

Creative Scotland submission of 19 October 2023

PE2030/E: Review cultural funding arrangements to enable Scotland to contribute to the Venice Biennale in 2024

In March 2023, it was announced that the Board of Creative Scotland and the Scotland + Venice partners were pausing on the Scotland + Venice project in 2024 to allow for a period of reflection and review.

While this was a difficult decision given the project's significant achievements, in the current financial and planning environment, it felt necessary to review the current model and consider the project's position within the wider scope of international opportunities available to Scotland's art and architecture communities.

The Review of the Scotland + Venice Project

Creative Scotland published the invitation to tender for the review of Scotland + Venice on 20 September 2023.

Creative Scotland are commissioning the review, on behalf of the Scotland + Venice partners and will determine the future viability of the project and the effectiveness of the current approach. It will also address the resourcing and capacity challenges that Scotland + Venice has faced in previous years and in context of the climate crisis, will consider how Scotland + Venice can achieve Net Zero.

It is anticipated that the review will cover the relevance and impact of the project, the current commissioning and delivery model, the partnership and governance model, the ethics, sustainability, finances, and budgets.

The review will present and evaluate options for change, underpinned by a clear financing strategy. It will support the future planning of Scotland's participation at the Venice Biennale from 2026.

Work is expected to run from November 2023 to April 2024, comprising of desk research, interviews with key stakeholders and targeted sector engagement. This work will be overseen by a steering group, made up of representatives of the partner organisations and key invited stakeholders. Once complete, the review will be shared with a range of

stakeholders and be made available to the public on Creative Scotland's website.

More information on the review can be found on our website:

[Creative Scotland | Invitation to tender for a review of the Scotland + Venice project](#)

Outcomes of Scotland's past participation at the Venice Biennale

The previous evaluation of Scotland + Venice was undertaken in 2017/18 and covers the years 2009 to 2017.

The brief for this evaluation sought to:

- Identify the importance, reach and relevance of the project, to Scotland and its visual arts sector
- Evaluate the delivery models and determine the strengths and weaknesses
- Establish whether the project is regarded as an international priority by and for the sector
- Explore whether there are alternative models for delivering the project and whether these would achieve equivalent/better outcomes
- Determine whether there are opportunities beyond the project for Creative Scotland and partners to strategically develop the international profile of the visual arts sector in Scotland.

Methodology included a review of policy documents/reports, interviews with key partners, participants and the wider sector, a focus groups with partner media teams and those working in the visual arts sector and benchmarking of the participation of other countries which were Wales and New Zealand.

The evaluation revealed a consistently positive picture of Scotland + Venice. It presented key findings that included a strong belief from stakeholders that the project should continue to be a priority for partners to invest in, that participation in the project has strengthened artists profile and connections both in Scotland and internationally, that the project is important in raising the profile of Scottish contemporary arts and that the project represented good use of public money.

The recommendations from the evaluation were used when planning the approach to Scotland + Venice 2019 and long-term ambitions for the

project were set, including building stronger links between the presentations at the Venice Art and Architecture Biennales.

The full evaluation is available on our website:

[Creative Scotland | Evaluation of Scotland + Venice \(2009-2017\)](#)

Metrics for success

The metrics for success link to the project's objectives for Scotland + Venice. These are:

International opportunity

To make a critically relevant contribution to international discourse about art and architecture and to generate international opportunities for Scotland's creative sector.

Excellence and ambition

To make a strong, globally relevant, and distinctive contribution to La Biennale which, in turn, nurtures and promotes the best of Scottish art, architecture, and design.

Global position and recognition

To strengthen Scotland's reputation as an ambitious, innovative, connected centre for the arts and architecture, internationally open to new ideas and partnerships.

Public Engagement

To strengthen public interest in and engagement with contemporary art and architecture from Scotland.

The Creative Workforce

To centre and support the creative and professional development of a diverse range of artists, architects, curators and producers.

Ethical working

To maintain and develop a proactive and progressive approach to equalities, diversity, access, inclusion and environmental sustainability across the project.

Governance

To achieve best value for money within clear governance, management, and reporting structures

Comparison to other events

To our knowledge there are few if any comparable projects of this scale and scope currently being undertaken in Scotland. Where we have conducted comparative evaluations of Scotland + Venice in the context of other similar international initiatives the project has been found to be delivering strong outcomes and value for money.

Creative Scotland has plans to establish an International Strategy to guide its future work in this area. This will be informed by the Scottish Government's International Culture Strategy which is expected to be published in Spring 2024.

In the meantime, Creative Scotland sees opportunities to share, learn and connect with others as being key aspects to international work. We want artists, creative practitioners and cultural organisations to have opportunities to deepen their practice through international dialogue, exchange and collaboration - broadening knowledge, insight and innovation. Scotland's culture and creative sector need opportunities to maximise the potential of international markets, and we want high-quality work created in Scotland to be widely showcased and enjoyed. We believe Scotland is an important global centre for culture and creativity which is diverse, has strong traditional roots and an appetite for experimentation and innovation and our approach to international work is aligned with our other key priorities of EDI, Fair Work and Environmental Sustainability.