



BUSINESS PLAN 2010-11

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

Edinburgh Convention Bureau Ltd (ECB) is the lead organisation responsible for promoting Edinburgh as a premier conference, incentive and event destination. It is funded through a partnership of public sector support from the City of Edinburgh Council with private sector funding from our membership base representing leading conference venues and services throughout the city.

Our vision is for Edinburgh to be recognised as one of the top 20 conference destinations in the world and our mission is to position Scotland's capital as a world-class business tourism destination providing substantial economic benefit for the city, through effective and innovative marketing and collaboration with the industry to develop the quality of the city's business tourism facilities, skills and services.

2009 /10 saw the achievement of all our key objectives. We successfully secured £74.2m economic benefit for the city from confirmed conferences, acquired £1.39m worth of business for our accommodation members and increased our membership income to £154,350.

1.2 Strategic context

Business tourism is the high quality, high yield end of the tourism spectrum, complementing the leisure sector and creating year-round employment for over half a million people in Britain.

In spite of improvements in the economic landscape the global economic downturn continues to affect all business sectors across the world. In relation to business tourism the greatest impact during 2010 /11 is likely to be felt by the public and government sector leading to a reduction in the number of conferences and events held by this sector.

The association market, both national and international, has as predicted proved to be resilient during 2009/10 and there are no indications that this sector will diminish in strength in the year ahead. Associations generally have internal regulations requiring them to have annual meetings, as well as the need to meet, exchange intellectual capital and promote new research. In addition city destinations continue to increase in popularity among association meeting planners providing them with a greater choice of direct air routes and range of venues than is the case of opting for resort destinations.

With companies keen to restrict their overseas travel but viewing Scotland as sufficiently different and affordable there continues to be potential for an increase in the UK corporate market. Similarly there is potential for growth in the European market to Scotland taking advantage of the beneficial exchange rates and increasing availability of low budget air routes into Edinburgh.

1.3 Edinburgh

Successful business tourism is a vital element of the Edinburgh and Lothians' economy, contributing over £300m annually. The city's Framework for Growth 2007-15, published by the Edinburgh Tourism Action Group (ETAG), recognises business tourism as one of its four strategic priorities. Business tourism also plays a leading role in the recently established Destination Edinburgh Marketing Alliance.

The economic benefit confirmed through ECB activity for 2009 /10 is £74.2m. The overall leverage per £ of public sector financial support is approximately £100 to the Edinburgh economy. With high levels of product knowledge,

specialist skills and effective coordination of venues and support services, the ECB works with its partners and members to maintain the profile of Edinburgh as a world-class business tourism destination. The ECB's main clients are the city of Edinburgh, 150 industry members, conference organisers and a range of other stakeholders. Our principal market is the association meeting sector, which is effectively targeted through our highly regarded Edinburgh Ambassador Programme, working with specialists to help secure association meetings for the city.

1.4 Key challenges and opportunities

Edinburgh, Scotland's "inspiring capital", enjoys many natural advantages which give it a strong competitive edge in both leisure and business tourism sectors. For the business delegate, it offers a wide range of excellent venues and hotel accommodation, backed by wonderful opportunities for the social programme. This was underlined when Edinburgh was recently named as the 'best value for money' business tourism destination city in an international survey undertaken by VisitBritain. However, the ECB acknowledges the dangers of complacency. Distilled from our full business SWOT the ECB recognises the following key challenges and opportunities

1.4.1 Challenges

- **increase in competition** – from well-resourced destinations in Europe, Far East, South America and UK
- **global recession** – although an improving landscape there will continue to be negative impacts on certain business tourism sectors particularly the public and government sectors
- **conference infrastructure** – despite the welcome enlargement to EICC the city is currently incapable of hosting events for delegate nos 3000+ due to insufficient plenary and banqueting capacity of existing venues.
- **funding** – restraints on public sector finances will require our forward planning process to identify other methods of funding to offset inevitable reductions from this source.

1.4.2 Opportunities

- **centres of excellence** – Edinburgh enjoys iconic status as a capital city and a world-wide reputation for its centres of excellence in the life sciences and new technologies
- **conference infrastructure** – significant developments are planned within the city. The EICC extension, the Royal Museum project and the completion of the tramway will enhance the city's ability to attract events.
- **possible integration of ECB, Destination Edinburgh Marketing Alliance (DEMA) and Edinburgh Film Focus** – exploitation of synergies, skills and strengths may assist in achieving long term sustainability for all three organisations (through scale & breadth).

1.5 Key objectives 2010/11

The overall objective for Edinburgh Convention Bureau in 2010/11 is to achieve £75.7m of economic benefit in total from conferences confirmed through efforts of the Bureau, by end March 2011 – a 2% increase on figures achieved in 2009 /10.

The plan aims to take a strategic approach, with clear objectives set to minimise the weaknesses and threats which we face, and to capitalise on our strengths and maximise our opportunities.

Given the global economic climate, coupled with other challenges in relation to infrastructure and funding, the economic benefit target of £75.7m is designed to maintain the successful achievement of the 2009/10 performance, in the wider

context of a business plan which seeks to consolidate our position and ensure that we are well-placed for future growth.

To achieve this over-arching objective of £75.7m economic benefit, the ECB will pursue five key strategic objectives:

1. Commercial focus – the bottom line

We will continue to take a commercially-focused approach to our income-generating activities and we will, through improved marketing and sales, maximise the economic benefit for the city and return on investment for our members

2. Market intelligence & sales leads – bringing in new business

We will further enhance our research activity on behalf of the city and our members to help identify potential conferences and other sources of new business, and disseminate market intelligence to all our members and partners.

3. Customer satisfaction – keeping our customers happy

We will continue to listen and respond to the needs of our members, clients and other stakeholders and work continuously to improve our communications and service delivery, enhancing our quality assurance and evaluation feedback.

4. Lobbying and representation – the voice of business tourism

We will communicate effectively, for example through the city's tourism agencies such as DEMA, to lobby for the business tourism sector and to represent the interests of our members.

5. Business processes & systems – smarter and greener

We will further develop and streamline our systems and processes to ensure that they promote efficiencies and reinforce our corporate core values of professionalism, accountability, integrity, collaboration and creativity.

Marketing and sales strategy

To support the achievement of these objectives the ECB has devised an extensive marketing and sales strategy segmenting our various key markets and communicating with them across a range of media platforms.



2 VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

2.1 The Edinburgh Convention Bureau

Edinburgh Convention Bureau Ltd (ECB) is the lead organisation responsible for marketing and organising Scotland's capital city as a premier conference, incentive and event destination. Our role is to raise the profile of Edinburgh as an inspiring conference destination and to work as a catalyst between the conference industry and all the venues and services that our members offer. Attracting conferences and assisting our members to make them happen is what we're all about.

2.2 Vision

Our vision is for Edinburgh to be recognised as one of the world's top 20 conference destinations.

2.3 Mission

Within the context of increasing global competition and the city's framework for growth in line with Scotland's ambition to grow tourism yield by 50% by 2015, our mission is to position Edinburgh as a world-class business tourism destination providing substantial economic benefit for the city, through effective and innovative marketing and collaboration with the industry to develop the quality of the city's business tourism facilities, skills and services.

2.4 Values

All our strategic policies and operational activities are underpinned by a set of core values which reflect the professionalism and accountability that we recognise are essential to the business tourism sector. We take pride in what we do, and encourage our team members to enjoy their work and support each other in an atmosphere of honesty, integrity and creativity.



3 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.1 International and national context

3.1.1 Value of business tourism

Business tourism represents 28% of inbound tourism into the UK.¹ It is the high quality, high yield end of the tourism spectrum, complementing the leisure sector and creating year-round employment for over half a million people.

For Scotland, business tourism is worth £723m annually and accounts for 18% of total tourism spend. Scotland hosts 29% (up from 25% in 2008/09) of all international association conferences held in the UK.

VisitScotland's Business Tourism Unit (BTU), whose responsibility is to build a strong brand, raise awareness of Scotland as a meeting and incentive destination and generate demand for Scotland as a business tourism destination through a targeted marketing communications plan, has the following ambitions for the Scottish tourism industry:

- to grow total tourism revenue by 50% by 2015
- increase business tourism's share of value from 22% to 25%
- increase propensity to bring conferences/ meetings to Scotland

3.1.2 Global outlook

An improving economic situation and favourable exchange rate point to a more encouraging trend for business tourism in 2010/11.

According to VisitBritain the volume of visitor numbers to the UK, both leisure and business is set to increase by at least 0.8% to 30.4 million with inbound visitor spending rising to £17.1 billion, an increase of nearly 4% on 2009.

VisitBritain predicts that whilst 2010 will not see record numbers of inbound business tourists the prolonged weakness in the value of sterling will result in a stronger performance.

Recent research undertaken by the Meetings Industry Association (MIA) – *Actual impact of the 'credit crunch' on the conference and events market (November 2009)* also provides evidence of improvement in market conditions. The MIA research reveals that 'whilst 37% of respondents identified an increase in yield as the main challenge for the future 60.6% of all respondents recognised the signs of recovery in their own business. These results provide confidence that recovery in trading conditions will in turn lead to improved results for those involved in business tourism

The ECB expects that the association market, both national and international will remain strong during 2010/11 with an improvement in delegate attendance levels. This will result in an improved return on investment for the host destination.

As far as the corporate market is concerned we anticipate there will be an improvement in the number of meetings held by the sector, this view is endorsed in Meeting Planner International's (MPI) Future Watch 2010 report, which reveals that 'corporate planners anticipate a 3.6% increase in the number of meetings held in 2010'.

¹ International Passenger Survey (IPS) 2007

3.2 Edinburgh

3.2.1 Edinburgh's Tourism Strategy and the role of business tourism

In the UK, Edinburgh is second to London in hosting international association meetings. In 2008, Edinburgh was ranked 28th in the ICCA world rankings for international association meetings (Glasgow was ranked 42nd). Edinburgh was ranked first in a 'value for money' survey of ten world ranked conference destinations commissioned by VisitBritain in 2009.

Contributing over £300m annually to the economy of Edinburgh and the Lothians', business tourism is a vital contributor to the region's success.

Successful business tourism is a vital element of the Edinburgh and Lothians' economy and an increasingly important contributor to Scotland's economy. Business travellers spend 80% more per night than leisure visitors, they address seasonality issues by visiting throughout the year and they offer enormous potential for return leisure visits.

The city's **Framework for Growth 2007–2015**, published in 2007 by the Edinburgh Tourism Action Group (ETAG), recognises the crucial importance of business tourism, identifying it as one of the four strategic priorities for tourism development in Edinburgh:

- 1 the city centre
- 2 festivals and events
- 3 the Waterfront
- 4 business tourism

The Framework for Growth recognises that these four strategic priorities will need to be supported by effective and integrated activities in city promotion, transport improvements, the tourism workforce, sustainability and collaboration between Edinburgh and Glasgow and between industry groups in Edinburgh.

With all the support systems and funding in place, the Framework anticipates a confident future for business tourism: "We will position Edinburgh as one of the world's foremost destinations for meetings, incentive travel, conferences and exhibitions by 2015".

3.2.2 The DEMA Project - Promoting Edinburgh as a Destination

The Destination Edinburgh Marketing Alliance (DEMA) Project was set up in Spring 2008 to explore various issues which must be addressed if the city is to enhance its destination marketing function, in particular:

- the existing fragmented approach
- the need for clarity of common purpose
- the requirement for leadership - bringing people together and speaking with one voice
- a definitive destination promotion strategy
- the City needs to be capitalising on its assets and the potential for cross selling messages across the themes of visit, invest, live & study

The Alliance was launched as an entity early in 2009. Alan Johnston, ECB's Chair of Board, also sits as Chair of the DEMA Board giving ECB a strong voice in the development of Edinburgh's tourism offering.

The overall aim is for DEMA to be a powerful new function, specifically charged with the destination promotion and marketing of Edinburgh. This will ensure the city's reputational currency is maintained, enhance our competitive identity and change perceptions of the destination across the four markets of 'visit, invest, live and study'.

These objectives are being pursued by a coalition of the city's top talents, a committed team of dedicated professionals, supported by networks of the public and private sector, providing the critical tools to stand out in a highly competitive market place with a focus on the customer at its heart.

DEMA's strategy was launched in April 2009. A key objective in the prevailing economic climate was to identify early tangible deliverables and outcomes. A number of early successes have been recorded including:

- creation during winter 2009 of a city marketing campaign to promote the unique Edinburgh retail and leisure experience
- introduction of a Bluetooth pilot project for the main arrival points into the city providing welcome messages and city information
- a refocus of Capital Review into an inward investment promotional tool titled 'Invest Edinburgh'
- maximizing promotional benefits from Edinburgh's entry into The Clipper Round World Race 2009/10
- commissioning the Edinburgh Visitor Survey for 2009/10

The current economic situation and the engagement with key stakeholders continues to drive the new approach to city promotion, with a team Edinburgh focus, delivering a set of coherent and consistent messages about our destination.

During the course of the last few months exploratory discussions relating to the potential integration of ECB, DEMA and Edinburgh Film Focus to form the basis of a new city promotional organisation have been initiated. Adopting such an approach may allow the city to capitalise on the synergies, skills and strengths which exist between the three organisations and lead to the delivery of a new organisation with the scale, breadth and depth capable of building significantly on the successes all three organisations have achieved to date.

Further detailed discussions require to be undertaken and the timescale for implementing any agreed change has still to be decided (full integration, if agreed is not expected before 2011/12). This business plan has therefore been developed on the basis of *status quo* for ECB in terms of its structure and funding in this financial year.

3.3 Role of the ECB within the strategic context

The ECB's main focus is to generate for Edinburgh and its members additional and profitable all year round business from the meetings industry markets. Our aim is to further enhance Edinburgh's reputation as an international conference destination and develop the conference sector as an important element of the city's economic success.

The economic benefit confirmed through ECB activity for 2009 /10 is £74.2m. The overall leverage per £ of public sector financial support is almost £100 to the Edinburgh economy.

With high levels of product knowledge, specialist skills and effective coordination of venues and support services, the ECB works with its partners and members to maintain the profile of Edinburgh as a world-class business tourism destination.

The ECB plays a key role in the city's tourism networks, for instance through the Edinburgh Tourism Action Group (ETAG), ensuring that business tourism is part of an integrated approach to the overall development of tourism and ultimate prosperity of the city.

Within ETAG's **Framework for Growth** tourism strategy, the ECB works in conjunction with its public sector partners such as the City of Edinburgh Council and Scottish Enterprise (East) – along with its members in the private sector - to develop the conference market as an inward investment tool and as a mechanism for attracting internationally recognised expertise and talent to the city.

In promoting the city and addressing the needs of our members and clients, the ECB works collaboratively in the following areas:

- **Edinburgh** – through marketing and direct sales, winning conferences and events for the city, accruing more than £70m in economic benefit annually
- **Members** – through raising the profile of Edinburgh as a conference destination, working to maximise the commercial opportunities for our members and helping them develop their business tourism activities through marketing and development
- **Conference organisers** - through a variety of services from helping to prepare bids to advice on venues, accommodation and social programmes for delegates and their companions, thereby helping clients to achieve conference success
- **Stakeholders** – through generating significant return on investment and helping to position the city as a leading international destination, ECB secures benefits for the wider Scottish economy.



4 KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Edinburgh, Scotland's 'inspiring capital', enjoys many natural advantages which give it a strong competitive edge in both leisure and business tourism sectors. It is one of the most attractive cities in Europe, with a strong cultural and architectural heritage and a world-renowned programme of festivals and events. For the business delegate, it offers a wide range of venues and hotel accommodation, backed by wonderful opportunities for the social programme.

However, the ECB recognises the dangers of complacency. Serious challenges lie ahead – especially as we continue to face a period of economic uncertainty - if the city is to maintain and enhance its international and domestic competitiveness.

To be effective the ECB's business plan for 2010/11 needs to take into account the key challenges to be addressed and the key opportunities to be exploited. The following challenges and opportunities have been distilled from our full SWOT analysis and identify the key areas which the business plan will address.

4.1 Challenges

4.1.1 Increasing competition

Edinburgh faces growing competition from increasingly well-resourced and well-organised competitor destinations. As well as the already well-established conference destinations in Europe (e.g. Vienna, Barcelona, Prague) a significant number of emerging nations have identified the conference sector as an important component in developing their economies and are therefore prepared to subsidise conferencing, entertainment and hospitality to an extent that established cities like Edinburgh currently do not. In the past year major competitor cities including Brussels and Dublin have opened new conference facilities and Copenhagen is currently building a major new arena with conference space that will open in 2012.

See 7.2 for details of competitor destinations' investment in new facilities.

4.1.2 Economic climate

As outlined at 3.1.2 above, Edinburgh will undoubtedly face tough economic realities during what continues to be a difficult global economic climate and this will have some negative impacts on business tourism, particularly in attracting business from the public and government sectors.

4.1.3 Conference infrastructure

Agreement by the City of Edinburgh Council to provide full planning consent for the much needed enlargement of the Edinburgh International Conference Centre is greatly welcomed and we look forward to the new 2,000 sqm hall with tiered seating auditorium for 1,600 people opening in early 2013. The completion of the three year Royal Museum project in July 2011 is also welcomed. Completion of the project will not only provide Edinburgh with a 21st century museum but also with a city centre venue capable of accommodating up to 900 delegates for a conference dinner.

In spite of these developments the city is still incapable of supporting events for 3,000+ delegates. Continued investment in its conference infrastructure is essential if the city is to maintain its competitive position in relation to other conference destinations that are increasingly well organised and well resourced.

The absence of a venue capable of accommodating meetings in excess of 3,000+ delegates necessarily limits the size and yield of any one event that the Bureau can attract.

4.1.4 Funding

The ECB faces continued funding uncertainty, dependent on annual review.

The feasibility study which informed our Five Year Plan (published in 2007) demonstrated how 'standing still' is not an option for Edinburgh even if it is only to maintain, let alone increase, its international profile for business tourism.

Benchmarked against eight European competitor city destinations, the study commended Edinburgh for 'punching above its weight' in terms of the return it secures on the public sector investment. However, it also makes clear that the relative under-resourcing compared to these competitors and other destinations cannot continue without jeopardising the city's ability to compete in the medium to long-term.

4.1.5 Organisational culture

The ECB continues to evolve from a relatively secure position of public sector funding and support to a more commercially-focused business culture. We have successfully managed the transition in a way which effects positive participation from all staff and enables them both to contribute to and share in the company's success. We have reviewed the organisational structure to provide depth and strength at senior management level to support the company's business development.

4.2 Opportunities

Despite the increasingly competitive market conditions heightened by the economic climate Edinburgh has the potential to win 90% of the International Association meetings market. ECB will continue to respond to these opportunities by playing to the city's unique strengths in order not only to maintain our position as leading business tourism destination but to improve upon it.

4.2.1 Centres of excellence

Edinburgh should be marketed aggressively and effectively, not only for its iconic status as Scotland's capital city but also for the increasing strength of its centres of excellence in a range of life sciences and new technologies. The ongoing development of new fields of science and medicine highlighted by the Biocentre and the School of Informatics is leading to a greater number of more specialist conferences and with the existing and ever evolving centres of business excellence, Edinburgh is well placed to take advantage of this trend.

4.2.2 Corporate Market

There remains potential for an increase in the UK corporate market with companies keen to restrict their overseas travel but viewing Scotland as sufficiently different and affordable. An example was the London Bullion Market's decision to move their proposed 2009 conference location from South America to Edinburgh. Likewise there is potential for growth in the European market to Scotland taking advantage of the beneficial exchange rates and increasing availability of low budget air routes to Edinburgh. The Olympic Games in London 2012 and the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow 2014 provide opportunities for Edinburgh to attract sport-related meetings in the next four years.

4.2.3 Conference infrastructure

In late 2008, a comprehensive strategic overview of the conference infrastructure developments which the city requires to increase its competitiveness, both nationally and internationally was commissioned by City of Edinburgh Council and Scottish Enterprise (East). Facilitated by the ECB the audit mapped the existing infrastructure provision and proposed developments and carried out an extensive option appraisal of the investment

requirements needed to deliver a cohesive conference infrastructure which will best serve Edinburgh and Scotland's needs in the 21st century. The study is now complete. It is to be used (alongside the earlier Cultural Venues Audit which addressed similar issues) by relevant Committees within the Council to help shape future policy and funding decisions on how best to achieve both the growth in the business tourism market and the city's wider cultural requirements.

Meanwhile, the city is undergoing some exciting new developments, many of which will come to fruition in 2011, enabling us to incorporate them in our short to mid-term bid processes. Highlights include the refurbishment of the Royal Museum which will see its gala dinner space expand from 750 to 900 guests. The Apex Waterloo Place Hotel opened as planned last Spring with 187 bedrooms and meeting spaces for up to 180 delegates. Edinburgh also saw the opening of the world's first Missoni Hotel designed by the iconic Italian fashion house and the opening of the Royal Botanic Garden's John Hope Gateway facility and redevelopment of Edinburgh First's John McIntyre Conference Centre. Several significant refurbishment and upgrading projects of existing conference facilities will also play a key role in the city maintaining its international standing as a global destination. These include the planned refurbishment of the Sheraton Grand's bedrooms in 2010 and extension of Edinburgh International Conference Centre.

Transport links are a key element in attracting business tourists - improvements to BAA Edinburgh Airport, the busiest airport in Scotland with 9.1 million passengers per annum and 110 direct air routes around the world, are well underway. The £100m five year programme to transform the passenger experience saw the opening on the extended departure lounge in November 2009. The refurbished terminal will be complete by 2011 and will be capable of handling 13 million passengers per annum. Work also continues to deliver the new tram system which will provide a fast, comfortable and environmentally-responsible transport link between the airport, city centre and Leith.

4.2.4 Funding + DEMA

Marketing Edinburgh as a conference destination would benefit from higher levels as well as greater security of funding. The current arrangements, whereby funding is subject to annual review, tends towards a cautious approach when a longer-term perspective would be more productive. The realistic position is that a change to the existing funding system is unlikely in the near future given the restraints on public sector finances.

Despite this uncertainty, the ECB will continue to plan for the longer term leveraging all opportunities for additional financial resources, building on our demonstrable success and maximising all options for growth from this high-yield and high-performing sector.

The ECB is optimistic that the new destination marketing alliance will enable Edinburgh to capitalise on the synergies of the various agencies currently promoting the 'visit, invest, live and study' messages. Business tourism and its essential funding should surely benefit from this approach. By avoiding duplication of effort and resources and achieving economies of scale, both the public and private sectors could thereby invest more directly and effectively in marketing the destination.



5 KEY OBJECTIVES 2010-11

The corporate objectives outlined in this Business Plan are directly linked to, and informed by, the aims of the Edinburgh Tourism Action Group's strategy for the city as discussed previously, whilst also addressing the specific internal and external issues, challenges and opportunities faced by the organisation and its members and stakeholders around the city.

The overall objective for Edinburgh Convention Bureau in 2010/11 is to achieve £75.4m of economic benefit in total from conferences confirmed through efforts of the Bureau, by end March 2011.

In 2009/10 the ECB exceeded its £73.9m economic benefit target, achieving £74.2m economic benefit for the city. Mindful of the continuing uncertainty in market conditions but confident that we can maximise every opportunity, we are optimistic that we can achieve £75.7m in 2010 /11.

This over-arching £75.7m economic benefit objective will be achieved through the following **five key strategic objectives for 2010/11:**

5.1 Commercial focus – the bottom line

We will continue to take a commercially-focused approach to our income-generating activities and we will, through improved marketing and sales, maximise the economic benefit for the city and return on investment for members

5.2 Market intelligence & sales leads – bringing in new business

We will further enhance our research activity on behalf of the city and our members to help identify potential conferences and other sources of new business, and disseminate market intelligence to all our members and partners.

5.3 Customer satisfaction – keeping our customers happy

We will continue to listen and respond to the needs of our members, clients and other stakeholders and work continuously to improve our communications and service delivery, enhancing our quality assurance and evaluation feedback.

5.4 Lobbying and representation – the voice of business tourism

We will communicate effectively, for example through the city's tourism agencies to lobby for the business tourism sector and to represent the interests of our members.

5.5 Business processes & systems – smarter and greener

We will further develop and streamline our systems and processes to ensure that they promote efficiencies and reinforce our corporate core values of professionalism, accountability, integrity, collaboration and creativity.

6 STRATEGIES

To achieve the objectives set out above, the ECB will carry out the following strategies:

6.1 We will be commercially successful

Commercial focus

We will continue to take a commercially-focused approach through marketing, sales and other income generating activities in order to maximise the economic benefit for the city and return on investment for our members.

- focus on the high-yield national and international association markets
- develop/refine the Edinburgh Ambassador programme
- target UK corporate market, focussing on London and South East England
- increase income from CABS commission
- refine our marketing plan designed to maximise our profile
- increase membership numbers and income
- increase advertising income from our business extenders website
- increase income from online flight booking tool
- increase income from banner advertising on www.meetingedinburgh.com website

6.2 We will bring in new business

Market intelligence & sales leads

We will further enhance our research activity on behalf of the city and our members to help identify potential conferences and other sources of new business, and disseminate market intelligence to all our members and partners.

Market research to inform sales and marketing activity:

- analysing the characteristics of the association meetings that have high potential of coming to Edinburgh 2011-2016
- benchmarking Edinburgh against competitor destinations in the associations market
- gathering trends analysis and communicating to ECB members and partners
- provision of market intelligence pertinent to DEMA
- working with our partners in the BestCities Global Alliance to increase opportunities for sales leads
- recording market intelligence for each association bid win

6.3 We will have happy customers

Customer satisfaction

We will continue to listen and respond to the needs of our members, clients and other stakeholders and work continuously to improve our communications and service delivery, enhancing our quality assurance and evaluation feedback.

- develop/refine 'account management' approach to our membership
- continue to increase our communications with all stakeholders and ensure effective networking with members and key influencers
- review members' benefits and communicate them proactively
- undertake delegate profiling
- continue consumer research to evaluate conference organiser satisfaction with ECB services
- introduce annual membership survey

6.4 We will be the voice of business tourism

Lobbying and representation

We will communicate effectively, for example through the city's tourism agencies, such as DEMA to lobby for the business tourism sector and to represent the interests of our members by

- ensuring the city's business tourism needs are identified and effectively incorporated into the future promotional strategies for the city through membership of DEMA
- actively contributing to consultation workshops and provide relevant business tourism intelligence to shape planning and development
- working with partners on Edinburgh Route Development Forum to increase direct air routes
- providing information to potential developers
- working closely with the Edinburgh Inspiring Capital brand team and support the development of the city's Inspiring Capital brand

6.5 We will be smarter and greener

Business processes & systems

We will further develop and streamline our systems and processes to ensure that they promote efficiencies and reinforce our corporate core values of professionalism, accountability, integrity, sustainability, collaboration and creativity.

- train ECB staff to maximise the benefits of new members' portal on CRM system
- train ECB members to maximise the benefits of new members' portal on CRM system
- ensure staff development and training supports the company's refined commercial focus
- achieve Bronze in the Green Business Tourism scheme
- review our quality assurance practices to ensure continued compliance with the BestCities Global Alliance's Quality Management System
- work toward attainment of ISO 9001 accreditation



7 MARKET ANALYSIS

7.1 Market segmentation

7.1.1 Association market

The importance of association conferences acting as a profile raising showcase for Edinburgh's centres of excellence, particularly in the fields of science and technology research cannot be over emphasised. Capitalising on the city's centres of excellence the ECB will particularly focus on attracting association conferences in the fields of life science, technology and informatics. ECB's work in securing such conferences will not only achieve economic benefit through delegate spend but will also afford links with potential collaborative partners in the commercialisation of the city's intellectual capital.

Continued development of the Edinburgh Ambassador Programme will be vital in ECB's efforts to increase association market share. The Edinburgh Ambassador Programme, which works with senior academics and professionals from the city's commercial, legal and financial sectors to attract association conferences to Edinburgh, is a significant generator of business tourism. International association market conferences constitute around two thirds of all business handled by the ECB, with a mean of around 500 delegates per event. This provides a very solid endorsement of ECB's policy to concentrate its marketing resources on growing economic revenue derived from this particular market sector.

7.1.2 Corporate and incentive market

Corporate conferences have a lower number of attendees than association conferences. The mean number of delegates attending corporate events is 140 with the majority of events having fewer than 100 delegates and an average duration of only 1.1 days. The corporate sector both local and national was adversely hit by impact of the recent global recession and whilst there are encouraging signs of an upturn in the health of the sector a return to full strength is not predicted for some considerable time.

7.2 Competition

Recognising the high yield to be gained from business tourism, particularly from the international association sector, many other city destinations around the world are investing heavily in this industry, and Edinburgh faces increasing and challenging competition, not just from its traditional competitors in Europe such as Vienna, Barcelona and Munich, but also in the emerging markets of southern Asia, the Far East and South America.

In 2008, Edinburgh rose eight places in the ICCA world rankings for the international associations conference market. In doing so the city increased the number of qualifying events it hosted up from 41 in 2007 to 57 in 2008. In December 2009 full planning consent for the enlargement of Edinburgh's landmark Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) was granted with the centre's much needed additional function space to open for business early in 2013. Although the excellent ICCA results and the welcome green light for the extension of EICC are real positives there is no room in an increasingly competitive market place for complacency as rival destination continue to invest heavily in new facilities.

China is expected to be the world's leading conference destination by 2020 and is currently building 120 conference centres. Many of the Olympic venues were designed specifically to be converted into conference venues after the Games.

Elsewhere, Brazil and Colombia are investing heavily in their conference infrastructure and will be particularly appealing to the North American market.

In Europe, the Convention Centre in Dublin is due to open in September 2010 and has already secured the International Statistical Institute biannual session for 2011, a five-day event that will bring 3,000 delegates to the Irish capital. In 2013 Copenhagen will extend its existing portfolio of convention and event venues with a new multi purpose arena seating up to 15,000 people.

Other cities in Eastern Europe, with comparable heritage, are also investing in their conference facilities and they have the additional advantage of lower costs, which increases their competitive edge.

Nearer to home, London's ExCeL venue will complete its Phase 2 development in May 2010. The development will provide ExCeL with a semi-permanent auditorium capable of seating 5,000 delegates plus a conference and meetings hub providing additional space for up to 2,000. Glasgow's Scottish National Arena, a multi-use venue which will house 12,500 people is also due for completion in 2011.

The awarding of the Olympic Games to London in 2012 and the Commonwealth Games to Glasgow in 2014 will result in an increased global profile for both destinations as well as substantial investment in their respective infrastructures which will pose further challenges to Edinburgh's business tourism position at both national and international levels.

Also within the UK market, Edinburgh must now compete with the entry of a number of major new players including Manchester, Liverpool and Newcastle in what to date has been a relatively static 'home' market. Manchester recently completed a £20m refurbishment of its main meeting space – 'Manchester Central', Liverpool's flagship Arena and Convention Centre opened in 2009 and has played a major part in propelling Liverpool to 86th position in the ICCA league table. The emergence of these and other developing UK destinations poses a challenge to the city's leading position within the domestic business tourism market.

7.3 Marketing and sales strategy

7.3.1 Marketing & sales strategy

As the city's lead agency for attracting business tourism to Edinburgh, and with a vision to position the city in the top 20 destinations in the world, the ECB's key role is to market the city as the perfect conference destination, segmenting its messages according to the various market sectors it is aiming to attract.

Amongst its many supplementary roles, the ECB is also a lobbying organisation – aiming to ensure that the importance of business tourism to the economic success of the city is given due recognition and support. It also has a representational role, promoting the interests of its members in the conference venues and services across the city. At the same time, the ECB must ensure that it is communicating effectively to its funders in both the public and private sectors, reassuring them of the excellent Return on Investment that it achieves on their behalf.

To ensure that all these messages are delivered appropriately and effectively to the correct markets, the ECB has developed a comprehensive marketing and sales strategy which is both targeted and cost-effective.

7.3.2 Key markets

Essentially, our key markets are the association and corporate sectors – their organisers, agents and delegates, depending on the stage of the process – who are looking to hold an event in the city involving at least one night's accommodation.

The association markets are both national and international. Large associations tend to rotate their meetings around the world. The corporate markets are primarily in the UK but also on mainland Europe.

As a membership organisation, working with the premier venues and conference service providers in the city, we also recognise that our members – who supply the conference 'product' - are an extremely important market to us, along with our funding partners, other tourism agencies and a network of other stakeholders in the city's tourism, hospitality and economic development sectors.

In summary, the ECB's markets can be described as:

- association market
 - Edinburgh Ambassadors
 - organisers
 - delegates

- corporate & incentive market
 - organisers & agents
 - delegates

- members

- other stakeholders
 - funding partners
 - tourism agencies
 - BestCities partners

7.3.3 Key messages

As identified above (7.3.1), the ECB segments its markets and delivers appropriate messages to ensure that all its roles are carried out effectively. To do so, we engage with our different market sectors in a variety of different ways, using different media, determined by budgets and potential impact. The messages vary depending on the different markets and how they relate to the ECB's objectives but they include:

- Edinburgh is the ideal conference destination with the venues, facilities, accommodation and centres of excellence appropriate to target markets
- Edinburgh is a beautiful, safe and inspiring city
- the ECB is successful, professional and accountable
- the ECB offers free, impartial advice on arranging conferences in Edinburgh
- the ECB demonstrates and encourages best practice in service delivery

7.3.4 Marketing and sales activities

The following matrix shows a summary of the various activities which we undertake to ensure that our messages are delivered effectively to our key markets, and ultimately that the ECB achieves its mission, aims and objectives.

Market	Message	Action	Timing
Associations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> organisers agents 	Edinburgh is the ideal conference destination + the ECB is here to help you organise an inspiring conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edinburgh Ambassador Programme Bid documents – paper and electronic Blueprint www.conventionedinburgh.com website advertising, editorial and features in trade magazines exhibiting at trade shows such as 'Imex' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>ad hoc</i> <i>ad hoc</i> May ongoing <i>ad hoc</i> spring
Associations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> delegates 	Edinburgh is a beautiful, safe, fun and inspiring city + you can book your accommodation and flights through us + you can extend your stay pre- and post-conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.conventionedinburgh.com website delegate literature – maps, guides etc CABS and on line flight link on their conference website 'business extenders link' on their conference website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ongoing <i>ad hoc</i> <i>ad hoc</i> <i>ad hoc</i>
Corporate & incentive markets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> organisers and agents 	Edinburgh is the ideal conference destination + the ECB is here to help you organise an inspiring conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request for Proposal interactive website www.meetingedinburgh.com Blueprint exhibiting at trade shows such as EIBTM, CONFEX and Scotland Means Business <i>Corporate Matters</i> e.newsletter advertising, editorial and features in trade magazines Destination Edinburgh client targeted workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ongoing May <i>ad hoc</i> quarterly <i>ad hoc</i> biannual

<p>Corporate & incentive markets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> delegates 	<p>Edinburgh is a beautiful, safe, fun and inspiring city</p> <p>+ you can book your accommodation and flights through us</p> <p>+ you can extend your stay pre- and post-conference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.conventionedinburgh.com website delegate literature – maps, guides etc CABS and on line flight link on their conference website ‘business extenders link’ on their conference website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ongoing <i>ad hoc</i> <i>ad hoc</i> <i>ad hoc</i>
<p>Members</p>	<p>The ECB is a successful, accountable and professional organisation, promoting Edinburgh to your potential clients, promoting your interests in the city, sharing market intelligence and helping you achieve commercial gain from your business tourism activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members’ events – providing updates on ECB activities, industry trends and market intelligence <i>Conference Matters</i> e.newsletter Fam visits occasional e.blasts with news, trends + surveys press releases on conference wins for the city, new developments etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan & July quarterly <i>ad hoc</i> <i>ad hoc</i> <i>ad hoc</i>
<p>Edinburgh Ambassadors</p>	<p>The ECB is a successful and professional organisation which is available to work with you to attract high level association meetings in your field to the city</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edinburgh Ambassador events magazine editorial in university press presentations to research institutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> approx 6 pa biannual <i>ad hoc</i> <i>ad hoc</i>
<p>Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding partners 	<p>The ECB is a successful, accountable and professional organisation, fulfilling its mission and justifying investment from the public sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Report ECB Board Report <i>Conference Matters</i> e.newsletter member of DEMA representation on tourism bodies eg ETAG <p>press releases on conference wins for the city, new developments etc</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> August quarterly <i>ad hoc</i> <i>ad hoc</i> <i>ad hoc</i>

<p>Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tourism agencies eg VisitScotland, ETAG, Chamber of Commerce, STF, Tourism Innovation Group etc 	<p>The ECB is a successful, accountable and professional organisation, working with others to ensure that Edinburgh is promoted successfully as a leading conference destination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Report <i>Conference Matters</i> e.newsletter representation on tourism bodies eg DEMA,ETAG participation in industry conferences <p>active engagement with Edinburgh Inspiring Capital brand – case studies for website, use of brand images and logos etc</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> August quarterly ongoing <i>ad hoc</i> ongoing
<p>Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BestCities partners 	<p>The ECB is upholding best practice in its service delivery and actively working to supply potential association business to its Alliance partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> annual certification process management meeting conference calls intranet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> annual annual monthly <i>ad hoc</i>

