



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

19 September 2018

Joan McAlpine MSP
Convener
Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Convener,

Thank you and the Committee for the time and attention you have given to the screen sector. We have studied carefully the CTEER report "Making Scotland a Screen Leader" and addressed the recommendations for Screen Scotland below. You will see the references to the specific recommendations throughout the letter.

Following the formal launch of Screen Scotland on 21 August, I am writing on behalf of Creative Scotland and partner agencies to give you an update on our work since we wrote to you at the end of March 2018 and to elaborate on future priorities.

The Screen Scotland launch event was very well received and marked several milestones in the implementation of the Screen Unit: announcement of the new £3M Content Broadcast Fund, the unveiling of the Screen Scotland brand, identity and the online portal www.screen.scot, which brings together information on all support available to the screen industries in Scotland through a 'single front door'.

1. Governance, leadership, industry engagement (Recommendation: 49)

Creative Scotland board appointments

On 2 August the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs announced the appointment of Elizabeth Partyka, David Strachan and Ewan Angus as Members of the Board of Creative Scotland. All three have strong screen industry experience, directly addressing the gap which had existed previously in the composition of the Board.

- Elizabeth Partyka worked at STV from 1995 until 2007 finally in the role of Channel controller. Elizabeth is currently a member of Edinburgh Napier University Court and Scotland's Screen Academy.
- David Strachan was founding managing director of Tern Television in 1988 until June 2018. For nineteen years he was Scottish representative on the board of the producers' trade association and served a term on the board of Scottish Screen.
- Ewan Angus worked for the BBC for 32 years, more than half that time as commissioning editor for television at BBC Scotland. Ewan has sat on several industry committees including a three-year term as chair of BAFTA Scotland.

Screen Committee

The Screen Committee - consisting of Creative Scotland Board members, representatives of the partner agencies, independent industry advisers and the Scottish Government – is now chaired by David Strachan and will continue as the Screen Scotland Committee, providing advice to the Board and Executive Director and enabling effective governance of the strategy and partnership working.

Screen Sector Leadership Group

In addition, the current Screen Sector Leadership Group (SSLG) will be more formally constituted as an industry advisory group, a key source of intelligence and advice to support the Executive Director in the delivery of Screen Scotland. The role that the industry plays in the governance model is of pivotal importance and this group will ensure that the industry has a central voice and is directly engaged in the policy direction and delivery of Screen Scotland.

(Recommendation: 129)

Executive Director in post

Screen Scotland's Executive Director started on 5 September. Previously Head of International at the British Film Institute, Isabel Davis's appointment has been very well received by the partners, the sector in Scotland and internationally. The Executive Director's focus will be firmly on Screen Scotland. **(Recommendation: 94).**

The Executive Director's first public engagement was at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). One of the most important global film platforms, TIFF opened on 6 September with the world premiere of the major new Scottish film, *Outlaw King*, directed by David Mackenzie. A further three Scottish premieres in the festival line-up were garnering excellent critical and audience response: *Wild Rose*, *Freedom Fields* and *Tell it to the Bees*. This was an exceptional opportunity for Screen Scotland to promote Scotland to the international film community as a production destination, rich source of talent and creativity and as a co-production partner. Feedback has been very positive.

2. Partnership approach (Recommendation: 81)

Partner MOUs

We are currently finalising MOUs with our Screen Scotland partners and working on a business plan which, building on the Collaborative Proposal, will define the respective roles of the partner agencies further and provide clarity on the benefits of the partnership approach. We are planning to publish the MOUs on the Screen Scotland website before the end of September, and the business plan to be ready by the end of this year.

Business development support

Concurrently, for certain workstreams, such as business development support, we have set up working groups involving CS and partners to find collaborative solutions. We are working closely with Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Business Gateway to establish more effective provision of screen sector business development support and a strategy to achieve growth in Scottish screen companies. One concrete development is that the full range of business support service available to screen businesses from the Enterprise Support agencies has been consolidated in one place on the online Screen Scotland portal.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) recognises that in this sector, scale and growth is generally created through collaborative working. Building on its previous work, HIE has just approved a new 3-year package, providing specialised support to creative industries, including screen businesses, delivered through XpoNorth. As well as delivering an annual international event that attracts key local, national, and international industry decision makers to Inverness, a year-round bespoke support service is also available. The amount of support available will be based on the ambition of the business, commercial opportunity, innovation, the importance to regional infrastructure or local needs. It is expected that the number of screen businesses supported by relationship or account management will increase. Whether account managed or not, screen businesses can also access a wide range of other HIE services such as innovation support.

Scottish Enterprise continues to provide dedicated business development support to the screen sector through the DEEP and FOCUS programmes which is jointly funded with Screen Scotland; FOCUS is a 2-year pilot programme that gives screen production companies access to specialist business development services and expertise in digital distribution, aggregation, financing, international co-production, and audience development, DEEP is a 3 year programme (also supported by the BBC and Channel 4) to develop the knowledge and connections of senior staff in international markets to drive export sales through a series of events and activities including SuperSizer; a training programme for independent production companies in the Nations and

Regions who want to win big, high value commissions that will transform their business.

Growing Scotland's skills and talent

SDS and Creative Scotland are in the final stages of the Screen Skills research work, including surveys of freelancers, companies and educational provision. This, together with expert practitioner comment from interviews and an Industry Skills Reference Group, will support Screen Scotland to establish a new Screen Skills Strategy for Scotland later this year. The new Broadcast Content Fund requires applicants to maximise opportunities for talent and skills development, and SDS is working with Creative Skillset on the review and development of National Occupational Standards and Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks in Digital Journalism and Creative and Digital Media Production in support of in-demand craft, technical and production roles across broadcast and feature film production. Screen Scotland welcomes the National Film and Television School Scotland (NFTS Scotland) setting up base in Scotland and will continue to work with them.

Strategic Partnerships

We are also developing strategic partnerships with content commissioners and particularly with BBC and Channel 4. Reflecting on other examples of MOUs in other parts of the UK and considering a multi-party MOU with several broadcasters, we expect MOU(s) to be signed before the end of the year.

The aim is to:

- join forces to develop Scottish talent and improve skill base
- enhance the access of Scottish producers to network commissioning
- maximise the opportunities offered by Scotland's new BBC channel.

We will also be more closely engaged with Ofcom to advocate on behalf of the sector on issues relevant to the broadcasters' out-of-London production.

The role of streaming platforms in growing the Scottish screen sector

The increasing influence of the digital players such as Netflix, Amazon, Google, mubi and others represents an opportunity for Scottish content producers, as evidenced by Netflix' financing and distribution of *Outlaw King*. Screen Scotland will support the development of the sector's capabilities and confidence in working with these digital players. **(Recommendations 235–246)**

3. Staffing: An expanded Screen Team (Recommendation: 114)

The Screen team at Creative Scotland is being expanded to increase capacity to fund and manage additional projects, promote Scotland on the international stage and provide business development support.

Recruitment of the team is progressing as planned with more roles to be deployed in the next few months. The resourcing plan includes the creation of 18 new posts by the end of the financial year.

In addition to the Executive Director, new roles already appointed include the Implementation Project Manager, three new Screen Officers, Screen Commission Officer, Funding Officer, Film Education Officer, Media Relations & PR Officer, Digital Communications Officer, Research Officer. Re-advertisement for a Screen Skills Officer is underway.

In phase three, we will advertise for two business development support specialists, a contract/business affairs post, and the permanent Director of Screen, alongside two more executive support roles.

The final structure and roles will be honed and determined by the Executive Director. Once all the recruitment is complete, the Screen team will have a dedicated headcount of 20, (a near doubling of the previous structure), with an additional 7 new posts providing direct functional support to the Screen team.

The expanded Screen team will have increased specialist expertise, along with operational capacity in order that funds are administered swiftly and efficiently and that the wider development and growth agenda is served by enhanced skills in policy development, business support; business affairs, digital marketing; data collection and evaluation. Training in the business of television is being arranged for the team, with significant input from the industry across the UK.

4. Brand, identity, online portal (Recommendation: 55)

Screen Scotland now has a clear and visible brand identity and a comprehensive online portal www.screen.scot where all relevant information about screen in Scotland can be found. Developed in collaboration with Screen Scotland partner agencies, it is an essential resource for the sector in Scotland, the global industry and for all who wish to connect with us wherever they are in the world. The website has received very positive feedback, highly rated by users during informal user testing sessions conducted after launch. To date, pages on the website have been viewed over 15,000 times by nearly 3000 users, and we continue to develop the content and features on the website, working with our partners and target users of the site from the sector. We are also building a presence on social media to support our objectives and increase our reach. On Twitter, for example, we have gained 1344 followers and our tweets have had nearly 200,000 impressions.

5. Funding (Recommendations 283, 284)

A new £3M Broadcast Content Fund has been developed in consultation with the industry and launched on 21 August, designed with a robust set of criteria

to ensure the wider benefits for the creative industries in Scotland, including skills and talent development, inclusion and diversity (**Recommendation 286**).

A new £600,000 Festivals Fund was launched on 27 June and the budget of the Production Growth Fund has been doubled from £1M to £2M.

Taken together, the Film Development and Production Fund and the Broadcast Content Fund provide £7M to support indigenous production, alongside £2M in the Production Growth Fund, £2.3M for strategic partnerships with content commissioners and £1M for infrastructure. (**Recommendation 283**)

At the time of writing, Screen Scotland is providing support to approximately 25 screen productions at various stages of financial and legal contracting, pre-production, production, postproduction, and sales and distribution.

6. Studio facility and infrastructure (Recommendations 175 – 180)

The Studio Business Case received approval in principle from the Cabinet Secretary on 18 July with several conditions around supplementary approvals, resourcing, the ongoing process and compliance. These areas are being progressed steadily alongside commercial discussions with the prospective landlord. The recruitment of a project manager is underway to drive the next steps which include tendering to secure a studio operator.

As the news about Screen Scotland developments is spreading (see [link](#) to article published by Screen International 28 August 2018), our Screen Commission is responding to an increased level of enquiries from prospective productions keen to shoot in Scotland, hosting recce visits for various clients, including Netflix.

7. Summary of deliverables already achieved:

- Screen Scotland brand and identity launched at a high-level industry-facing event in the presence of the Cabinet Secretary
- Online portal www.screen.scot launched
- All funds foreseen in Collaborative Proposal, including the new £3M Broadcast Content Fund, operational and receiving submissions
- Studio Business Case approved in principle by the Scottish Government (subject to conditions).
- Executive Director commenced work on 5 September
- Three Creative Scotland board members with expertise in screen industries appointed
- Focus: a specialist business support programme for the screen sector is entering its second year

- Industry Skills Review is nearing completion. A screen skills strategy for Scotland will be completed before the end of the year
- Review of the support for the distribution, exhibition and festivals was carried out in 2016. This will be updated and inform the distribution/exhibition strategy
- Screen team expanded to 20 staff, with 7 still to come.

8. The next phase of implementation of Screen Scotland (September 2018 – March 2019) will include the following:

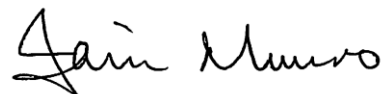
- Formation of Screen Scotland Industry Advisory Group
- MOUs with Screen Scotland partner agencies
- Screen Scotland business plan for the current and next financial year including specific strategies for:
 - skills and talent development (**Recommendation 302**). This will include a review of approaches to New Entrants Training, film education and talent development. (**Recommendation 303**)
 - international and inward investment (**Recommendations 141 and 287**)
 - distribution/exhibition/audience development (**Recommendation 327**), including mapping of where provision could be improved (**Recommendation 328**)
- Strategic partnerships with content commissioners in place and working
- Research and scoping to be completed for the new data hub (**Recommendation 314**)
- Research and scoping for enhanced business development support services (**Recommendation 114**)
- Third phase of the Screen Scotland recruitment.

We share the Committee's ambition for the Scottish screen sector to become a major, competitive player on the global stage. Scottish films, which were so enthusiastically received at the International Film Festival in Toronto, represent a wide range of budget levels, draw on a diverse range of international financing partners and combine home grown talent with the wider pool. Similarly, in TV, Scottish producers are punching above their weight securing network commissions - for BBC One, for example, a Scottish Australian co-production, *The Cry* with Jenna (Victoria) Coleman, or *The Victim*.

These films and programmes – all of them receiving backing from Creative Scotland - are the evidence of the sector with a bold ambition, ripe and ready to expand into the international marketplace. With increased strategic funding from the Scottish Government, we are committed to supporting this talent

further in the most imaginative, smart and efficient way so it can realise its full potential and bring the rewards back to Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Iain Munro". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'I' and 'M'.

Iain Munro

Acting Chief Executive