International Culture Strategy: Consultation Analysis

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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Executive Summary

Overview

On 2 February 2023, the Scottish Government launched a 14-week public consultation, in the form of an online survey, to seek views on an International Culture Strategy. The aim of the consultation was to gather views on sectoral needs, aspirations and motivations in terms of international activity, in order to shape the content of the International Strategy. Social Researchers in the Scottish Government carried out detailed thematic analysis on the 77 survey responses received (from organisations and individuals). The main findings, from the 24 open and closed questions, are:

Scotland's Cultural Footprint: Current Activity, Motivations and Barriers

- Respondents came from a diverse range of sectors, describing wide ranging international activity. Such as: collaborative projects with international peers, knowledge exchange, outbound work (e.g. touring), inbound work (e.g. tourism and hosting international visitors), involvement in international societies and partnerships, commissioning work and practitioners, sponsorship/funding and campaigning. International activity was seen as being intrinsic to the work of practitioners, organisations and the wider creative and cultural sectors. This view was common regardless of the type of organisation.

- Key motivations for working internationally included the desire to build connections, network and collaborate. Many highlighted sharing knowledge and expertise and the mutual learning that came from this. This led to innovation. Activity led to wider reach, created work opportunities, raised profiles and showcased work. Financial motivations were also highlighted by many respondents. This was emphasised as being particularly important given the wider pressures faced by the sector.

- The main barriers to developing international activities were financial, with COVID-19, Brexit, rising costs, and the cost of living crisis compounding challenges for an already pressured sector. Lack of funding and underinvestment were commonly highlighted.

Rationale for an International Culture Strategy

- Most respondents gave positive feedback on the idea of an international strategy, highlighting the need for a long-term strategic approach. Respondents felt that a strategy could support the sector to grow, bring investment and could have wider social and economic benefits. However, there were some concerns about the need for resources to match the ambition.

- Respondents were asked to comment on the proposed vision and themes (cultural connections, economic impact, diplomacy and reputation). The responses suggest that mutual exchange, mobility, connections and opportunities were regarded as particularly important characteristics of an International Culture Strategy.

- While respondents agreed that it is important to achieve economic outcomes, it was emphasised that the strategy should also consider alternative outcomes. Such as: health, wellbeing, sustainability, education, social inclusion and empowerment - outcomes that are related to different drivers for engaging in international activity, and reflect the differences between the type and size of organisations.

- When reflecting on the proposed vision, some concerns were raised about use of the term 'Scotland's distinctive identity'. This included a perception from some, that this did not reflect the diversity of culture in Scotland.

- Respondents also provided wider views on how the Scottish Government should approach developing this strategy. Some respondents favoured a strategic approach that builds on existing strengths and expertise as opposed to a 'top-down' approach led by the Scottish Government. In addition, it was suggested that a strategy should set out what it is going to achieve. Including, detail on responsibilities, resources and wider goals.

Current Support for International Activity

- The majority (68%) of respondents (both organisations and individuals) had accessed public sector support for international activities.

- The consultation asked about the impact of this support. The most prevalent themes included, building partnerships, enabling cultural exchange, facilitating tours and events and gaining international recognition. Respondents perceived the support as "vital" and acknowledged that many of their

achievements and successes would not have been possible without the support.

- Over half (56%) of respondents (both organisations and individuals) had accessed other sources of support (30% had not). This included funding from international cultural organisations and specific Ministries or government agencies in the counties they were working.

- Respondents were asked if current support for international activities was appropriate. Across both organisations and individuals, 53% stated 'no', 12% agreed it was, and 21% were not sure. When asked to describe any gaps in current provision, the most prevalent themes were related to structural barriers in accessing financing, issues with project-based and short-term funding models, challenges navigating the post-COVID and post-Brexit landscapes, uncertainty around available support, and a lack of funding options for emerging artists, early-career professionals, and smaller organisations.

- Respondents provided a range of international examples that Scotland might learn from that successfully support their country-based creative workers and organisations globally.

Pressures, Challenges and Opportunities

- Respondents were asked how international activity can address the challenges the sector are facing. A number of responses emphasised the way that cultural activity enables engagement in international partnerships, which in turn facilitates shared knowledge and resource.

- The consultation asked if there are particular challenges that leaving the EU has caused to international activity. The most prevalent themes related to increased costs, visa administrative issues, loss of human resources and capital, new barriers to international trade and investment, reputational damage and a loss of collaborative partnerships.

- Respondents provided suggestions for strategic changes following Brexit. These included new funding models for the Scottish culture sector (e.g. making funding available to target specific aspects of international work such as covering post-Brexit administrative costs), establishing a new model for EU engagement and providing business advice and support to assist with issues relating to travel, taxes and visa requirements.

- Respondents were asked how the strategy should consider the impact of international activity on climate change. In summary, respondents felt that the

strategy is an opportunity to provide leadership and guidance, to promote and advocate for change and to share learning.

- Respondents were asked how they would like this strategy to further the aspiration of handling historic injustices responsibly. Responses covered the view that the International Culture Strategy can help by acknowledging and taking responsibility for past injustices, by promoting understanding, sharing best practice and fostering partnerships and collaborations.

- When asked to consider new opportunities, the majority (61%) had begun to engage internationally in new ways and 23% aspire to in the future. Explaining their choice, common responses were related to the adjustments that had been made due to COVID-19 restrictions. This had caused many to explore alternative methods of delivering their services, working more remotely or digitally. Although, limitations were recognised in terms of the absence of in-person contact and the perspective that digital working is not practical for establishing long-term international partnerships.

Geographies

- The survey asked if there are particular geographies that are of greater importance to the respondent/their organisation or the wider sector. 34% agreed that there are geographies of greater importance to their organisation, with 17% agreeing there are important geographies to the wider sector. Just over a quarter (26%) stated there are no particular geographies that are of greater importance.

- When asked if an International Culture Strategy should prioritise any particular geographies, 31% agreed, 27% stated 'no' and 31% were not sure, reflecting a wide spread of views to this question and some uncertainty.

- Follow up responses from the respondents on why the strategy should prioritise particular geographies, or not, reflected a degree of caution. It was suggested that there may be a risk in prioritising particular geographies, as this could lead to missed opportunities or the risk of overlooking emerging regions.

Equalities

- The consultation asked respondents if there are aspects of engaging in international cultural activity that can affect equalities groups differently. A range of views were provided that reflected both the positive and negative impact of international cultural activities on different equality groups. Views

were also expressed on how different organisations/individuals address equalities concerns through their work and workplace.

- When delivering cultural work internationally, some respondents had encountered challenging situations in, for example, countries with oppressive political regimes or with human rights issues. As such, equalities concerns factored into some respondents' decisions around where to work internationally.

- When asked to specifically reflect on socio-economic status, it was suggested by some respondents that due to the higher costs associated with international cultural work, this can create inequalities in access and participation.

- Issues raised relating to island communities included limited access to international cultural activities (as these activities are often more concentrated in the Scottish central belt) and digital connectivity.

- When asked to specifically reflect on children and young people, respondents pointed out positive aspects of involving children and young adults in international cultural activities. They noted that participation expands children's future career opportunities, builds connections and networks and contributes to a better understanding of Scotland's global position. However, it was noted that the additional resources required to adequately support and safeguard the participation of children and young adults in international cultural work can be a significant barrier.

- A final question in the survey asked, if any negative effects had been identified (with equality issues), what could be done in the future to prevent this happening. Respondents stressed the need to engage with those who have lived experience within the culture sector, to gain a better understanding of the barriers, and to determine the support required to address equality issues.

Introduction

This report sets out the analysis of responses to the International Culture Strategy consultation. The aim of the consultation was to gather views on sectoral needs, aspirations and motivations in terms of international activity. Subsequently, these responses will shape the content of the international strategy and help to develop actions proposed under it.

Background

In 2020, A Culture Strategy for Scotland was published. This strategy set out that Scotland's culture sector has a strong international reputation, and Scotland has a number of internationally important cultural assets.[1] In addition, there is international recognition of Scotland's strengths.[2] However, major disruptive events since its publication, including Brexit, the cost of living crisis 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 and publication of an International Culture Strategy will seek to address barriers to development of the sector's international activity and provide greater coherence on how Scottish Government supports international cultural activity. In developing this strategy, it was recognised that as the sector is experiencing significant challenges, it should aspire to address issues of sectoral resilience, recovery, and long term development.

A series of roundtables with Scottish Government officials and a cross-section of around 50 sectoral stakeholders were held in Spring 2022. Those roundtables helped to shape the focus of the consultation survey, and provide a number of provisional principles which have been explored through this consultation process.

Consultation

On 2 February 2023 the Scottish Government launched a 14-week public consultation, in the form of a survey, to seek views on an International Culture Strategy. The end product of this 14-week engagement process is this report which summarises the views from the respondents.

The consultation questions are provided in Appendix 1. In summary, the survey contained 24 questions. Eighteen were open questions and 6 were closed questions. The consultation sought views on:

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[1] Arts and Cultural Assets Research Report | British Council
[2] as_others_see_us.pdf (britishcouncil.org)

- Current international activity in the Scottish culture sector, its importance, and motivations behind it
- 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

The survey was aimed at cultural organisations, creative industries companies, and individual practitioners who work internationally and those with aspirations to do so. The Scottish Government also welcomed views from organisations from outside of Scotland who have worked with Scottish partners or wish to do so.

Overview of responses

There were 79 responses to the consultation. These responses were all provided through the Scottish Government online platform Citizen Space. This included responses from individuals and organisations/companies with an interest in the International Culture Strategy.

61 responses were from organisations and 18 responses received from individuals. Two were excluded as the responses included comments that were not within the scope of the consultation. This meant there were 16 responses from individuals included in the analysis. The majority were based in Scotland, 13 were from the rest of the UK and 2 were based outside of the UK. Of the organisations that identified their size (59 in total), the majority (25) were from organisations that have fewer than 10 employees/members. Sixteen respondents identified as having over 250 employees, 11 identified as having more than 10 but fewer than 50 and 7 identified as having more than 50 but fewer than 250.

In terms of the types or organisations who responded there was a mixture of 10 public bodies (including Local Authorities), 6 national cultural organisations, 13 sector representative organisations, 5 key sectoral organisations, and 27 other organisations including charities, arts organisations and universities.

Where permission was provided, details on the organisations and individuals that responded to the survey are provided in appendix 2.

Method

The analysis of responses was undertaken by Social Researchers within the Scottish Government, in line with Government Social Research (GSR) professional standards and code of practice.

Analytical approach

The closed questions in the survey asked the respondents to select from a predefined set of responses, such as 'Yes/No'. These were counted and the percentage was calculated. For the closed questions, breakdowns have also been provided for the respondent type, which were, organisation and individual.

The open questions did not have a fixed response, or a limit to the length of the response, allowing the respondents to answer in their own words and in as much or as little detail as they liked. Consequently, thematic analysis was used to analyse the open question survey responses. This meant that each response was read by a member of the research team and the codes (main points) were identified. The next step was then to read across the responses to systematically identify any common ideas or patterns of meaning. Themes were discussed across the research team to allow for comparisons and contrasts until consensus was reached among the team on the final structure.

Subject to the publishing preferences of the consultation respondents, the quotes that are provided through the report are intended to illustrate some of the points in respondents' own words and to capture some of the themes as they were written. They are attributable to the organisation or to an individual and were selected by the authors for illustrative purposes. Therefore, quotes are not necessarily representative of other respondents' views.

This analysis did not seek to provide a comparative or quantitative account of the issues that were raised, but sought to summarise the range of topics and responses that were provided. However, descriptive terminology is used to add clarity on the views. For example, 'some' or 'many'. It was not the intention to quantify the views, but it should be noted that in general, 'many' or 'most' refers to views that were shared across a large section of the responses. Use of the term 'some' is used to reflect an idea or viewpoint that came up less frequently than 'many/most'.

Limitations

There are some limitations that should be noted. Although this approach provided a way for people to submit their views, given the relatively small number of responses, it cannot offer a complete or representative view that reflects the concerns and insights of all cultural organisations and individual practitioners. It is likely that there

were views on these questions that were not put forward through the consultation, and that there are ongoing and emerging issues for different people and organisations.

Not all respondents answered every question and some organisations provided greater detail on certain topics than others, reflecting their interests and professional background. Given the diversity among the responses, the aim of the analysis was to summarise some of the views and perspectives held by different people/organisations, present the breadth of perspectives across the responses and show patterns or themes, where views were shared by respondents.

Structure of this report

This report sets out a summary of the main themes and perspectives that were submitted to the consultation. Data tables are provided for the closed questions and written text and quotes for the open questions. The findings are presented within the following sections, which reflects the order the questions were asked in the consultation survey:

- Scotland's International Footprint
- Rationale for an International Culture Strategy
- Vision and Themes
- Current support for International Cultural Activity
- Current Pressures, Challenges and Opportunities
- Geographies
- Equalities

Findings

Scotland's International Footprint: Current Activity, Motivations and Barriers

The following section of the report sets out current levels of international activity amongst the respondents, what the various motivations are for engaging internationally, and their perceptions on the barriers.

Current international activity

Respondents came from a diverse range of sectors, describing wide ranging international activity. This included both inbound (international activity that took place in Scotland) and outbound (activity outside of Scotland) and activities that ranged from teaching and research, to touring performances/exhibitions, festivals and events, commissioning and co-productions (types of activity are presented in Table 1).

Table 1: Range of International Activity

Type of International Activity	Summary
Collaborations/ co-productions	Collaborative projects, performances and exhibitions with international peers and organisations; research; co-productions
Sharing knowledge/ expertise	Training; workshops; teaching; lecturing; conferences; knowledge and cultural exchange; exchange programmes/residencies; capacity building; consultancy/advice; supporting artists
Outbound	Working internationally; touring performances/exhibitions; presenting work at international venues; tourist/audience member; loans of objects and artworks; restitution and repatriation; exports and sales
Inbound	Events/productions in Scotland involving international artists or audiences; film and TV productions; tourism; hosting international visitors; festivals
International networks	Involvement in international societies/ organisations/networks; networking; academic partnerships; international relations

Commissioning	Commissioning work and practitioners; brokering; booking/managing tours; finding new artists and works	
Financial	Sponsorship and grants; funding for events; seeking donors and fundraising; philanthropy; publications and resource sales; regional strategies and enterprise	
Awareness raising and action	Campaigning; awareness raising; advocacy and representation; decolonisation work; addressing historic injustices and global/social issues	

Europe was the most common region for international activity, although the United States and Canada were also frequently mentioned. There was however activity that spanned the globe, with some organisations describing a global reach.

Although there were challenges that impacted on the sector's capacity to undertake international activity (discussed in the barriers section) it was seen as intrinsic to the work of practitioners, organisations and the wider creative and cultural sectors. This view was common regardless of the type of organisation.

'The level of international working and partnership in the visual arts is so interwoven in activity that this submission can only provide an outline of activities and a handful of case studies.' (Scottish Contemporary Art Network)

Many respondents described international collaboration on projects and activities, and the cultural exchange and learning that came from this work. They described sharing knowledge and expertise, best practice, and capacity building. The activity was reciprocal (both learning from and sharing with international peers), and included training, workshops, teaching and giving lectures, research, conferences, newsletters, international exchange programmes and residencies, and consultancy.

'We are committed to bringing an international perspective to our work, seeking to be a meeting point for local and international artists to nurture the development of new ideas.' (The Work Room)

'Guth nan Gàidheal - an exchange trip for young artists from Scotland and Ireland to immerse themselves in each other's languages.' (Bòrd na Gàidhlig)

Linked to this, many respondents highlighted the role of international activity in career and professional development. This included support for both Scottish and international artists, those who experience barriers, and either accessing or providing sponsorships, bursaries or funding for this work.

'SCAN has supported diverse and care-experienced artists, by funding their places on this programme which provides training, paid work and unrivalled

experience to work as visitor assistants at the Scottish Presentation at the Venice Biennale.' (Scottish Contemporary Art Network)

Some highlighted their activity as promoting tourism, and international activity as showcasing Scotland, Scottish culture, and promoting their area of interest or work. They described international appeal and demand for their work.

'Glasgow Life also promotes Glasgow as destination for domestic and international tourism, business tourism and conventions. The city's cultural assets and programming remain a key driver for international visitors and are strongly linked with motivation to visit.' (Glasgow Life)

Networking and connecting internationally were very common. This included involvement in professional networks such as international organisations, associations and working groups, research and academia, and international awards. Respondents also described building and maintaining international relationships.

'As a university museum… we are involved in exhibitions, loans, research, publications & presentations, (board) memberships of international organisations & networks, repatriation and more.' (The Hunterian, University of Glasgow)

A number of respondents discussed the role of digital online activity in international engagement and reach. This included making collections digital, social media alongside marketing to promote organisations and cultural assets, developing online materials and tools, and online training/conferences and workshops.

'We have recently introduced a Virtual Reading Room service which has allowed international researchers and audiences to see materials and consult with staff.' (National Library of Scotland)

A handful of responses also described the role of international activity in awareness raising and addressing climate change, social justice and human rights, anti-racism, accountability and reparation for the legacies of colonialism and slavery, and promoting disability arts (as discussed in later sections, for example 'Handling of Historical Injustices'). For some this was their driving motivation for working internationally.

'In order to reckon with the histories and legacies of empire, colonialism and slavery that continue to shape Scottish society, we must continue to look outwards and learn from the populations and geographies deeply connected to Scotland through these processes.' (Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights)

Motivations for working internationally

Key motivations, expressed in the consultation, included the desire to build connections, network and collaborate, and to share expertise and knowledge. Respondents stated that this enabled them to work at the forefront of their field, and showcase high quality work. International activity was described as essential to organisations, how they worked, and the wider sector.

'Our international engagement is the bread and butter of what the Fringe is - without our global partnerships and stakeholders it would not be this critically acclaimed global platform.' (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society)

Most commonly, respondents described the mutual learning that came from international exchange and collaboration, how that learning shaped the development of programmes and activities, benefitted research, widened cultural participation, and supported career and professional development.

'Working internationally enables us to form knowledge exchange and best practice models that increase understanding and access to our museums and galleries collections for the wide range of communities we serve.' (Museums Galleries Scotland)

Learning and exchange flowed both ways and was commonly described as reciprocal. There were a small number of references to supporting those with less access to resources or to share the limited resources available.

'We can express solidarity with artists and initiatives who may have less access to resources in their own jurisdictions.' (Yard Heads International)

Cultural exchange and collaboration informed the development of best practice, providing high quality, innovative and creative work, and enabled practitioners and organisations to work at the highest level in their field.

'It's fundamental to ensuring that artistic practice in Scotland remains at the forefront internationally, developing our international contacts, awareness and networks is key to this.' (Starcatchers)

Respondents stated that it increased diversity; broadening understanding of different perspectives and experiences, helping organisations become more diverse and inclusive, and leading to more accessible and representative work.

'Participatory arts projects are enabling migrant communities and individuals in Scotland to develop confidence to express their own cultural heritage and to make new intercultural connections in their neighbourhoods.' (Culture Collective)

International activity also generates wider reach. Respondents noted positives around new audiences and markets (both abroad and bringing visitors and tourism to Scotland), gaining exposure internationally, and attracting talent. Activity also generated new work opportunities. For some, such as artists and musicians, this provided critical employment opportunities.

Related to this, respondents discussed the reputational impact of international activity, and how this supported organisations to raise their profile, and promote their area of activity and culture in Scotland. A desire to showcase high quality work and practice, and to support the development of Scotland's identity on the world stage, were common motivators.

> 'Putting Scottish theatre and Highland culture on the international stage; building confidence so that our region and nation are seen as vibrant and creative both at home and abroad.' (Dogstar Theatre Company)

> 'Working on international projects can provide critical employment opportunities. These are often longer contracts and better paid than in Scotland and the rest of the UK.' (The Work Room)

Some also described widening access to culture, for instance high quality live music, offering affordable international culture to both Scottish and international audiences, access to museums and loans of artwork. Others described celebrating and promoting diversity, and the necessity of increasing diversity and voice within the sector.

> 'As part of our national strategy priorities, we are committed as a sector to ensuring cultural access to all people and in particular underrepresented groups.' (Museums Galleries Scotland)

Financial motivations were highlighted by many. Although a couple of responses described no financial gain, others highlighted how international activity generated income. This was particularly important given wider pressures faced by the sector. Financial benefits included increased opportunities for paid work, better paid and funded work internationally, inward investment and export, wider economic benefits, fundraising, and increasing international audiences.

> 'By engaging with audiences overseas, they [cultural organisations] can increase exposure and potentially attract new audiences and supporters, which can lead to increased revenue and sustainability.' (Culture Counts)

Increased income came through earnings and revenue, commissioning, performances, donations, funding, and investment.

Barriers to developing international activity

The main barriers identified in the consultation were financial, with COVID-19, Brexit, rising costs, and the cost of living crisis compounding challenges for an already pressured sector. Lack of funding and underinvestment were commonly highlighted. Brexit had posed additional barriers such as visa and administrative barriers, movement of goods and people, and lost access to opportunities and funding.

Additionally, respondents highlighted lack of time, capacity, staff skills, confidence, and gaps in knowledge and understanding. Further barriers included lack of infrastructure, lack of joined up strategic approaches to international activity, and a lack of support mechanisms and pathways.

'The most immediate challenge is declining investment due to budgetary pressures. Due to pressures on budgets, for example, we are assessing and prioritising key markets for consumer marketing investment and business-to-business activity.' (VisitScotland)

Some described the current landscape as being so challenging that artists and small scale organisations were struggling to survive.

'To be working effectively internationally needs to be built on a thriving and confident local infrastructure... Currently independent artists and small-scale companies and organisations in dance are struggling to survive.' (The Work Room)

A few described how international activity could be given lower priority, for example, due to reductions in funding for organisations' core activities.

'The cost-of-living crisis has led many cultural organisations to focus on core activity, keeping the doors open and maintaining services and staff. There is a shift in focus to the 'local' in a post-Covid and Brexit world which has seen a decline in international activity.' (Culture Counts)

Respondents commonly described a lack of funding opportunities and uncertainty around funding, declining public sector funding, reduced access to EU funds, lack of mobility funding and international touring funds, and the need to secure external funding/grants for activities. This is discussed in further detail in the 'Current Support' section.

Additionally, many highlighted the costs involved in international activity, particularly travel and accommodation, visas and fees, and transportation costs. They highlighted the rising cost of international work.

'Fees gained for international touring are being eaten into by the increase in costs, meaning international work is much less profitable than previously.' (Creative Scotland)

Leaving the EU had created many issues for the respondents. These are discussed in more detail in the section 'Current pressures, challenges and opportunities' but included: visa and administrative issues, new legislation, lost access to EU funding streams, increased costs, lost exchange opportunities and networks, lost trade (because of increased costs for EU clients) supply chain and labour shortages, and difficulties around freedom of movement and movement of goods.

A few respondents highlighted inadequate infrastructure as barriers. This included lack of facilities for conservation, transport of artworks, infrastructure to support major festivals, and educational reform to support anti-racism education.

'There is an underestimation of the collective scale and economic impact of what takes place every August in Edinburgh… we lack the infrastructural response that the events/the city need, to provide a truly world class experience.' (Edinburgh Fringe Festival Society)

Some also highlighted the lack of joined up strategic approaches to international activity. This included the lack of collaborative partnerships across the public sector, joined up approaches within Scottish Government, and between Scottish Government and other public organisations. Also, a lack of engagement with business and enterprise agencies, and lack of understanding of the links between culture and the economy.

'Culture sits very firmly within culture and major events division in the Scottish Government, and it can be very difficult to get engagement out with this, to support wider growth.' (Edinburgh International Festival)

Climate concerns, including the environmental impact of travel, were highlighted as a barrier by a handful of respondents. These barriers are discussed in further detail in the 'Current pressures, challenges and opportunities' section.

Rationale for an International Culture Strategy

The following section of the report sets out the respondents' views on the Scottish Government's rationale for an International Culture Strategy. It covers the following themes:

- Benefits of the strategy
- Resources needed to match the ambition
- Tensions around value and focus
- Systems and infrastructure
- 'Soft power' impacts

See consultation survey (page 4 onwards) for further background on the rationale proposed by the Scottish Government.

Benefits of the Strategy

Many gave positive feedback on the idea of an international strategy, highlighting the need for a long-term and strategic approach.

'The strategy is exactly that - a coherent framework for international working which underpins the unique character and talent that Scotland has to offer.' (Street Level Photoworks)

Some felt the rationale was clear and sensible, and that the strategy showed a commitment by Scottish Government to the sector. It could support the sector to grow, bring investment, and would have wider social and economic benefits.

'Overall, the rationale builds a strong foundation on which to base future international working and demonstrates a commitment from the Scottish Government to champion and support the continued international focus of Scotland's cultural industries.' (University Museums In Scotland)

A strategy could also promote and support Scotland's international reputation. A few also described the rationale as aligning with their own motivations for international activity, and there were some positive comments on the needs of the sector being placed at the beginning of the rationale.

'Building upon our reputation and history of openness with immigration, welcoming, national and cultural identity formation of many cultures, and a shared understanding with others that cultural exchange and understanding leads to shared understanding and tolerance.' (University of West of Scotland)

Resources need to match the ambition

However, there were concerns about the lack of resource, and the need for resources to match the ambition.

> 'Without addressing the structural threats to the cultural sector due to funding reductions, any strategy is likely to have extremely limited meaning and traction.' (Glasgow Life)

Some emphasised the strategy needed to acknowledge and address the wider context, including the impact on the sector of cost pressures, Brexit, and the pandemic. Also, that the sector was not robust enough to achieve its' own international potential, so would need investment to build the capacity to do this.

> 'There are risks to the sector's core activities which would need addressed alongside, so that organisations are able to work both locally and internationally.' (Traditional Arts & Culture Scotland)

There was also caution, that ambitions needed to be realistic, to manage expectations and avoid disappointment.

> 'High ambition which is not accompanied by proportionate budgetary support is not realistic, resulting in disappointment and an erosion of trust in the sector, and diminution of Scotland's global reputation as a leading creative nation.' (Creative Scotland)

Tensions around values and focus

There were tensions between the language and focus of the rationale and the wider value base of arts and culture. A handful of respondents described the intrinsic value of culture in and of itself, without the need to demonstrate wider benefits, with a few requests not to link to indirect outcomes.

> 'This never really ends well... put trust in artists and arts organisations and support them to develop what they do best, but please don't link this to specific indirect outcomes...' (Individual)

Others highlighted wider benefits from cultural activity. Particularly, respondents felt that this was more than just an economic activity, and that whilst economic outcomes were important, these were often not the primary drivers of international activity.

> 'An exchange of values is more important than a purely transactional approach which focusses on expanding markets.' (Artlink Edinburgh and the Lothians)

Some felt the focus was too narrow, or lacked creativity in its language, and highlighted other outcomes that should be included, such as health, wellbeing, education, and benefits for communities including social inclusion and empowerment.

'Culture is not something that is just enjoyed for fun or education. It also has the potential to transform lives and communities.' (National Trust for Scotland)

Other outcomes included environmental outcomes such as climate justice, providing social outcomes through decolonisation and repatriation, human rights, and framing a strategy around a rights based approach. It was suggested that the definition of international culture should be broadened to align it with 'A Culture Strategy for Scotland' (2020).

'The rationale would benefit from acknowledging and working with universal values, i.e. respecting, protecting, promoting and fulfilling human rights, gender equality, and Leave No-one Behind, as well as seeking to protect and restore the natural environment.' (Curating Tomorrow)

Some highlighted the need for intersectionality, and a consideration of equalities, access and diversity. Also, requests for a focus on those at the early stages of their careers, Fair Work, and greater transparency and fairness around how international opportunities are allocated.

'As long as this is intersectional and prioritising access and equality, we support an international culture strategy as a framework and reference for the importance of international working.' (Deveron Projects)

Respondents also noted the need to include net zero and sustainability commitments, and others highlighted the need for increased accountability and responsibility in Scotland's culture-driven work.

'Whether reckoning with the histories and legacies of colonialism, empire and slavery or learning from the shortcomings of previous international campaigns, such as Homecoming Scotland, increased accountability and responsibility should be a guiding principle ' (Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights)

Additionally, there were some requests for a focus on inbound activity, with the view that international productions, organisations and visitors coming to Scotland are as important as undertaking activity abroad.

'We note the emphasis on export activity and would like to see more explicit emphasis in the rationale on the benefits of INBOUND cultural activity for ideas and skills exchange, inward investment, and talent attraction.' (Festivals Edinburgh)

Systems and Infrastructure

Commonly, respondents were wary of a 'top-down' approach by Scottish Government, arguing that a 'light touch approach' that builds on existing strengths and expertise in the sector, and a rationale that was not too prescriptive or overly directive, was required.

'We believe that a light-touch approach to furthering cultural relations that builds on the existing strengths of Scotland's cultural sector will likely bring more benefits than a heavy-handed 'top-down' approach from Government that links culture too closely with explicit foreign policy aims.' (National Galleries Scotland)

This included the need for reciprocal relationships between government and the sector.

'A reciprocal relationship where government supports the aims of the sector and provides funding, support and finds solutions to address the challenges and barriers to enable the sector to support government aims should be considered.' (Culture Counts)

A few respondents noted the needs of wider communities or stakeholders, and an understanding that needs and interests around international activity may differ between sub-sectors, size of organisation and individual performers.

'Different strategies will be required according to the scale and type of international activity being undertaken. By the same token, the needs of individual freelance performers are likely to be very different to those of organisations responsible for staging major events.' (University of St Andrews)

Respondents saw the benefits of more connectivity, cross-government working, and a need to view culture as intrinsic to business and development strategies.

'Culture should not be viewed as 'other' but rather as an intrinsic part of business and development strategies. Cultural export is education, it is innovation, it is data, it is inclusivity and diversity AND it is the cultural product which provides all of these things.' (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society)

'Soft power' impacts

Some were positive around the use of 'soft power'[3] in the rationale, emphasising the positive impacts of cultural exchange.

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[3] 'Soft power' refers to the use of a country's cultural and economic influence to persuade other countries to do something.

'Building upon our reputation and history of openness with immigration, welcoming, national and cultural identity formation of many cultures, and a shared understanding with others that cultural exchange and understanding leads to shared understanding and tolerance.' (University of the West of Scotland)

Mutual exchange, connections and opportunities were regarded as most important, with a view that international connectivity is important regardless of whether it leads to trade relations.

'Transnational dialogue, mobility and exchange are the most important characteristics of an international cultural strategy.' (Drew Wylie Ltd)

A small number of respondents had some criticism about the use of 'soft power'. This included a concern with using culture to advance a state's influence and relationships, and the difference in policy aims and agendas between culture and foreign policy objectives.

'Cultural diplomacy, however, the term is defined, is essentially using cultural work to advance a state's influence and relationships for foreign policy objectives. The broader cultural engagement or relations is related, and can have the same actors, but its policy ends are distinct and different from the project of power influence.' (Historic Environment Scotland)

There were a few positive responses on adopting the British Council principles, which included the focus on cultural exchange and understanding, connecting and co-creating.

There was also a note of caution with this approach.

'We note concern that you seek to combine cultural relations, diplomacy, and development within the strategy. You note parallels to British Council's primary cultural relations role. They are, however, a separate cultural body sitting within a broader UK foreign and policy landscape.' (Historic Environment Scotland)

Other concerns included the potentially negative reputational impacts for cultural organisations associating with national government strategies of 'soft power', and the need for humility in the modern context of Scotland and the legacies of colonialism.

'The association for cultural institutions and artists with national government strategies of 'soft power' can often be reputationally detrimental, having the reverse effects to those desired.' (Glasgow Life)

Vision and Themes

The following section of the report sets out the respondents views on the proposed vision and themes for the strategy.[4]

Vision

There were a number of positive views on the vision, with many broadly supportive and noting this as clear and comprehensive.

> 'The vision is in keeping with our own aspirations to foster a climate in which cultural difference is valued and in which we maximise the opportunities for our staff and students to be innovative and engage in entrepreneurial activities.' (University of St Andrews)

Some felt, however, that the vision was missing the practicalities and detail of how the strategy would be achieved, including who will have lead responsibility, what resources will be available to achieve this and how international partnerships, markets and audiences will be developed. It was questioned how the strategy would be reviewed and progress monitored. Several respondents requested a focus on goals.

> 'The vision currently reads more about what the strategy will do, rather than what the strategy will achieve. We would recommend that it is more goal focused and should have a clearer link to the outcomes of the 2 primary themes in the vision' (Historic Environment Scotland)

A few commented on the need to ensure the structures and support systems are in place to achieve the vision, greater joined-up working and policy between areas.

> 'Fully joined up policy is absolutely key to successful implementation and meaningful change.' (Culture Counts)

Further points noted the importance of integrating the International Culture Strategy with the Scottish Government Culture Strategy and refreshed action plan, emphasising how the relationships between local cultural provision and international programmes will be supported, particularly with regard to the sustainability of cultural activities given wider pressures on the sector.

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[4] The draft vision for the strategy is: '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.'

'It is important that an International Cultural Strategy (ICS) integrates, connects to and flows down from the Cultural Strategy and its refreshed Action Plan, which captures a much fuller range of benefits than the 4 themes in the proposed ICS.' (Culture Counts)

Scotland's distinctive identity

A number of concerns were raised about use of the phrase 'Scotland's distinctive identity'. This included a perception from some that this did not reflect the diversity of culture in Scotland.

'I think it is good but would caution that as history tells us, many of Scotland's cultural identities are invented and reinvented, we thrive on more than a singular cultural identity.' (University of West of Scotland)

Some individual respondents had concern that the term conjured up specific imagery. Others cautioned not to rely on stereotypes about Scotland's national identity, with requests to emphasise contemporary culture in Scotland.

'Scotland itself hosts all kinds of culture from different sources - this strategy sounds a bit tartan-biased - what about elements such as the Mela and other inputs from 'newer' Scots?' (Individual)

Others felt the vision should centre on Scotland's progressive, humanitarian and inclusive values. There was a desire for the strategy not to be nationalistic, to focus on what, as a nation, Scotland can 'give back', and to promote shared identities, beliefs and values.

'In articulating the vision, we should also take care that it doesn't come across as simply exporting Scottish culture and importing the economic benefits.' (National Galleries Scotland)

It was suggested the strategy should promote the benefits and diversity that incoming international activity can bring, with a view that international activity was not just promoting Scotland but also about reciprocity, collaboration, and the impact on Scotland of international exchange.

'The vision is clear and concise. However, it does not take into account what Scotland can learn from other countries internationally.' (Museums Association)

Some felt there was no need to define what it means to be Scottish other than the activity or practitioners being Scotland-based or supported by Scottish or Scotland-based initiatives or companies. Others felt it was the creativity and quality of work that was most important, rather than being 'distinctively' Scottish.

We don't need someone to define what it means to be Scottish in any other way than the artists, the company or the project (any of these) were Scotland-based or Scotland-supported.' (Yard Heads International)

Some respondents flagged the need to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the vision. This included recognition of the work done in this area, measures to improve access to culture for marginalised groups and showcase the diverse range of Scottish culture and heritage, and cultural activities that have been shaped by minority groups.

'Some of Scotland's cultural organisations are doing ground-breaking work in this area. Positively promoting EDI values and inclusive practice in relation to Scotland's international vision - which clearly links to innovation - is key.' (Drake Music Scotland)

This also included, from museum sector responses and an equality rights group, the need for accountability and fairness in relating to historic and contemporary injustices.

'CRER firmly believes that Scotland's international cultural footprint was built upon a platform provided by empire, colonialism and enslavement - and Scotland must hold itself accountable for this history and the impact of its legacy.' (Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights)

It was suggested that the vision should also focus on social responsibility and social impact, and how culture impacts on issues such as climate justice and sustainability, inequality, health and wellbeing, and education.

'Cultural activity is much more than consumption of goods and services (the neoliberal approach), but a rights-based activity rooted in democracy, fulfilment of human rights, and participation of people in society and in shaping collective futures.' (Curating Tomorrow)

Themes

The respondents commented on the four proposed themes: cultural connections, economic impact, diplomacy and reputation. Respondents related most to the theme of cultural connections. Whilst some described how their activity connected with all four themes, others felt that the themes were not broad enough, and requested the inclusion of others, in particular, societal impacts.

Cultural Connections

Respondents appeared to relate most with the theme of cultural connections. Many of the views already expressed were repeated, around the vital importance of connection, sharing culture, collaboration, and being part of global networks. Respondents viewed these connections as intrinsic to their work.

'Much of my work relates to cultural connections. As an expert for the EU I have worked regularly with a large cohort of cultural professionals across Europe for the last 12 years. This has led to much wider connectivity with networks.' (Drew Wylie Ltd)

Some also highlighted raising awareness of, and promoting, diversity in Scotland, such as the contributions from ethnic minorities, and promoting opportunities for disabled arts and composers.

'The connections also feed back into our multi-cultural society and allow us to make work here in Scotland that resonates with the smaller heritage specific communities we have welcomed over generations to this country.' (Individual)

Others highlighted how connections promoted both their work, organisations, and Scotland more broadly, attracting interest and visitors to Scotland and increasing audiences. This included the benefits of digital connections, which widened access.

'We strive to connect with nations who cannot for political, social or economic reason attend the Fringe through digital innovation - for example our British Council supported 'Voices from the South' project.' (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society)

Economic Impact

Many respondents again highlighted the current economic challenges facing the sector, and the need for funding and financial support. The strategy was described by some as providing the opportunity for investment, and as a framework for organisations to access funding and support.

'An International Cultural Strategy could provide a framework for cultural organisations to access funding and support for international projects, which could help to address some of the funding and logistical barriers that organisations face when developing international cultural activity.' (Culture Counts)

For some, economic impact was not a primary theme: whilst there was an economic impact of activity, this was not the motivation for international work.

'Our work in the traditional arts is primarily about community, conviviality and wellbeing. While we see a role for economic impact, we believe the local human benefits to be of prime importance.' (Traditional Arts & Culture Scotland)

For some individual respondents and smaller organisations, international activity had either none or limited economic impact. A few described this being an area of development.

'Financially our work doesn't make sense - it costs the same to create and present the work but due to the age and capped audience numbers the ticket yield doesn't cover the costs, so we are reliant on subsidy.' (Starcatchers)

However, the work and employment opportunities provided by international activity had an important economic impact on practitioners. This included training and career progression opportunities, and the necessity of work to ensure careers were sustainable. This was particularly important for touring and performance companies.

'We understand that international touring can bring much needed economic sustainability to our organisation and as an independent, not regularly-funded company, we continue to seek for opportunities to achieve this with regularity.' (Shaper/Caper)

A few responses also highlighted equalities issues that related to this theme, such as around pay and conditions, the disproportionate impact of the cost of living crisis on ethnic minorities, and increased access costs for disabled artists.

Some respondents described performances and tours abroad contributing to the local economies in the countries they were performing in. Commonly, however, respondents from a range of organisations discussed how cultural events drive tourism and visitors to Scotland, with events also acting as a gateway to the rest of the UK or Scotland.

'Scotland's museums have an economic impact as they form an important part of its visitor economy, attracting international visitors who in turn will spend money on hotels and in restaurants.' (Museums Association)

Others highlighted sales of work, access to international markets, ticket and merchandise sales, music exports, award money, screening fees, digital sales, royalties, and service exports through visitor spending. International activity also opened up access to funding streams, financial investment, and fundraising. International partnerships also meant the ability to share costs on major projects.

'Screen Scotland's international work brings large-scale productions to Scotland. In 2019, producers and production companies based outside of Scotland spent an estimated £165.3 million on the inward production of films and High-End TV programmes filmed on location or in studio facilities in Scotland.' (Creative Scotland)

A handful of respondents referred to education and research, for instance, university work on bids, selling expertise in education and outreach, work with students, the contribution that graduates make to the economy and wider society, and the contribution that university museums make in attracting people to Scotland.

'Our work within employability, both with domestic and international students, develops vocational skills and confidence, often leading to recognition in students' enhanced transcripts and improving their longer-term employment options.' (University Museums in Scotland)

Additional points raised included a request for a focus on how the role of culture in forming Scotland's international identity helps to position it as an attractive place to invest, work or study, and how culture interacts with trade. Also, using expertise from other groups when mapping international activity to better understand the economic impact of international work.

'Mechanisms like the Creative Industries Leadership Group and the place based organisations like Creative Dundee and Creative Edinburgh will be vital in mapping international activity and economic contribution of the freelance creative workforce.' (Scottish Contemporary Art Network)

Diplomacy

There were varied responses to this theme. A number of respondents said they did not engage in diplomatic work. Some recognised that arts and culture can contribute towards diplomacy, but they did not have the capacity to undertake high levels of diplomatic work.

'Diplomacy is not a direct remit for Creative Scotland, and we currently don't have the capacity to undertake high levels of diplomatic work, particularly if it doesn't also align with the direct interests of the arts, screen and creative industries.' (Creative Scotland)

For those who did, it was discussed how major cultural events can act as representations of Scotland's values, history and outlook, and are platforms in which high level government networking and other diplomatic activities can take place.

'We have welcomed visitors from countries that are unable to engage at a political level but can do so at a cultural level. We can help keep the doors of communication open, akin to the British Council, when governments are in conflict.' (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society)

Other activity included hosting receptions and events attracting international diplomats and ambassadors, participating in dialogue with music export offices that are funded by international governments, participation in the Edinburgh International Culture Summit, support for Scottish Government hubs, and work to support Memorandums of Understanding.

Some described how their work could contribute towards diplomacy, providing the opportunity for connections and cultural exchange, whilst others felt that diplomacy should not be the reason behind supporting cultural activity.

'Culture can help strengthen diplomatic relationships in increasingly turbulent times but once again this should not seek to be the main reason behind supporting culture in and about Scotland.' (National Trust for Scotland)

Some highlighted how international activity enabled them to express solidarity with peers, address social issues and achieve social justice. Particularly, how recognition of the impact of Scotland's role in colonialism, empire and slavery would improve diplomacy.

'The Hunterian, with Scottish colleagues, is very active in the field of restitution/repatriation, building relationships with people and countries across the globe. This highly symbolic form of social justice can be a very powerful way to connect.' (The Hunterian, University of Glasglow)

There were views that international activity should be about Scotland enabling dialogue globally, and that international activity should be understood in the context of Scotland's global responsibilities.

'Culture should not be an instrument of diplomacy, and should not be used to 'artwash' regimes, organisations or individuals that abuse human rights. There is scope here for developing a new approach to cultural diplomacy that is attentive to ethics, values and addressing the challenges such as climate justice, decolonisation and resetting of exploitative relationships as exchange, capacity building and reparation.' (Scottish Contemporary Art Network)

There were some suggestions for strengthening cultural relations. This included collaborative projects, exchange programmes and residencies, opportunities for showcasing Scottish culture, engagement with diaspora communities and visits to build and foster connections internationally. This also included a request for the Scottish Government to fund Scottish organisations and professionals to be involved in EU programmes as third country partners. Also, measuring the return on influence as well as the economic impact of international activity.

'By showcasing Scottish culture at international festivals, fairs, and exhibitions, Scotland can create opportunities for dialogue and partnerships with other countries. These events can also help promote Scottish songwriters, composers, artists and creative industries on a global scale.' (The Ivors Academy of Music Creators)

Reputation

Most respondents felt that arts and culture have significant reputational value for Scotland, and described how their work builds their international reputation. Many already had a strong international reputation, including for delivering high quality work, social justice, collaboration and innovation, and for being part of global conversation.

'National Museums Scotland's research activity is significant worldwide. For example, our Natural Science collections contribute to international understanding of climate change and our Scottish historical collections provide the core source to understand Scotland and its place in world history.' (National Museums Scotland)

Some respondents reflected on the need to maintain standards to keep their international reputation, and the importance of ongoing international activity for this.

'Many aspire to what the Edinburgh Fringe has grown into over 75 years, we provide masterclasses to many countries on 'how to do a Fringe', we are invited to speak at international conferences and events on the success of the Fringe, so we have to ensure we keep relevant, leading and innovating.' (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society)

In addition, their work promotes and builds the international reputation of Scotland, impacting on understanding, views and images of Scotland. This included showcasing Scotland's cultural offering, its people and places. It also included the reputation of Scotland as outward looking, progressive and innovative, welcoming, and a country that values bringing local and global cultures together.

'Our work helps to create a very positive impression of Scotland and its culture as a dynamic, friendly, creative and outward-facing country.' (Dogstar Theatre Company)

Some examples included showcasing the best that Scotland's children and young people can offer, Scotland's reputation as a country in which older people are valued and respected, representing the Scottish cultural and creative sector at specialist events, and using Scotland's reputation as a springboard for further cultural connections.

Challenges to the sector were again raised, with respondents reiterating the need for support and investment, and the lack of opportunities and resources.

'We don't see Deveron Project's role as 'promoting Scotland' but we recognise that, as one of a handful of rural arts organisations in the region, with requisite support we could have significant impact on increasing tourism to in the north east.' (Deveron Project)

Aspects of respondents' work not covered by the four themes

Respondents mainly highlighted the absence of societal impacts. They emphasised the need to focus on issues of inclusion, equalities and sustainability.

For instance, reasons for engaging in cultural work, such as connections to democracy and fairness, the social impact of the arts on disadvantaged communities, disability arts, addressing gender inequalities, and the specific inclusion of work around restitution and repatriation.

'Promoting inclusivity and diversity in international cultural activity, by ensuring that cultural organisations work to showcase the diverse range of Scottish culture and heritage and engage with diverse audiences and communities overseas. It is vital that economic factors are not prioritised at the expense of equalities.' (Culture Counts)

Added to this was the view that the strategy should look to support and represent grassroots and community work alongside the focus on national organisations. This included the positive impact of international exchange on communities, places and wellbeing, and the opportunity and enjoyment that comes from participation in culture.

'The strategy could find a way to supporting the international aspects of grassroots, community and equalities work, as it risks supporting a limited view of the role of cultural work around economic and market based activities or elite national cultural institutions.' (Scottish Contemporary Art Network)

Additionally, several noted again the importance of culture to tourism. There were some calls for improved mechanisms, including the need for a music export office, an office for cultural exchange, and resource and capacity building, for instance with investment, addressing gaps in skills provision, and access to partnerships and funding.

Current Support for International Cultural Activity

The following section of the report sets out respondents' views on whether they had accessed support for their international activity, what impact this had, and views on international examples that Scotland might learn from, in its support for international cultural activity.

Table 2: Accessing Scottish public sector support for international activity

Have you accessed Scottish public funding to support international activity?	Yes	No	Not answered	Total
Organisations	40 (66%)	13 (21%)	8 (13%)	61
Individuals	12 (75%)	4 (25%)	0 (0%)	16
Total	52 (68%)	17 (22%)	8 (10%)	77

The majority of organisations (66%) and individuals (75%) had accessed public funding to support their international activities (see Table 2). Creative Scotland was the most commonly mentioned source of support. Examples of funding programs provided by Creative Scotland included Made in Scotland, Open Funding, National Lottery and Recovery Fund. The Scottish Government was also identified as a funding source for international cultural activity.

Impact of this support

When considering the impact of public sector support, the responses were overwhelmingly positive. Respondents perceived the support as significant, describing it as 'vital', and 'useful' for their international work. Respondents acknowledged that many of their achievements and successes in the international arena would not have been possible without this support.

The detailed responses revealed that public sector support had a diverse and profound influence on various aspects of respondents' work, ranging from enabling international tours and collaborations to fostering cultural exchange, supporting emerging talent, contributing to economic growth, and promoting the Scottish culture sector on a global stage. The impact of this support is set out in three themes: 'building partnerships', 'facilitating events', and 'strengthening the sector'.

Building partnerships and connections/networking

Public funding had enabled organisations and individuals to build partnerships and collaborations with artists, curators, and stakeholders from different countries. It had

facilitated international networking and the creation of new connections within the global cultural community.

> 'The public funding we have received in Scotland towards international activity has been critical in securing partnerships and making it possible for The Work Room and independent dance artists to be involved in international activity. Often these activities have led to seeding long term relationships and work for artists and arts workers in dance in and out with Scotland.' (The Work Room)

Moreover, through public support, respondents expanded their global reach and gained recognition for their work in international circles.

> 'The support has also been a platform through which we have achieved value and recognition both domestically and internationally for expert knowledge and leadership through ICH related activity.' (Museum Galleries Scotland)

Facilitating international tours and events

Public sector support had enabled organisations and individuals to tour their work to various countries, including the US, China, Australia and Japan. This provided increased exposure to their music, performances, and creative projects.

> 'We would not be able to tour to locations such as the US and China, without this support.' (Starcatchers)

Furthermore, regular funding played a crucial role in ensuring the consistency of cultural events and other creative projects abroad, enabling a reliable network of contacts and sustainable engagement.

Strengthening the Scottish culture sector

The support directly benefited artists and organisations by providing them with financial resources and opportunities to showcase their work internationally. It allowed them to develop their careers and gain recognition on an international level.

> 'With the year-on-year investment that the International Touring Fund provides, we are starting to build our international reputation (starting predominantly in Germany, then progressing to other European regions).' (Royal Scottish National Orchestra)

The support had also been crucial in facilitating mentorship and professional development opportunities for emerging artists and practitioners, contributing to the growth of the Scottish creative community.

'Without this support we are unable to undertake any international work at all. Specific funding for international development is crucial if YDance is to continue to give young dancers these opportunities and to showcase young talent from Scotland on the international stage.' (Scottish Youth Dance)

Additionally, it allowed for the development and implementation of strategies for future growth.

Respondents were also asked about other forms of support, beyond public sector funding. More than half of respondents (54% of organisations and 63% of individuals) had accessed other forms of support for their international activities (See Table 3).

Table 3: Accessing other forms of support for international activity[5]

Have you accessed any other forms of support for your international activity?	Yes	No	Not answered	Total
Organisations	33 (54%)	17 (28%)	11 (18%)	61
Individuals	10 (63%)	6 (38%)	0 (0%)	16
Total	43 (56%)	23 (30%)	11 (14%)	77

The most commonly cited sources of funding outside the Scottish public sector were the British Council and arts councils from the rest of the UK.

For some respondents, their international work received funding from specific ministries or government agencies in the countries where they were active.

Respondents also emphasised the in-kind support received from hosts of international events or producing partners. Such support often covered additional fees, travel and accommodation costs, or provided discounts.

'We are often invited to international events and conferences where attendance expenses are paid for by the host country, in these instances we typically seek to undertake additional activities to maximise the engagement of the trip.' (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society)

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[5] Note that not all percentages add up to 100% due to rounding.

Private donations from individuals and businesses, as well as support from charitable organisations, trusts, and foundations, both in Scotland and from other countries, played a role in funding international work.

Assessing current support for international cultural activities

As shown in Table 4, over half (53%) of all respondents (organisations and individuals) did not think that current support for international activity is appropriate. While 12% agreed it was appropriate and 21% were not sure.

Table 4: Views on whether current support is appropriate[6]

Is current support for international activity appropriate?	Yes	No	Not sure	Not answered	Total
Organisations	7 (11%)	35 (57%)	9 (15%)	10 (16 %)	61
Individuals	2 (13%)	6 (38%)	7 (44%)	1 (6%)	16
Total	9 (12%)	41 (53%)	16 (21%)	11 (14%)	77

Reflecting this view, the majority of respondents expressed concerns about the adequacy of current support for international cultural activity, highlighting various challenges and suggesting potential areas for improvement.

Uncertainty about the appropriateness of current support appeared to be influenced by factors such as the lack of adequate financing, challenges associated with the post-COVID and post-Brexit landscapes, the increasing need for a more strategic approach, and the necessity for better utilisation of technology to make international cultural work sustainable.

Lack of sufficient financial support

The lack of sufficient financial support for international cultural activity was a significant concern. Respondents highlighted the challenges faced by artists and performers when it came to covering the costs of international travel, visas, and logistical arrangements. Many indicated that the costs associated with international touring, including flights, accommodation, visas, and transportation of equipment, were significant and often not fully covered by available funds.

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[6] Note that not all percentages add up to 100% due to rounding.

Respondents highlighted structural barriers in accessing financing, issues with project-based and short-term funding models, limited access to EU funding, and insufficient investment in cultural diplomacy.

Respondents emphasised that emerging artists, early-career professionals, and smaller organisations encountered difficulties in securing financial support for engaging in international activities.

'The only fund available to us for exclusively international theatre touring is Made in Scotland and this must be specifically for productions which have been presented and supported by Made in Scotland at the Edinburgh Fringe. I think there should be international touring money available for successful productions which have not been part of Made in Scotland.' (Dogstar Theatre Company)

Respondents suggested that a lack of dedicated funding options for these groups limited their ability to engage in international activities, despite the potential benefits.

Several responses critiqued the prevailing project-based funding model, which provided support for specific outcomes or initiatives rather than sustained and long-term engagement. Artists and organisations required ongoing support to build meaningful relationships and collaborations, but short-term funding cycles hindered the development of such partnerships. Respondents stressed the importance of long-term funding solutions to ensure the sustainability of international cultural collaborations. Suggestions included multi-year funding commitments that allowed for strategic planning and the cultivation of meaningful partnerships over time.

Brexit resulted in a loss of access to EU funding opportunities, including those provided by Creative Europe and ERASMUS. Respondents mentioned that these funding sources were crucial for supporting international projects and collaborations, and their absence created a gap in available financial support.

Some responses called for the establishment of dedicated cultural export bodies or funds that were specifically designed to provide financial support for international activities. These bodies could focus on offering grants, loans, or a combination of both to support artists and organisations in their international endeavours.

Some respondents also argued that international cultural activity was undervalued in terms of its potential for cultural diplomacy and global reputation building. They suggested that greater investment in this area could lead to substantial societal and economic benefits, but current funding levels did not reflect this potential.

'More support for our work would be appreciated considering the benefits and the huge value for money on smaller amounts that we need and longer term effects of our activity. There could be a specific fund for companies that have a track record

of international work or an expressly international agenda and intention for the majority of their work.' (Yard Heads International)

Global models for supporting creative work

Respondents were aware of countries that successfully support their country-based creative workers and organisations globally. The most common examples and potential learning points to be gleaned from included countries such as: Canada, Germany, France, Ireland, Finland, Norway, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

Respondents also listed international institutes, boards, public bodies, and organisations where they saw connected and strategic efforts in supporting international cultural activities. The examples included:

- Quebec's Art Council (Canada)
- Goethe Institute (Germany)
- German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)
- Pro Helvetia (Switzerland)
- Fluxus Art Projects (France)
- Office for Contemporary Art Norway
- Kone Foundation (Finland)
- Frame (Finland)
- The Finnish Institute
- Nordic Culture Point
- Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO)
- Arts Council of Wales
- Culture Ireland
- Creative Europe
- Korea Arts Management Service (KAMS)
- HEVA - Finance for East Africa's Creative Economy
- Sounds Australia
- Creative New Zealand

Current Pressures, Challenges and Opportunities

The following section of the report sets out the respondents' views on the way international activity might help to mitigate current challenges (such as Brexit, the pandemic and the cost of living crisis), how the strategy should consider the impact of international activities on climate change, and how the strategy might further the aspiration of handling historic injustices responsibly.

Ways international activity can help to mitigate current challenges

Respondents generally saw the potential for Scottish international cultural activity to address the current social, economic, cultural and environmental challenges of the nation.

> 'International activity breeds reciprocity. The economic and social benefits are proven.' (Individual)

Considering social benefits, respondents stressed that international cultural activity enables engagement in international collaborations and partnerships. These, in turn, can facilitate the sharing of knowledge and resources, collective learning from best practices and experiences, stronger cross-cultural connections, and community integrations.

> 'International activity broadens our horizons and deepens our collective learning. They are essential if we are to face the current challenges which have forced us to be more introverted. None of the problems caused by the pandemic, international affairs or climate crisis can be solved on their own, they need a collective approach across borders to have any chance of being overcome.' (Artlink Edinburgh and the Lothians)

Some of the responses also highlighted the uplifting and unifying aspects of international cultural activities, showcasing their ability to convey positive messages, offer solace and comfort, and serve as a bridge for communication and connection, particularly during challenging times.

> 'Any cultural arts programs are a balm for the soul in troubling times.' (Scottish Arts Foundation/Learned Kindred of Currie)

Considering the economic benefits, the responses stressed the chance for the expansion of trade, investment and funding opportunities as a result of international work, which will be particularly important in the wake of Brexit and the loss of access to the EU single market. This should result in the reduction of dependence on one market and diversification of income sources, which was particularly important for these individuals and organisations.

'Identifying fruitful new opportunities and markets internationally should help to aid growth and sustainability of those enterprises involved, providing additional and increased income streams, whilst also acknowledging additional risk and costs.' (South of Scotland Enterprise)

Particular challenges related to leaving the EU

The responses highlighted several challenges that leaving the EU has brought to international cultural activity in Scotland. These challenges included:

- Increased costs of international work
- Loss of EU funding
- Visa, administrative issues and increased bureaucracy
- Loss of human resources/capital
- New barriers to international trade and investment
- Reputation damage
- Loss of collaborative partnerships, exclusion and discrimination

Many respondents mentioned increased costs associated with international projects, including higher transportation expenses, tariffs, and customs fees. These financial challenges have made international work more costly, significantly impacting the budgets of cultural organisations and artists. In some cases, they have even hindered further international work.

'Touring is increasingly expensive, and the visa requirements, import taxes etc. make it extremely difficult to tour in Europe.' (Starcatchers)

Several respondents pointed out the loss of access to EU funding programs, such as Creative Europe. These programs had previously provided crucial support for cross-border cooperation, cultural exchange, and mobility. The loss of EU funding opportunities was described as 'catastrophic', creating a significant gap for long-term partnership projects.

'No longer being eligible for Erasmus or Creative Europe funding makes it almost impossible for us to undertake any activity with European partners.' (Scottish Youth Dance)

New visa requirements, additional paperwork, administrative complexities, delays at borders, and complex legal procedures have become more burdensome for artists and cultural organisations working internationally. For many, this has added time pressure and logistical challenges to international projects.

'The added bureaucracy and costs involved are an unwelcome additional burden when planning and executing international work (we haven't done any since

2019, except online). They are also a deterrent for international bookers and co-producers. We don't know if we will ever manage to co-produce with our Scandinavian partners again, for example.' (Dogstar Theatre Company)

The end of freedom of movement has made it difficult for Scottish artists and cultural professionals to travel and work in the EU. It was suggested that simultaneously, post-Brexit, Scotland/UK has become a less attractive place for creative workers, limiting the Scottish cultural sector's ability to access a diverse pool of talent.

'The biggest challenge for the Trust and other partners has been the reduced access to skills and reduced numbers of volunteers from overseas.' (National Trust for Scotland)

Respondents reported new barriers to international trade and investment including increased tariffs (taxes), custom checks, longer transit times of goods, unfavourable exchange rates, and disruptions in supply chains. It was felt that these issues significantly affect the competitive advantage of Scotland's culture sector.

'International loans and transit of books and materials across borders are now more difficult than they were pre Brexit. We felt the effects of this when transporting 250K books to Munich as part of our Google Books digitisation scheme. This process was bureaucratic and expensive.' (National Library of Scotland)

Ways the strategy can seek to address the challenges of leaving the EU

Respondents highlighted several potential directions for the strategy to address the challenges faced by the Scottish culture sector post-Brexit. The following outlines the most common suggestions for strategic changes:

- Alterations to the current funding model for the Scottish culture sector
- Gaining 'third country' status as part of a new EU engagement model
- Offering business advice and support
- Ensuring 'freedom of movement' for artists and creative workers
- Cultivating an image of Scotland as open to international collaborations

The responses were primarily focused on recommendations to modify the existing funding model of the Scottish culture sector. Specifically, it was proposed that more funding should be made available to target specific aspects of international work.

Respondents also stressed that funding for international work should be accessible through an open-application process, granting access to all Scottish organisations and individuals involved in artistic endeavours. Moreover, the current funding model should be diversified by seeking other sources of financing, such as forming new partnerships or receiving support from the private sector.

'Scotland could establish a new cultural funding model by increasing public investment in the arts, engaging new business sponsors, and forming international partnerships. (The Ivors Academy of Music Creators)

The responses further recommended the establishment of a new model for EU engagement. This includes the renegotiation of Scotland's participation in the Creative Europe Programme and similar EU projects as a non-EU member to attain 'third country' status, akin to Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein.

'If and when a moment of policy change arises, we would like to see Scottish Government making the case to UK Government for the UK to rejoin the Erasmus+ and Creative Europe programmes as well as supporting the work to reinstate the Horizon programme currently underway.' (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society)

It was suggested that the new strategy should also focus on simplifying post-Brexit administrative challenges. For example, by providing business advice and establishing dedicated bodies to assist individuals and organisations with issues related to travel restrictions, logistics, taxes, carnets and visa requirements when working abroad or with international partners.

'It [the strategy] might enable the Scottish government to look at the creation of officers who specialise in assisting artists and cultural organisations to overcome the new bureaucratic barriers created by Brexit along with those which exist for other countries outside the EU.' (Dogstar Theatre Company)

Some respondents advocated for 'freedom of movement' for artists and other creative workers. This could include visa allowances, visa-free allowances, or 'cultural passports' governing the movement of people between the UK and EU without the need for a visa process.

At the same time, it was noted that different types of international activity can require vastly different approaches, which should be acknowledged within the strategy and with clear goals for each, along with well-resourced plans to meet these goals.

The impact of international activities on climate change

Respondents provided a range of views on how the strategy should consider the impact of international activities on climate change.

There was recognition that international work has an environmental impact. The different international activities that were discussed in this question broadly included: tourism, travel, touring/residencies, shipping, importing and exporting, and the carbon footprint of digital technology.

There was general agreement among respondents that the sector wants to find innovative, sustainable ways of operating internationally in a net zero carbon future. It was suggested that the value of international working needs to be carefully balanced and considered against its climate impact. And so, solutions and mitigations should be developed to allow the two to not be in conflict. It was suggested this is where the strategy could play a key part.

> 'Organisations and individuals currently face tensions and barriers to making positive change. Many of these could be alleviated by an international cultural strategy that makes environmental responsibility its key concern.' (Scottish Classical Sustainability Group)

Some organisations provided examples to demonstrate how they have embedded sustainable initiatives into their work.

> 'In our work, we are aligning our international work to our environmental commitments by: opting for slow/ lower-carbon travel options, making use of communication technology to minimise travel, developing international projects through long-term collaborations and partnerships.' (The Work Room)

Other examples, of either work that is being done or suggestions for what the strategy should emphasize included, embracing the 'slow model' (encouraging train travel and slow touring), recycling and reusing materials and equipment (for example, The Circular Arts Network[7]) and maximising the potential of digital opportunities. In addition, the work that artists do to draw attention to climate change and its societal impacts, alongside their role in promoting sustainable practices, was emphasised.

> 'The arts are a potent tool to raise awareness.' (Scottish Arts Foundation/ Learned Kindred of Currie)

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[7] CAN – Circular Arts Network (canarts.org.uk)

However, there were some noted barriers to engaging in particular activities and operations. These included travel and shipping costs. For example, the high cost of train travel (and the unreliability), costs to ship by sea rather than by air and the cost of longer stays, to offset flights for only one or two performances.

'We need an urgent, government initiated review of ticket prices for surface-based travel, that will ultimately make these more sustainable methods the most affordable and attractive option.' (Scottish Classical Sustainability Group).

A perceived lack of investment in carbon adaptation for cultural organisations and a lack of technologic advancement was raised as an issue. It was also recognised that while digital may be a solution it can be costly to produce, and it comes with its own carbon footprint.

'The lack of investment in carbon adaptation for cultural organisations is a significant inhibiting factor to this work. As is the lack of joined up working across government.' (Scottish Contemporary Art Network)

Considering the role of the strategy, the most prevalent themes in responses included that the strategy is an opportunity for leadership, to provide guidance, to promote and advocate for change and to share learning, for example, from environmental policies of countries worldwide.

'We would welcome a strategy that enables the sector to innovate and learn from others also tackling climate change across the world.' (Creative Scotland)

There was a view from some respondents that the impact of international activities on climate should be a priority within the strategy, that it should be a '*core feature rather than an add on'* and that the strategy should reflect that the drive towards net zero is not just driven by obligations, but by the impetus from the creative community to engage with this major issue, and have a wider influence on society.

There were some opposing views, in terms of respondents' views on the relevance of addressing climate issues in the strategy. This appeared to be driven by the opinion that it is not appropriate to ask the sector to consider these issues, and that the timing, given other pressures, is not right.

'Scotland is still recovering from the pandemic and enduring the cost of living…it seems incoherent to embark upon a major international cultural push against the climate backdrop, It should not be seen as somehow parochial or a lesser to want to engage concertedly with communities and audiences within Scotland.' (Traditional Arts & Culture Scotland)

The handling of historical injustices

Respondents were asked how they would like this strategy to further the aspiration of handling historic injustices responsibly.

Responses covered the view that the International Culture Strategy can help by acknowledging and taking responsibility for past injustices, by promoting understanding, sharing best practice and fostering partnerships and collaborations. To support organisations, the provision of dedicated funding and resource was highlighted as being important, particularly for smaller organisations, who may not be unable to undertake activity relating to historical injustices due to prohibitive costs.

'First and foremost, an explicit acknowledgement from the Scottish Government of our part in historic slavery and colonial history needs to be made.' (University Museums in Scotland)

Some respondents highlighted that as part of this process of acknowledgment, there is learning to be drawn from previous projects.

'This strategy must learn from the findings and recommendations of the Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums project, which recognised that to become a fairer and more equal society, Scotland must reckon with its history with responsibility, accountability and maturity.' (Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights)

It was suggested that the strategy can be used as platform to promote understanding and ideas between countries. Moreover, that arts and culture have a role to play in telling stories, generating greater intercultural understanding and encouraging healthy debate on this topic. It was emphasised that this should be done with experts, those with lived experience in equality, diversity and inclusion, and with those directly affected.

Collaboration and partnership working was raised by many as being important. For example, for the strategy to make commitments to support collaborations with international partners who are seeking to raise awareness of colonial history.

'Collaborations between different cultural organisations and communities… can help to facilitate the development of joint initiatives that address historical injustices and promote social justice.' (Culture Counts)

It was recognised by some respondents that there is an opportunity for the Scottish Government, when thinking about the strategy themes and vision, to expand what is proposed (see Vision and Themes section). For example, to embrace the exploration of Scotland's distinctive identity in the context of curiosity about other cultures, and to explore the cultural sector's obligation and continuing efforts to make reparations,

alongside other global responsibilities including environmental sustainability and climate justice.

It was suggested that tackling injustices (both past and present) can raise contentious issues, and may require complex, tailored solutions.

> 'It is important that any strategy allows for a case-by-case examination of specific issues and does not subscribe to a blanket policy that impedes appropriate investigation of any injustices that may be exposed.' (University of St Andrews)

New ways of engaging internationally

In the context of thinking about how to mitigate current challenges, and reflect on opportunities, the respondents were asked if there are new ways they have begun to engage internationally. As noted in Table 5, the majority (61%) of all respondents (organisations and individuals) indicated that they had begun to engage internationally in new ways. Just under a quarter (23%) had not, but aspired to in the future.

Table 5: New ways of engaging internationally[8]

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	Not answered	Total
Organisations	41 (67%)	11 (18%)	1 (2%)	8 (13%)	61
Individuals	6 (38%)	7 (44%)	1 (6%)	2 (13%)	16
Total	47 (61%)	18 (23%)	2 (3%)	10 (13%)	77

When prompted to expand on their answer, respondents highlighted two significant areas of adjustment and change in their work post-Brexit: working more remotely/ in digital space, and licensing or the physical relocation of work.

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[8] Note that not all percentages add up to 100% due to rounding.

The disruptions caused by COVID-19 restrictions compelled many to explore alternative methods of delivering their services and products. The utilisation of technology proved to be successful, enabling many to continue their work and remain engaged, regardless of their physical location.

'The consequence of Covid-19 and initiatives that arose mean that international dialogue online has been facilitated more easily through digital platforms. Throughout the pandemic we initiated and staged regular online events which included a number of international curators and artists which would not have happened in person, allowing conversations to take place despite geographical barriers.' (Street Level Photoworks)

A significant number of respondents continue to work remotely or within digital spaces to some extent, if not exclusively.

'We are currently in dialogue to continue our focus on practice development and exchange. The balance of the current format (part digital/part in-person) might change, but essentially it will continue to be a combination between digital and in-person.' (Artlink Edinburgh and the Lothians)

While working remotely and in digital spaces helps many to stay connected with their international partners, several limitations are associated with the absence of in-person contact. Respondents acknowledged that digital is useful for quick meetings, conference formats, planning, and sharing of learning, experiences, and ideas. However, they cannot fully replace in-person interactions in core aspects of respondents' work, such as dance or working with elderly, where digital exclusion is a potential issue. Additionally, digital means are not deemed practical for establishing long-term international partnerships.

'Covid forced us all to work online, which has some advantages in terms of geographical reach, but is no substitute for people working together in a studio. What we have learned is that much of the initial stages of international collaboration - meeting potential partners, exchanging ideas and planning - can be done more cost effectively online, however for dance projects collaboration in person is essential.'(Scottish Youth Dance)

Geographies

The following section of the report sets out the respondents' views on particular geographies that are of greater importance to them or their organisation, and views on whether an International Culture Strategy should prioritise particular geographies.

Geographies of greater importance

As shown in Table 6, across the total number of respondents, there were mixed views on whether they thought there were geographies of importance to them (27%), their organisation (34%), or the wider sector (17%). Just over a quarter (26%) did not think there are geographies of greater importance.

Table 6: Geographies of greater importance[9]

Are there particular geographies that are of greater importance to you, your organisation, or the wider sector, than others?	Yes, to me	Yes, to my organisation	Yes, to the wider sector	No	Don't know	Not answered
Organisations	14 (23%)	24 (39%)	11 (18%)	18 (30%)	3 (5%)	9 (15%)
Individuals	7 (44%)	2 (13%)	2 (13%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)	3 (19%)
Total	21 (27%)	26 (34%)	13 (17%)	20 (26%)	3 (4%)	12 (16%)

The responses indicated that Scotland's cultural sector engages in international work in numerous countries worldwide. Consequently, different cultural organisations and individuals have varying geographic priorities.

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[9] Respondents could select multiple options for this question, the percentages therefore add up to over 100%.

'Geographies where there are Scottish connections, either through people moving to or from there, are of importance to us, however, all geographies are of interest and there are many connections that aren't immediately apparent.' (National Library of Scotland)

Europe was frequently mentioned as a region of significant importance. Specific countries included Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Poland, Hungary, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, France, Spain and Portugal as well as the wider UK and Ireland.

'Given the close proximity of the EU to the UK that geographical territory is (or was) our most accessible 'back yard'.' (Musicians Union)

English-speaking diaspora countries also featured prominently in international endeavours, particularly the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, India, and, increasingly, Caribbean nations. These connections reflect Scotland's historical, cultural and linguistic ties with these countries.

Additionally, some cultural organisations focus on other regions, such as MENA (Middle East and North Africa) countries and further eastern countries like China, Japan and South Korea.

Historic ties and engaging with historical injustices (as highlighted also in the section 'Historical Injustices') were highlighted as pivotal when deciding on the location of international work.

'CRER's work particularly speaks to the legacies of empire, slavery and colonialism in Scotland and worldwide. Because of this, our cultural activities with an international scope tend to focus on populations in Africa, the Caribbean and Asia with a connection to Scotland due to these processes.' (Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights)

The nature of creative work or expertise can dictate certain locations, as does mutual interest in collaboration, and areas where funding is available.

'Partially dependent on where the funding is to support the work with cultural organisations interested in promoting the work.' (Individual)

Some respondents stated that they avoid countries where LGBTQ+[10] rights are compromised to protect their staff (discussed again in the 'Equalities' section).

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[10] Acronym for 'lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace'

'Due to a strand of work that we have been developing over the past few years, we pay particular attention to avoiding countries where the LGBTQ+ rights are compromised as a way to protect our staff, although it would appear that a cultural conversation on such a content would be most needed there.' (Shaper/Caper)

Prioritising geographies

As shown in Table 7, 31% of all respondents (organisations and individuals) felt that the strategy should prioritise particular geographies, with an equal number (31%) unsure, and 27% saying it should *not* prioritise particular geographies.

Table 7: Should the strategy should prioritise particular geographies[11]

Do you think an International Culture Strategy should prioritise particular geographies?	Yes	No	Not sure	Not answered	Total
Organisations	20 (33%)	15 (25%)	19 (31%)	7 (11%)	61
Individuals	4 (25%)	6 (38%)	5 (31%)	1 (6%)	16
Total	24 (31%)	21 (27%)	24 (31%)	8 (10%)	77

There was some uncertainty among the respondents regarding prioritisation. Respondents emphasised the importance of flexibility and the inherent international nature of the Scottish cultural sector. It was put forward that the decision on whether to prioritise particular geographies in the International Cultural Strategy should involve a careful balance between focus and adaptability, as well as an understanding of the sector's unique characteristics and goals.

'A narrow geographical focus based on Scottish Government 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.' (Festivals Edinburgh)

Emphasis was also placed on the risks associated with prioritising certain geographies. The main concerns were related to the potential for missing valuable opportunities, overlooking emerging and unconventional regions, inflexibility in responding to dynamic changes in the cultural sector, and other unforeseen consequences.

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[11] Note that not all percentages add up to 100% due to rounding.

Equalities

The following section of the report sets out respondents' views on whether there are aspects of engaging in international cultural activity, that can affect equalities groups differently (both positively and negatively). The survey asked respondents to specifically reflect on the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation) and then on socioeconomic status, island communities and children and young people.

Impact of international cultural activity on protected characteristics

The respondents mainly reflected on the impact of international cultural activity on the equalities groups, from the perspective of their own experiences in delivering cultural activities, the barriers encountered by their team members, and how they themselves address equality concerns through their work and within their workplace.

When delivering cultural work internationally, some respondents found it challenging to adjust to the norms and values of less egalitarian countries, countries with oppressive political regimes, or countries with human rights issues.

'Disabled performers can be disadvantaged because of the local infrastructure, with little provision for disabled accommodation.' (Individual)

Equality concerns were a factor for some respondents in deciding where to work internationally.

'Each individual practitioner from the UK who is considering a project makes a personal decision and we honour those who decide they could not and would not work in a region without the equalities we hold dear.' (Individual)

Other respondents addressed the subject of equality by discussing the barriers encountered by their staff when navigating international activities. This included concerns regarding equal access and participation, such as problems with travel, logistics, caring responsibilities, and the resulting higher costs to accommodate these needs. This also included efforts made to ensure equal visibility and representation of various groups with protected characteristics.

Some respondents addressed the positive impact of international cultural activity on equality issues. The examples provided discussed the increased participation of artists with protected characteristics, which provided access to a wider community and fostered closer cultural ties.

'With race and religion in particular there is a positive effect after I go to a specific country. My links with the relevant community at home do tend to deepen

and I am able to foster closer cultural ties between the countries/cultures/races/ religions through the trust and legitimacy that is built up through action.' (Individual)

Socio-economic status

When asked to specifically reflect on socio-economic status, it was suggested that due to the higher costs associated with international cultural work, this can create inequalities in access and participation. Some respondents suggested this is more likely to be noticeable in formal education, training, development, travel, and career opportunities of individuals within the culture sector.

'The effect of socio-economic status can be a lifelong and structural barrier or an advantage, depending on the status. Significant opportunities for travel and international collaboration will have been and be more accessible for individuals with a higher family income, higher parental education and occupation.' (Yard Heads International)

Respondents proposed that access to international cultural activities should be attainable for artists from all backgrounds.

Island communities

When asked to specifically reflect on island communities, it was suggested by some respondents that island communities receive fewer cultural provisions and have limited access to international cultural activities, as these activities are often more concentrated in the Scottish central belt. Digital connectivity was also raised as an issue in rural areas, affecting access to cultural work.

'For islands communities, engaging in international work is affected due to geographical barriers. These communities have difficulties around transportation and digital poverty with little or no access to internet or broadband.' (Museums Galleries Scotland)

Children and young people

When asked to specifically reflect on children and young people, respondents pointed out positive aspects of involving children and young adults in international cultural activities. It was noted that participation expands children's future career opportunities, builds connections and networks, contributes to a better understanding of Scotland's global position, and makes them 'good global citizens'.

'Touring can have positive impacts on young people. We have in the past used culture exchange opportunities to provide new experiences for Scottish children and, in turn, have seen the positive benefits of exporting Scottish culture to children

and young people in other territories (e.g. by making diaspora links).' (Royal Scottish National Orchestra)

However, it was noted that the additional resources required to adequately support and safeguard the participation of children and young adults in international cultural work can be significant barriers to fully embracing the opportunities associated with exposure to global cultural experiences.

'Due to the additional safeguarding measures associated with managing children and young people there are likely to be resource limitations which are barriers to opportunities for them to access international cultural activity. Access can be dependent on the policy and resources of the school or institution with which the children and young people are attached. For children and young people who are care-experienced and/ or who may have been excluded from school/ college there may be even less opportunity for them to experience international cultural activity, unless carers/ workers have been able to identify them.' (Yard Heads International)

Preventing negative effects

A final question in the survey asked if any negative effects had been identified what could be done in the future to prevent this happening. Respondents stressed the need to engage with those who have lived experience, within the culture sector, to gain a better understanding of the barriers, and determine the support required to address equality issues.

'The Scottish government should engage with groups who represent those with disabilities to see what support they require and what support the government can offer.' (The Ivors Academy of Music Creators)

This also included promoting the values of diversity and inclusivity within the sector and taking a human-rights-based approach to participation in both domestic and international cultural activities.

'Addressing the potential impact of international cultural activities on equalities groups requires a proactive and collaborative approach that recognises and values diversity and inclusivity.' (Culture Counts)

'Take a rights-based approach to the cultural sector and cultural activity, rather than an instrumentalist and economic and power-based approach.' (Curating Tomorrow)

Respondents also discussed the importance of providing a wide range of support when promoting international cultural activities, all while being mindful of equality issues. Such as, ensuring sufficient budgets to cover associated costs, offering

advice and support to workers, holding public bodies that receive public funding accountable for their internal equality policies, providing financial incentives for organisations to proactively recruit from diverse backgrounds, and encouraging applications from those in multiply-marginalised communities.

'Require bodies in receipt of public funding to be accountable for their internal equalities policies and external-facing practices and partnerships' (Equal Media and Culture Centre for Scotland: Engender)

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Consultation questions

Scotland's international cultural footprint

1. What current international activity do you undertake?
2. What impact does international activity have on your business/organisation?
3. What are your motivations for working internationally?
4. What, if any, are the main barriers to developing your international activity?

Rationale for an International Culture Strategy

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

Vision and themes

6. What are your views on the vision outlined above?
7. We have identified 4 themes (cultural connections, economic impact, diplomacy and reputation). How does your work connect with each of these areas?
8. Are there aspects of your work that would not be captured by these themes, but you feel the strategy should recognise?

Current support for international cultural activity

9. Have you accessed Scottish public sector support for your international activity and if so which sources?
Yes
No
10. What has been the impact of this support on your work?
11. Have you accessed any other forms of support for your international activity and if so which sources?
Yes
No
12. Is current support for international cultural activity appropriate? Are there gaps in provision in terms of focus?
Yes
No
Not sure
13. Are you aware of international examples that Scotland might learn from in its support for international cultural activity?

Current pressures, challenges and opportunities

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

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

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

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

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

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

Geographies

20. Are there particular geographies that are of greater importance to you, your organisation, or the wider sector, than others?

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

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.

Equalities

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

Please reflect on the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation).

Please now reflect on socio-economic status.

Please now reflect on island communities.

Please now reflect on children and young people.

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

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

Appendix 2 – Consultation respondents

Artlink Edinburgh and the Lothians
Bòrd na Gàidhlig
British Council Scotland
Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER)
Craft Scotland
Creative Dundee
Creative Scotland
Culture Collective
Culture Counts
Curating Tomorrow
Deveron Projects
Dogstar Theatre Company
Drake Music Scotland
Drew Wylie Ltd
Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society
Edinburgh International Festival
Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust
Equal Media and Culture Centre for Scotland; Engender
Festivals Edinburgh
Glasgow Life
Historic Environment Scotland
Live Music Now Scotland
Luminate
LUX Scotland
Midlothian Council
Museums Association
Museums Galleries Scotland
Musicians Union
National Galleries Scotland
National Library of Scotland
National Museums Scotland
National Trust for Scotland
National Youth Choir of Scotland
Peacock Visual Arts
Perth and Kinross Council
Puppet Animation Scotland
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
Royal Scottish National Orchestra
Scottish Arts Foundation/Learned Kindred of Currie
Scottish Classical Sustainability Group
Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN)
Scottish Sculpture Workshop

Shaper/Caper
Showcase Scotland Expo and Active Events
South of Scotland Enterprise
Starcatchers (2 separate responses)
Street Level Photoworks
The Brochs of Coigach (Land and Art) Ltd and Polbain House Farm
Ltd
The Glasgow Barons
The Hunterian, University of Glasgow
The Ivors Academy of Music Creators
The Soundhouse Organisation
The Work Room
TRACS (Traditional Arts & Culture Scotland)
University Museums in Scotland (UMIS)
University of St Andrews
University of the West of Scotland
VisitScotland
Yard Heads International
YDance (Scottish Youth Dance)

Additionally there were 18 responses from individuals.

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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