Over the last 13 years, the Senscot Board has pursued a single mission – one of working to put in place the financial, regulatory and support infrastructure that would underpin the development of a strong and sustainable social enterprise community in Scotland. In pursuing this mission Senscot has held fast – on occasions at considerable cost to itself - to certain key strategic principles:

• Always seeking to 'add value' by taking initiatives in areas with no existing players.

• Wherever possible building coalitions or partnerships to carry forward the new initiative.

• 'Floating off' new initiatives once established and relinquishing any ownership or control whether via share holding or board nominations.

• Acting on 'Open Source' principles rather than trying to own and brand as proprietary property all the materials arising from out work.

• Maximising participation through either free or very low cost access to our resources.

Its achievements are summarised under three headings below:

Developing Support Infrastructure:

2001 Establishing – with 6 other partners across the UK - **UnLtd (The Foundation for Social Entrepreneurs)** and **Scotland UnLtd** to provide seed capital in the form of grants to emerging social entrepreneurs and social enterprises. Because of Senscot's early involvement, Scotland is the only part of the UK that has a ring-fenced awards budget and delegated staff and decision-making processes.

2002 Beginning the process of converting our small Edinburgh office base into a **social enterprise incubator** with a range of rooms for rent - on easy in/easy out licenses – along with common services such as kitchens, meeting rooms and WiFI. Today we manage all the space in the building, bar one unit, on a for profit basis.

2003 Setting-up the **Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS)** (www.dtascot.org.uk) to support local communities in taking greater control and ownership of local assets via the creation of robust local 'anchor organisations'. Some 250 communities across Scotland are now either full or associate members and many are owning and managing significant community assets.

2004 Creating the **Social Enterprise Academy** (www.theacademy-ssea.org) to provide training and professional development to boards and staff in the social enterprise and wider third sector with action learning as a central feature of its modus operandi. Setting-up **The Senscot Exchange** as an in-house business advice and support service to social enterprises.

2005 Acting as one of the moving spirits in the creation of **Social Enterprise Scotland** (http://www.socialenterprisescotland.org.uk) - the representative/umbrella body for the social enterprise community in Scotland

2007 Forming **Firstport** (www.firstport.org.uk) – by spinning off **The Senscot Exchange** and locating it alongside the Scotland-based staff of **UnLtd** – to create a tightly integrated one-stop shop for funding and advice for social enterprise new starts.

2009 Partnering with others in the sector to establish **Ready for Business LLP** (www.readyforbusiness.org) – a web portal and advisory service – to deliver the Scottish Govt contract, - "Developing Markets for Third Sector Providers".

2010 Taking a lead in creating standards for the social enterprise sector - initially by trying to establish a Scottish version of the **Social Enterprise Mark** - but latterly by facilitating the emergence of Scotland's unique **Social Enterprise Code** (www.se-code.net)

2011 Establishing **Senscot Legal** (www.se-legal.net) - to provide accessible and affordable quality legal support to the social enterprise and not-for-profit sector in Scotland.

2012 Beginning the process of setting up a **Scottish Community Banking Trust** to provide a means of re-cycling third sector financial resources for re-investment within projects and communities in Scotland.

In addition to developing the infrastructure of the social enterprise sector in Scotland we have two other ongoing roles:

Facilitating Social Enterprise Networks (the SENs):

Since 2004, we have been directly involved in supporting and facilitating social enterprise networks (SENs) across Scotland. (See www.se-networks.net).
Networks 1st is the name we give to our work with SENs - both thematic and geographical. SENs provide members with peer support, a vehicle for collective action and market development. The vision is of a growing community of frontline social enterprises across Scotland - connected and energised through a network of Networks.

Today, there are over **20** SENs – **17** geographically based and **6** that are thematic – with a combined membership of over **460** grassroots social enterprises. Increasingly, they are legally incorporated – and have their own staff.

2004: Fife SEN; Argyll &Bute SEN; Aberdeen SEN
2005: Edinburgh SEN
2006: East Lothian SEN; Dumfries and Galloway SEN; Borders SEN
2007: Dundee SEN; *Health SEN*
2008: Glasgow SEN; Clacks SEN
2009: *Cultural SEN***; Moray SEN**
2010: *Sport SEN***; Inverclyde SEN**
2011: Stirlingshire SEN; West Lothian SEN; *Community Food SEN***; Aber'shire SEN**
2012: *Start-up SEN***; South Ayrshire SEN**
2013: South Lanarkshire SEN

See, http://www.se-networks.net/networks.php

Connecting and Informing:

We have created a `virtual` network via a **weekly e-mail bulletin** that now goes out to over 4,500 individuals across Scotland and the rest of the UK (48% - social enterprises; 25% - wider third sector; 27% - public/private sector and others). Our **website** attracts around 6,000 hits per week – with an average of 2,000 individual visitors. See www.senscot.net

Senscot

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