vinetur

Scottish tourism group seeks cabinet post for the industry

The alliance says a dedicated minister would give tourism a stronger voice in the next Scottish government.

Wednesday, May 20, 2026



The Scottish Tourism Alliance is pressing the next Scottish government to create a dedicated cabinet secretary or minister for tourism, arguing that the sector needs a stronger voice at the top of government after the Holyrood election.

The alliance said such an appointment, along with a shadow tourism figure, would help ensure that the new administration can champion tourism and hospitality and improve coordination across departments. The group said the proposal was part of a broader manifesto for Scotland’s £11.4bn-a-year tourism and hospitality industry that it set out before voters went to the polls.

Among the other measures it wants are reform of business rates, a Scottish tourism and hospitality growth plan, more investment in training and retention, and better transport and digital connectivity. The STA said those steps are needed to support an industry that it described as central to Scotland’s economy and communities.

Marc Crothall MBE, chief executive of the STA, said tourism is “Scotland’s shop window to the world” and one of its most resilient industries, but warned against assuming that resilience alone will protect it. He said the sector was at a crossroads and that decisions made now would determine whether Scotland invests in growth or faces decline that could hurt businesses, jobs and communities.

Crothall said there is no part of Scotland where tourism is not an important source of employment and business, adding that in many rural and island areas it is the main employer. He also said half of Scotland’s tourism and hospitality businesses are at risk because they lack cash reserves, and argued that the industry needs recognition as a reliable area for investment rather than only supportive language from politicians.

The call comes as Scotland’s tourism sector continues to seek a clearer place in government policy at a time when operators are dealing with pressure on costs, staffing and demand. For wine tourism businesses, hotels, restaurants and visitor attractions tied to food and drink, any shift in policy could affect how much support reaches the wider hospitality economy that helps drive travel spending across the country.