

CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

ARTS FUNDING INQUIRY

SUBMISSION FROM EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

This submission should be read in conjunction with the submission from Festivals Edinburgh, the membership body for eleven of Edinburgh's festivals, to which we have also contributed.

1. Threats and challenges to sustainable funding of the arts

- Arts and artists are far from immune to the very challenging outlook for government finances, both at national and at local authority level
- Arts funding is non-statutory and in particular at local authority level, where there are so many significant statutory requirements, this has led to significant cuts in budgets
- Since 2009 the International Festival's core government grants from the City of Edinburgh Council and Creative Scotland have declined from 50% of income to 38% of income, for example
- Overall Edinburgh International turnover increased by over 17% in that period (from £9.6 million to £11.5 million), showing our ability to raise income through ticket sales, donations and commercial sponsorships
- Government funding has a critical role to play in the funding mix, as this funding can be used to take risks which allow existing and emerging artists to develop and innovate. Sponsors and donors tend to support work that is safe, and it is much easier to sell tickets for artists who are already established
- So although the International Festival has increased expenditure directly into the artists in the programme from £7.2 million in 2009 to £8.1 million in 2018, the increasing reliance on ticket sales and donor support has put pressure on the team to support established artists and 'safe' work
- The costs of pursuing and servicing funding from donors and sponsors, as well as bidding for and evaluating specific project funds from government means that in practice more core government funding is being diverted away from funding artists and programme.
- There is a lack of a joined-up approach between different funders, in particular between central and local government, along with arm's length bodies. This results in confusion, complexity and increased costs, especially in developing proposals and evaluation methodologies for multiple different funds.

2. Funding for artists and cultural freelancers

- It's essential that there are a multitude of available funding sources available to support artists and freelancers.
- Different sources of funding should include:
 - Public sector direct funding
 - Public sector funding through arm's length organisations
 - Private sector
 - Trusts and foundations
 - Individual giving and patronage
- Different channels to supporting artists should include:
 - Direct funding (flexible but provides little support and often doesn't leverage other money)
 - Through arts organisations including festivals (can help to support artists to make their best work, bring in audiences and leverage other funding. Edinburgh International Festival invested £8.1 million into artists and programme in 2018, almost double our level of government funding)
 - Support bodies (efficient training and development for different sectors)
- Different purposes for funding should include:
 - R&D
 - Creation of work
 - Touring
 - Professional development

3. Measures to ensure sustainable level of funding and innovating to attract greater funding

- Government funding needs to be committed on a multi-year basis as the default
- It's this level of certainty, both for individual artists but particularly for arts organisations that allows them to set a long-term vision, and ambitious objectives that need multiple years to realise

- This helps them attract other strategic and long-term funders, from public and private sector in the UK and around the world, and through individual donors and patrons who appreciate the long-term approach
- New funding sources, such as Transient Visitor Levies and tax breaks should be actively pursued, given the pressure on current budgets
- There is significant evidence and track record of the cultural sector delivering against public sector priorities across multiple areas, including supporting the following agreed outcomes, among others, in Scotland's National Performance Framework:
 - live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
 - are creative and their vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely
 - have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy
 - are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society
 - are healthy and active
 - are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally
- Steps should be taken to support artists and cultural organisations to be able to effectively bid for and deliver work against other national performance framework outcomes.
- This would require significant cross-government working between the Culture and other departments to ensure commitment, follow through and support for the arts sector to access opportunities to deliver against their objectives

4. Relevant examples of international practice

- We would echo the examples in the submission from our membership body, Festivals Edinburgh.
- Quebec, and Canada more broadly are examples of where government money is used to deliver objectives that are difficult for other funders, and to take a long-term approach. The Canada Council for the Arts provides a range of support, from small R&D funds to multi-year funding for the creation and international presentation of work of scale that will showcase the very best of the country

- The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia is responsible for supporting Swiss artists on both the domestic and international stages in a way which is coordinated and effective, including a small team of staff based in important markets around the world