

**Written evidence submitted by Scottish Arts and Humanities Alliance  
(PSI0002)**

**How successful have UK bodies and the UK Government been in promoting investment in Scotland and Scottish products internationally, and what steps could they take to improve this?**

The UK government has not always been particularly effective here. On the whole, the visibility of Scotland's distinctive brand within the UK has not been promoted strongly and systematically, despite the existence of a body of research on distinctive international perception of the Scottish brand ranging from the Anholt-Ipsos National Brands index to the British Council's 2019 Scotland Soft Power report. Better partnership with Scottish Government efforts in this direction would show that Scottish branding can be preserved and enhanced in a UK framework. As a longstanding speaker and participant at international Burns events (e.g. British Chambers of Commerce Germany, Northern Banks Scandinavia, Vancouver and elsewhere) and organizer of the Glasgow and Dublin: Creative Cities summit at the British Embassy in Dublin in 2019, the respondent takes the view that there is much to be achieved by national and civic partnership in promoting trade, tourism and branding in a multinational framework in the UK context. The Pittock Report on Burns and the Scottish Economy was taken up strongly by the DIT in 2020 and that was a very good outcome: the Burns Supper movement remains an under utilized form of soft power and showcasing for new and distinctive Scottish produce, and it has strong reach globally.

**How are Scottish interests represented and promoted in UK embassies and missions around the world?**

In certain quarters—for example by Ambassador Wilson in Beijing—Scottish interests are well represented, but this is not systematic. Scotland seems to be best represented by the hubs within British Embassies supported by the Scottish Government budget. The Scottish Arts and Humanities Alliance (representing 12 universities in Scotland, the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the national graduate school) gave evidence to the relevant Holyrood enquiry on these last year. Current political tensions over them are counterproductive: it is not well understood that they operate within UK embassies and in partnership with the UK government representatives in those embassies, and are a normal mode of substate representation where a strong national brand exists.

**How effective have the Scotland Office, in coordination with the FCDO, been in promoting Scotland internationally, and could this be strengthened (i.e. by how well they coordinate their activities)?**

The Scottish Office may be doing a great deal behind the scenes, but this is an area in which many of our members are engaged and whatever they are doing is not well communicated. So it looks as if this could do with strengthening. However, we would also note that we are aware of extensive good working practice between FCDO and the Scottish Government, for example over the Dubai EXPO, and once again this is an area where constitutional politics should not cut across co-operation in promoting Scotland's distinctive brand internationally.

**What is the role of the UK Government in promoting Scottish trade and exports, and what steps should the UK Government take to maximise the benefits of recent and upcoming Free-Trade Agreements for Scotland?**

There does not currently seem to be a systematic strategy in place, but the UK has the capacity to offer significant enhancements to the Scottish Government's own strategies in countries such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand, as well as the great prize of India for the whisky industry.

**How effectively is Scotland's cultural offer promoted overseas by the UK Government and its associated bodies?**

Currently not strongly. The British Council office in Brussels- I was there advising in 2014- marketed itself then as 'London in Brussels'. A greater awareness of marketing the UK's distinctive nations is a must when maximizing the impact of their brands overseas and recognizing them at home. To quote the Queen's late majesty on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee in 2012, to 'value the distinctive contribution that Scotland is making to strengthen the bonds that link the nations and regions of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and Europe'.

**How effectively has hosting major international events, such as COP26, been capitalised on to boost Scotland's profile/promote Scotland overseas?**

COP 26 was successful in boosting Glasgow's profile, already strong through the Commonwealth Games and other events. Not least in the Peatland Pavilion, it allowed Scotland to have a significant role in discussions over carbon capture in the small but significant number of countries who have peatlands worldwide: the National Trust for Scotland

played a significant role, and its Mar Lodge Estate on Royal Deeside had a high profile. This in its turn will be useful for fundraising overseas for relevant Scottish charities. SAHA itself had a COP 26 event on the topic of the arts and humanities role in climate change, a topic earlier raised a few years ago by Tan Chorh Chuan, President of the National University of Singapore (2008-17) in the context of the establishment of the Yale-NUS College of Liberal Arts in Singapore. Scotland's universities were also able to profile Net Zero and Sustainability projects extensively at COP, activity which also fed into the Dubai EXPO where the Scottish space industry (including its role in climate surveillance in the Arctic) was profiled by CNN and other major providers.

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