

# **Evaluation of the ‘Event Ready Producers - Road to 2014 and beyond’ project**

**Report to Scottish Enterprise, September 2016 - Executive Summary**

## Executive summary

This is the report of an evaluation and economic impact assessment of the project: 'Event Ready Producers - Road to 2014 and beyond'. The Event Ready Producers project (hereafter ERP) in scope for this study runs from March 2012 to February 2016 i.e. for c. 47 months. The study has been undertaken on behalf of Scottish Enterprise (SE) by Stewart Brown Associates Limited during April to June 2016.

The objectives set by SE for this study include assessments of: (i) achievements against project objectives and targets; (ii) the extent to which the original market failure rationale for the project has been justified and addressed; (iii) the actual (to date) and anticipated economic impact arising from the project; (iv) any other benefits, tangible or intangible, that participants have gained; (v) the value for money (vfm) achieved by SE's investment in the project; (vi) the efficacy of what has been delivered through the project; (vii) what more, if anything, could have been done to help participating companies realise benefits; and (viii) any learning that should influence similar activities in future.

## Summary findings

The ERP project has delivered many of the outputs identified in the original Approval Paper – a market segmentation, business referrals to third party sources of information and support, a business database, a website and e-zine (jointly with the Experiencing Scotland project), as well as producing a set of company case studies. Following an extension to its period of delivery by c. 12 months, the ERP project has achieved 86% of its target (of 26) for provision of 1-2-1 support to companies.

The original information failure rationale for the intervention is justified and it has been addressed by the project.

Stakeholders point to the project as a good example of partnership working between stakeholder organisations, although certain consultees have argued that more referrals of candidate businesses to the project delivery team coming forward from some (but not all) quarters would have been beneficial.

Over four years, 26 businesses received 1-2-1 support. Businesses are broadly satisfied with the support received. For example:

- 85% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the review of their company's readiness to supply events in Scotland
- 100% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the advice they received on sales and supply strategies
- 71% are satisfied or very satisfied with the advice given on product and price propositions.

On business capacity and capability outcomes, c.61% feel better able to plan to supply event organisers and better able to find support when they need it, but only 38% feel better placed to actually supply event organisers in Scotland. Also, 15 participants report winning business at c. 71 different events attended for the first time after receipt of the ERP support.

The economic impact of the ERP project in terms of net additional GVA lies in the range £104k to £160k, aggregated over a seven-year period. The Net Present Value for the ERP project lies in the range minus £51k to plus £5k. The low number of responses to a beneficiary survey and the inability/unwillingness of some companies to share quantitative business performance data together have an adverse effect on the quality and usefulness of these impact findings. Moreover, relatively few survey respondents received support in the early part of the programme. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that, for a relatively large proportion of respondents, not all of the impacts that the support might achieve would have arisen by the time of the survey. In other words, it is possible that our findings may under-estimate the eventual overall impact of support.

In terms of a value for money assessment, the ratio of net additional GVA to £ of spend ranges between 0.67 and 1.03. The cost per job ranges from c.£29k to £45k. Overall, the project has delivered relatively poor value for money whilst the evidence points to the delivery of support being appropriate in the context of the 2014-15 year of international events and Homecoming celebrations, and their associated business opportunities.

On other business and economic benefits, c. 69% of business survey respondents said that the 1-2-1 support had a 'significant positive impact on the way that the company finds and secures event organisers as clients'; overall, there was a 73% increase in the number of event-organiser clients that firms had after receiving 1-2-1 support and 61% of respondents said their business had improved its service delivery to event organisers in Scotland following the support.