

## BUSINESS TOURISM ACTION PLAN (DRAFT)

### Vision

To return England's business tourism to pre-recession volume and value levels and subsequently increase England's market share by 5% (by 2020).

### Objectives

1. To improve England's competitive success through strong brand value for England, portraying England as modern progressive destination with traditional historic assets, raising awareness of England's destinations for business tourism.
2. To leverage England's expertise in medicine/science, academia and industry to gain competitive advantage.
3. To ensure all England's facilities, products and services continue to meet market needs to increase England's competitive success.
4. To maintain the appeal of England in the future for generations X, Y and Z.
5. To ensure business tourism remains high profile.

### Who is a business visitor?

Business Tourism includes visitors participating in the following activities:

- Association/Charity/Institute/Society Events
- Governmental meetings & conferences
- Corporate Events – dinners, product launches, conferences, awards etc
- Incentive travel
- Corporate hospitality
- Exhibitions & trade shows
- Independent business travellers

### Why take action on business tourism?

Conferences, Meetings and other business events play a vital role in economic, professional and educational development in England by providing important opportunities to communicate, educate, motivate and network, all essential components for achievement of business and academic objectives.

England leads the world in specialist areas of innovation such as biotechnology, digital media, genetics and nano-technologies. It also plays a pivotal role in finance, insurance and business services as well as having globally admired expertise in creative industries.

This specialist expertise enables England to develop conferences and meetings contributing £15 billion in economic impact in 2009, plus exhibitions and trade shows worth £7.4 billion and a further £1 billion each from incentive travel and corporate hospitality. Additionally, trade transacted at exhibitions and other business meetings is conservatively estimated to be worth over £80 billion. Meetings deliver a 12.5 to 1 return on investment directly to the organisation. The key target segments are international, national and regional association conferences, international, national, and regional corporate events, exhibitions and trade shows and incentive travel.

Business tourism in England is estimated to generate 28% of total overseas visitor spend and between 80% and 90% of total UK business visitor spend. There are over 22,000 businesses in the sector, sustaining around 800,000 full time equivalent jobs and significant tax revenues.

England was in the top five countries for international association meetings from 1875 to 1999. Its position has now dropped to outside the top ten countries worldwide with England hosting just 286 international association meetings in 2009, compared to 720 in France (Source: Union of International Associations’).

The volume and value of business tourism in England peaked in 2006, since when it has experienced a reduction of more than 25% for inbound overseas business trips and 6% for UK business trips. There is a clear challenge to halt England's reduction in global market share of international meetings and return business tourism to pre recession levels of volume and value.

Increasing business tourism in England will improve the success of England as a place to do business and raise the profile of its destinations as knowledge capitals. The urban renewal and regeneration of many towns and cities is catalysed and supported by conference and meeting activity, helping to improve them as places to live, work and play.

Business visitors spend an average of £178 per day, over 50% more than the average spent by leisure visitors.

Event type	Expenditure per day
International associations	£364
National associations	£170
Corporate	£120
IPS Overseas business visitors	£131
UKTS business visitors	£105

Source: Delegation Expenditure Survey 2006 Visit Britain, IPS & UKTS

The key decision making drivers that impact England's volume and value success and its ability to meet them are set out in the appendices Business tourism sectors and drivers (1) and Key sectors and ability to meet market needs (2) . These outline the necessary actions for increased performance with each sector that have led to the actions outlined on pages 4 to 9. Significant components include:

- creating and packaging exciting programmes for incentives, taking advantage of England's excellent sporting and cultural opportunities;
- promoting a 'joined up' approach between destinations, venues and suppliers to make the event organisation process more straight forward; and
- Encouraging strong, proactive ambassador engagement at local, regional and national levels.

Actions on product and service will aim to improve the scoring of England's ability to meet market needs as shown, with the target of achieving 5 for each sector.

## Perceptions of England

Research undertaken to inform the preparation of the action plan revealed the perceptions of England as a place for business visitors to be as follows:

Perceptions of England -positive	Perceptions of England -negative
Easy access and transport links	High costs and poor value for money
Good entertainment, shopping & social programme options	Inadequate range of hotel options (outside London)
Easy to organise events	Service not up to expectations
Good diversity of venues available	Lack of local and national government support
Safety and security for delegates	Telecommunications & technology not meeting market needs

The key challenges for increasing market share for England's meeting industry raised by meeting and event organisers are as follows:

Ranking	Challenge
1	(Ensuring) competitive pricing and value for money
2	Increased competition worldwide
3	England's economic growth and key industries
4	(The threats posed by) emerging markets
5	Staffing and skills shortages...affecting service levels

## Action Plan Objectives for future growth

Taking these challenges and perceptions into account, the action plans sets out the necessary tasks to return England's business tourism to pre recession and previous levels of success, thereby increasing England's global competitiveness and benefitting the economy overall.

The six key objectives for future growth are:

1. Improving England's competitive success will depend on improved perceptions, clear market understanding of value and strong branding for England. Internationally, perceptions of high cost are swayed by experience of London rather than elsewhere in England. There is a clear opportunity to raise awareness of all destinations across England and their offer in terms of infrastructure, service and value.
2. Leveraging England's expertise in industry and academia. With world experts in medicine, science, engineering, technology, design and digital media among other subjects, England is *the* place to visit to benefit from highly revered experience, innovation and invention. Recruiting ambassadors from academia and industry will help England to maintain and increase its global profile as a world renowned centre of learning, research and development. This in turn will encourage further inward investment in England's talent.
3. Ensuring all England's facilities, products and services continue to meet market needs will be essential to gaining competitive advantage. With fantastic sums being invested in infrastructure, facilities and destinations in all emerging markets, increasing market share will be a challenge requiring ongoing investment.

4. Maintaining the appeal of England and its destinations to generations X, Y and Z. The techno savvy generations require regular, immediate and relevant 'sound bite' communication. New and exciting forward thinking images and messages which continually surprise are key to gaining attention.

5. With a rapidly changing environment for organisation and funding of regional development, there is a need to ensure business tourism remains high profile in national and regional political arenas, to gain the support and commitment to ensure growth in volume and value in future.

The strategy and action plan is intended to be dynamic so that it can be adapted regularly to suit changes in the UK and global economy. For 2011/12 the corporate sector offers more opportunity for growth than public sector and governmental meetings which will see reduced volume due to public spending cuts. Although predictions for growth in GDP are low for the next three years, individual industry sectors' growth varies each year and this will impact the volume of events organised. Many factors including product cycles, publication of new research, mergers and acquisitions and changes in communication style will all influence the characteristics of events. The association sector always has a longer lead time and is more resilient to market changes. For all sectors, actions will be responsive to maximise potential for England's destinations.

**Objective 1: To improve England's competitive success through strong brand value for England, portraying England as modern progressive destination with traditional historic assets, raising awareness of England's destinations for business tourism.**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD PARTNERS (where appropriate)</b>	<b>SCHEDULE</b>	<b>DELIVERY PARTNERS</b>	<b>OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE</b>
<b>Raising awareness of destinations across the whole of England</b>				
i. The creation of the England Business Tourism Group (EBTG) for destinations across England that have identified business tourism as a key element of their economic growth strategy. This group will work with and alongside existing destinations groups (e.g. MIA Destinations group/Core Cities Group) to achieve the activities set out in a-i below.	VisitEngland	1-3	Destinations / VisitEngland / MIA / Core Cities	Specific target for raising awareness to be developed.
a) Identify destinations targeting international markets (by sector) and ensure these destinations (and suppliers within them) are represented internationally.	VE/EBTG			International Sales & Marketing Plan
b) Map industry sales & marketing to gain clear picture of which markets are being targeted by English suppliers, any gaps, opportunities for improved activity.	VE/EBTG			
c) Ensure clients are given the opportunity to experience destinations across the whole of England through regular, well organised, focused client familiarisation trips.	VE/EBTG			Familiarisation trip programme; business generated /awareness raising
d) Encourage business visitors to extend their stay in England, return as leisure visitors in future or bring family and friends on business trips to experience England's leisure product through effective promotions and packaging of product.	VE/EBTG			Business Extender plan
e) National product issues (fit for purpose report) – see part 3.	Core Cities Group			Fit for purpose report

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD PARTNERS (where appropriate)</b>	<b>SCHEDULE</b>	<b>DELIVERY PARTNERS</b>	<b>OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE</b>
f) National research requirements.	EBTG, BVEP, MIA Destination Group			National research plan
g) Quality assurance progress, client accreditation, review and maintain competitiveness.	MIA Destination Group			
h) Promote a 'joined up' approach between destinations, venues and suppliers to make the event organisation process more straight forward.	MIA Destination Group, Core Cities Group			Production of best practice guidelines for "joined up" destination approach.
i) Feedback from/input into Business Visits and Events Partnership (BVEP).	MIA Group			
ii. Set up England DMC group to be chaired at national level which meets around the country as mini-familiarisation trip; discuss issues such as perceptions, challenges, new products (particularly incentive), sharing best practice where appropriate -client advisory board or similar to continue the steering group.	VisitEngland	1-3	VE / DMC's / Destinations / Venues / Transport	Improved awareness of destinations in England / Successful new incentive programmes / Clearer understanding of how DMC's can contribute to growth
iii. Creating and packaging exciting programmes for incentives in destinations outside London, taking advantage of England's excellent sporting, cultural and entertainment opportunities and creative skills.	VE/England DMC Group	1-3		
<b>Improve England's competitiveness through branding -Portray England consistently with strong brand messaging</b>				
iv. Portray England as modern progressive destination as well as traditional historic assets.	VE/EBTG	1-3	All suppliers	
iiv. Brand messaging to reflect the dynamism, creativity and innovation side of England as well as the traditional - vital to helping England to compete internationally (including against Scotland and Wales).	VE/EBTG	1-3		Clear branding strategy and toolkit which can be used by suppliers across country to portray consistent message of England in both domestic and international sales & marketing.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD PARTNERS (where appropriate)</b>	<b>SCHEDULE</b>	<b>DELIVERY PARTNERS</b>	<b>OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE</b>
iiiiv. Ensure we have strong channels for sending these messages both domestically and overseas through a well researched database with up to date appropriate contacts, strong representation at trade fairs, workshops, sales missions, telemarketing, PR and advertising, online / website / social media.	VE/EBTG	1-3		Clear branding strategy and toolkit which can be used by suppliers across country to portray consistent message of England in both domestic and international sales & marketing.
ivv. Follow through strong brand messages for England with common messages across the country – access, value, quality & reliability, innovation / creative ('hothouse for ideas'), green, food & drink, heritage & history – creating a national brand toolkit.	VE/EBTG	1-3		Clear branding strategy and toolkit which can be used by suppliers across country to portray consistent message of England in both domestic and international sales & marketing.
<b>Improve England's competitiveness through value perceptions</b>  vv. Explore viability of pricing charters across country for large events.	MIA Destinations Group	1-3	Destinations	Understand feasibility of a charter. If so, guideline/ template.
viv. Review pricing models from convention centres to ensure promotion of value added and encourage further value added offers, in particular free WiFi.	Convention Centres	1-3	Convention Centres	Best practice pricing model clearly communicated to customer.
viiv. Promote good value offer in many destinations to change perceptions of England as a high cost destination.		1-3	All suppliers	Clear value messaging incorporated into communications.
viiiv. Explore possibility of national subvention 'pot' to be used for conferences that meet strict national criteria or city pots that have to fulfil certain national criteria – i.e. international conference or conference that may go to another country. Also national guidelines for evaluation and awarding of subvention. Feedback suggests lengthy processes lead to England losing out to other faster reacting countries.	ECLG (see below)	2	VisitEngland/Convention Centres	Clear guidelines for use of national and local subvention.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD PARTNERS (where appropriate)</b>	<b>SCHEDULE (action plan year)</b>	<b>DELIVERY PARTNERS</b>	<b>OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE</b>
<p><b>Perception research on a regular basis to fully understand what buyers think of England</b></p> <p>ixv. Carry out regular research at local and national level to understand buyer perceptions of England and its key destinations for ongoing testing and monitoring of all actions – ensure <b>coordinated</b> and <b>shared</b> market intelligence.</p>	Industry Associations / BVEP Destinations / Venues / Transport / VE / VB	1-3	Industry Associations / Destinations / Venues / Transport	Regular programme of perception research informing national and local marketing.

**Objective 2: To leverage England's expertise in medicine/science, academia and industry to gain competitive advantage.**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD PARTNERS (where appropriate)</b>	<b>SCHEDULE (action plan year)</b>	<b>DELIVERY PARTNERS</b>	<b>OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE</b>
i. Create working group of key destinations, convention centres and government agencies (UKTI / BIS / British Council) involved in the development of specific target sectors and within that the attraction of Large Association/Corporate Conferences – England Large Congress Group (ELCG).	ELCG	1	VisitEngland / Destinations / Convention Centres / UKTI / BIS / British Council / PCO's	Creation of group.
ii. Investigate viability of national ambassador programme for high profile ambassadors from industry, medicine/science, academia and public organisations to encourage conferences, meetings and events for England.	ELCG	1-2	ELCG	Paper on viability of programme and how it would link to local programmes.
iii. Continue to support development of local ambassador programmes and forums such as those set up by Newcastle and Liverpool in 2010 – (new group could be formed from this group).		1-3		Increased support for group.
iv. Identify which destinations are researching ICCA and UIA databases across the country; ensure these databases are being fully utilised. - Encourage destinations to employ researchers or provide national researcher where appropriate.	ELCG	1-2	ELCG	Identify optimum 'research' solution.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD PARTNERS (where appropriate)</b>	<b>SCHEDULE (action plan year)</b>	<b>DELIVERY PARTNERS</b>	<b>OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE</b>
v. Investigate scope for working with UKTI and similar organisations to develop sector specific marketing plans and for UKTI to support initiatives in this area – e.g. sector specific sales missions, attendance at trade shows or workshops, sector specific familiarisation trips, PR in sector specific publications.	ECLG	1-3	ECLG	Common objectives identified and actions aimed to achieve objectives.

**Objective 3: To ensure all England's facilities, products and services continue to meet market needs to increase England's competitive success.**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD PARTNERS (where appropriate)</b>	<b>SCHEDULE (action plan year)</b>	<b>DELIVERY PARTNERS</b>	<b>OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE</b>
i. Identifying gaps in infrastructure such as large convention hotels, convention centres (reinvestment), transport (e.g. high speed rail links), iconic landmark buildings that create sense of place – Produce “Are we fit for purpose report?” to include the specific issues below.	Core Cities Group	1-3	Destinations / venues / transport	List of key infrastructure requirements and costings.
a) Encourage national government to reduce the barriers to entry for overseas business events visitors; make visas easier and cheaper to acquire, reduce air passenger duty etc.	BV&EP	1-3	BV&EP / Government	
b) Ensure technology and telecommunications are meeting market needs and remaining competitive including free Wifi and readily available broadband throughout the country.		1-3	Destinations / Venues / Transport	World class technology and telecoms.
c) Ensure destinations have necessary intelligence to encourage better transport connections, in particular regional airports, rail and coach. Promote ease of transit from London to other parts of the country.	Destinations	1-3	Destinations / Transport	Improved connections.
d) Skills and training – promote professional qualifications and Institute of Event Management, encourage CMP nationally and	People 1 <sup>st</sup>	1-3	Destinations / Venues /	

raise awareness of business tourism expectations for hospitality generally.			Associations	
e) Promoting Quality by continuing to support MIA AIM scheme; with initiatives to encourage more venues to sign up and also to include messages in marketing to raise awareness amongst buyers of scheme.	MIA	1-3	MIA / NTO's / Destinations / Venues /	Increased sign up to scheme and widespread recognition.
f) Provide intelligence and best practice to encourage accommodation providers/suppliers to improve quality to meet market needs.		1-3	All suppliers	
g) Sustainability – Supporting BS8901 and ISO2012 and promotion of environmental and CSR activities. Promote England as the home of sustainable events – based on our history in supporting/winning business and bids with strong environmental credentials and the fact that we helped create the first standard BS8901.		1-3	All suppliers	Adoption of sustainable schemes across industry.
h) Accessibility –Promote national standards for disabled access to venues.		1-3	All suppliers	
i) National Welcome Scheme – with template for cities to follow. Ensure business tourism needs are incorporated into wider “Welcome Plan” – (also political engagement to ensure high profile figure present at opening of large events).	VE/EBTG	1-3	All suppliers	Template for best practice “business events” welcome.
j) Investigate national partnerships with key suppliers to industry e.g. train operators for discounts and special offers for UK delegates (note; BritRail pass for international delegates already exists).	VE/EBTG	1-3	All suppliers	Potential National partners identified and feasibility of national programme assessed.

## Objective 4: To maintain the appeal of England in the future for generations X, Y and Z.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD PARTNERS (where appropriate)</b>	<b>SCHEDULE (action plan years)</b>	<b>DELIVERY PARTNERS</b>	<b>OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE</b>
i. Promote England through use of social networking, viral marketing, smartphone apps and new technologies.		1-3	All suppliers	Social media integrated into all forms of marketing.
ii. Ensure all previously outlined activities (to include product, service and marketing developments) take needs and preferences of future generations into account, with regular future needs sessions and 'crystal ball' gazing.		1-3	All suppliers	
iii. Keep up to date with future client needs through participation in industry associations, online forums etc.		1-3	All suppliers	
iv. Take an active role in Institute of Event management development and add business tourism intelligence and input to other hospitality education and training.	People 1st	1-3	All suppliers	Creation of Institute of Event Management and integration of BT intelligence into courses.

## Objective 5: To ensure business tourism remains high profile.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD PARTNERS (where appropriate)</b>	<b>SCHEDULE (action plan years)</b>	<b>DELIVERY PARTNERS</b>	<b>OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE</b>
i. Continue to support strengthening of Business Visits and Events Partnership (BV&EP) ensuring industry is fully engaged and contribute to this group.	BV&EP / MIA Destinations Group	1-3	All members of BV&EP	Fully representative partnership engaged with whole industry.
ii. Promote the value and importance of business tourism at national and local level through regular updated research and effective channels of communication to national and local government.	BV&EP	1-3	All members of BV&EP	
iii. Plan and execute 'Business Tourism' road show to promote the value and contribution the sector makes to the local and national economy.	BV&EP	1-3	BV&EP	

## **Questions for Consultation**

1. Do you support the overall objectives, context and key issues highlighted in the Action Plan which have helped to steer the more detailed actions?
2. Are there any key actions missing from the Action Plan and / or do you have any alternatives to suggest that are realistic and achievable?
3. Do the delivery partners make sense or are there other organisations that could help deliver any of the actions which are not referred to?
4. What can you do to support the delivery of this Action Plan? Would you be prepared to lead on any of the actions?
5. Does the Action plan embed accessibility and sustainability (wise growth) principles fully enough, or does this need highlighting further?
6. Are there any case studies or good examples you can share that relate to and support the actions outlined?
7. If you are a DMC would you like to be part of the England DMC Group referred to in Objective 1, Action ii (page 5)?
8. Do we need further robust research on pricing and comparisons to understand value perceptions and help improve competitiveness? (Objective 1)
9. Are pricing charters for large events across England feasible (Objective 1, Action vv, page 7)? If so, is the VisitLondon Olympics Charter a good starting point?
10. Are there any other comments you wish to make in relation to taking this (or these) action plans forward?

## **APPENDIX 1: Sectors for conferences/exhibitions for inward investment growth**

### **The UK exhibition market -top sectors showing increased attendance and growth**

1. Catering & food processing
2. Energy, power & water
3. Industry & manufacturing
4. B2B (business services)
5. Books/publishing
6. Retail(ing)
7. Broadcasting & computers
8. Creative industries

### **UK World leader subjects with potential for future events**

1. Specialist Science e.g. Ultrasonic pharmaceutical particle engineering technology
2. Education
3. Importers of wine
4. Most monitored people on earth -security
5. Retail
6. Offshore wind power
7. Marine renewals

### **Which sectors suggest growth in future?**

1. Creative industries Art, architecture & design, marketing, media, film, photography, music & the arts, publishing
2. Renewable energy
3. Robotics
4. Biotechnology & specialist sciences
5. Electronic currency & finance
6. Education - distance learning - virtual universities
7. Security

### **Potential target sectors (conference and exhibition links)**

1. Science and medical (including related technologies)
2. Business and financial services
3. Environmental technologies
4. Digital, media and creative industries
5. Transportation

Potential Growth in health (including alternative), retail, sustainability/environment, IT, natural and organic health, homebuilding/renovating, employee relations, business travel, design and engineering.

**APPENDIX 2: Business Tourism Action Plan - Key sectors and ability to meet market needs** ©The Right Solution Limited 15<sup>th</sup> September 2010

The table below identifies the impacts and requirements of the different sectors and assessment of England's ability to meet these requirements currently.

Markets Impacts	International association	National association	UK Corporate	International corporate	Incentives	Exhibitions
Delegate daily spend per head <sup>1</sup>	£364 <sup>1</sup>	£170/461 <sup>1</sup>	£120/459 <sup>1</sup>	£459 <sup>1</sup>	£459 <sup>1</sup>	£16-£196 per day*
Average event duration	3 days	1.6 days	1.4 days	1-2 days	4 days	2.7 days (open)
Average size	552	340 to 400	129	129	58	10,331 visitors
Lead in time averages	2 years	16 months	3 months	6 months	12 months	12 months**
Origin of attendees	Worldwide	All over UK	Mainly local and regional (1½ hours journey)-	Europe Worldwide	UK Europe Worldwide	Local and regional
<b>Requirements -Venue preferences</b>						
Convention Centre	1	1=	3			1 (exhibition centre)
City Centre Hotel		2	1	1		
Out of town hotel		3	2	2		
University	3	1=				
Other	2		4		See note below	2
<b>Accommodation preferences</b>						
5-star	●	●	●	●	●	● (T)
4-star	●	●	●	●	●	● (T&C)
3-star	●	●	●	●		● (T&C)
Budget	●	●				● (T&C)
Other	●	●				●
<b>England's ability to meet these needs from 1 to 5 when 5=all requirements met</b>	<b>3/4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3/4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

<sup>1</sup>Figures from *Delegate Expenditure Survey September 2006* (UK National Tourist Boards)

T&C =trade and consumer

\*varies for exhibitors and visitors

\*\* Often several years simultaneously

Not all incentives require a meeting venue but most often use luxury hotels, resorts or unusual venues