SCDI looks to strengthen Scotland’s competitiveness by bringing together businesses and organisations from every part of Scotland to grow their networks, consider challenges and opportunities, and influencing Government policies to encourage sustainable economic prosperity. SCDI’s membership includes businesses, trade unions, local authorities, educational institutions, the voluntary sector and faith groups.

As highlighted in the call for evidence, there are key issues that need to be resolved in relation to the UK’s exit from the EU. The issue of the rights of EU citizens living in the UK, and UK citizens overseas, and the need to put in place a legal framework that mitigates against a vacuum as the UK exits the EU and resolves its future trading arrangements, are two key areas.

As the negotiations continue, we hear how vital it is that the business community have as much certainty as possible, and that sufficient information is made available to allow them to plan for any changes they’ll need to make.

As the UK Government seeks the best deal possible from the negotiations, companies and organisations of all shapes and sizes need guidance on what the likely arrangements will be following the conclusion of negotiations. Many we speak to rely on the access to the labour and free trade that the EU offers, and could lose out as talent is put off from the UK and investment hard to secure as a result of uncertainty.

Businesses recognise the need to boost their resilience against negative consequences and ensure that they can capitalise on any opportunities that emerge, but to do so requires clarity of what the potential outcome of negotiations will be.

We recognise on immigration there is also an opportunity to deliver an outcome which enables a different position to be taken in Scotland, recognising the additional need for labour faced here, compared to some other parts of the UK.

SCDI will continue to engage with its members on the long term issues that will affect Scotland, and are happy to engage with and provide evidence to the committee as the Article 50 process continues.