



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 21 February 2008

VISITSCOTLAND.COM TO LAUNCH NEW WEBSITE

(Issued on behalf of VisitScotland.com)

VisitScotland.com will launch its new website on 2 April 2008, the most significant change to the UK's most popular tourism destination website in six years.

Extensive work to create the new website is currently underway and dates back to summer of 2007 when many of the ideas were suggested by the tourism industry directly.

Giving tourism providers the opportunity to contribute to the new website's design has underpinned the development strategy. VisitScotland and the Scottish Tourism Forum have been closely involved in the evolution of the new site and have welcomed the plans.

Marco Truffelli, Chief Executive of VisitScotland.com, commented;

"The changes are now possible thanks to our world leading technology platform which was deployed in early 2007. The evolution of the site has been created in response to consumer demand and in line with industry expectation. Last year we worked extensively with the industry and agreed some significant and far reaching changes which we are now putting into place. Direct contact details shown clearly on the site will be available, as well as a range of interesting new features and online bookable experiences.

"If you look at tourism destination websites across the world, Scotland is truly leading the way. This is a tangible step in e-enabling our tourism service providers, helping them to make more money out of the internet and make our contribution to the 50% growth target by 2015"

Iain Herbert, Chief Executive of the Scottish Tourism Forum, commented;

“The Scottish Tourism Forum is delighted to see the new format of VisitScotland.com which provides some real opportunities for the whole tourism industry in Scotland. This will be a key delivery tool for operators at all levels demonstrating the industry’s drive and ambition to position Scotland as an accessible must see destination. We look forward to working with VisitScotland.com to feed in further industry ideas as it develops further.”

Fifteen focus groups held across the country last year produced some innovative thinking and the new website incorporates a number of important changes. These include:

- The split of the website into two distinct zones; Scotland’s Ultimate Visitors’ Guide and the Online Travel Shop
- The ability to browse over 14,000 providers with extended opportunities to profile properties with their contact details. Accommodation providers with VisitScotland Quality Assurance will benefit from improved listings and booking opportunities
- New shopping opportunities including travel tickets and packaged experiences
- Increased listings and new directory of tourism services and attractions.

VisitScotland.com enjoyed 11 million visitors in 2007 and this is predicted to rise to 12.9 million in 2009.

VisitScotland.com earns money from fees gathered from listings and on commissions from bookings. Tourism providers are given a choice of marketing opportunities by VisitScotland and these include new opportunities with VisitScotland.com.

VisitScotland.com was launched as a public private partnership in 2002 and is owned by eTourism Ltd. Its shareholders include VisitScotland, Tiscover, Atos Origin and Partnerships UK.

ENDS

For further information, please contact:

**Kirsten Speirs
Marco Truffelli**

**KDMedia Ltd
VisitScotland.com**

**0131 624 9840/ 07810434204
01506 832 101/ 07786266652**