

## CTEEA Committee evidence session: 02.05.19 Update on Screen Scotland progress

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### Introduction

This written submission provides the Culture Tourism Europe and External Affairs Committee (CTEEA) with an update on Screen Scotland progress

An update on the progress of Creative Scotland is contained under separate cover.

This is ahead of the evidence session on 2 May 2019 at the Scottish Parliament, where the Creative Scotland Acting Chief Executive and Screen Scotland Executive Director will be able to expand on these topics, and any others, as required by the Committee.

This submission contains updated information on:

1. Key milestones and current priorities
  2. Progress to date
  3. Recent successes of the screen sector in Scotland
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### 1. Key milestones and current priorities

The last seven months have been a period of very intense work and transformation for Screen Scotland as the partnership, now under the leadership of Isabel Davis, is nurtured and developed.

Key milestones in this period include:

- The **Screen Scotland Business Plan** 2019/20 which concludes a comprehensive process involving the Screen Scotland team and partners to build on the Collaborative Proposal 2017 and make it our own by joining up existing delivery and the new remit. This will be published by the end of April.
- The **Broadcast Content Fund** was launched in August 2018 and attracted 31 applications from across the TV sector in a variety of genres. The £3M budget for its first financial year was allocated to six independent production companies in April 2019.  
<https://www.screen.scot/news/2019/03/independent-scottish-production-companies-receive-boost-for-new-tv-content>.
- The **Partnership Agreement between Screen Scotland and the BBC** was signed on the occasion of the launch of the new BBC Scotland Channel on 24 February 2019. The [announcement](#) was warmly received.
- Following the [published tender process](#), we are currently in advanced negotiations with a preferred bidder for **the Studio** in Bath Road, Leith.

Subject to finalising the necessary legal detail and Scottish Government approval, the operator will be announced as soon as possible, with the intention still to have the studio operational by the end of the year.

Looking ahead, our key priorities include:

- The Studio
- Partnership building
- Business development – creating a single front door
- Skills and talent strategy
- Equality, diversity and inclusion

Our Executive Director, Isabel Davis can expand on these priorities as required at the Committee meeting on the 2 May.

## **2. Progress to date**

### **i. Strategy development and Screen Scotland Business Plan 2019/20**

Over recent months, an extensive amount of work has been carried out to develop a comprehensive Business Plan which will capture the whole of Screen Scotland activity, including the new ambitions articulated in the Collaborative Proposal 2017 and reflecting the partnership set up.

Your report **Making Scotland a Screen Leader** made a number of recommendations around areas of focus for strategic development, which have been taken into account in the plan.

The Business Plan sets out eight clear objectives for Screen Scotland, each with a corresponding target and a Key Performance Indicator (KPI).

The Business Plan will be published by the end of April.

### **ii. Governance**

The Screen Committee meets regularly and is a valuable forum where the partnership is being shaped and strengthened. The Screen Committee's members include senior representatives of the five partner agencies comprising Screen Scotland (Creative Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Funding Council, Skills Development Scotland and Highlands and Islands Enterprise), along with industry representatives and the three screen practitioners on the Creative Scotland board.

The Screen Sector Leadership Group (SSLG) met for the last time in November 2018 and is currently being re-constituted as a fleet of foot, agile industry advisory group, a key source of intelligence and advice to support the Executive Director in the delivery of Screen Scotland.

iii. The team

The Screen Scotland team has doubled in size, (<https://www.screen.scot/about/meet-the-team>) providing additional capacity and a strengthened team of knowledgeable, experienced, and committed screen professionals. This includes the new areas of expertise, for example research and data.

We are also currently going through recruitment processes for a Director of Screen, Skills Officer and Business Development specialists.

iv. Funds for film and TV

Screen Scotland now offers a range of funds that support critical parts of the screen sector value chain, including:

The new £3m [Broadcast Content Fund](#), which has met with strong industry demand, spending its full budget for the financial year 2018/19 (even though it was launched in August 2018). The supported projects represent a variety of genres, including TV factual formats, which is the genre that needs to develop in Scotland if we are to achieve the growth needed. There is also a good balance between applications for development funding, including several slates, and production.

<https://www.screen.scot/news/2019/03/independent-scottish-production-companies-receive-boost-for-new-tv-content>

The £2.3m investment through the [Production Growth Fund](#) has attracted companies not only to film in Scotland but to increase the spend on Scotland based crew, above the line talent and facilities.

The [£1.6 Cinema Equipment Fund](#) has been designed to create a transformation in audience experience for film across Scotland. Whilst the Collaborative Proposal did not focus on audiences, it has been recognised that developing audiences across Scotland has enormous economic, social and cultural value and that supporting the 'demand' end of the screen value chain is critical to building the success of the sector.

After identifying a clear and urgent need, we decided to make a swift one-off intervention into Scotland's exhibition sector and enable either upgrading of the digital equipment in existing cinemas or furnishing community venues with screening facilities thus increasing provision in the more remote areas where there is currently no access to cinema.

<https://www.screen.scot/news/2019/03/new-fund-for-cinemas-and-film-exhibitors-in-scotland>

With the volume and complexity of our funding streams increasing we are reviewing how we administer the funds in order to streamline processes.

v. Strategic partnerships with content commissioners

On 24 February 2019, to coincide with the launch of the new BBC Scotland channel, Screen Scotland and the BBC signed a Partnership Agreement to “put Scotland’s TV industry on the world stage”.

<https://www.screen.scot/news/2019/02/bbc-and-screen-scotland-join-forces-to-put-scotlands-tv-industry-on-world-stage>.

The initiative, which aims to support Scotland’s television industry by supporting world-class drama, cutting-edge comedy and high-end factual content, marks the start of an exciting long-term partnership between the BBC and Screen Scotland.

The work has already started with executives from the BBC and Screen Scotland working together to come up with developmental initiatives that will deliver on the MOU pledges, for example a training programme for editors.

The next step is to agree a similar partnership agreement with Channel 4 (harnessing the opportunity of the new C4 Creative Hub in Glasgow).

Screen Scotland is also developing relations with streaming platforms such as Netflix, Amazon, Apple, and others. These new players will be having an increasingly important role in the sector growth and producers will be looking for support to Screen Scotland on how to navigate this developing landscape.

vi. Business development support

Consultants, EKOS Ltd have been contracted and started work on a Business Development Support Scoping Study. The report will be reviewed by the Screen Committee in July.

In the meantime, the FOCUS project, which currently has a full [cohort of 20 companies](#) receiving business development support, has been extended to 31 December 2019, providing continuity until outcomes of the Scoping Study can be implemented. This project is backed with funds from Screen Scotland in addition by Scottish Enterprise. A project evaluation of the FOCUS project is due to take place between June and December 2019.

vii. Studio

The news of Screen Scotland backing the development of [a studio in Bath Road, Leith](#) was widely reported and generally well received by the sector. The Screen Commission has received a significant increase in international enquiries as a consequence, supporting the assessment that market conditions will support a studio in Scotland.

We are currently in advanced negotiations with a preferred bidder. Subject to finalising the necessary legal detail and Scottish Government approval,

the operator will be announced as soon as possible, with the intention still to have the studio operational by the end of the year.

viii. Towards a skills and talent strategy

The development of a skills strategy is where Screen Scotland's partnership model is of particular relevance. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) led research into skills gaps in Scotland to inform the development of a comprehensive skills and talent strategy. This research is now completed and a skills working group, comprising SDS, Scottish Funding Council, industry practitioners and FE/HE institutions will take the work forward. Screen Scotland has re-opened dialogue with ScreenSkills (the industry-led skills body for the UK's screen-based creative industries) to ensure they deliver for Scotland under their UK-wide remit.

In the meantime, several skills focused initiatives have been launched to the benefit of the sector, including:

- **Screen NETS apprenticeships** – 6 month long apprenticeship programme offering on-the-job training programme in technical, production and design roles for High-end film and TV drama in Scotland.
- **Outlander traineeships** - a programme offering trainee places across all departments including camera, costume, design, assistant director, art department, effects and production, to approximately twenty trainees per series
- **BECTU Vision** – free courses offering training opportunities to the freelance film and TV workforce based and working in Scotland.
- **PACT Indie Training Fund** - training covers the digital, diversity, legal and business, people skills, production, scripting and technical aspects of TV and film.

A small but much-needed [Professional Development Fund](#) has also been opened (21 February 2019) to help individual screen professionals to further their skills in their chosen field.

Creative Scotland is commissioning a review of its current programmes that support talent development.

ix. Data/evaluation

Since the Screen Unit Collaborative Proposal, the centralisation and sharing of knowledge has been identified as a key concern for Scotland's screen industries. This commitment has strengthened since the inception of Screen Scotland in August 2018. We recognise the research outputs of Screen Scotland will need to have an application for multiple stakeholders who work in diverse fields including exhibition, production, and education.

With the support of the BFI's Research and Statistics Unit, we have carried out extensive research into the data sources and information available on screen in Scotland. We have also commissioned several bespoke studies to fill industry knowledge gaps. We are now in the process of scoping the potential content, function, form, and audiences for a Screen Data Hub that would be tailored specifically to Scotland, in line with Committee Recommendation 314.

We have entered into discussions to develop a partnership with the Data Driven Innovation (DDI) Programme at the University of Edinburgh, beginning with facilitated events to bring together academic expertise and the screen industry how best to meet the needs of the sector. The DDI initiative is part of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. Collaboration will allow Screen Scotland to explore how to access cutting-edge expertise within research teams at the University and investigate co-designing a prototype Data Hub with and for the Screen Industry.

x. Equalities, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

Screen Scotland is aiming to introduce the BFI Diversity Standards into its film funding, with the aim of piloting the Standards in two of the funding strands by the end of the summer: the Film Development and Production Fund and Film Festivals Fund. This would be a significant development, and follows on from the [Equalities Matters](#) review published in January 2017, and the establishment of a Screen EDI Working Group in July 2017. Prior to the introduction of the Standards, Screen Scotland will embark on industry consultation and education in order that there is widespread understanding of how the Standards work in the context of Scottish representation.

Alongside the Diversity Standards, discussions have begun with the Screen Commission on how EDI can be factored in to the hiring of trainees on productions taking place in Scotland. The BFI will also be involved in this discussion, as will organisations such as Screen Academy Scotland, who are responsible for the Screen NETS programme.

### **3. Recent successes of the screen sector in Scotland (since November 2018)**

#### ***The Victim* aired on BBC One**

The four-part psychological drama starring Kelly Macdonald and John Hannah aired on BBC One in April. STV Productions received £250,000 Production Growth Funding. It has been confirmed the series will return for series 2, with a different case being examined.

### **Beats completed festival run with rave reviews**

Brian Welsh's coming of age drama received its World Premiere at Rotterdam International Film Festival and its UK premiere at Glasgow Film Festival. The film has received fantastic reviews and will be released in the UK and Ireland on 17 May. *Beats* received £503,000 of Screen Scotland development and production funding to support Scottish screen writing and directing talents, Kieran Hurley and Brian Welsh. A culturally significant Scottish story set and shot in Glasgow, *Beats* provided a significant opportunity for the creative and professional development of Scottish acting, craft and technical talent, and produced a significant spend in the screen and wider economy in Scotland.

### **Mr Jones**

Agnieszka Holland's *Mr Jones*, starring James Norton and Vanessa Kirby had its world premiere at Berlin in February. The Scottish co-producer, Angus Lamont, accessed £200,000 of Screen Scotland funding to attract this high-profile international project to Scotland. It provided a significant opportunity for Scotland based craft and technical talent, made a significant contribution to the Scottish screen economy, and promotes Scotland as a key destination for large-scale international film production.

**Two Scottish productions will receive World Premieres at Tribeca International Film Festival (24 April – 5 May 2019):** a feature film *Run* and feature documentary, *Scheme Birds*. *Run*, produced by Glasgow-based production company barrycraer and directed by Scott Graham (*Iona, Shell*). *Scheme Birds* is a co-production between Glasgow-based GID Films, with partners in Sweden, and was produced by Ruth Reid

**Glasgow Film Festival**, 26 February-8 March, included 6 Screen Scotland funded feature films (*Wild Rose; Beats; Yuli; Tell it to the Bees; Only You and The Vanishing*) and 9 feature documentaries (*Aquarela; Of Fish and Foe; Irene's Ghost; Harry Birrell: Films of Love and War; Prophecy; Freedom Fields; Last Breath; Do No Harm and Final Ascent*).

**Cinema Releases:** *The Vanishing* (Gerard Butler, Peter Mullan), *Wild Rose* (Jessie Buckley, Julie Walters), *Yuli* (Carlos Acosta) and feature documentary *Last Breath* all went on cinema release in the UK and Ireland over the last month. All of these films have been met with strong audience and critic reviews, particularly *Wild Rose* and *Yuli*. Jessie Buckley will return to Glasgow later in the year to perform as her character.

**Mary Queen of Scots** received its Scottish premiere in Edinburgh in January with director Josie Rourke, producer Tim Bevan and acting talent including Saoirse Ronan and Jack Lowden in attendance.

**Film and TV productions to have filmed in Scotland in the last year** include *Beats\**, *Clique*, *The Cry\**, *Curfew*, *Hobbs & Shaw*, *LIMBO\**, *Mr Jones\**, *Marionette\**, *Outlander\**, *Pokemon: Detective Pikachu*, *Run\**, *Shetland*, *Then Came You\**, *Trust Me*, *The Victim\**

\*denotes film and TV productions in receipt of Screen Scotland funding.

#### **4. Evidence Session on 2 May**

We look forward to being able to discuss these, and any additional areas of interest, at the evidence session on 2 May where Acting Chief Executive of Creative Scotland, Iain Munro, and Screen Scotland Executive Director, Isabel Davis, will be in attendance.

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