

Of all the regions of Scotland, Argyll & the Isles is the most represented economically in terms of tourism - tourism is therefore a vital component of the region's economy

Source: Office for National Statistics (Compiled by Scottish Government)

In the period 2011 – 2014, Argyll and the Isles has comprehensively outperformed Scotland as a whole in terms of tourism.

A&I total visitor spend increased from **£199m to £270m** – an increase of **36%** (**4%** for **Scotland**)

A&I Overseas Visitor Spend rose from **£36m to £46m** – an increase of **28%** (**23%** for **Scotland**)

A&I Sustainable Tourism GVA rose from **£81m to £127m** - an increase of **57%** (**29%** for **Scotland**)

A&I Turnover rose from **£167m to £227m** – an increase of **36%** (**15%** for **Scotland**)

Source: Office of National Statistics, Annual Business Survey (Compiled by Scottish Government)

The greatest percentage increase in visitors to attractions by council area between 2015 and 2016 was in Argyll & The Isles at **21.9%** as compared to 4.9% for Scotland as a whole

Source: Visitor Attraction Monitor, The Moffat Centre, Glasgow Caledonian University

In 2015 AITC led the development of the regional response to the national strategy '**Tourism Argyll & The Isles 2020**' with a target to grow visitor spend from £270m in 2014 to **£300m by 2020**. This will now be refreshed. AITC's ratio of leveraged to core funding from A&BC over the period 2014 - 2017 is **3.88**. Over five years AITC has attracted in excess of **£860k** core and leveraged funding.

'GHRL's view is that it is highly likely that the relatively high performance of tourism related businesses in the Argyll & The Isles region in the past 5 years can be attributed in no small part to the effort and achievements of AITC.

To take a counterfactual position, had AITC not been formed and undertaken the extensive programme of tourism planning and marketing that it has, then one would be surprised if the economic benefits to the region would have been as strong as they have been.

The evidence suggests that AITC has been highly effective in the right areas, i.e. branding and marketing, setting and facilitating the implementation of strategy and leveraging funding.

The fundamental idea of a single, branded and promoted package has probably been instrumental in shifting the tourism landscape from essentially competitive to collaborative: a significant benefit for tourism in the region.'

Source: Mark Nash, GHRL, 'An Assessment of AITC's Impact on Tourism in Argyll & The Isles 2011-2016'

New visitors to **exploreargyll.co.uk** increased by **67%** and page views by **47%** from 2015 to 2016.

In 2016 AITC had **5898** Twitter followers **611** Instagram followers & **3827** Facebook likes.

AITC has attended VS EXPO for five consecutive years generating in excess of **500 travel trade** appointments and over **260 strong leads** for local businesses.

In 2014 AITC distributed over **1 million** branded leaflets across Scotland. In 2016 AITC published 109 on-line blogs.

AITC facilitated over **150** individuals to receive Principles of Customer Service training in 2016



WILD ABOUT ARGYLL

AITC's 12 day epic #WildAboutArgyll adventure and film challenge with endurance athlete Mark Beaumont attracted over **£60k** funding from **10** project partners, engaged over **115** local businesses and has now secured a **£100k** marketing campaign for 2017. More than **93,000** social accounts were actively engaged over the 12 days.

In 2016 AITC arranged for over **200** individuals/businesses to get involved in the DTS workshops and training event in 2016. More than **370** businesses completed AITC's digital tourism needs analysis survey.



In 2016, **16 of the 50** Highland & Islands Tourism Awards finalists were from Argyll, including AITC itself; significantly more than any other region. **Four out of the 15** ultimate winners were from Argyll.

At the end of 2016 over **54%** of local businesses stated the season was better/much better than 2015; over **77%** reported an increase in turnover (**23.5%** were 10% up or higher) and **77%** of businesses are optimistic about the next 12 months
Source AITC Tourism Barometer 2016

AITC has **11 DMO** and **5 sectoral group members** - giving a reach to over **1300 businesses**. AITC has 10 directors and contracts 10 freelance development managers/agents. AITC Director time and expertise is provided on a voluntary basis – equating to **over £40k per annum** consulting-equivalent rates.