1</sup> We cannot truly and effectively deliver our domestic priorities and these missions without addressing the range of global challenges that contribute to them, and learning from examples of best practice internationally.

This document sets out our key areas of focus to deliver on these missions. It recognises Scotland's strengths and how we will work to harness these, but also acknowledges the challenges Scotland faces and outlines the key areas where our international work will help deliver our domestic objectives of a more equal society, a fairer and greener economy, and excellent public services.



The extent to which global events can directly impact people here at home as well as those overseas, particularly the most vulnerable in society, is clear from the conflict in Gaza following Hamas's appalling attack on Israel, the war in Ukraine, the climate crisis, the rollback of the rights of women and girls, energy insecurity, increased global competition and the increasing shift towards protectionism. Events, incidents and trends such as these have the potential to impact negatively on Scotland's economy, security and society, and we must work to ensure that we are able to address them and future challenges.

We also recognise the distinct, negative impact of these events on countries in the Global South, and the resultant demands for reform of international systems and on climate justice for a fairer world. In line with our dual commitment on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we will continue to work

<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government, 'Equality, opportunity, community: New leadership - A fresh start', 18 April 2023, URL: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/equality-opportunity-community-new-leadership-fresh-start/> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

with our international development partner countries as we seek to tackle poverty and inequality at home in Scotland, and to contribute internationally. Against the backdrop of recent global events, the global community must continue to accelerate action to deliver progress for people and our planet.

## 1.2 Our Vision

Scotland is an outward-looking nation committed to good global citizenship, has a strong and respected voice internationally and joins with others to help build a fairer and more equal world. Scotland has a long history of looking beyond its borders to trade, cooperate, learn, innovate and inspire. Our people, businesses, universities and cultural organisations have long benefitted from this collaboration and have made significant contributions globally. We have a lot to offer and will continue to celebrate and make the case for positive internationalism.

## 1.3 Our Values

As outlined in Scotland's [Global Affairs Framework](#), the Scottish Government's work is underpinned by a fundamental principle: to be a good global citizen. The United Nations defines global citizenship as 'the umbrella term for social, political, environmental, and economic actions of globally minded individuals and communities on a worldwide scale.'<sup>2</sup> This concept is incorporated in the UN Sustainable Development Goals and is rooted in everything that the Scottish Government does in its international work.

Being a good global citizen means recognising and understanding that we need to work together to ensure our planet is more equal, fair and sustainable, because our actions also impact others through our global connectivity. This means taking an inclusive approach to how we act as a globally minded nation, ensuring that our values of fairness, equality and inclusion are at the heart of everything, and that the voices of those less privileged than us are heard and acted on. We've seen these values put into action

in recent years with our work on climate change in Scotland and overseas, and the warm welcome Scotland has given to refugees from Syria, Ukraine and elsewhere.

### Our response to the War in Ukraine

We condemn Russia's illegal war against Ukraine and offer our unqualified support for Ukrainian sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. We fully agree with the UK Government on the vital importance of addressing the threat to security posed by Russia, in particular by supporting Ukraine to reassert its sovereignty.

This is why we have offered practical support to the people of Ukraine and are proud to have provided sanctuary for more than 26,000 people displaced from Ukraine since March 2022, 20% of the total taken by the UK as a whole. Since then, we have provided £5.3 million in humanitarian assistance to support people in Ukraine and those fleeing to neighbouring countries. This has included funding for cold-weather gear following Russian attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure and support for the work of the HALO Trust, whose teams have been clearing mines and other explosive remnants of war from both residential and agricultural land. In addition to this financial support, we have also sent five consignments of medical supplies worth almost £3 million to Poland for onward transport to Ukraine.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, 'Global Citizenship', URL: <https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/global-citizenship> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]



These values apply at home and abroad, across the range of work we do. We want to share these and help shape international conversations on how they can continue to be adhered to, even in the face of increasing global uncertainty. This requires three overarching and immutable commitments in how we act internationally:

- ▶ **Respect for human rights and equality** – Whether through the incorporation of UN Human Rights Treaties<sup>3</sup> or through international engagement with partners, we will not waver in our commitment to respect for human rights and equality.
- ▶ **Support for the rules-based international system** – We strongly support multilateralism and the rules-based international system, contributing actively in global dialogues.
- ▶ **Implementation of a feminist approach to our international work** – Scotland is the first country in the UK to commit to taking a feminist approach to international relations. With more than 15 other nations currently committed to the principles of feminist foreign policy, we are part of a growing global movement. Our new approach is defined by the principles of feminist foreign policy to ensure that our work abroad, just like at home, furthers equality and delivers the Sustainable Development Goals.

### Why a feminist approach to our international work?

The Scottish Government believes a feminist approach can support all international actors to advance a more equitable world. The nature of the global challenges we face - climate and nature loss, pandemics, conflict - means collaboration is crucial.

Several states have adopted a feminist foreign policy in recent years. While there is not one

uniform definition, feminist foreign policies aim broadly to protect the rights of women and marginalised groups, prioritise peace and interrogate existing power structures. A feminist approach for Scotland will leverage all aspects of Scotland's international policy to advance gender equality and the rights of women, girls and marginalised groups in pursuit of a fairer world. While foreign policy remains the responsibility of the UK Government, we have a proud record of engaging internationally in Scotland's interests within current constitutional arrangements. There is a clear role for us to make a constructive contribution to addressing global challenges.

In November 2023 we set out our overall approach to implementing this [Feminist Approach to International Relations \(FAIR\)](#). This includes five core cross-cutting actions for the Scottish Government:

1. Supporting women's organisations, feminist networks and other grassroots movements.
2. Seeking to ensure funding is allocated in a way that is accessible, flexible and long-term.
3. Innovating and influencing globally on progressive policies such as the wellbeing economy, Just Transition and gender budgeting.
4. Speaking out for structural change on the international scene.
5. Ensuring coherence between international, domestic and local policies.

<sup>3</sup> Scottish Government, 'Human Rights Bill consultation', 15 June 2023, URL: <https://www.gov.scot/news/human-rights-bill-consultation/> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

## 1.4 Our Activity

The Scottish Government has a successful record of delivering internationally since the beginning of devolution. We have achieved notable successes from our international development programmes and collaboration in higher education, to investment attraction and sharing of best practice with other governments on a range of policy areas from health to judicial cooperation.

Given our size and limited resource, we need to prioritise where we focus our international efforts so that they are concentrated on those areas that will lead to the most impactful outcomes. This means playing to our strengths and building on areas where Scotland already has significant assets, such as engaging with our diaspora and promoting our world-leading higher education institutions. In our international development work, it means considering carefully with our partner governments where, in addition to financial investment, Scotland can provide added value through existing expertise in relevant subject areas. It also means identifying areas where there is significant potential for Scotland to have impact in the future and secure positive outcomes, such as in renewable energy. This document outlines our key areas of focus across three core themes:

1. Economy, trade and investment;
2. Climate change, biodiversity and renewable energy; and
3. Reputation, influence and relationships.

### Engaging global audiences

We believe that engaging global audiences not only benefits Scotland's economy and enriches our culture but also supports Scotland's international connections wherever they are in the world. We want to encourage people to live and work, study, visit, and do business in Scotland. All of our international communications are underpinned by Scotland's

nation brand strategy, ensuring we tell a consistent and unified story about who we are as a nation.

We take an inclusive approach to engaging Scotland's international communities. The approach we set out in the [Scottish Connections Framework](#) is focused on building more substantial and mutually beneficial relationships with our diaspora, helping members to grow their own networks and their connections with Scotland.

Our international development work also maintains a key focus on strengthening our international relationships and partnerships. Our [International Development Principles](#) set out our commitment to partner country-led and inclusive development, to collaboration and partnerships, to equality, to amplifying Global South voices, and to inclusion and diversity.

### International Network

The Scottish Government's International Network of offices are located in Beijing (China), Berlin (Germany), Brussels (Belgium), Copenhagen (Denmark), Dublin (Ireland), London (United Kingdom), Ottawa (Canada), Paris (France) and Washington DC (USA). These offices directly engage with governments and organisations in their respective countries, to learn from others' experiences and to share our knowledge, skills and technical expertise for the global good. They facilitate high-level engagement abroad for Scottish Ministers and provide a base for Scottish public sector and commercial stakeholders to interact with their international partners. Through these important engagements, we help share and build understanding on common challenges and priorities, pave the way for new cultural and commercial projects, develop partnerships with our key partners and attract people to come to live and work, study, visit and do business in Scotland.<sup>4</sup>

4 Further information on the work and impact of our international offices can be found in: Scottish Government, 'Understanding Scotland's International Network - International network: annual report 2022-2023', 9 November 2023, URL: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-international-network-annual-report-2022-23/pages/4/> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]



Scottish Enterprise's international arm, Scottish Development International (SDI), has over 30 offices staffed by over 100 officials in 23 countries. Through these offices, it delivers trade and investment support to companies. This includes attracting companies headquartered outside of Scotland to establish and grow operations in Scotland, securing international capital investment into strategic projects in Scotland and ensuring increased global trade of Scotland's world-class products and services around the world. From this work, in financial year 2022/23 alone, £1.73 billion<sup>5</sup> of forecast export sales were achieved and 8,500 forecast jobs<sup>6</sup> were secured through inward investment support. Scotland also retained its place as the most attractive place to invest and attracted more inward investment than anywhere in the UK outside of London.<sup>7</sup> This vital work to secure international trade and investment helps create a more dynamic and globally competitive economy.

## 1.5 Our Geography

### European Union

Scotland remains a friend and an active partner to the European Union with shared interests and ambitions. People in Scotland voted overwhelmingly against Brexit and, as predicted by the Scottish Government and many others, Brexit has had damaging and long-lasting impacts on Scotland, not least through new trade barriers and the loss of freedom of movement. It is predicted by the Office for Budget Responsibility that the UK's potential productivity will be 4% lower in the long run due to Brexit,<sup>8</sup> equating to a loss of £3 billion in public revenues for Scotland each year. Given this and the increasingly challenging global context, it is more important than ever that Scotland holds firm

to European collective values and takes a positive and proactive role in engaging with the European Union institutions and European partners on shared challenges and opportunities.

Scotland has much to offer our European neighbours and we want to maintain and consolidate these close relations. For example, this is why we are committed to the [Ireland-Scotland Joint Bilateral Review](#), which outlines a range of areas of cooperation across business, diaspora, culture, education and rural communities, and which reinforces our already strong relations.

- ▶ We will review and update the report for 2025 onwards with the Irish Government.

We are committed to the closest possible relations with the European Union and our European neighbours based on our shared values. We want to remain aligned with the European Union as far as possible, to seek improvements to the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, and to continue to make the most of EU-driven economic development opportunities. We continue to engage directly with the European Union on a range of devolved policy matters such as education, culture, energy, marine, environment, inclusive growth, research and innovation, and trade.

We look forward to rejoining the European Union as a Member State in our own right. However, until that happens, we will continue to push the UK Government to take sensible steps to reduce the damage Brexit has caused by facilitating collaboration and reducing the barriers to trade and movement it has created. In this context we have identified six immediate priorities to be addressed in

5 Scottish Enterprise, 'Annual Report and Accounts', URL: <https://www.scottish-enterprise.com/media/d3ap2m30/se-group-accounts-2023.pdf> [last accessed 10 January 2024]

6 Scottish Development International, 'Inward investment continues to deliver for Scotland', 8 June 2023, URL: <https://www.sdi.co.uk/news/inward-investment-continues-to-deliver-for-scotland> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

7 EY, 'Scotland's foreign investment grows with record results', 19 June 2023, URL: [https://www.ey.com/en\\_uk/news/2023/06/scotlands-foreign-investment-grows-with-record-results](https://www.ey.com/en_uk/news/2023/06/scotlands-foreign-investment-grows-with-record-results) [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

8 Office for Budget Responsibility, 'How are our Brexit forecasting assumptions performing?', URL: <https://obr.uk/box/how-are-our-brexit-forecasting-assumptions-performing/> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement:

- ▶ Regaining full access to European Union programmes including Erasmus+, European Territorial Cooperation and Creative Europe.
- ▶ Seeking a more ambitious UK-EU agreement on general mobility, particularly in favour of young people, touring artists and creative professionals.
- ▶ Ensuring trade can flow with as few unnecessary restrictions as possible, which will require the UK to consider greater alignment with European Union regulations.
- ▶ Securing mutual recognition of professional qualifications across more professions.
- ▶ Continuing to exchange vital security information.
- ▶ Ensuring Scottish civil society is fully represented on the UK Domestic Advisory Group and able to share ideas and experiences with European counterparts.

## Case study: Scotland House Brussels

Our engagement with the European Union is led by our largest and longest-standing overseas office, Scotland House Brussels (SHB), located at the centre of the city's European Union quarter. SHB hosts teams from both Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise (through the Scotland Europa membership organisation). They work in tandem to deliver our policy and economic interests at the very heart of the European Union to benefit Scottish communities and businesses.

### What are our priorities?

#### Economy, trade and investment

- Amplifying the profile and relevance of Scotland's trade and economic development priorities, guided by our National Strategy for Economic Transformation.
- Promoting Scotland as a hub for research, innovation, partnership, collaboration and funding. Our work will showcase the strengths of our innovation ecosystem, positioning Scotland as a trusted partner and a natural home for business.

#### Climate change, biodiversity and renewable energy

- Showcasing Scotland's high ambition and expertise on net zero. By continuing to promote Scotland's climate and environment work internationally, we will emphasise our shared ambitions and ongoing desire to collaborate with the European Union.
- Focusing on the Just Transition and Scotland's strengths and expertise, such as our huge offshore wind potential, our potential as a green hydrogen exporter to Europe, our ambition to decarbonise heat, transport, and our ongoing work on biodiversity, nature restoration and circular economy.

#### Reputation, influence and relationships

- Strengthening and reshaping Scotland's European Union relations.
- Developing international strategic insights on and engagement with evolving European Union agenda, policies and activity.

- Developing and delivering a targeted programme of events, discussions and visits for Ministers, senior officials, members and other stakeholders to promote and inform shared learnings and Scotland's international offer.
- Developing integrated and enhanced strategic communications and digital delivery to support the delivery of our overall objectives, maximise our reach and showcase Scotland's knowledge and expertise in key areas of interest.

### How do we deliver our priorities?

Scotland House Brussels delivers on these priorities by coordinating through a wide range of activities including:

- Facilitating European engagement for Scottish Ministers and stakeholders, using SHB as a base for events and bilateral meetings for organisations in the public and private sectors.
- Engaging and maintaining close links with European Union institutions such as the European Commission and Parliament, including the '[European Friends of Scotland](#)' MEPs' group.
- Developing and maintaining links with a range of member states, including those with cultural and geographical links such as the Republic of Ireland and Nordic countries, Belgian stakeholders in-country, and partners with key strategic influence.
- Developing and maintaining links with a range of key third countries, both in Europe and beyond, as well as sub-state actors such as Flanders.
- Utilising and capitalising on Scotland's rich culture in our diplomacy, especially our winter festivals of St Andrew's Day and Burns Night.
- Cooperating closely with partners within strategic networks in which the Scotland House partners participate.



## Our near neighbourhood

Scotland is in a strategic location, serving as a link between the North Sea and North Atlantic regions. We have deep and diverse ties with partners in our shared neighbourhood and recent years have seen a further increase in collaboration between Scottish and Nordic countries. The opening of a Scottish Government office in Copenhagen in 2022 is evidence of our commitment to build on economic, cultural and policy links both bilaterally and multilaterally, including through organisations such as the Nordic Council of Ministers and its agencies.

Nordic countries will also be among our key partners in achieving shared ambitions in relation to digital economy, cultural collaborations, the net zero transition and renewable energy technologies. The North Sea region has the potential to serve as a green battery for Europe, and Scotland is ready to contribute expertise and capacity to develop shared and mutually reinforcing infrastructure to accelerate decarbonisation and build energy security. We will:

- ▶ Continue to foster collaboration with Nordic countries to pool policy expertise, celebrate cultural links and increase sustainable trade.
- ▶ Work with the Nordic Council of Ministers to explore new opportunities for Scottish involvement in cross-Nordic projects, events and initiatives.

Scotland is also a North Atlantic nation, one of many reasons why our relationships with the United States (US) and Canada are so critical. We are bound together through trade and investment, with the US for example being the number one foreign investor in Scotland.<sup>9</sup> Also through shared policy challenges on climate, energy security and economic growth. There are deep familial links between us via the Scottish diaspora in both North American countries. We enjoy productive partnerships between our universities. To enhance these partnerships, we will:

- ▶ Seek new partnerships at a US state and Canadian provincial/territorial level to increase our bilateral trade and investment. For example, the Great Lakes region straddling both countries is now a global centre for battery manufacturing with opportunities for Scottish business, investment and academia.
- ▶ Encourage diaspora organisations to promote Scottish culture, heritage, Gaelic and Scots languages, sports and tourism.
- ▶ Work with Scotland's airports to further grow direct air routes from US and Canadian cities.

Scotland is the world's most northerly non-Arctic nation sharing deep cultural and historical links as well as similar challenges with countries across the North. In line with the vision set out in [Arctic Connections: Scotland's Arctic Policy Framework](#) we aim to promote Scotland as a good global citizen and a reliable partner in a region increasingly affected by environmental and geopolitical changes. Drawing on expertise developed domestically, we have established Scotland as a valuable contributor to Arctic dialogue and will be hosting the Arctic Science Summit Week in Edinburgh in 2024. We want to build on this work and other success such as our [Arctic Connections Fund](#) to develop our growing reputation as an Arctic stakeholder. To achieve this, we will:

- ▶ Maximise the potential of Arctic Science Summit Week in March 2024 showcasing the expertise Scotland has to offer the Arctic.
- ▶ Promote Scotland as an expert contributor to Arctic dialogue, contributing to international conferences and hosting Arctic delegations and events.
- ▶ Evaluate the impact of the Arctic Connections policy framework before the end of the current parliamentary session in order to inform the future direction of Scotland's Arctic policy and engagement.

<sup>9</sup> EY, 'The EY Attractiveness Survey Scotland 2022', 31 May 2022, URL: [https://www.ey.com/en\\_uk/attractiveness/22/scotland-leads-the-way-for-fdi-investment](https://www.ey.com/en_uk/attractiveness/22/scotland-leads-the-way-for-fdi-investment) [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

## Engaging further afield

Scotland has significant interests and opportunities beyond our near neighbourhood. Emerging economies are outpacing advanced economy growth rates (4.0% GDP growth in 2023 compared to 1.5% growth in advanced economies), and gaining an ever larger share of global GDP.<sup>10</sup> As populations across these countries enter the middle class they are driving much of global consumption growth, stimulating increased demands on the exports and services Scotland can provide such as education, financial services, tourism and consumer goods.

With world-leading academic and research organisations, dynamic businesses and a global diaspora, Scotland should be well positioned to make the most of these opportunities. For example, over 82,000 students from over 180 different countries chose to study in Scotland in 2021-22<sup>11</sup> with students from China and India representing a significant proportion.

Beyond opportunities, we are also aware of the responsibility we have to work collaboratively with developing and emerging economies on global challenges of poverty and climate change – issues where the crises are affecting the Global South, but are often caused by the North. We will look to role model this type of relationship in particular with our development partner countries of Malawi, Zambia, Rwanda and Pakistan.

We will strengthen our social, cultural and economic relationships with emerging and developing economies around our key themes as appropriate. To achieve this we will:

- ▶ Continue to engage China and increase engagement with India and other economies across the Middle East, Asia and Africa as opportunities emerge and resources allow.
- ▶ Deliver a programme of overseas Ministerial visits to emerging markets and developing countries.
- ▶ Connect with Scottish diaspora and alumni in these countries in line with the Scottish Connections Framework.
- ▶ Sustain Scotland's approach to solidarity with countries in the Global South towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including our established international development partner countries.

10 International Monetary Fund, 'World Economic Outlook: Navigating Global Divergences', October 2023, URL: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2023/10/10/world-economic-outlook-october-2023> [last accessed 10 January 2024]

11 Higher Education Student Data, URL: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students> [last accessed 10 January 2024]

## 2. Economy, Trade and Investment

### 2.1 Our Aims

Scotland's centuries-old economic links with the rest of the world are broad and deep. Our solid reputation for innovation, collaboration and being true to our values resonates with the international community and encourages potential partners to work with us. We provide world-class goods and services, from items rooted in our traditions such as whisky and salmon, to our pioneering satellite manufacturing industry and dynamic financial services. Engaging internationally in these areas is crucial to making the transition to a [wellbeing economy](#) that is fair, green and growing. An economy that serves the collective wellbeing of people now and in the future sets us on a path to a greener, more prosperous nation, and helps our international partners do the same.

In March 2022, the Scottish Government published its [National Strategy for Economic Transformation](#) (NSET) which sets out the priorities for Scotland's economy, and the actions needed to maximise the opportunities of the next decade. NSET commits us to achieving the vision of a nature-positive economy founded on wellbeing and net zero, and based on the principles of prosperity, equality, sustainability, and resilience for current and future generations. Our international activity will help achieve this.



VisitScotland / Kenny Lam

**In this chapter, we will outline how the Scottish Government, in collaboration with its partner organisations and businesses in Scotland, will deliver its international trade and investment objectives, the key sectors, priorities and geographies of focus, and the vital role played by the Scottish International Network in delivering for Scotland.**

### 2.2 Our Approach

In January 2021 we published [Scotland's Vision for Trade](#), a strategic policy framework to guide our decisions in a way that supports wider economic, social and environmental ambitions. It sets out five principles – inclusive growth, wellbeing, sustainability, net zero and good governance – which guide our actions both on the devolved elements of international trade, and where we are seeking to influence UK Government actions.



Overseas engagement and relationships are crucial to achieving these ambitions. It requires a Team Scotland approach in which the Scottish Government works in tandem with partner and enterprise organisations across the country, supporting and collaborating on international activity with businesses, universities and other organisations to meet the goals of NSET.

We are also proud to collaborate with other nations to achieve these goals. For example, as one of the founders of the [Wellbeing Economy Governments group \(WEGO\)](#), we work with our fellow partner countries to share best practice and our valuable relationships with Finland, Iceland, New Zealand, Wales and Canada are helping to take forward our work in this area.

Our network of offices in Europe and around the world work to deliver for people in Scotland. Scotland's International Network, operated by both the Scottish Government and Scottish Development International, makes vital contributions towards our NSET goals to supporting the growth of Scotland's economy. This Network will continue to focus on high-potential sectors, while at the same time developing long-term strategic economic diplomacy focused on high-potential areas of growth, including leveraging the [GlobalScot Network](#) and our [Trade and Investment Envoys](#).

We will continue to apply internationally agreed standards, respect international law, support human rights, and build trade-based international relationships which support developing nations and address global inequality. As part of this we also aim to better understand and address the differential impacts of trade across our society in Scotland, such as in relation to gender. We will continue to support and promote fair trade, building it into our wider model of social, economic and environmental balance, driving better trading conditions for marginalised producers and workers globally. We will

also support strong trading relationships by applying good regulatory practice (in line with the New Deal for Business Group recommendations<sup>12</sup>). To deliver Scotland's Vision for Trade, we will:

- ▶ Publish our annual progress in applying our principles to decisions on trade.
- ▶ Hold the UK Government to account in its decisions on trade, including all Free Trade Agreements and World Trade Organisation business, using our trade principles.
- ▶ Take a range of concrete actions, in Scotland and overseas via our International Network, that support NSET delivery, net zero targets and the alignment of economic growth with the ambition to build a wellbeing economy, including:
  - Improving the trading environment for Scottish businesses, such as actively supporting the resolution of market access barriers.
  - Continuing to develop our policy on international regulatory cooperation and using the Scottish Services Trade Forum to inform our approach to trade in services, supporting the aims of the New Deal for Business.
  - Advancing more equal access to the gains and opportunities from international trade for people in Scotland, such as by improving our evidence base on the differential impacts of trade in Scotland and engaging with the recently established Centre for Inclusive Trade Policy's research agenda.
  - Developing Scotland's influence in global trade policy and the WTO.
  - Driving further coherence between climate and trade ambitions, including in relation to the energy transition, and continuing our consideration of human rights as part of trade policy.

12 Scottish Government, New Deal for Business Group Report on progress and recommendations, 29 June 2023, URL: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/new-deal-business-group-progress-report-recommendations/documents/> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

## 2.3 Export Growth

The Scottish Government's publication [A Trading Nation](#) sets out our approach to increasing Scotland's exports by focusing support on the markets with the most demand, and the companies best able to meet that demand. This plan is aligned to the principles set out in a Vision for Trade, optimising the Team Scotland approach to build the performance of Scottish exports. Our overarching approach to trade is rooted in our commitment to fair work, inclusive growth, and supporting the wellbeing of our people.

The products and services that Scotland has to offer have long been in high demand across the globe with Scottish companies showing high levels of resilience in the face of challenges such as Brexit, the pandemic and rising inflation. Latest figures show that the support provided by our enterprise agencies<sup>13</sup> to companies across Scotland in 2022-23 will result in £1.73 billion of planned international sales over the next three years – a 20% increase compared to 2021-22.<sup>14</sup>

Our goal is to increase our exports as a proportion of the Scottish economy from 20% to 25% by 2029. While Brexit has made this more difficult, with additional costs and bureaucracy, achieving this would increase Scotland's GDP by around £3.5 billion and create 17,500 more jobs in Scotland, with an increased tax take of around £500 million per annum. And over the decade, we will deliver on a number of internationally focused objectives which will further demonstrate Scotland's ambition for excellence in a number of sectors and fields, and build on our strengths. To do this, we will:

- ▶ Showcase Scottish expertise, particularly in renewable energy and net zero, to the world at major events such as COP and through the Brand Scotland partnership.
- ▶ Deliver our Sector Export Plans in technology,<sup>15</sup> life sciences<sup>16</sup> and renewables<sup>17</sup> to capitalise on new market opportunities.
- ▶ Continue to target export support to business to increase trade and grow our export capacity, capabilities, international reach and profile.
- ▶ Deliver a robust programme of trade missions and ministerial visits with agencies and partners in key markets to promote and further internationalise Scotland's economy and strengthen our trading relationships globally.
- ▶ Support NSET ambitions by strengthening Scotland's position in new markets and industries, focusing on the international economic opportunities stemming from decarbonisation and net zero, where Scotland can become world-leading and secure first-mover advantage.
- ▶ Our International Network will cultivate strategic relationships with key stakeholders to help unlock areas of high potential growth for SDI colleagues to pursue, utilising Scottish Trade and Investment Envoys and the GlobalScot networks to their full potential.

13 Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and South of Scotland Enterprise.

14 Scottish Development International, 'Exports provide £1.73 billion boost to Scotland's economy', 21 August 2023, URL: <https://www.sdi.co.uk/news/exports-provide-173-billion-boost-to-scotland-s-economy> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

15 Scottish Government, 'Technology sector export plan', 21 March 2022, URL: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/technology-sector-export-plan/> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

16 Scottish Government, 'Life sciences sector: export plan', 22 November 2022, URL: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/export-plan-scotlands-life-sciences-sector/> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

17 Scottish Government, 'Actions and next steps - A Trading Nation – framework to grow Scotland's renewables exports', URL: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/trading-nation-framework-grow-scotlands-renewables-exports/> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

### Case Study 1: Food and Drink

2022 was a record year for Scottish food and drink, with food exports worth £1.9 billion and exports of whisky alone worth £6.2 billion, demonstrating the excellence of Scottish products and the esteem in which they are held by the rest of the world.<sup>18</sup> Our overseas experts support Scottish companies through the practicalities of doing business abroad and build relationships with international customers. We have in-market specialists based around the world – including in the US, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, the Middle East, Singapore, China and Japan. We want to build on this success and will:

- ▶ Undertake a review of Export Plan delivery, looking at how best to support exporting Scottish food and drink companies in the years ahead.
- ▶ Make the most of our networks, expertise and reputation – using our platform to capitalise on the potential that exists in export markets, as outlined in the industry strategy [Sustaining Scotland, Supplying the World](#).
- ▶ Host an international food summit to promote the sector and consider a range of issues including food systems and supply.

### 2.4 Inward Investment

Scotland is internationally recognised as a prime destination for investment. With our world-class universities, dynamic businesses, and highly educated and motivated workforce, it is not surprising that Scotland is consistently the UK's most favoured destination for foreign direct investment outside London. As a key driver for economic growth, inward investment helps to create a more open and outward-facing economy, which is why we have clear ambitions for increasing the amount of high-quality inward investment, as articulated in our [Inward Investment Plan](#). This paper emphasises the important role inward investment plays in our economy and in the creation of a fair, sustainable, inclusive and net zero future for Scotland by contributing high-value jobs to the Scottish economy.

The Inward Investment Plan identifies nine<sup>19</sup> opportunity areas with the greatest potential to maximise the delivery of additional benefits to the wider Scottish economy and strengthen the opportunities for Scotland to continue to be an inward investment destination of choice. These opportunity areas align with Scotland's strengths and values, and to global demand, with the goal of attracting international investment that will shape our future economy. This means focusing on sectors which provide significant growth potential and delivery of high value jobs. Examples of these are outlined below.



VisitScotland / David N Anderson

<sup>18</sup> HMRC Trade Data, 16 March 2023, URL: <https://www.uktradeinfo.com/trade-data/> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

<sup>19</sup> Energy transition, decarbonisation of transport, software and IT, digital financial services, digital business services, space, healthtech, transformation of chemical industries and food & drink innovation.



## Case Study 2: Space

We have a significant opportunity to build on our strengths and make Scotland the home of NewSpace, maximising the economic, environmental and societal benefits of this thriving sector. Our ambition is for Scotland to be Europe's leading space nation and to have a £4 billion share of the global space market and 20,000 jobs in the sector by 2030. With Glasgow already recognised as the largest producer of small satellites in Europe, and with two spaceports under construction aiming to come online over the course of 2024, Scotland is already making headway on realising our ambition. [Our Strategy for Space in Scotland](#) outlines the necessary steps and key actions to get there.

- ▶ Scotland's ambition to become Europe's leading space nation by 2030 is supported by a group of space industry experts from around the world. The Scotland International Space Advisory Committee (SISAC) will provide advice and identify opportunities to realise this ambition.
- ▶ We will facilitate new business and industry growth by helping Scottish space companies enter new international markets. And we will enhance Scotland's growing reputation for dynamism, competitiveness and innovation by implementing the world's first Sustainable Space Roadmap.<sup>20</sup> In doing so, we will further encourage inward investment into innovative research, solution provision, infrastructure and value chain development, focusing particularly on priority markets in the rest of the UK, the Americas and EMEA.
- ▶ Mangata Networks, an innovative satellite-enabled cloud services company, has chosen Prestwick International Aerospace Park as the location for its new research and development hub. This investment will create up to 575 new jobs at Mangata's state-of-the-art engineering and operations hub for satellite manufacturing. The majority of these will be highly paid, highly skilled technical engineering positions.

<sup>20</sup> Space Scotland, 'Space Sustainability - A Roadmap for Scotland', 1 March 2023, URL: <https://spacescotland.org/developing-a-sustainable-scottish-space-sector/> [last accessed 10 January 2024]

### Case Study 3: The Digital Economy and Artificial Intelligence

Scotland recognises the immense potential of building a thriving tech ecosystem to fuel economic growth and drive innovation. By developing a robust tech ecosystem, we aim to improve our international profile as a hub for technological innovation and expertise. For example, AI is being used in the financial technology (FinTech) sector to add economic value. By providing insights and intelligence, better assessing financial risk and helping people to better manage their money, FinTech is just one of the possible use cases where AI can transform the lives of people in Scotland for the better.

The links between Scotland's universities, inward investment, and innovation are fuelled by: knowledge transfer, a strong talent pipeline, collaboration, and an entrepreneurial ecosystem. By improving Scotland's international tech profile, creating an environment conducive to investment, and supporting start-ups and scale-ups, we aim to attract global attention and position Scotland as an attractive destination for tech companies, investors, datacentres and talent.

To achieve this, we will:

- ▶ Implement our AI Strategy<sup>21</sup> which adopts the five OECD values-based principles for the responsible stewardship of trustworthy AI and UNICEF's policy guidance on AI for children.<sup>22</sup>
- ▶ Provide support for our major tech conferences to make them more international.
- ▶ Further strengthen inward investment in Scotland and in the technologies required to deliver our ambitions in areas such as energy transition, focusing on ScotWind, Hydrogen and Space.
- ▶ Continue to work with hyperscale datacentre operators to locate in Scotland.
- ▶ Continue to deliver more high-quality inward investment, improving Scotland's attractiveness as a location for inward investment.

21 Digital Scotland, 'Scotland's AI Strategy', 1 March 2021, URL: <https://www.scotlandaistrategy.com/> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

22 UNICEF, 'Policy Guidance: AI for Children', 1 November 2021, URL: <https://www.unicef.org/globalinsight/reports/policy-guidance-ai-children> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

## 2.5 Capital Investment

The Scottish Government recognises that public sector investment alone will not be able to respond to the global challenges we face in the 21st century, particularly the climate emergency.

That is why in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation the Scottish Government committed to establishing an Investor Panel bringing together experts in investment finance to advise on how Scotland can create the right conditions to attract global capital investment to support the physical infrastructure required for a Just Transition. The Panel published [their recommendations](#) in November 2023 and the Scottish Government published [our initial response](#) alongside the Panel's report.

The Panel recognised that to achieve our climate change ambitions, investment on an unprecedented scale over many years will be required, and the public and private sector will need to work together to achieve this. The Panel's insights will now help to inform the strategic direction of the Government in driving investment in Scotland.

The Panel's recommendations include:

- Fully considering the views of and implications for investors and investor sentiment when developing and delivering policy and regulation;
  - Establishing a pipeline of planned, costed and shaped Infrastructure priorities; and
  - Developing a streamlined and focused approach to building and managing relationships with investors across the public sector.
- ▶ We will now work closely with public and private sector partners to drive forward the Investor Panel's recommendations and will provide a progress update to the Scottish Parliament in June 2024.

## 2.6 Tourism

Increasing travel demand presents opportunities for Scotland's tourism industry but underlines the importance of developing the connectivity and the quality offering to ensure our competitiveness in key markets. [Scotland Outlook 2030](#), Scotland's national tourism strategy, sets out the shared ambition for Scotland to be the world leader in 21st century, responsible tourism and to be one of the most economically, environmentally and socially sustainable destinations in the world. We want Scotland's tourism industry to shine both within our own borders and internationally, attracting visitors and new generations of our workforce, while contributing positively to our communities and protecting our natural and cultural heritage for generations to come. The National Events Strategy seeks to ensure Scotland is recognised nationally and internationally as the perfect stage for events by supporting and securing a portfolio of events and festivals that deliver sustainable impacts and international profile for Scotland. To help achieve this, we will:

- ▶ Work closely with key partners, led by VisitScotland, as part of the Brand Scotland strategic partnership, and with our international offices to position Scotland as an inclusive, year-round destination.
- ▶ Support Scotland's tourism businesses to develop the product offering to exploit these opportunities and to internationalise.
- ▶ Prioritise key markets and audiences to grow Scotland's share of global travel in a sustainable way and drive value from every visit.
- ▶ Make the case for Scotland as the ideal stage for international events.
- ▶ Collaborate with international tourism bodies and other countries with similar goals to enhance our profile and reputation, and exchange best practice.
- ▶ Work with Scotland's airports to improve our international connectivity and secure new routes that are essential for inbound tourism, business connectivity, exports and the economy as a whole, including destinations in markets such as Germany, France, North America, China, and India.



## 3. Climate Change, Biodiversity and Renewable Energy

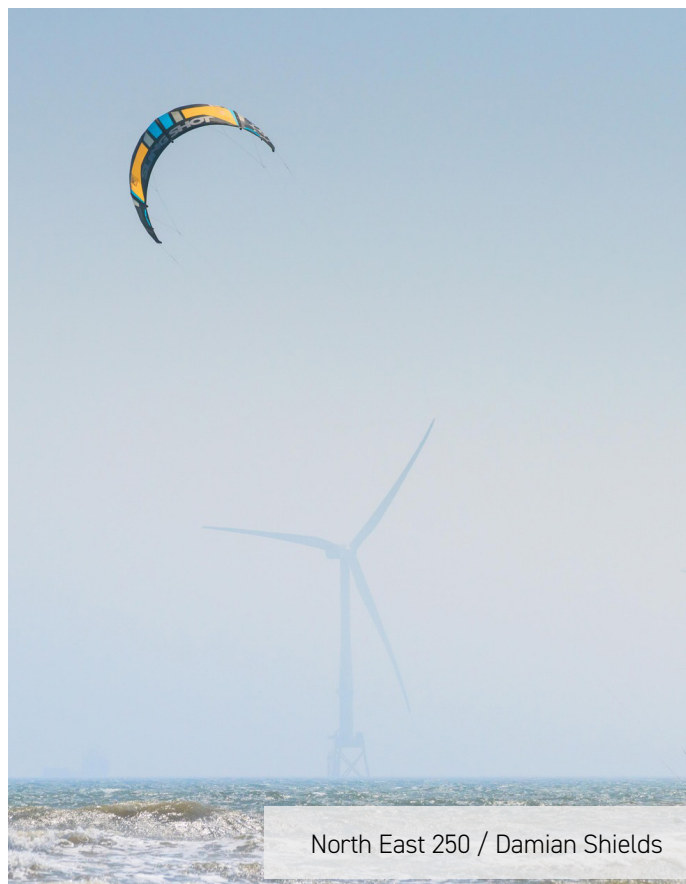
### 3.1 Our Aims

Scotland's natural environment is our greatest national asset. Its awe-inspiring, globally renowned landscapes are vital to our health, our wellbeing and our economy, supporting the productivity of many sectors, and supplying energy, resources and essential natural processes. Despite this, important aspects of our natural environment are under threat as Scotland, like many other countries around the world, is directly impacted by the twin crises in climate and nature. While there is further to go, we are proud of the progress we are making in Scotland. Our innovative [Environment Strategy](#) sets out the Scottish Government's long-term ambitions and priorities for restoring Scotland's natural environment and playing its part in tackling the twin global climate and nature emergencies.

Climate change, biodiversity and renewable energy are key priorities of our international activity. This includes continuing to meet or exceed existing environmental standards, backed by our strategic approach to environmental policy; assisting Scotland with its journey to meeting net zero emissions of all greenhouse gases through a Just Transition, as well as marketing Scotland's capabilities on energy transition including in hydrogen and wind power, and supporting renewable energy initiatives in, and knowledge sharing with, our international development partner countries.

Our international efforts will be key to furthering Scotland's place in the world and attracting innovation, investment and partnerships that bring benefits and build on Scotland's legacy on policy issues at COP28, COP27 and COP26. They are also part of our international development offer, through our support for renewable energy and climate change initiatives.

**In this chapter we present the key policy sectors that drive activity to boost economic growth, address global climate change and promote domestic efforts along with the geographic areas where we focus our international effort.**



### 3.2 Our Approach

Climate change is a policy area where there are significant opportunities and benefits to be had from working with international partners. We face a global crisis where shared ambition and action are prerequisites to achieving the goals of the UN Paris Agreement. That will only be possible with the concerted effort of a multitude of international actors, including governments at all levels. That is why the [Global Affairs Framework](#) highlights climate change and climate justice as key parts of our global contribution within the international community and why climate justice is a focus of our Feminist Approach to International Relations. We want the Scottish Government to continue to be recognised as a world leader in tackling climate change and a credible partner in confronting global challenges. We want to showcase the excellent work we are doing to tackle this global challenge and leverage this to enhance our influence in support of increased global ambition and action. We can make

a significant contribution through our emissions reduction ambition, our renewable energy delivery and expertise, our knowledge and experience of afforestation and peatland restoration, and our scientific strengths and innovation expertise on nature-based solutions. But we also want to harness the innovation and expertise that exists in our academic institutions, businesses, communities and people.

We cannot do this alone. We will therefore continue to work collaboratively with other nations and through international forums. We do not have all the answers so we want to work with and learn from others and be an integral part of the global solution. We will continue to put people at the heart of our international climate action through our commitment to climate justice and amplifying the voices of communities and institutions in the Global South.

### 3.3 Climate Change

The global climate emergency we face affects us all. The [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) is clear: human activities, principally through emissions of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming, with average temperature reaching 1.1 °C above pre-industrial levels in recent years. We are already seeing the effects of climate change here in Scotland, with more extreme weather events and rising sea levels. So we are committed to playing Scotland's full part in tackling this global emergency. This means delivering action to reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2045, through a Just Transition. In direct response to the UN Paris Agreement and the global commitment of limiting average temperature rise to 1.5°C, Scotland's landmark [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#) constituted one of the most ambitious legislative frameworks for emissions reduction in the world, making our nation a world leader in climate change policy.

This also means acting internationally to foster global discussion and action, particularly engaging with the most vulnerable. In this way we also aim to cement Scotland's position as a world leader on climate

change and influence the global agenda. Scotland has led on action to address climate justice and loss and damage (L&D), for instance, pioneering funding to address loss and damage, galvanising international agreement on the operationalisation of a LandD Fund and using our convening power to advance global dialogue, increase ambition and accelerate climate action by governments of all levels. Scotland has been the European Co-Chair of the Under 2 Coalition (U2C) since 2020. The Coalition is the largest network of substate governments, states and regions committed to reaching net zero emissions by 2050 or earlier. Today, the coalition represents 177 individual states, regions, provinces and substate governments along with several other national and substate entities: a total of more than 270 actors, totalling more than 50% of global GDP. We have used the last three years to mobilise governments at all levels to increase their ambition towards net zero, Just Transition and increased resilience. Since October 2021, over 50 new and existing members have signed an updated Memorandum of Understanding – explicitly aligning members with a 1.5 °C pathway by 2050. Similarly, since COP26, our COP programmes have amplified voices often marginalised in climate change discussions, connecting them with global decision-makers and supporting their participation in the conference. We will build on this and lead by example using our values, experience and global commitment to play our full part in finding solutions to the climate emergency, learning from other nations to improve domestic policymaking and delivery, sharing our own learning and inspiring others – from governments to businesses, universities, communities and individuals.

We will carry out a range of activity across policy development, international influencing, impact-focused programme delivery, and knowledge and evidence development to make the case for more action to tackle these challenges. To achieve this we will:

- ▶ Continue our COP bridging role by mobilising and aligning loss and damage non-state actors around priority activities that align with the UNFCCC

processes. In this way, we will deliver practical loss and damage programmes, securing increased finance globally and increasing the momentum for addressing loss and damage.

- ▶ Push for climate justice and loss and damage programmes to be led by communities. This will ensure that the priorities of affected communities are central to the development and implementation of our interventions. This will help communities in our partner countries to be more resilient and better able to address loss and damage caused by climate change.
- ▶ Seek to enhance the global evidence base on climate justice and loss and damage so that countries and communities are better informed and able to deliver climate justice and loss and damage programmes at scale.
- ▶ Prioritise climate change in the work of our International Network through, for example, facilitating policy exchange with partners and to attracting innovation and investment to Scotland.

### 3.4 Biodiversity

Our natural world is in crisis. Recent global studies have shown that the health of the world's ecosystems is declining faster than at any point in human history, with a million species at risk of extinction. The World Economic Forum's 2023 Global Risks Report identified biodiversity loss as one of the most severe risks the world faces over the next 10 years.<sup>23</sup> The decline in nature is also reflected in Scotland, where the State of Nature: Scotland Report 2023 confirms that there has been a sustained net loss of biodiversity in recent decades.<sup>24</sup>

The global climate emergency and the nature emergency are twin reinforcing crises: the actions we take to address each are fundamental to our wellbeing and survival as a species. In response to these emergencies, at COP26 the former First Minister endorsed the [Leaders' Pledge for Nature](#), an international commitment to reverse biodiversity loss and create a nature-positive world by 2030. We want to accelerate and scale up those efforts to drive landscape and seascape scale recovery. This is why the [Scottish biodiversity strategy to 2045](#) sets out our clear ambition for Scotland to be Nature Positive by 2030, and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity across the country by 2045.

In 2019, the Scottish Government was invited by the UN [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (CBD) to lead a consultation with sub-national bodies on their role in addressing the biodiversity crisis. This culminated in the [Edinburgh Declaration](#) which called for a dedicated decision and a renewed Plan of Action on subnational governments to:

- ▶ Take strong and bold actions to bring about transformative change to halt biodiversity loss.
- ▶ Recognise the vital role of sub-state governments, cities and local authorities.
- ▶ Support the adoption at COP15 of a new dedicated Decision for the greater inclusion of sub-state governments, cities and local authorities within the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and adopt a renewed Plan of Action on Subnational Governments.
- ▶ Establish a multi-stakeholder platform that ensures representation of sub-state governments, cities and local authorities.

<sup>23</sup> World Economic Forum, 'Global Risks Report 2023', 11 January 2023, URL: <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-risks-report-2023/> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

<sup>24</sup> State of Nature Partnership, 'Scotland State of Nature 2023 Report', 27 September 2023, URL: <https://stateofnature.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/TP26056-SoN-Scotland-summary-report-v5-1.pdf.pagespeed.ce.ElP-TYaoGQ.pdf> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]



Over 300 sub-national governments have signed the Declaration and we were delighted that these voices were heard by State Parties during COP15, resulting in a dedicated Decision and adoption of a renewed Plan of Action on Subnational Governments alongside the [Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework](#). Since COP15, we have remained an active member of various key International Networks which support and enhance our domestic work to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, and we will work to raise ambition for biodiversity internationally. In particular, we will:

- ▶ Continue our engagement with the CBD, particularly through our membership of the Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments (AC SNG) to support the implementation of their Strategic Plan for Biodiversity.
- ▶ Build on the legacy of the Edinburgh Process by raising our profile as a frontrunner in delivering innovative and impactful biodiversity policy, working closely with a range of regions and cities globally including across Europe, South Asia and the Americas.
- ▶ Increase knowledge-sharing on nature-based solutions, ecosystem restoration and other key areas, showcasing Scotland's leading work on the global stage. We will do this through a range of other collaborative networks including the [RegionsWithNature](#) (RWN) implementation platform and the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People Subnational Taskforce for 30 by 30.

### 3.5 Blue Economy

Scotland has almost 19,000 km of coastline and a marine area 7 times greater than our land mass. From tourism to the fishing industry, our marine areas and communities provide an immense contribution to our economy and society with an estimated £4.5 billion in gross value added from the marine economy (2021) and almost 70,000 jobs in the marine economy (2021).<sup>25</sup> In line with our commitment to the UN

Sustainable Development Goals, we want to continue to support this sector while protecting and using our marine resources in sustainable way (SDG 14).

Our [Blue Economy Vision for Scotland](#) sets out our long-term ambition for the blue economy to 2045 in which we will seize the opportunities that our seas have to offer. Environmentally, this means ensuring sustainable management of our shared marine space to address the global climate and nature crises by carefully managing increasing competition for space and resources in the marine environment. It also means considering social impacts and working towards fairer, healthier, happier communities across Scotland, with equal access to the benefits from marine resources. Economically, it means creating and maintaining economic prosperity for Scottish people, particularly in coastal and island communities.

A key pillar of realising this vision is international cooperation. Sustainable ocean governance depends on international engagement and we want to work with partners globally to deliver mutually beneficial outcomes for our shared marine space and resources. We will do this by:

- ▶ Seeking opportunities to engage with our European and international partners to learn from others' experiences, share Scottish expertise, encourage investment and work together.
- ▶ Participating in international forums and negotiations to deliver on our shared commitments and obligations, to ensure marine assets are managed and used sustainably and inclusively to deliver benefit to Scotland, neighbouring coastal states and others, to further our shared values, to support global ocean governance and to maintain Scotland's international influence.
- ▶ Continuing to develop multidisciplinary science partnerships with international partners to support evidence-based decision-making.

<sup>25</sup> Scottish Government, 'Scotland's Marine Economic Statistics 2021', 13 December 2023, URL: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-marine-economic-statistics-2021/> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

### 3.6 Hydrogen

The [Hydrogen Action Plan](#) (HAP), published in December 2022, outlined the Scottish Government's commitment to work collaboratively with international partners to develop the global hydrogen economy more quickly. International demand for hydrogen is growing fast, with Germany, Belgium, the European Union and the UK Government all investing heavily having increased their respective hydrogen production and/or import ambitions, and a number of countries in Europe in the process of revising their national strategies.<sup>26</sup> However, as more investments and commercial contracts move forward, action is needed now to ensure that Scotland is able to realise the opportunities presented by this acceleration of the global hydrogen market, particularly with regards to trade policy, standards and regulations, infrastructure, innovation, and the international relationships that support our export ambition.

We are therefore driving action across Scottish Government and the enterprise agencies to meet our ambition of 5 GW of installed hydrogen production capacity by 2030 and 25 GW by 2045, to maximise economic benefit and job creation, and to harness hydrogen's potential to contribute to reducing emissions and meeting Scotland's climate targets. International engagement is crucial to cementing Scotland's profile in Europe as a stable, reliable, major supplier of green hydrogen and to building the international relationships that will secure future trade and investment opportunities.

To achieve this, we will:

- ▶ Promote regional hydrogen cooperation with Scotland's near northern neighbours and communicate the advantages of hydrogen imports from northern Europe to continental European partners.
- ▶ Cement Scotland's profile in key strategic regions as a potential major green hydrogen producer for international markets and build relationships that will support future trade opportunities.
- ▶ Support Scottish companies to secure export opportunities in the international H2 market, increasing sales and marketing activity, while also raising awareness of hydrogen opportunities among key partners.
- ▶ Attract inward investment to support the development of Scotland's hydrogen production pipeline and supply chain through direct engagement with international companies operating across the hydrogen value chain as well as sovereign and international investors.

### 3.7 Offshore Wind

We want to ensure secure, reliable and affordable energy supplies within the context of long-term decarbonisation of energy generation. Continued growth of the renewable energy sector in Scotland is an essential feature of the future clean energy system and a potential key driver of economic growth.

Offshore wind is a large-scale technology with the potential to play a pivotal role in Scotland's energy system over the coming decades. The development of technologies such as floating wind, which offer scope for deployment in deeper water, have significant potential to contribute offshore wind energy supply at increasingly affordable prices. Expansion of our offshore wind generation capabilities in the coming years offers a fantastic opportunity to support an energy transition that not only delivers on our climate obligations, but ensures a fair and Just Transition for the energy sector and wider industry.

ScotWind is the first devolved leasing round for offshore wind development in Scottish waters and reflects very significant market ambition for offshore wind – around 28 GW across 20 projects. The Innovation and Targeted Oil and Gas (INTOG) decarbonisation leasing round presents significant opportunities to decarbonise oil and gas production in Scotland while, crucially, enabling the offshore wind sector to expand. This leasing round could also

<sup>26</sup> IEA, 'Global Hydrogen Review 2023', September 2023, URL: <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-hydrogen-review-2023> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

potentially add around 5.5 GW of capacity – up to almost 450 MW for innovation projects and 5 GW for targeted oil and gas decarbonisation. Subject to planning and consenting decisions and finding a route to market, we have a current reported potential pipeline of over 40 GW of offshore wind projects.

With scale, offshore engineering heritage, vast natural resources, an extensive network of ports and strong innovation clusters, Scotland's offshore wind sector will be at the heart of the Europe's energy transition, and its future energy security for decades to come. We are already home to both the world's first (Hywind) and one of the world's largest (Kincardine) floating offshore wind farms. Scotland is now gearing up to deliver other large-scale commercial projects.

The FM Investor Panel highlighted offshore wind as the single most important opportunity for attracting capital to Scotland and raising Scotland's wider investment profile. That is why we are investing up to £500m over 5 years to stimulate and support private investment in the infrastructure and manufacturing facilities critical to the growth of our world-leading offshore wind sector.

We will work to enhance Scotland's place as a world leader and destination for offshore wind investment by attracting inward investment to support the development of the supply chain, maximising trade opportunities and driving forward collaboration and knowledge-sharing. To achieve this, we will engage internationally through our offices and partners in a range of countries across Asia, Europe and North America to:

- ▶ Market the opportunity to invest in Scotland to key companies and develop relationships with new and existing inward investors.
- ▶ Deliver a pipeline of investor-ready opportunities.
- ▶ Capitalise on our offshore engineering heritage to promote Scotland's skills and expertise.
- ▶ Support participation in collaborative projects and gain insight, experience and best practice from other countries.
- ▶ Facilitate inward and outward delegations and deliver events that promote Scotland's production potential and future export offer.
- ▶ Represent the Scottish Government in international bilateral and multilateral engagements that support policy outcomes delivery and knowledge exchange.



## 4. Reputation, Influence and Relationships

### 4.1 Our Aims

Scotland has a strong global identity that is grounded in relationships and people-to-people links. Our reputation as a welcoming place to live and work, study, visit and do business is already strong. The 2022 Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index ranked Scotland as a top-twenty country on five of its six dimensions of reputation (governance, culture, people, tourism, and immigration and investment).<sup>27</sup> In addition, there are an estimated 40 million people or more globally who consider themselves to be of Scottish heritage.<sup>28</sup> Many more have lived, studied and worked here, and have first-hand experience of Scotland as a modern, progressive and dynamic nation.

We want to build on this excellent reputation and these extensive people-to-people links, focusing on the highest impact stakeholders and policy areas to grow our networks and levels of influence for the benefit of Scotland, as well as to learn lessons that can help Scotland address key domestic and international challenges. This includes building on our international development work as part of our desire to be a good global citizen.

**In this chapter, we will outline how the Scottish Government, in collaboration with our partner organisations, will deliver on key soft power objectives to improve Scotland's reputation and influence, and develop positive relationships to deliver on our ambition to be a good global citizen.**



### 4.2 Our Approach

Using our networks with the international community here in Scotland, as well as the relationships we have built through our international offices and activity abroad with partners such as Creative Scotland, we want to develop and strengthen our links with a wide range of public, private and third sector organisations. To do this successfully, we will use a range of formal and informal methods of cooperation such as formal agreements, partnerships, promotional events and support for organisations such as our world-leading cultural bodies and higher education institutions.

<sup>27</sup> Ipsos, 'Nation Brands Index 2022: Germany finishes first again with Japan and Canada rounding out the top three nations', 2 November 2022, URL: <https://www.ipsos.com/en/nation-brands-index-2022> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

<sup>28</sup> ICR Research, 'Literature Review for the Scottish Government's Scottish Connections (Diaspora) Work', 20 December 2021', URL: [Supporting documents - Scottish connections \(diaspora\) work: literature review - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2021/12/20211220-scottish-connections-diaspora-work-literature-review-gov-scot) [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

We want to increase direct engagement with other governments and public administrations to exchange knowledge and best practice across a range of policy areas, as well as improve and consolidate already strong ties post-Brexit. To achieve this, our International Network will build and consolidate our links with key international stakeholders in priority policy areas for the benefit of Scotland and the people who live here. Strengthening these links can include:

- Making formal agreements and partnerships.
- Supporting our internationally recognised cultural and higher education sectors to their full potential.
- Building networks with those who have a connection and affinity for Scotland, be that through business links, the Scottish diaspora, and international alumni of Scottish higher education institutions.

### 4.3 Building Brand Scotland

Key to our approach above, Brand Scotland is a strategic cross-organisational partnership which brings together the marketing and communications efforts of the Scottish Government, key public sector organisations and wider partners behind a shared brand narrative and positioning to deliver a collaborative, audience-first nation brand strategy.

This nation brand strategy for Scotland aims to ensure that at every single touchpoint we tell a consistent and unified story about who we are, thereby increasing the collective impact of all communications activity and ultimately improving Scotland's international reputation in support of economic growth. This is how we collectively build Brand Scotland.

Scotland's nation brand embodies our values and tells the stories of our unique heritage, while also celebrating our country's dynamism, progressiveness and innovation. It reinforces the positive perceptions we must consistently build for Scotland with international audiences, to drive consideration of Scotland as a place to live and work, study, visit or do business.

This enables us to bridge delivering positive outcomes for the people of Scotland at the same time as projecting the values we want to embody on the world stage. These principles are at the heart of how we communicate to international audiences to ensure consistency of messaging and visual brand presence, as well as creating the conditions for collaboration and strong partnership working to increase the impact and effectiveness of all our work. In support of building Brand Scotland we will:

- ▶ Continue to strengthen our partnership, seeking to grow the member base and extend our collaborative reach beyond the current set of sectors represented.
- ▶ Continue to create an audience-first, joined-up approach to all our international communications with the creation of a new evidence-led International Communications Framework.
- ▶ Deliver a cohesive and joined up visual brand presence for Scotland across all our communications and content, our International Network, and our programme of events through the continued roll-out of the single nation brand marque for Scotland.
- ▶ Increase Scotland's international digital presence via a dynamic programme of activity and advocacy across multiple platforms including [www.scotland.org](http://www.scotland.org), Brand Scotland social channels, partners and via our International Network of offices.

#### 4.4 Scottish Connections

Scotland needs to engage not just with other governments and official organisations but with our communities and friends around the world. Scotland's diaspora is an extension of Scotland itself – our living bridge with people, organisations, and communities around the world. 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 also want our efforts to benefit our diaspora too.

So we will strengthen and expand our relationships with and between Scotland's diaspora, those with links to Scotland through heritage, residence, educational, business, sporting, cultural or any other affinity. Our recently published [Scottish Connections Framework](#) is a first step in consolidating the many links we enjoy and setting greater ambition.

We will build on existing networks, including our own International Network of offices, GlobalScots and Trade and Investment Envoys, alumni groups, heritage diaspora organisations and other partners to create a more visible, vibrant and connected diaspora as an end in itself, but also to promote Scotland as a place to live and work, study, visit and do business. To achieve this we will:

- ▶ Progress the 50+ commitments in the Scottish Connections Framework, reaching out and engaging Scotland's global diaspora through a variety of networks, programmes and events.



#### 4.5 Cultural Cooperation

Scotland's cultural sector is inherently international, and cultural exchange and dialogue are vital to sectoral innovation. From our world-renowned festivals to our thriving screen sector, our international activity has the potential to enhance cultural connections, increase economic growth and improve Scotland's reputation globally. The sector has been badly hit by the pandemic and cost of living crises,<sup>29</sup> which have come on top of the damage to the sector caused by Brexit. We want to help the sector recover from these challenges and thrive. So we will promote the wide range of cultural activities that Scotland offers, working closely with partners such as Creative Scotland and the British Council. We want artists, creative practitioners and cultural organisations to enjoy the benefits of international cooperation and to deepen their practice through international dialogue, exchange and collaboration – broadening knowledge, insight and innovation.

- ▶ We will publish an International Culture Strategy to support the international aims and ambitions of Scotland's cultural and creative sector.

The cultural and economic interests of the culture sector will be the driving principles of the strategy. However, it will also recognise that increasing the sector's international presence strengthens bilateral

<sup>29</sup> Scottish Government, 'Scotland's Wellbeing: The Impact of COVID-19', 18 December 2020, URL: <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/scotlands-wellbeing-impact-covid-19> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]



relations, promotes Scotland as a tourism and events destination, and creates opportunities to develop new trade and investment relationships.

- ▶ We will promote Scotland as an important global centre for culture and creativity which is diverse, has strong traditional roots and an appetite for experimentation and innovation.
- ▶ Alongside this work, we will seek out innovative ways to showcase Scotland's culture sector and open new opportunities for international engagement through our international offices and the Brand Scotland partnership, as well as through the facilitation of partnerships between cultural organisations, institutions and museums.

Our international efforts can particularly help Scotland's thriving screen sector develop its offer, seize the significant opportunities for growth and contribute to a sustainable creative economy. The [Economic Value of the Screen Sector in Scotland in 2021 Report](#), published in 2023, shows the exceptional growth that Scotland's film and TV industries have experienced in recent years, generating millions for the economy, creating thousands of jobs, and providing opportunities for skills and talent development in roles across the sector. Inward investment in film and High-End TV (HETV) production has increased by 110% since 2019, from £165.3 million to £347.4 million in 2021.

Screen provides other economic benefits. Shows such as *Outlander* and *Shetland* often help to drive tourism beyond the Central Belt, bringing economic benefits to a wider range of communities. In 2019, screen tourism was linked to 656,000 overnight visits in (worth £65 million to the economy) and tourism of this sort is predicted to grow if more productions can be brought to Scotland.<sup>30</sup> We are continually seeking new opportunities to support and grow the screen sector, making Scotland an attractive production

base internationally and a place for people in the creative industries to live and work.

To achieve this, we will:

- ▶ Work closely with Screen Scotland and enterprise agencies to seek new opportunities to support and grow the screen sector, making Scotland an increasingly attractive production base for international companies and promoting Scotland's screen talent worldwide.

#### 4.6 Higher Education and Research

Scotland has a long history of excellence in learning, teaching, research and innovation at home and internationally. We strongly value the benefits that international collaboration and study bring to Scotland and want to continue to encourage international partnerships and welcome international students to study here despite the UK Government's decision not to associate to the Erasmus+ programme.



VisitScotland / Peter Dibdin

Our diverse universities and colleges offer over 4,500 courses in more than 150 subject groupings at both undergraduate and postgraduate level and each of Scotland's universities conducts world-leading research.<sup>31</sup> We take a Team Scotland approach

<sup>30</sup> Screen Scotland, 'The Economic Value of the Screen Sector in Scotland in 2019', 23 June 2022, URL: <https://www.screen.scot/funding-and-support/research/economic-value-of-screen-sector-in-scotland-in-2019> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

<sup>31</sup> Research Excellence Framework, 'Results and Submissions', 2021, URL: <https://results2021.ref.ac.uk/> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]



in promoting this education and research offer internationally. To do this we work in partnership with a range of organisations including, but not limited to, the British Council, VisitScotland, Scottish Development International, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Funding Council, Universities Scotland, Colleges Scotland, Connected Scotland and Creative Scotland, to harness our energy, expertise, and resources, increasing the impact of Scotland's global reputation. This means using our global outreach networks alongside our education establishments to build international partnerships in established and emerging markets such as Europe, China, India, North America and Nigeria. It also means using our Scottish Connections Framework to enhance international communication and promotion of our universities and colleges through our GlobalScots and Alumni, as well as promoting active participation in international programmes such as Horizon Europe and Copernicus which we are associated to.

Scotland is a leading research nation. It contributes to impacts across the globe and has significant international reach - over 170 countries and territories in the world.<sup>32</sup> Scottish institutions deliver transformative impact in areas of global importance such as driving our transition to net zero, improving health outcomes, accelerating development and adoption of digital and space technologies and vibrant creative sector. Our expertise, our infrastructure and our regional, national and International Networks allow Scotland to contribute, compete and collaborate internationally. According to a 2022 SFC report<sup>33</sup> a third of Scotland's research outputs directly related

to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals in the last decade – tackling key global challenges such as hunger, sanitation and climate change.

Scotland is also highly competitive at leveraging in additional funds - for example winning more funding per head in Scotland in Horizon Europe's predecessor programme Horizon 2020 than the rest of the UK (around 11% of the UK's overall funding with 8% of the population share).<sup>34</sup>

Our research also delivers significant economic impact. Analysis from the Fraser of Allander Institute shows all research and development spending in Scotland supports nearly 60,000 FTE jobs, and makes a £3,225 million contribution to the Scottish economy measured as GVA.<sup>35</sup> In 2021, research and development projects were the third largest focus for foreign direct investment in Scotland and remain at historically high levels – with Scotland ranking joint second in the UK behind London for RandD FDI.<sup>36</sup> To build on this excellent position, we will publish our International Education Strategy to outline how we will work with our universities and colleges to:

- ▶ Attract students, staff and researchers from outside the UK, to help diversify our international student population, and support them to maximise their contribution to Scotland.
- ▶ Maximise our social, educational and economic contribution globally.
- ▶ Deepen our global collaborations and engagements.

32 RAND Europe, 'Impacts of research from Scottish universities: Analysis of the REF 2021 Impact Case Studies', 2023, URL: [rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA2800/RRA2848-1/RAND\\_RRA2848-1.pdf](https://rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RRA2800/RRA2848-1/RAND_RRA2848-1.pdf) [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

33 Scottish Funding Council, 'Scotland's Research Contribution to National and International Challenges', 23 March 2022, URL: <https://www.sfc.ac.uk/research/impact/scotland-research-contribution-challenges.aspx> [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

34 European Commission, 'Horizon Dashboard', 2024, URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/horizon-dashboard> [last accessed: January 2024]

35 Fraser of Allander Institute, 'The economic impact of university research funding', 9 November 2023, URL: [The economic impact of university research funding | FAI \(fraserofallander.org\)](https://fraserofallander.org/) [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

36 EY, 'Scotland's foreign investment grows with record results', 19 June 2023, URL: [https://www.ey.com/en\\_uk/news/2023/06/scotlands-foreign-investment-grows-with-record-results](https://www.ey.com/en_uk/news/2023/06/scotlands-foreign-investment-grows-with-record-results) [last accessed: 10 January 2024]

## 4.7 Knowledge Exchange and Partnerships

The COVID-19 pandemic and the climate and biodiversity emergencies prove in the starkest possible way that we live in an interconnected world. It is more important than ever that Scotland plays its part. International engagement provides us not only with the opportunity to work across borders to tackle global challenges, but also to share best practice and learn from others to ensure that we develop and deliver effective policy at home.

In recent years, the Scottish Government has actively sought out partnerships, memoranda of understanding and opportunities to share best practice in a range of policy areas. For example, in response to Scotland's increasingly serious demographic challenges we have built links and raised the profile of our work internationally to enable us to better target our domestic interventions to mitigate the impact of population decline affecting some of Scotland's communities. As part of this work, we will now look to increase our engagement with key institutional and academic partners in Spain, Nordic countries, Japan, Poland and Canada on issues such as depopulation and low birthrates. Where appropriate, we will conclude memoranda of understanding to underpin fruitful collaboration.

The Scottish Government is committed to building links with international organisations in areas of devolved policy. For example, on health policy the global COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the need for Scottish Ministers and policymakers to find new ways to engage with international partners, particularly now that Scotland is no longer part of the European Union. We need to ensure that Scotland is part of global conversations on healthcare policy so that we can learn from counterparts in other healthcare systems and they can learn from innovations and improvements in Scotland. Our international priorities in this area include establishing policy and operational links with the European Union's Health Union and deepening links with the World Health

Organization (WHO). We are engaging with the UK Government on the new Pandemic Accord and revised International Health Regulations<sup>37</sup> to ensure Scotland's integration with global health surveillance and security measures.

As part of our work to embed equality, inclusion and human rights at the heart of our policymaking and delivery, we work with international partners to ensure effective implementation of our international human rights obligations. For example, we regularly welcome visits from UK Special Rapporteurs and other scrutiny bodies from the United Nations, Council of Europe and the International Labor Organization to interrogate Scotland's human rights record. We work closely with other countries to promote human rights and good global citizenship. We also fund fellowships to enable human rights defenders across the globe to develop their skills, extend their networks in a place of safety, and continue their vital work.

Similarly, as a good global citizen we want to continue to support access to clean energy in our international development partner countries, and to learn from them in return. Development of the renewable energy sector has the potential to drive economic growth in our partner countries just as it has in Scotland. There is common recognition of the urgent need to accelerate energy access, with clear opportunities for shared learning between all four countries, each bringing distinct areas of experience and expertise.

This is why in May 2022 at the UN SE4All Conference in Kigali the [Scottish Government launched a new international development funded Global Renewables Centre](#). Hosted online at Strathclyde University, the Scottish centre will harness expertise from renewable energy experts in Scotland to share learning and support capacity building, mainly online, through peer-to-peer technical support model in our African international development partner countries. A hub for facilitating knowledge exchange

<sup>37</sup> The instruments currently under negotiation through the WHO to respectively strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, and to improve global health security. These are expected to be agreed at the seventy-seventh World Health Assembly in May-June 2024.

between our African partner countries and the Scottish renewables sector, it has since formalised local partnerships in Malawi, Zambia and Rwanda. A fundamental principle of the Global Renewables Centre is that, in line with our International Development Principles, its work focuses on leadership from the Global South with climate justice, and gender mainstreaming embedded in its strategy to help ensure that its initiatives are more equitable, inclusive and effective in achieving the objective of increased deployment of renewable energy.

By increasing international cooperation and collaboration we can ensure that policymaking at home is as innovative and effective as. This is why we will:

- ▶ Increase our engagement with other governments, public administrations and international bodies bilaterally and in international forums across a range of policy areas.

#### 4.8 International Development

International development is one of the most important ways in which Scotland demonstrates its commitment to being a good global citizen. The global challenges that we face today – climate change, pandemics, conflict, poverty and inequality – remind us all of our global interconnectedness: what happens in the Global North affects the Global South and vice versa. This is clearly recognised in the concepts of global citizenship and global solidarity. We must work together in addressing these challenges and recognise that success in tackling them depends on solidarity in times of difficulty and working in partnership to help the most vulnerable. We have committed to increase our International Development Fund (IDF) to £15 million per year by the end of this parliamentary term.

The Scottish Government's international development programme has evolved significantly since its inception 2005, but our central focus on partnership to address poverty reduction remains constant.

We seek to do this by embedding the Sustainable Development Goals in how we work and contributing to sustainable development and the fight against poverty, injustice and inequality globally. We will continue to develop our progressive policies on contributing to international solidarity and enhancing global citizenship, through our commitment to:

- ▶ Align all of our international development work with our [International Development Principles](#). An outcome of our review in 2021 of our approach to international development, these set out our commitment to partner country-led and inclusive development, to collaboration and partnerships, to equality, to amplifying Global South voices, and to inclusion and diversity.
- ▶ A respectful partnership approach with our partner countries, and with organisations we fund.
- ▶ Champion a feminist approach to development, by ensuring all of our overseas development spending and work contributes to gender equality and advances the rights of women and girls.

Through this approach, we are working hard to ensure that as far as possible we put the Global South in the driving seat for our policymaking, programming, strategy development and delivery and implementation. This means working in tandem with our partner countries<sup>38</sup> to make a distinctive, positive and impactful difference to the lives of those most in need across health, education and equalities. We will work closely with our partner countries to:

- ▶ Develop new health programmes, partnering with them to build stronger health systems and tackle the world's leading cause of death and disability – non-communicable diseases, illnesses linked to poverty, pollution, diet, tobacco and alcohol use, which pose a huge and increasing threat to the health and livelihoods of people in the Global South.

<sup>38</sup> Malawi, Rwanda, Zambia and Pakistan.

- ▶ Develop new education programmes, partnering with them to support inclusive education, particularly advancing access to education for the most marginalised, especially girls and learners with additional support needs.
- ▶ Implement a new Equalities Programme. This will include our ongoing investment in the Police Scotland Protection of Vulnerable Groups Programmes with their peer police forces in Malawi and Zambia, as well as launching a new Women and Girls Fund, co-developed with women and girls, to support locally-based women-led organisations to advance women's rights.
- ▶ Continue to promote and support Fair Trade, to contribute to building a just, equitable and sustainable world.

We have set out already in Chapter 3 our ongoing commitments on climate justice and loss and damage. We also recognise that there is an increasing need to support those countries impacted by unexpected and devastating crises. Part of our commitment to being a good global citizen means stepping up when disasters impact other countries and ensuring Scotland plays our part in any requests for assistance. To do this, we will:

- ▶ Sustain our Humanitarian Emergency Fund and explore options for how it can deliver the greatest impact at a time of increasing humanitarian need.
- ▶ Increase the visibility of Scotland's response as a compassionate global citizen to international humanitarian crises and our contribution on prevention and resolution of conflict and, through this, contribute to strengthening global citizenship in Scotland.

In all our international development and humanitarian work, we will therefore be guided by three underpinning approaches: alignment with our new Principles; taking a feminist approach; and pursuing an equalising power agenda in our relationships with our partner countries and other Global South countries.



## 5. Conclusion

Our new International Strategy recognises that to deliver our domestic priorities effectively in an increasingly interconnected world, Scotland needs to act internationally. This will require a 'Team Scotland' approach that brings together the wide range of agencies and partners that work to enhance Scotland's international presence and outcomes.

By prioritising our international activity around three core themes, we are focusing our efforts on those areas that play to Scotland's strengths such as our world-leading higher education institutions and cultural heritage, as well as on areas that present significant opportunities such as the digital economy and artificial intelligence.

As we work to deliver the actions set out in this strategy, we will provide updates on our progress on a regular basis. As part of this, we will outline progress annually via our [International Network annual report](#), which sets out key achievements of the Scottish Government's International Network. This annual report will include a high-level assessment of the key themes and priorities set out in this document, and how we have delivered on these.

The values, priorities and actions outlined in this strategy will apply regardless of Scotland's constitutional position, but the contribution that Scotland could make, and the benefits it could receive, would be significantly enhanced with the powers of independence rather than devolution.



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