



**SOUTH OF  
SCOTLAND  
DESTINATION  
ALLIANCE**

## **Chairperson Appointment July 2020**



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## Introduction

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In May 2018 following the establishment of the South of Scotland Economic Partnership, the two destination groups for the South of Scotland (Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership and Visit South West Scotland) came together to form a Tourism Leadership Group.



This group has steadily been working on devising a programme of activity to unite the region as a single destination and has secured an approx £2.7m budget from South of Scotland Enterprise Agency (SOSE) to drive this forward over the next five years. This builds upon an original start up fund of £350K, which was awarded through South of Scotland Enterprise Partnership (SOSEP) and supported by VisitScotland, Dumfries and Galloway Council and Scottish Borders Council.

The Covid19 pandemic has since had far reaching consequences globally and the tourism sector has been one of the worst hit. But this has served to cement the resolve of the TLG to lead the industry out of this crisis and create a new norm for destination development, management and marketing.

Adopting the place brand *Scotland Starts Here*, the TLG established South of Scotland Destination Alliance Ltd in May 2020 and is seeking to establish a long term programme of activity that will completely reinvent the destination credentials of this region which is within a 2 hour drive of 14m people.

The SSDA board currently has six founding directors from across the South of Scotland and is now seeking an independent Chair to lead the DMMO.

# SSDA Ltd Chairperson Requirement

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**This is a key appointment in one of the South of Scotland's most important economic sectors.**

SSDA is looking for a Chairperson to help build industry networks, lead the delivery of a clear tourism strategy from coast to coast, enhance and develop our tourism product and make the South of Scotland a world-class visitor destination. Ultimately the role is to provide leadership to help ensure the South of Scotland tourism sector will thrive and prosper.

## **Role and Expectations**

The Chair of SSDA will lead the Board of Directors, upholding its values and standards. The Board is responsible for the strategic leadership and management of SSDA.

The expected time commitment of the post is approximately 20 days per year. The time commitment can be varied during the year and is likely to include evening and weekend engagements and travel commitments. This role is non-remunerated.

In addition, it is anticipated that the Chair will generally be available for contact with the executive and governance functions of SSDA out with formal meetings.

# SSDA Ltd Chairperson Requirement, continued...

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## Key Responsibilities

The specific duties of the Chair are as follows:

- Chairing meetings of the SSDA Board
- Chairing meetings of the SSDA Executive Group
- Liaising with the SSDA Team on high level decision making and issues of governance
- Leading the Board in ensuring proper means of implementation and monitoring performance
- Representing SSDA in an ambassadorial role via;
  - Formal representation on national and local groups
  - Ad hoc representation of SSDA and actively promoting South of Scotland tourism sector to the outside world, including the media and senior business, administrative and political figures, international delegations etc
  - Liaising with other organisations (in the public, private, and third sectors) on behalf of the SSDA and where appropriate, developing relationships with key strategic partners and funders
  - Participating where appropriate in committees, meetings, consultations

## – About the SSDA and our Ambition

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## Person Specifications

It would be helpful if candidates had experience of the South of Scotland's tourism sector, however, we are also keen to consider very strong candidates who may not have a tourism background but who will bring exceptional skills that will support the tourism sector through the work of SSDA.

Person specifications include;

- A passion for the cause of tourism and the aims and activities of SSDA
- Outstanding leadership and interpersonal skills with the experience, abilities and diplomacy to guide SSDA and the tourism sector through a continuing period of change and renewal
- A reputation for probity and integrity
- An ability to devote sufficient time to the discharge of the duties of the Chair
- Familiarity with the strategic leadership of a complex and changing business sector
- Experience of broadening an organisation's audience and engagement

- The South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA) is the new industry led organisation for tourism and hospitality marketing and destination development. It formally brings together the Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership and Visit South West Scotland.
  - Pre-Covid, we all acknowledged the need for a joined up tourism voice across the South with a Tourism Leadership Group (TLG) formed in May 2018.
  - In July 2019 in Moffat, the South of Scotland summit, attended by 24 tourism businesses, SoSEP, key agencies and local organisations unanimously agreed a collaborative action plan and the sourcing of a strategic funding package.
  - This need for a coherent strategic approach is supported by TEAM Tourism's Market Assessment Report in April 2019 that formed part of the SoSEP tourism work plan.
  - As an industry we were optimistic about the outlook for 2020, however Covid19 very quickly had a devastating impact on tourism businesses across the South of Scotland, so now more than ever before, we believe the role and function of SSDA is critically important to the recovery and future economy of the South.
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- We have developed a long term proposition, linked to the National Tourism Strategy, that over the course of the next five years allows us to become a profit making business that drives £750 million of tourism spend in the region, with an increase to £1 billion by 2030.
  - Our focus is on place-making, people, digital capability and sustainability



## SSDA Objectives

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1. To lead, influence and co-ordinate the development, management and marketing of the South of Scotland (including but not restricted to Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway Council areas) as a leading tourism destination, creating a world class visitor experience while taking into account the needs of visitors, local residents, businesses and the environment;

2. To stimulate innovation in tourism product development, product differentiation, diversification and flexibility to secure the South of Scotland as a leading tourism destination for domestic and international markets;
3. To promote and encourage the development of the tourism industry in the South of Scotland through activities of benefit to visitors, businesses and the community at large and in particular through:
  - a) Developing and promoting the “Scotland Starts Here” Brand for the South of Scotland, initially for but not limited to tourism;
  - b) Promoting and further developing the South West Coastal 300 and other strategic tourist initiatives
  - c) Developing and leading implementation of tourism and destination development strategy for the South of Scotland;
  - d) Enabling the tourism industry in the South of Scotland to network and collaborate;
  - e) Fostering cooperation and collaboration between South of Scotland tourism businesses and operators and national and international tourism organisations, public bodies and individuals interested in promoting tourism in the South of Scotland;

## **SSDA Objectives, continued...**

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- f) Representing the views of the industry with a view to influencing the development of tourism policy and practice relating to South of Scotland among UK, Scottish and local government authorities and agencies and other public sector bodies;
- g) To supply to members of the Co-operative such goods, services and/or facilities as may be deemed appropriate with a view to facilitating the conduct of their activities;



- h) Pursuing commercial activity for the benefit of members and the cooperative's financial standing in a manner which is consistent with the ethos and principles of the co-operative business model.

In addition to the core remit of developing the region's tourism, hospitality and leisure offering, the SSDA will look to build cross-sectorial engagement:

- a) Develop the industry's links with the region's education sector, highlighting tourism as a career, and helping to ensure we have a future workforce.
- b) Build the tourism supply chain and create partnerships in everything from laundry provision to digital capabilities.
- c) Work actively with local communities to demonstrate the value of the tourism (particularly important post-Covid) and to cement its part in the place-making activity of the South.
- d) Encourage a carbon-neutral approach from our membership by bringing together sectors including energy provision and transport to deliver a long-term and sustainable tourism supply chain for the South.

## Scotland Starts Here

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The Scotland Starts Here campaign showcases to visitors that it is in the South that Scotland's identity and soul were born - not only from a location perspective, but also as the pivotal areas that have shaped the nation's history and culture for centuries. It comprises of a travel inspiration website ([www.scotlandstartshere.com](http://www.scotlandstartshere.com)), a mobile app and a suite of digital marketing assets including podcasts, eBooks, videos, blogs and social media advertising.

Aimed at visitors from the UK, Europe and International markets, the campaign focuses on four key themes of Hidden Wonders, Active & Outdoors, Food & Drink and History & Heritage. By putting a spotlight on authentic local experiences and award-winning products and businesses, it will increase potential visitors' awareness of what the area has to offer for short breaks and holidays.



The initial launch of Scotland Starts Here was developed by the Midlothian and Borders Tourism Action Group (MBTAG) on behalf of the Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership and Midlothian Tourism Forum. It signaled the first phase of a new tourism drive across the areas and the wider South of Scotland. Now under the umbrella of SSDA it will be extended to cover the D&G area.

Over the past three years, MBTAG has engaged over 800 businesses in the Scottish Borders and Midlothian areas in workshops, training and product development to make them more tourism ready. Funding for this programme will end in October 2020 and so all assets will be transferred to SSDA for the new organisation to build on and market the whole of the South.



# Funding

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The funding we have received from SOSE is the first major investment from the newly formed enterprise agency.

A key element of all future funding is commercialisation of SSSA Ltd with income anticipated from;

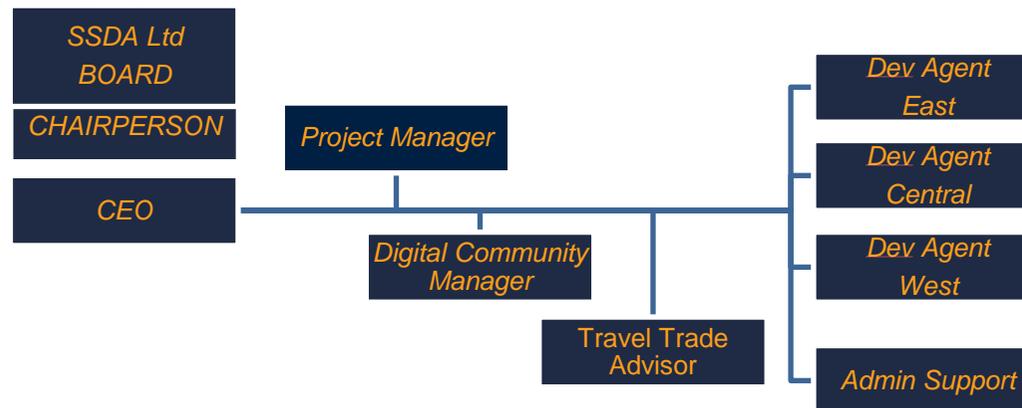
- a) Booking income – develop a booking revenue stream either through a proprietary booking engine or commercial relationships with OTAs. (est. 50-100K pa)
- b) Membership income and Scotland Starts Here brand licensing – given Covid19, we will offer a year of free access to Scotland Starts Here marketing assets, but will drive membership revenue thereafter (est. 30-50K pa)
- c) Sponsorship – the increasingly joined-up nature of the South and its tourism network will offer opportunities for commercial sponsorship along the lines of NC500 (est. 100K pa)
- d) Service provision – develop the expertise and industry engagement to commercially deliver key tourism initiatives for partners like local authorities, SOSE, VS and Scot Gov (est. 50-100k pa).



# Staffing and Structure

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- An interim Chair is in place to allow this independent Chair position to be filled over summer 2020.
- The board of directors has been formed from industry volunteers within the two regions of Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders. There are currently six founding directors with two more to be elected during 2020 to ensure good geographic and sectoral skills and knowledge. There is also scope to co-opt up to two further directors.
- An initial freelance team is being appointed to allow a CEO to be recruited and then assemble their own core team – it is anticipated that this will be mix of staff and freelance (structure outlined below).
- The CEO remit and salary is being pitched in line with our ambition for the organization. We are seeking a ‘hard hitter’ and the role will be incentivized, linked to commercialisation.
- The focus in summer 2020 is to recruit a Chair and CEO, engage businesses and develop Scotland Starts Here content and packages for D&G to ensure a smooth handover from MBTAG in October.
- A pan SoS winter campaign will be launched immediately thereafter.



## Activities

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SSDA have a five year Activity Plan which will support the sustainable growth of the South of Scotland’s tourism sector -from direct business engagement to facilitating the creation and delivery of the region’s tourism and destination development strategy. Year 1 Activity:

Theme	Activity
South of Scotland Covid Recovery Strategy & Planning	Prepare tourism sector recovery strategy, aligning with national and regional activity; launch recovery campaign as launch pad for strategic planning and understanding longer term needs
Industry Leadership and Capacity Building	Interim Project Manager to establish Yr. 1 work programme and systems; recruit independent chair for SSDA and incentivised CEO; establish team of three local development agents with admin support
Scotland Starts Here Place Branding and On-line Package Development	Establish SSH as the destination brand; expand on creative proposition and digital assets as pan SoS and for all of SoS partners to support; adopt and adapt where suitable; create portfolio of easy to book SSH packages and experiences; collaborate to amplify campaign messages
5-Year Dest Dev Strategy Development	Research and development of SoS response to Outlook2030 and SoS Destination Development Framework to influence capital and infrastructure investment
Industry Engagement Programme	Engage members at local level and expand network of member businesses; Virtual then on the ground roadshow to meet local tourism groups to set out SSDA/SSH visions and seek recruitment; pan SoS Summit event in Autumn 2020
Business Readiness Programme	Close working with industry on product development and business readiness via workshops; accredited customer care training; online visibility and bookability training; OTA partnerships
Scotland Starts Here Strategic Marketing Programme	SSH new content, media packages, business toolkit ;VS SSS campaign reignited post Covid; winter 2020 SSH campaign; annual strategic and multi-stranded marketing campaign with PR and media plans and cross sector shared messaging

## How to Apply

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For a confidential discussion about the organisation and the role please contact [info@SSDAAlliance.com](mailto:info@SSDAAlliance.com) and one of the Board Directors will be back in touch.

All applications should be sent FAO Patricia Picken to [info@SSDAlliance.com](mailto:info@SSDAlliance.com)

The closing date for applications is 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

Applications should please include:

- A statement on why you wish to take on this role, your knowledge/relationship with the South of Scotland and tourism and what the opportunity means to you (max 1 page)
- An outline of what you see as the three key challenges and opportunities this role will face and your approach to tackling these (max 1 page)
- A summary CV focusing on relevant skills and experience to fulfill this Leadership role
- Contact details for 2 character references who know your leadership skills and style

## Founding Directors Vision

"I was delighted to join SSDA as it seems the best opportunity to make a difference to the tourism sector in the south. I see the south being a major player in the growth of Scottish tourism and with the financial support of the new SOSE and our new "Scotland starts here " brand tourists will at long last start to see South Scotland!"

Douglas McMillan, Managing Director, McMillan Hotels, Stranraer

"This newly formed Alliance between the two main regions of the South is a momentous coming together for the good of all tourism. Together we hope to achieve far more than as single entities bringing a new and invigorating dynamism to tourism and hospitality right across the South of Scotland."

Ian McAndrew, Owner, Blackaddie House Hotel, Sanquhar

"The future of tourism in the UK is changing, and the South of Scotland's rural economies are in an enviable position to capitalise upon that. Through creative and passionate work the SSDA will play a core role in the growth and development of our local tourism industry, leading the reveal of the magical charms of our region and driving real change in the way visitors see us as a destination."

Vicki Steel, Owner, Aikwood Tower, Ettrick Valley

"The creation of the South of Scotland Destination Alliance is a pivotal moment for tourism in the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway. The ambition, determination and drive to deliver a game-changing destination management organisation for the South shines out from the SSDA's Board of Directors, and the political and grass roots support required to make the SSDA a success is clearly evident."

John Henderson, Owner, Born in the Borders, Jedburgh

"Through the SSDA we have a great opportunity and responsibility to build a thriving tourism sector for the South of Scotland. I feel very privileged to be a Director and am committed to helping achieve the SSDA ambitions."

Patricia Picken, Partner in Solway View Caravan & Camping Site, Borgue; Owner Yellow Door Cottage, Kircudbright; Harbourside House, Portpatrick

"Our region has never been seen as a tourism destination. Now by giving it a brand name – Scotland Starts Here – we now have the opportunity to change this. For the future of our economy and for the survival of our tourism, food and leisure businesses, the work of South of Scotland Destination Alliance is more important now than ever. SSDA will provide leadership and direction to ensure our region will see growth again."

Will Haegeland, Deputy General Manager, Cringletie, Peebles

## Partner Support for SSDA

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“As we went live as the new South of Scotland Enterprise on 1 April, we have been clear from the very beginning that partnership working is the absolute best way to help respond to the impact of Covid-19 and to support the future recovery plans. The formation of the new South of Scotland Destination Alliance is a key part of this partnership work and as we consider our medium to longer term plans - it will be vital that we develop a strong working relationship with the SSDA and its newly appointed Chair.

“Attracting visitors back to our area is undeniably crucial for our economy with our communities at the centre of this. The recruitment of a committed and forward-thinking Chair is hugely important as we take forward our ambitious plans for the region, to promote it and put the South of Scotland firmly on the map as a place to visit and enjoy. This relationship will help us to work together to promote the development of the tourism industry through activities of benefit to visitors, businesses and the community.

“We are committed to work with partners to ensure the South of Scotland comes out of this stronger than ever. We must focus on an optimistic future and one which makes our economy stronger than ever,, building on the fantastic community spirit and commitment that we all have for our beautiful area. The new appointment of Chair will provide the vital leadership to help ensure the South of Scotland tourism sector will thrive and prosper, and make our region flourish again.”

*Chair, South of Scotland Enterprise, Professor Russel Griggs OBE*

## **A Final Word from the Interim Chair**

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“I have been privileged to be asked to be interim chair in the formative weeks of SSDA Ltd, building on the facilitation work I have been doing with the TLG since May 2018. I am very excited about the dynamics already at play with such a passionate and committed board and keenly look forward to recruiting the right person to chair this organisation as it steps up to the challenges ahead.

“The appointment of the inaugural chair represents a major step for the new South of Scotland Destination Alliance and for the recovery of tourism across the region. The creation of the new South of Scotland Destination Alliance is great news for the Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway, bringing together tourism businesses across the South of Scotland to work together to ensure the best possible outcomes for the whole of the visitor economy.

“Tourism is more than a holiday experience - it sustains communities socially and economically and contributes to the health and wellbeing of the population.

“We look forward to working closely with the South of Scotland Destination Alliance going forward to help the tourism industry in the region become an economic and social powerhouse again. There is no doubt an opportunity to reset tourism together with local communities and look at how we can take it forward in a responsible manner as local management will be as important as local promotion.”

*VisitScotland Chief Executive Malcolm Roughead*

“The times we are in are difficult in a way no-one could ever have imagined but in many ways the South of Scotland could be in a much stronger place moving forward with the indications showing staycations, personal experiences and the great outdoors, being key priorities for many people post Covid19.

“This stunning and largely undiscovered region sits right in the middle of Scotland’s Central belt and large population hubs in the north of England. With the right leadership driving this destination forward this could be the start of a very exciting era in the South of Scotland’s fortunes. This is not to belittle the devastating impacts of Covid19 or the immense challenges that will lie ahead – but definitely gives a real sense of purpose. My hope is this unique set of circumstances will spark interest from the right person to chair and lead this new organisation through not just its formative years but also its most challenging.”

**Carron Tobin, ruralDimensions**



