

# International Culture Strategy Consultation

February 2023

## 1. Introduction

The Scottish Government has committed to developing a strategy to support the international aspirations and potential of Scotland's culture sector. Through this survey we want to understand views of all interested parties in this work to inform the shape the strategy takes.

Scotland's culture sector undoubtedly has a strong international reputation. For a small country, Scotland has an impressive number of internationally important cultural assets and international recognition of our many strengths. However, there is a need to better coordinate and focus the public policy landscape that aims to support the sector's international activity.

[A Culture Strategy for Scotland](#), published in February 2020, sets out a range of ambitions in this space. However, major disruptive events since its publication, including Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic, have affected the ability of cultural professionals to work internationally and have imposed additional costs and administrative barriers.

The development of an International Culture Strategy ('the strategy') will seek to provide greater coherence to how the Scottish Government supports international cultural activity. It will focus on the motivations of culture sector stakeholders in working internationally, while recognising that such work has wider impacts on Scotland's international reputation and relationships.

However, the sector is currently experiencing significant concurrent challenges and the development of a strategy must be set in that context. It must support sectoral resilience, recovery, and long term development and be one way through which current challenges can be addressed.

### 1.1 Who is this aimed at?

This survey is aimed at cultural organisations, creative industries companies, and individual practitioners who work internationally and those with aspirations to do so. We would also welcome views from organisations from outside of Scotland who have worked with Scottish partners or wish to do so.

We are seeking views on:

- Current international activity in the Scottish culture sector, its importance, and motivations behind it.
- The rationale, principles, and objectives of the strategy.
- The current support available for international cultural activity and its appropriateness.
- How this work might help to address current major challenges, such as cost of living, recovery from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the impact of leaving the EU.
- Geographical priorities and focus.

## 1.2 How responses will be used

Responses will be used to inform the development of an International Culture Strategy. Views and information provided will shape the content of the strategy and help to develop actions proposed under it. They will help us to understand sectoral needs, aspirations and motivations in terms of international activity.

## 2. Scotland's international cultural footprint

Scotland has internationally recognised cultural assets of a scale that many larger countries cannot match. Recent work undertaken jointly by [Creative Scotland and British Council Scotland](#) demonstrates the range of cultural assets that exist in Scotland. These assets are not just the activities, performances, festivals, infrastructure, and practitioners that exist in Scotland, but also the approaches and business models that make Scotland distinctive. This is a strong starting point for the development of this strategy.

The international footprint of Scotland's culture sector has a number of aspects:

### 2.1 Economic/business/industrial

In 2019 Scottish Creative Industries [exports](#) stood at £4.1 billion, 4.7% of total exports. This figure represented a 2.1% increase over the course of the year. Exports to the rest of the UK stood at £2.4 billion in 2019 and accounted for 58.5% of total Creative Industries exports. International exports to the EU stood at £545 million (13.4%) and international exports to non-EU countries stood at £1.2 billion (28.2%).

Cultural organisations have reported that their international work has a range of financial impacts. International work including tours or exhibitions can leverage additional income from existing intellectual property, develop new philanthropic relationships with diaspora communities, expand audiences, and form important income streams.

These activities are also central in building links with organisations such as promoters and other creative professionals internationally, which further supports international business activities and access to skills for the sector in Scotland.

### 2.2 Cultural

International cultural exchange is an essential element of what the sector does. Sharing experience and drawing on others' knowledge and expertise supports innovation and cultural excellence. Few art forms can be said to be uniquely Scottish, so to continue to innovate, organisations and artists must develop and maintain creative connections with peers around the world.

The Scottish sector has a reputation for particular approaches that make organisations particularly keen to work with Scottish peers. A perceived authenticity, democratic bottom-up approach, and innovative delivery models, are all recognised as being particular strengths that support mutually beneficial international relationships. This was highlighted in the recent report by Creative Scotland and

British Council Scotland on Scotland's cultural assets: [To See Ourselves](#) and [As Others See Us](#).

It is also demonstrated by the previous track record of Scottish organisations in the Creative Europe programme – a EU programme that recognises the value of and supports international cultural exchange. Scottish organisations enjoyed significant success in Creative Europe pre-Brexit and were seen as valuable partners in projects, as indicated by the higher than average proportion of projects where Scottish partners held the project lead.

### 2.3 Reputational

Culture is central to how Scotland is viewed internationally and its attractiveness as a destination for tourism and business. In 2020, Scotland was ranked 16<sup>th</sup> out of 50 countries in the [Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index](#) terms of survey respondents' perceptions of Scotland's culture. This overall ranking would be higher if the Culture dimension did not include perceptions of sporting excellence as a sub-category. At time of publication, the 2022 culture specific ranking has not yet been published but is expected imminently. Culture is a strong draw to Scotland with, for example, around [a third of tourists](#) in 2015/16 identifying it as their motivation for visiting the country. This was the second most popular reason for visiting behind scenery and landscape.

The Scottish Government's National Strategy for Economic Transformation identifies the creative industries as a 'new market opportunity'. It recognises the creative industries' global position which draws on Scotland's long-standing cultural assets and reputation for expertise in delivery, innovation, and growing strengths in digital skills and technologies. Scotland's international cultural reputation and presence also plays a part in making Scotland an attractive place to do business.

In the [Vision for Trade](#) we set out the interactions between trade and culture, including the ways in which trade can support our National Outcomes. The Vision sets out that building trust and strong international relationships has a direct positive economic effect on trade. Engaging internationally through cultural events such as international festivals is also identified as a lever for the Scottish Government to promote its principles-based approach to trade internationally.

### 2.4 Current levels of activity and motivations

Where international activity receives public funding or is conducted through Scotland's culture public bodies and national cultural institutions, we have data on the levels of activity, its intent and outcomes. We also know the absolute economic value of Scotland's cultural exports. What is less clear under this is the more detailed picture of the type of work that is undertaken outside of publicly-funded structures and its impact. Through this survey we want to better understand the importance of international working to Scotland's culture sector, why it is important, and what the various motivations for engaging internationally are.

**Question 1:** What current international activity do you undertake?

**Question 2:** What impact does cultural activity have on your business/organisation?

**Question 3:** What are your motivations for working internationally?

**Question 4:** What, if any, are the main barriers to developing your international activity?

### **3. Rationale for an International Culture Strategy**

Our starting point for the development of this strategy is the needs and interests of Scotland's culture and creative sectors in developing their international activity and achieving their ambitions in this area. We are seeking to understand the importance of this activity to the sector as a whole, to consider where there is potential for development, and what the barriers to that might be. Ultimately, we want to understand how a coherent, strategic approach can support the sector's international relationships, activity, and ambitions. In doing so, we primarily seek to achieve cultural and economic outcomes – international connections will support cultural exchange and innovation and develop new markets, audiences, and income sources.

We recognise as well that cultural activity can be central to a country's international reputation and recognition, and can support wider activity, such as diplomacy or trade promotion. We suggest that the best way of achieving diplomatic or reputational impacts through culture is first and foremost to ensure that the culture sector can achieve its own international ambitions and potential.

Organisations working in this space such as the British Council term their approach cultural relations. Their focus is on long term relationships of cultural exchange and cooperation to build mutual understanding. As [stated](#) by researchers at Nesta's Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, "in order to be effective, a new recipe for soft power for the 21st century should embrace a cultural relations approach, based on understanding, connecting and co-creating rather than on overt promoting and influencing - as this would undermine its very own mission."

Supporting the Scottish culture and creative sectors to internationalise could develop new markets, audiences, and income streams while increasing the visibility of Scottish cultural products internationally. Cultural exports come in many forms including, for example: tangible products such as books; digitally consumed music or film; touring artists and companies; exhibitions and exchange of cultural artefacts; or any number of other products and activities. What such activity holds in common is that it requires understanding of how to undertake international activity, develop new markets, access networks or navigate the regulatory landscape of another country. We wish to explore the skills, capacity, and potential within the sector for export activity.

Therefore our proposed approach seeks to achieve outcomes which principally support the culture sector's cultural and economic interests, but recognises that wider impacts can be achieved through doing so, and perhaps by explicitly linking such primary and secondary outcomes greater overall impact can be achieved.

**Question 5:** What are your views on the rationale set out for an International Culture Strategy?

#### 4. Vision and themes

Our working draft vision for the strategy is as follows:

*The Scottish culture sector is globally connected and has the means to develop new international partnerships, markets and audiences. Domestic and international cultural activity promotes Scotland's distinctive identity, supporting and enhancing our international profile.*

We have then identified four principal themes through which a strategy might be shaped. The primary themes are:

- **Cultural connections** – the culture sector is inherently international. Collaboration and exchange are essential to a vibrant and innovative culture sector. The Scottish culture sector is internationally connected and recognised as an innovator both in what it does and also how it does it. Scotland's strong cultural assets provide a platform that brings the world to Scotland. In this strategy we want to explore how to support the sector to remain globally connected and enhance its international cultural connections. That might include consideration of the ways in which connections through multilateral organisations, international networks and events, diaspora and other existing international cultural infrastructure can be enhanced or a greater role played within them by Scottish institutions.
- **Economic impact** – the challenges that are being felt across the economy and wider society have had a particular impact on the culture sector. Through this strategy we want to consider how international work can support the long term financial resilience and development of Scotland's culture sector through access to new markets, development of new audiences, and development of export capacity. We will assess existing barriers and consider how they can be addressed.

And following from that, secondary themes are:

- **Diplomacy** – culture can be a significant element of a country's soft power. We want to consider how a strategic approach to supporting the internationalisation of Scotland's culture sector can have these wider impacts. We want to assess the ways in which culture can continue to be at the forefront of Scotland's existing public sector international infrastructure, including the Scottish Government's international offices, and how a mutually beneficial relationship can be encouraged. We will also consider whether there are ways in which Scotland's existing cultural assets might provide a platform for developing our diplomatic engagement.
- **Reputation** – it is clear that culture is central to how Scotland is perceived internationally and its attractiveness as a country and a destination. It follows

that an increased international presence for Scotland's cultural organisations can have a positive reputational impact. We would also like to explore views on whether cultural organisations consider themselves to have a role in promoting Scotland through their international work and, if so, in what way.

**Question 6:** What are your views on the vision outlined above?

**Question 7:** We have identified 4 themes (cultural connections, economic impact, diplomacy and reputation). How does your work connect with each of these areas?

**Question 8:** Are there aspects of your work that would not be captured by these themes, but you feel the strategy should recognise?

## **5. Current support for international cultural activity**

There are a range of instruments funded directly and indirectly by the Scottish Government that are either targeted at international cultural activity or can be accessed for that purpose.

Creative Scotland fund international activity in a number of ways. Their Regularly Funded Organisations, those in receipt of core funding, can use those funds to support their international activity. Organisations based in Scotland can apply for funding to support international work through the Open Fund and specific, targeted funding is made available for particular activities.

Additionally, the Scottish Government has supported international cultural activity through the Festivals EXPO fund, aimed at providing showcasing opportunities at Scotland's festivals for artists with potential for international export. To date, this fund has provided over £31m of support.

Scotland's National Performing Companies and collections all undertake international activity as part of their core business. The Scottish Government provide funding directly to the five National Performing Companies to support their international touring.

**Question 9:** Have you accessed Scottish public sector support for your international activity and if so which sources?

- Yes
- No

**Question 10:** What has been the impact of this support on your work?

**Question 11:** Have you accessed any other forms of support for your international activity and if so which sources?

- Yes
- No

**Question 12:** Is current support for international cultural activity appropriate? Are there gaps in provision in terms of focus?

- Yes

- No
- Not sure

**Question 13:** Are you aware of international examples that Scotland might learn from in its support for international cultural activity?

## **6. Current pressures, challenges and opportunities**

Rising costs are hampering the ability of the culture sector to recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The UK's departure from the EU adds a further level of challenge, particularly in terms of international working. While the development of international activity might not directly help to address the immediate pressures facing the sector, it might form part of a longer term approach to supporting recovery, future development and future resilience.

The Covid-19 pandemic, while hugely disruptive and an existential threat to many organisations, did provide impetus to develop new ways of taking work to audiences both domestically and internationally through digital means. We want to explore your views on how such activity may develop and to what extent it is a challenge or an opportunity.

It is not clear if we are yet seeing the full impact of having left the EU on the sector's activity. Disruption to work, both domestically and internationally, by the pandemic followed by current cost pressures may have masked any distinct impacts caused by Brexit. We know though that important sources of support for international exchange and collaboration, principally the EU's Creative Europe programme, have been lost, and that Scottish cultural organisations no longer have unhindered access to the EU's single market for touring or other activity. The end of free movement of people between the EU and UK has also restricted the ability of creative professionals from the EU to work in Scotland, which is likely to be impacting the sector's ability to access the skills it requires. This strategy will explore ways in which specific challenges caused by leaving the EU might be addressed.

Scotland's culture sector has a significant role to play in Scotland's reputation as a forward-looking nation. However, we also must recognise that our past is not universally positive and that our legacy includes the historic injustices of the transatlantic slave trade and our contribution to global warming. The [recommendations](#) set out by the steering group of the national project [Empire, Slavery and Scotland's Museums](#) could give our museums the opportunity to be international change-makers, demonstrating how to face our history responsibly and lead the way to a fairer society.

Finally, this strategy must consider climate impact and the ways in which international engagement might help or hinder efforts to achieve net zero. Cultural activity can be a way of communicating and exploring such challenges, but there is also a challenge in ensuring that international activity is undertaken in a way that is as sustainable as possible.



**Question 14:** In what ways can international activity help to mitigate current challenges? (e.g Brexit, pandemic, cost crisis)

**Question 15:** Are there particular challenges that leaving the EU has caused to your international activity?

**Question 16:** If so, in what ways might this strategy seek to address those challenges?

**Question 17:** Are there new ways that you have begun to engage internationally or ways in which you wish to do so?

- Yes, I have begun to engage internationally in new ways
- No, I have not begun to engage internationally in new ways but I aspire to in the future
- No, I do not wish to engage internationally in new ways

Please could you explain your choice.

**Question 18:** What are your views on how this strategy should consider the impact of international activities on climate change?

**Question 19:** How would you like this strategy to further the aspiration of handling historic injustices responsibly?

## 7. Geographies

The Scottish Government's [Global Affairs Framework](#) sets out a values-based approach to the Scottish Government's international engagement. It recognises the importance of culture to Scotland's international presence. It also recognises that there are particular geographies upon which the Scottish Government's overall international priorities and activity will be focussed.

While particular geographies may be more important destinations for Scotland's cultural exports than others, we recognise that the sector is inherently international and that international exchange is vital to cultural innovation and development. A narrow geographical focus based on SG priorities may not be appropriate and could hinder the impact and potential of the aspects of the strategy that might focus on cultural exchange or export.

However, the Scottish Government has an existing [network of international offices](#) and there may be greater opportunities to undertake activity under this strategy in those countries due to existing capacity and in-country networks. While cultural activity is central to those offices' current activities, a more strategic approach could allow for greater mutual benefit to be achieved.

**Question 20:** Are there particular geographies that are of greater importance to you, your organisation, or the wider sector, than others? If so, why are they of particular importance?

- Yes, there are particular geographies of greater importance to me

- Yes, there are particular geographies of greater importance to my organisation
- Yes, there are particular geographies of greater importance to the wider sector
- No, there are no particular geographies of greater importance
- Don't know

If yes, please list which geographies are of greater importance.

**Question 21:** Do you think an International Culture Strategy should prioritise particular geographies?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If yes, state why you believe certain geographies should be prioritised.

## 8. Equalities

The strategy is an opportunity to explore what we want to see in terms of advancing equalities in international cultural activity. The diplomatic theme of the strategy could be an opportunity to restate the values and principles of the Scottish Government set out in the Global Affairs Framework to increase respect for, and understanding of, human rights worldwide, for example.

However, most data we have access to has a domestic focus and we do not have a great deal of information about the types of people engaging in international cultural activity and when in their career they are conducting work internationally.

This survey seeks the views of stakeholders and the public on any potential equality issues. We are assessing what impact the strategy may have across protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation). We are also looking at impacts on businesses and in terms of socio-economic status and geographical location.

Impact assessments will be further developed alongside the drafting of the strategy. If you would like to be engaged in the impact assessment process, please email [InternationalCultureStrategy@gov.scot](mailto:InternationalCultureStrategy@gov.scot).

**Question 22:** Are there aspects of engaging in international cultural activity that affect equalities groups differently? (in your response please reflect on both positive and negative effects)

**Question 23:** If you identified any negative effects, what do you think could be done in the future to try and prevent this from happening?

**Question 24:** Are there any other comments you would like to make on the strategy as a whole at this time?



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