



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

## Scottish Government Consultation: [National Event Strategy review and refresh – Scotland: the perfect stage](#)

*Submitted: June 2023*

### **Consultation Questions**

#### **Developing a shared ambition**

*1. To what extent do you support, or oppose the proposed Ambition?*

Support

*Should you wish to, please explain why you support or oppose the proposed ambition:*

Creative Scotland, inclusive of Screen Scotland, is the national body which supports the arts, screen and creative industries through funding, development and advocacy across Scotland.

Overall, we support the Ambition as set out, and would urge that the Strategy is suitably resourced to enable full delivery of all the elements contained within it.

We welcome the focus of the National Events Strategy, in particular the inclusion of points relating to the climate emergency, just transition and working conditions within the sector. Well-resourced events providing appropriate showcasing opportunities are an economic investment which, in turn, generate future opportunities. Festivals are a means by which international and domestic careers are developed and become more sustainable, and it would be positive to see this emphasised strongly throughout the Strategy.

*2. How important do you think each of these strategic priorities are for events over the next ten years? (please answer on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not important at all and 5 is very important)*

Developing a shared ambition - Boosting the economy: 4

Developing a shared ambition - Enhancing well-being and community engagement: 4

Developing a shared ambition - Contributing to the drive towards net zero and environmental sustainability: 4

Developing a shared ambition - Making the event sector a better place to work: 4

Developing a shared ambition - Showcasing and promoting Scotland's assets: 4

*3. What other strategic priorities, (if any), do you think should be included in a refreshed strategy?*

While we would not propose any other strategic priorities for inclusion, we would encourage the Strategy to reference and link to strategies and programmes in other policy areas. For example, the upcoming International Culture Strategy, work around the upcoming Climate Change and Just Transition plans for Transport, and developments in the Fair Work First agenda. The Strategy should seek to identify any areas where there is crossover and where collaboration would be beneficial for delivery.

We would also like to see the value of multi-agency working across events highlighted. When Creative Scotland has worked in this way, it has allowed Culture to play an enhanced role and support objectives in other policy areas. Examples of this include the multi-agency approach to Edinburgh's Festivals as one mega event, rather than individual festivals, and the inclusion of the Cultural Programme in the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

We would also focus on the importance of international programmed events in showcasing and promoting the activities of Scotland's cultural sector. This enables increased onward sales and further opportunities for international engagements, as well as the developing domestic employment.

**Excellent event experience**

*4. People attend events for a range of different reasons. Can you identify what is important for you in creating an excellent event experience?*

Within the culture and creative sectors, we would identify the most important elements to create an excellent event are as follows:

- Connection to a local community
- Demonstration of artistic or creative excellence
- Clearly showcasing Scottish artists
- Contribution to a wider picture of events across Scotland, so are in diverse geographic regions and highlight diverse cultures and performers
- Has a clear set of outcomes around what the event should achieve
- Has a plan to address any identified barriers to attendance
- Responds to the climate and biodiversity emergencies
- Creates job opportunities for artists, technical and support staff
- Creation of a safe space in which individuals and audiences can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment or any other emotional or physical harm

*5. To what extent do you agree, or disagree that events in Scotland are:*

Accessible: Neither Agree nor Disagree

Affordable: Neither Agree nor Disagree

Inclusive: Neither Agree nor Disagree

Welcoming: Agree

*6. We are also interested in knowing about why people might not be able to attend events. Can you identify any reasons for not attending the events you would like to?*

We know from the Scottish Household Survey that those attending and participating in cultural events in Scotland are generally from more highly educated and from higher socio-economic groups. In addition, those with a long-term health condition are less likely to attend or participate.

Our latest Audience Intentions Survey, conducted in March 2023, shows that participation levels in cultural and creative events generally have still not returned to pre-pandemic levels, despite the relaxation of restrictions and the re-opening of arts and cultural venues. This is in part due to the cost-of-living crisis, with half of the population stating they are less likely to attend paid for arts and cultural events. Conversely, participation in in-home cultural activities has increased, in some cases returning to the higher levels recorded during the first lockdown period.

Almost a quarter of Scottish adults are struggling financially, with younger people and the least affluent most affected. Almost three quarters of those surveyed stated that ticket prices have become a more important consideration when deciding whether to attend, with increasing costs impacting on decisions.

Attending art galleries and museums is perceived as being “cheaper”, perhaps due to the prevalence of free entry, while cinema, theatre and live music are usually perceived as being more expensive. The negative impact of cost-of-living concerns could be most pronounced for theatre, live music, dance, classical music and opera.

Further detail can be found in the full report, which is on our website. We would be happy to share this and any other research to better understand the barriers to attendance.

Other barriers to attendance may be more deeply rooted in the cultural relevance of event programming to particular demographic sectors. Price may not be a factor where programming is of significance to any given sector. Cultural relevance, co-creation and community collaboration may well be of greater significance in removing barriers to attendance.

Wider information around barriers to attendance can be found in the Spring 2023 “Recent Key Insights” from the Audience Agency, which broadly reflects the findings above (<https://www.theaudienceagency.org/evidence/cultural-participation-monitor/key-insights> )

*7. To what extent do you agree, or not, that event organisers involve communities in planning the events they hold?*

Neither agree nor disagree

*8. To what extent do you agree, or not, that event organisers communicate about how the events taking place will affect local people?*

Neither agree nor disagree

*9. How could the benefits of events be increased for local communities?*

While there are many events which are deeply rooted within the communities where they take place, there are approaches whereby benefits could be increased for local communities. These would be as follows:

- Clear engagement paths with local communities, both about what the event is and how to take part
- Utilising local businesses and individuals wherever possible in the staging of events
- Clear communication, facilitating a dialogue between event organisers and the community
- Extensive community consultation and clear understanding of any adverse impacts, with attendant mitigation, if appropriate
- Co-creation and collaboration on content of events and festivals and not just on the logistics
- Not solely treating communities as consumers

The Platforms for Creative Excellence (PlaCE) programme was a three-way partnership between the Scottish Government, the City of Edinburgh Council, and the Edinburgh Festivals, administered by Creative Scotland. The programme sought as one of its outcomes to achieve “Improved lives for citizens and communities through cultural engagement”. In doing this, the participant organisations were able to engage with new and existing groups, community partners reported a high level of satisfaction in working with partners and participating festivals stated that the programme had transformed how they worked with communities. Further details can be found in the evaluation of this programme, which sets out how festivals worked with communities and the elements which were successful. This is yet to be published, but we would be happy to share these findings when it becomes available.

*10. How important is the diversity of events in Scotland in terms of:(where 1 is not important at all and 5 is very important)*

Range of size: 5 (very important)

Spread of location: 5 (very important)

Variety of type: 5 (very important)

*11. What barriers, if any, are there to holding a diversity of events in Scotland?*

The rural nature of Scotland is often a barrier to ensuring a wide geographic spread. While there are many festivals which take place across the Highlands, Islands, Orkney and Shetland, it is still true that the majority are across the Central Belt. However, the diversity of the festival offer in Scotland is an acknowledged strength and the more local community-based festivals, while sharing the impacts of larger events, also deliver important outcomes for place making and community, social and economic benefits. It is important that these festivals are recognised for the benefits they bring in these areas and have access to strategic support that reflects their differing remits.

**Best practice, innovation and continuous improvement**

*12. Do you think the event sector is an attractive place to work? Please select your answer from the dropdown list:*

Don't know

*13. Please tell us why you selected yes, no or don't know:*

As a national agency we would not have a view on how individuals experience working in the sector. However, we note that precarity is a clear issue for the sector. This was evident in the delivery of Creative Scotland's Covid-19 Emergency Funds for freelancers, which demonstrated how many people are reliant on freelance work at festivals. Many festivals that Creative Scotland supports are through project funding which is typically annual and this is the case for most sources of funding for events and festivals.

Festivals are often required to apply for funding on a yearly basis, so any year where the funding application is unsuccessful has an impact on jobs and programming. If there were more strategic funding for festivals and events, especially those which are clearly held annually, from Scottish Government or others, this could contribute to removing some of the precarity.

*18. What do you think would enable events to become more environmentally sustainable?*

There are already several initiatives, partnerships and networks which can help event organisers to become more environmentally sustainable. We would recommend that organisers access these and consider every aspect of their event, to implement changes to reduce their environmental impact in the short term. In the longer term and to achieve resilience they will need to create pathways to net-zero and mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

As a nation, we have a legal obligation to achieve the emissions reduction targets of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act by 2045. However, there are geographical specific targets that are exceeding that ambition. Glasgow and Edinburgh have committed to achieve net zero by 2030, while Inverness is aiming for carbon neutrality and Dumfries and Galloway a net zero region, by 2025.

Edinburgh Festival City's Vision to 2030

(<https://www.edinburghfestivalcity.com/about/vision>) is an example of an organisations' commitment to connect local with global with a cognisance of The City of Edinburgh's 2050 Vision and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. They have created eight Principles to provide an agenda for partnership working between the festivals, the city and national partners to influence the positive changes that are crucial to the future success of the city and Scotland's cultural capital.

Clear visibility of the differing timescales and anticipated implications for events (from small to large) would be beneficial. While this alone will not support organisers to achieve both net-zero and the most sustainable practice, it will frame the context in which events will need to be planned. This will also aid the framing of measures of success that are connected to the climate emergency and sustainable practice associated with air and noise pollution,

impact on 'place' and communities, biodiversity and ecology, the eradication of waste, the adoption of a circular economy and the shift in energy sources.

The draft Adaptation Programme (SCCAP3) is due to be complete by end of 2023. It will address sixty-one risks and opportunities for Scotland identified by the 2022 Climate Change Risk Assessment. How these risks translate across the places of Scotland should be accessible, interpretable, and useable by event organisers. As the climate changes, new and ever-changing risks will impact events, our infrastructure and the health and wellbeing of Scotland's citizens. Examples would include increased risk of wildfires during summer months in the proximity of rural festival sites, over heating in urban areas caused by the urban heat island effect during the summer months and the impact of extreme weather events on public transport and road networks in the winter. Resources such as Adaptation Scotland's new Climate Hazards and Resilience in the Workplace (Making the Case and Tools for Practical Action Today) for Trade Unionists (<https://www.adaptationscotland.org.uk/how-adapt/tools-and-resources/climate-risks-workplace-protecting-workers-changing-climate>) could be utilised by themed groups to understand how planning and practice will need to respond to the changing climate.

ISO 20121 is currently a voluntary standard for event management that offers a standard framework which has been developed to "relieve the strain on local infrastructure and utilities, reducing the potential for conflict in communities where events are hosted" (<https://www.iso.org/iso-20121-sustainable-events.html>). There is however a time and cost implication associated with training and access to the standard that may be prohibitive for smaller and Third Sector organisations.

The Scottish Government supported network of Climate Action Hubs could provide tailored place-based support and guidance on the delivery of low carbon events at a community and local level. This could include existing and proposed energy infrastructure (by the forthcoming Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Scheme and Delivery Plans), local suppliers, local skills and expertise, public transport limitations and a localities commitment to achieve net-zero. The hubs will be connected and offer the opportunity to create a learning network which could aid with the development of skills and expertise. The draft of the next full Climate Change Plan is due by the end of 2023, which will set out the pathway to meeting our emissions targets out to 2040.

They will be supported by the development of new sectorial Just Transition Plans (Transport, Land Use and Agriculture, Buildings and Construction). Stakeholder engagement is planned for over summer and autumn 2023. This offers the opportunity to further understand the barriers that are being experienced by the sector as the three proposed Just Transition plans are linked to the 'big ticket' items raised by the Themed Groups. An output of the engagement could be a co-design a route map to net-zero as per those within RPP3, the current Climate Change Plan.

One of the biggest emissions challenges we have is the reduction and eradication of emissions associated with travel and, at the same time, we must work out an equitable approach to transport that supports city centric and rural events for communities.

Accessible, connected, reliable, comfortable, regular, and affordable public transport is the key to achieving the 20% car km reduction target of 2030.

An understanding of event attendees and suppliers' barriers to the embracement of the inverted transport hierarchy of the National Transport Strategy (<https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47052/national-transport-strategy.pdf>) is essential to inform forward planning. An exercise to establish the vision for the future of events, across scales, that aligns with the Climate Change (Scotland) Act, National Planning Framework 4, Regional Transport Partnerships, the Strategic Transport Project Review, Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans would be beneficial.

In addition to the national support from the Scottish Business Climate Collaboration group, place-based initiatives and networks are also emerging. In Glasgow, the Glasgow Climate Chamber is the Chamber of Commerce's green and circular movement designed to progress the ambitions of COP 26 and ensure that the summit results in genuine change, strong international relationships and long-term benefits for the city, members, and young people.

This includes the Circular Glasgow initiative which aims to position the 'Dear Green Place' as a leading circular economy city by encouraging organisations to adopt innovation, design, and circular thinking. This partnership project with Zero Waste Scotland is listening to the needs of businesses in relation to the way we live, work, produce and consume. Connecting, learning, and collaborating are instrumental in the transition to a circular economy and the convened network is bringing together interested parties to connect, share knowledge and ultimately find ways to future proof businesses, including those that deliver events.

Arts, Screen and Creative Industry specific support is available from organisations such as Creative Carbon Scotland and Julie's Bicycle. Resources include tools to establish the impacts of venues, offices, tours, productions, events and festivals, and reports and case studies:

- Creative Climate Tools | Julie's Bicycle | Sustainability Strategy Tools ([juliesbicycle.com](http://juliesbicycle.com))
- Sustainable Music Festivals Guide Published | Creative Carbon Scotland
- FESTIVAL.ORG - Greening Outdoor Festivals - Julie's Bicycle ([juliesbicycle.com](http://juliesbicycle.com))
- Towards Zero Waste Festivals Report - Julie's Bicycle ([juliesbicycle.com](http://juliesbicycle.com))
- New Carnival Company: Towards a greener carnival - Julie's Bicycle ([juliesbicycle.com](http://juliesbicycle.com))

*19. What sources of income do you think events should be developing in order to be financially sustainable?*

There are a number of sources of income which events could develop. We would note that in the face of rising costs, decreasing public funds, the nature of project funding and diminishing sponsorship resources, maintaining financially sustainable is increasingly challenging. However, the following are sources which could be considered:

- Sponsorship
- Public Funding – Local and national, but multi-year is not possible at the moment
- Income from ticket sales, but also provision for those for whom cost is a barrier

- Potential income from any Transient Visitor Levies which Local Authorities may seek to implement. Those running festivals and events and others should seek to influence how that income is spent, with a portion going back into the cultural events which help to attract visitors
- Funding from Trusts and Foundations

*20. What would support the event sector to measure the importance of events?*

Firstly, there would need to be a clear definition of importance. Does this relate to the size of events or their economic impact? Or the value of the event for Scotland's international standing? Once this has been quantified, then a series of measurements and datasets can be developed.

Understanding the scale and demographic profile of international audiences can be difficult due to the different categorisations in place in any given territory. This makes comparison of the impacts and benefits between different international activities problematic. Impacts of international showcasing and exchange are also longer-run, in that they may take years to come to fruition, again making measurement difficult.

*21. We would welcome evidence on the measurable impacts of events, particularly those held in Scotland.*

The evaluation of the PLaCE programme gathered data around jobs maintained and created, amongst others, but PLaCE added to these indicators around the specific funded projects, including contacts with community groups and additional jobs. This is yet to be published, but we would be happy to share these findings when it becomes available.

**Promotion and profile**

*22. In what way do you think events can promote Scotland internationally?*

Holding internationally significant events increases diversity, encourages creative ambition, experimentation and excellence, strengthens communities, boosts tourism, and connects Scotland to the world. International dialogue, presentations, distribution and touring are vital in ensuring Scotland's creativity and diverse contemporary cultures are widely understood and appreciated. Similarly, welcoming ideas and seeing the work from other countries can inspire both audiences and artists at home.

Events can also contribute to Scotland's reputation internationally. Scotland is seen as a leader in technical innovation thanks to initiatives such as Global Music Match (winner of the Womex Professional Excellence Award in 2021) and hosting World Congress of Science and Factual Producers (Congress) the behalf of the screen industry in 2022. The latter saw Screen Scotland and BBC Studios partner with Congress to host the world's most prominent gathering of international creators of science, history and natural history in Glasgow. The four-day event was the first in-person event in three years and welcomed 684 members of the unscripted community from 27 countries to Scotland, enabling producers to connect with international counterparts to build relationships and create development opportunities.



Made in Scotland, a curated showcase of high-quality performance from Scotland at the world's biggest arts festival, made possible by support from the Scottish Government's Festivals Expo Fund is a partnership between Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, Federation of Scottish Theatre, Scottish Music Centre and Creative Scotland. Since 2009, this programme has supported 259 shows, and supported over 100 productions to visit forty countries, opportunities arising from the showcase.

Made in Scotland aims to raise the profile of the work of Scottish dance, theatre and music companies/artists and offers them unique networking opportunities with promoters, increases the number and diversity of international promoters coming to see Scottish work at the Fringe through a year-round promoter development programme and nurtures and encourages international creative dialogue and the development of international collaborations by Scottish dance, theatre and music companies/artists.

Cultural events can help to create international connections, contributing to Scotland's soft power and cultural diplomacy. Edinburgh's world-renowned reputation as a leading Festival city has been an excellent platform and springboard for instigating further cultural connections through our Momentum partnership with Festivals Edinburgh and British Council Scotland. Using this reputation to attract cultural leaders from around the world, we have made closer connections between priority countries, not only with the festivals but also with the wider Scottish sector.

Finally, we understand the contribution culture makes Scotland's reputational standing, as measured by the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index (NBI), especially as a driver to visiting or investing in the country. We note that Scotland has climbed from 17th to 15th in the overall standings in 2022, one below New Zealand and three places above Ireland.

### *23. What specific aims would you prioritise for mega events?*

The aims set out in the consultation for mega events seem reasonable. We would perhaps add clear evaluation of the event and follow up work to understand the legacy and impact of the event.

If looking to prioritise specific aims, then Participation and Sustainability would be two that we would recommend. Participation is key to linking with local communities and on a national level. Without this, and consideration of accessibility to participate from all angles, mega events have a less meaningful contribution. Sustainability must also be a focus – each event should be delivered in such a way that it does not hinder the Just Transition or the journey to net zero, including transport for those attending.

In addition, we would note that culture is often an important component in mega events, which was clearly demonstrated through the Commonwealth Games, COP26 and, on a UK level, the Olympic Games. Including culture can help to deliver many of the impacts and elements outlined in the mega events framework, in particular Participation, Profile, Legacy and Innovation. As can be seen from our evaluation of the Commonwealth Games Cultural Programme (<https://www.creativescotland.com/resources-publications/research/archive/2017-and-older/glasgow-2014-cultural-programme->

[evaluation](#) ) there was a significant impact in a number of areas. Within the Arts and Culture sector itself, the Cultural programme created new employment opportunities, new working relationships with 1600 new collaborations and access to training and skills development for practitioners, along with a significant economic impact, leveraging some £5.2 million in match funding for projects.

There was also an impact on the profile and reputation of Scotland abroad, with approximately half a million visits to the Cultural Programme made by visitors from outside Scotland. The programme also helped to display Scotland's more contemporary culture, something which is often not associated with it internationally, something which also impacted on the country's tourism industry.

Finally, culture featured strongly in the legacy of the Games, through programmes developed by Local Authorities to increasing the status of the Cultural programme in subsequent Games. Through this, it can be seen that all mega events can benefit from an additional dimension by featuring culture in the programme, something that we would encourage and support in the future.

### **Partnership and collaboration**

*24. To what extent do you agree or disagree that event organisers make connections between events and their ability to deliver broader positive impacts for society?*

Neither agree nor disagree

*25. We would welcome evidence on how event organisers are working together with local and/or national bodies to deliver outcomes.*

Creative Scotland has worked on a number of initiatives which deliver on the above outcomes. These include:

- The Momentum international delegate programme Momentum is delivered by Festivals Edinburgh (on behalf of Edinburgh's Festivals), British Council Scotland, and Creative Scotland, with additional support from City of Edinburgh Council and EventScotland. It brings together curators, creative entrepreneurs, funders, media professionals, officials, producers and programmers from all over the world to immerse themselves in this unrivalled showcase of global cultural excellence. Since 2011, Momentum has brought over 700 international delegates to Edinburgh. These visits have resulted in seasons of work being presented by arts organisations from countries including India and New Zealand during the festivals and opened opportunities for delegates to forge new connections with their counterparts in the UK and internationally.
- The Platforms for Creative Excellence (PlaCE) programme was a three-way partnership between the Scottish Government, the City of Edinburgh Council, and the Edinburgh Festivals, administered by Creative Scotland. Created in 2018, the five-year programme aimed to support festivals' strategic development across three primary areas of work:
  - Sustained and strengthened programming innovation

- Increased creative development opportunities across Scotland
- Improved lives for citizens and communities through cultural engagement
- The Place Partnership Programme is a strategic programme designed to encourage and support local partners to work together with their creative communities and Creative Scotland. The partnership should aim to make significant interventions which address opportunities and issues, and help to strengthen creative development in their area. Joining the Place Partnership Programme involves local partners (eg Local Authorities, Cultural Trusts) submitting an outline proposal for a Place Partnership. The principles used for inviting a proposal are:
  - Locally initiated conversations with Creative Scotland on developing the cultural opportunities within the region indicating local readiness and understanding of the potential.
  - A clear ambition and vision for developing creative opportunities.
  - Indication from local partners that they could match Creative Scotland's funding contribution.
- The Culture Collective Fund is a pilot programme which has established a network of creative practitioners, organisations and communities, working together to create a positive difference locally and nationally in response to COVID-19. The programme focusses on community engaged creative activity, supporting participatory approaches and projects where creative practitioners and communities work collaboratively. A key element of this is proactively responding to the impact of COVID-19, providing employment opportunities for creative practitioners and actively engaging people in shaping the future cultural life of their community. Working collectively is central to the programme at a local and national level. Each of the supported organisations and creative practitioners are required to collaborate with communities locally but also to work together as a national collective. With the support of a central coordinator who oversees the programme, this includes the ongoing sharing of progress; attendance at national meetings and events; and participation in an evaluation of the pilot. A full evaluation of the project can be found here: <https://www.creativescotland.com/resources-publications/research/archive/2023/national-evaluation-of-the-culture-collective-programme>

In addition, our funding criteria ask applicants how they will contribute to our four Strategic Priorities: Fair Work; Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion; Environmental and business sustainability and International.