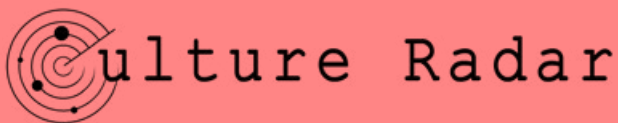


Scotland + Venice

Review

Prepared for the
Scotland + Venice Partner Board



Culture Radar

In association with Drew Wylie

www.culturereadar.org

2024

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Executive Summary

Background to this Review

Scotland + Venice has been developed over twenty years as an official Venice Biennale collateral event. Up until its pause this year, Scotland + Venice had established a reputation as one of the Biennial's most exciting collateral events.

This is the third review to be commissioned by the Scotland + Venice Partners since the project's inception in 2003. The first was undertaken in 2007 while the project was still funded by the Scottish Arts Council. The second was completed in 2018, commissioned by Creative Scotland, before the impact of Brexit on the UK's culture and creative industries could be fully understood, and before architecture was fully integrated into the Scotland + Venice partnership and project model.

Aim of this Review

The aim of this Review in 2024 is to deliver research and conclusions that will enable the current Scotland + Venice Partners to determine the future viability of the Scotland + Venice project, the effectiveness of its approach, and consider alternative options for the future. In scope, it reviews Scotland + Venice from 2018 onwards, as a dual visual art and architecture international event, in a post-Brexit and post-pandemic world, and in the very real context of climate and economic crisis.

Building on previous findings

Key findings from the 2018 review of Scotland + Venice included that the project could be enhanced through strategic planning between editions, and a stronger strategic position and policy context for international working. Overall, it concluded the project was needed, important and that the model largely worked.

Some recommendations were taken forward and actioned by the Partners, which include the Partner's continued support of Scotland + Venice with editions delivered 2018 to 2023. The Partnership and professional development programmes were developed to integrate architecture. An accessible venue in Venice was found and secured. And a strategic plan was begun – however the pandemic delayed its implementation, and since then, new strategic issues have emerged.



The changed context for Scotland + Venice today

Some of the recommendations made in 2018 for the successful delivery of Scotland + Venice remain valid today, such as: having a viable budget, strong leadership, sector support, Scottish Government support, a longer-term framework and planning, demonstrating and communicating impact.

There has been considerable change in the context for Scotland + Venice since the last review however, which has generated new, or increased, critical issues for its viability and sustainability.

The increasing urgency of climate crisis, the impacts of Brexit and geopolitics, of social change and precarious livelihoods, and economic uncertainty, including rising costs and standstill public budgets. These present major challenges for any international cultural working today, and by extension for Scotland + Venice.

Options for the future

This review has benefitted from the experience and input of over 330 individuals who have taken part at various stages of the research process, contributing learning from direct involvement to more distant appraisal.

The options have drawn directly from consulted needs and priorities of these stakeholders, as well as extensive desk research to appraise the **Commissioning and Delivery model**, its **Relevance and impact** and six **Critical issues**. The resulting four shortlisted options which were considered by the Scotland + Venice Partners in March 2024 are:

1. Ceasing Scotland + Venice.
2. Continuing with the existing model.
3. Development of, and commitment to a three-edition Scotland + Venice Programme.
4. An outsourced Scotland + Venice option.

The preferred Option 3 proposed a new Programme approach, with an enhanced governance structure, and continuous resource.



Relevance and importance of Scotland + Venice

Desk research and interviews determine that a national, country-wide presentation as provided by Scotland + Venice at the Venice Biennale still offers the best aligned international showcasing opportunity for Scottish art and architecture professionals in Europe.

With a long-standing reputation and purpose that aligns with the aims of Scotland + Venice to present and support artists, consultees saw Scotland + Venice as offering opportunities for exchange in relation to complex global topics, with impactful professional development. While other alternatives to Venice exist, Scotland + Venice was consistently the preferred option across diverse review consultees.

This is backed by evidence of significant stakeholder support, with **79%** of survey respondents stating Scotland + Venice is very important to the development of the sector in Scotland, and **83%** feeling that Scotland + Venice is very important for raising the profile of the sector internationally.¹

The review assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the current model and partnership, and its related impacts. There has been no shortage of challenge pointed out, and yet there has been no strong view expressed that it should cease, rather than it should adapt. Where it has been possible to do so, the review explores alternative models, benchmarks against international comparators, and concludes with recommendations which are carried forward into the preferred option for a future model to demonstrate what it would look like in reality.



Measuring success

Analysis of the findings suggest that the Scotland + Venice statements of purpose, governance and objectives are well crafted and appropriate. It suggests that the focus has been successful for visual art, and internationally Scotland + Venice is well-regarded, with a positive reputation among Venice Biennale collateral events and a strong identity and brand. Scotland + Venice presentations have been consistently well-received with national and international media coverage, as well as in specialist visual arts and architecture press.

Securing a central and accessible location in Venice has contributed to enhanced visitor numbers in Venice, with **37,000 visitors** to the 2022 presentation. The professional development and invigilator programme which has run alongside Venice exhibitions, delivered in partnership with Scottish higher and further education institutions, has continued to be seen as a key success for the project. There have been **174** graduates of this programme since 2003, drawn from **12** academic institutions who have reported a range of personal and professional benefits from their students' participation. Exhibition touring in Scotland has broadened the project's public reach, with the 2019 presentation touring in Scotland while live in Venice, and home audience figures of over **117,000** for the presentation of Alberta Whittle's commission at the National Galleries of Scotland in 2023.

Evidence shows the current approach to Scotland + Venice has not fully delivered all the desired ambitions of the project, however. The project remains less connected 'at home' than it could be. There appear to be underdeveloped connections with government, and with the full breadth of the professional sector in Scotland. Research suggests engagement with the general public could be greatly improved through a programme designed to do so intentionally. The most significant constraint emerging from the findings is the project-to-project approach meaning that each edition is consistently reported to begin from a "standing start." This is reported as having curtailed the development of areas like fundraising, visibility, environmental sustainability and legacy.

The brand visibility of Scotland + Venice is critical to its success, and there is evidence through the research of **consistent communications strengths**. These are particularly evident in relation to the promotion of **creative excellence and ambition**, achieving positive audiences, and through **promotion of increasing diversity** within Scotland + Venice. Research also illustrates that communications challenges have been consistent since 2018 however, including insufficient financial resource and lead times for communications planning.



The research indicates areas where stakeholders would like to see Scotland + Venice improve. These are primarily in relation to **environmental sustainability** and need for the project to reach net zero, **public engagement** (with a particular desire expressed to see more activity returning to Scotland) and further increased **access and inclusion**.

The research also demonstrates a determination for **monitoring and evaluation** to be developed for consistent and transparent case making, advocacy and partnership building – a persistent challenge noted in 2018, and a symptom of pressurised project-by-project working and planning. Addressing this will be increasingly important if the project is to evidence a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, value for money, and attract funders and ethical donors, sponsors and partners.

“Different tactics are needed for art and architecture”

The research found that while architecture benefits from, and has articulated a need for international profile-raising and development opportunities like Scotland + Venice, the current model (initially designed around a visual arts practice and curatorial model) is not meeting its needs. During the review process, the Scotland + Venice Partners agreed that work on the approach to architecture (including appraisal of future options) could take place on a longer timeline. The Partners felt this would also allow thinking to align to the findings of the current review of architecture policy delivery involving the Scottish Government, Architecture & Design Scotland, Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland and others, and to give architecture and built environment stakeholders sufficient time to meaningfully engage and input. It is the Partners’ intention to reconvene consultation with architecture professionals around Scotland + Venice later in 2024 with a view to developing options for returning to Venice in 2027.



The key findings of the 2024 review

Following the review and its options appraisal processes, it was the key recommendation of the review to pursue an adapted Scotland + Venice model.

This adapted model is informed by the conclusions and needs identified in this report, builds on Scotland + Venice strengths, and amplifies its opportunities for the future.

It is based on the premise that, following agreement and an in principle commitment of funding by the Scotland + Venice Partners in the summer of 2024 that:

- + A visual art Programme will move forward in planning to return to Venice in 2026;
- + There is a workable financial framework in place to deliver a Scotland + Venice visual arts Programme running 2026-2030;
- + Planning and development can begin in 2024/25, including the required sector engagement to achieve Venice Biennale timeframes;
- + Sector consultation will continue to determine an appropriate model with funding for architecture to return to Venice in 2027;
- + The new visual art Programme will be supported by an enhanced Partnership in the form of Associate Partners;
- + With contracting of a time-limited Programme Manager to provide continuous producing support across the Scotland + Venice visual art Programme;
- + And that at all levels of planning and delivery, the Programme will meet:
 - Partner environmental sustainability commitments and requirements
 - Best practice and industry standards in working conditions, recruitment practices and remuneration
 - Good governance and transparent financial management and reporting
- + Underpinned by a robust and consistent approach to monitoring and evaluation across the Programme to evidence return on investment and both cultural and public value.



Background to this review

This is the third review to be commissioned by the Scotland + Venice Partners since the project's inception in 2003. The first was undertaken in 2007 while the project was still funded by the Scottish Arts Council.

The second was commissioned by Creative Scotland in 2018 and encompassed five visual art editions of Scotland + Venice from 2009-2017. It was completed before the impact of Brexit on the UK's culture and creative industries could be fully understood, and before architecture was fully integrated into the Scotland + Venice partnership and model.

The 2018 review made recommendations which led to a four-year funding commitment and the appointment of a time-limited development manager for strategic and sustainable forward planning. This work was disrupted by the pandemic however, and Scotland + Venice was paused in 2023 for a new review to be undertaken.

The aim and scope of this review

The aim of this review in 2024 is to deliver research that enables the current Scotland + Venice Partners to determine future viability for the project, and aid decision-making around how best to maintain and grow an international presence for visual art and architecture at the Venice Biennale in an environmentally responsible and sustainable way.

Our research builds on the findings of the 2018 review, incorporates architecture into the review process, and considers significant changes in the project's operating context since 2018. Brexit and COVID-19, rising inflation, standstill public budgets, geopolitics, social change and the increasing urgency of climate crisis all present new challenges for Scotland + Venice.



They also present dilemmas and contradictions for any project of this scope today, raising questions that will be shared by all cultural projects, programmes or festivals with an international focus, primarily:

- + How to deliver ambitious international projects whilst also achieving net zero targets?
- + How to deliver bold international opportunities that are also inclusive, diverse and accessible?
- + How to ensure that innovative international projects follow and embed best practice, whilst working within available budgets and organisational capacity?
- + How to develop viable, sustainable investment and business models for dynamic international projects, whilst remaining ethical and maintaining artistic integrity?

These are big questions – answering them all in detail goes beyond the scope of this review. As one review participant noted:

“The project is one of such complexity, it presents significant challenges for decision-making It requires a level of understanding, nuance and ability to work through and respond to the problems.”

What the findings and options in this review can do is support the Scotland + Venice Partnership to navigate and respond to these big questions, as far as is possible in the context, to inform the project’s next stage of development.

Methodology

Our approach to the review has been iterative and collaborative to engage stakeholders in the process over a short timeframe between January to June 2024.

The research themes framing our review activity relate to the Scotland + Venice model and were set by the Scotland + Venice Partners. These were applied to the research methodology to review the model from a range of perspectives:

- + Commissioning and delivery model
- + Relevance and impact
- + Partnership and governance model
- + Ethics and sustainability
- + Finance and budgets



This report builds on the 2018 review, reflecting on editions from 2018 to 2023. It is noted however, that the 2020/21 architecture edition, *What If...?! Scotland*, was an ‘exception to the norm’ event due to COVID-19 and does not offer helpful research comparisons. And, while interviews were conducted with the 2023 delivery team for *A Fragile Correspondence*, a formal evaluation and end of project report were not available for this review.

Core activities for the review have included:

Desk research (January – June 2024) reviewed Scotland + Venice documentation and evaluations, published research and articles, relevant policy and strategies, and new research was conducted to further explore project impacts and international comparators. Supplementary desk research was commissioned in June 2024 into current and relevant climate policy, research and case studies to identify actions, benchmarks and milestones to inform priorities for a bespoke climate mitigation framework.

A sector survey (January – February 2024) engaged a broad range of visual art and architecture stakeholders in the review process, with findings benchmarking sector awareness, perception, importance and priorities for Scotland + Venice. The survey was designed with input from the project’s advisors (Collective Architecture and the Scottish Contemporary Art Network) and Creative Scotland’s Scotland + Venice Steering Group. It was promoted through Creative Scotland’s Jobs and Opportunities and social media, Culture Radar channels, project advisor networks, and by direct email to named contacts. In total, **243 survey responses** were collected of which **53%** were from visual arts and **47%** were from architecture respondents.

In-depth interviews (February – March 2024) were conducted with **50 individuals** from **32 organisations** including representatives from the Scotland + Venice Partnership, past participating organisations, individual creatives and producers involved with the project between 2018 and 2023, and representatives of strategic partners and stakeholders.

Round tables (February – June 2024) were hosted in February with **11 HE/FE** partners to the Scotland + Venice Professional Development Programme; in March with the Scotland + Venice Partners at a key stage of research development; and three round tables were hosted in June attended by **28 visual artists, curators and producers**.

An options appraisal (April 2024) was undertaken in discussion with the Scotland + Venice Partners, and Creative Scotland’s Scotland + Venice Steering Group. A summary of shortlisted options is included in Section 5 of this report.



Visual art options progressed, with more time to develop architecture

A round table with the Scotland+Venice Partners was held in March 2024 to review emerging findings from the review and agree the design and purpose of sector round tables.

Given the urgency for a decision on whether to return to Venice in 2026, a decision was made by the Scotland + Venice Partners to prioritise sector testing with visual art curators and artists to look in more detail at options and viability for a return, and that work on the approach to architecture (including appraisal of future suitable options) could take place on a longer timeline for the 2027 Venice Biennale.

This decision was also taken in the knowledge that it would allow options for architecture to reflect on, and align to, findings of the review of architecture policy delivery which was running concurrent with the Scotland + Venice review, involving the Scottish Government, Architecture & Design Scotland, Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) and others.

It is the Partners' intention to reconvene consultation with architecture professionals around Scotland + Venice later in 2024.

As a result, the options appraisal conducted in May 2024, and the round tables in June 2024, explored visual arts options only. The forward plan for Scotland + Venice 2026–2030 reflects this decision.

Who took part in the 2024 Review

A total of **331** people contributed directly to the review in 2024.

Of these:

- + **88** contributed through in-depth interviews and round tables (of which 30% claimed a freelancer reimbursement fee of £75).
- + **243** contributed through the sector survey.
- + Contributors were from across Scotland - 36% from Glasgow, 28% from Edinburgh, 10% Dundee and the remaining ranging from the Highlands and Islands, Orkney and Shetland to Dumfries & Galloway.



A guide to reading this report

The overall structure of this review is in six main sections.

Section 1: The context for Scotland + Venice

An overview of the Venice Biennale with a summary of the Scotland + Venice history, partners and objectives.

Section 2: Model and impact

An outline of the current model including the Professional Development Programme (PDP) and Public Engagement followed by overall threats and opportunities, and an assessment of Scotland + Venice Relevance and Impact.

Section 3: Critical issues for a future model

A description of six current issues that need to be addressed in a future model: Environmental Sustainability, International, EDI, Fair Work, Finance and Resource, and Leadership.

Section 4: Conclusions

Conclusions and needs arising informing future options.

Section 5: Options for the future

An outline of the process and criteria followed by discarded, shortlisted and preferred options.

Section 6: Recommendations

Which inform the proposed future model for Scotland + Venice.

Background reports to this review are available separately and include:

- + *Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Collated Desk Research Report*
- + *Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Survey Report*
- + *Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview and Round Tables Report*
- + *Scotland + Venice as an environmentally conscious international arts event: desk research and document review, Blanche, R., 2024*

Throughout this report there are brief features (in boxes) which focus on key facts, statistics and comparisons.

“ Throughout this report there are quotes featured (indented in italics) which are extracted from the survey, research interviews and round table discussions.”

SECTION

1

The context for Scotland + Venice

1

The Venice Biennale

Introduction

The Venice Biennale is one of the most significant international platforms within the global art world, celebrating visual art, architecture, cinema, dance, music and theatre.

Founded in 1895, and despite the significant growth of similar events around the world, the Art Biennale is still promoted as the most influential and prestigious contemporary art event, attracting an audience of over **800,000** in 2022. The Architecture Biennale, founded in 1980, is also recognised as one of the most critical platforms of its kind welcoming **285,000** visitors in 2023².

The Venice Biennale has a unique approach to the programming of these two events which take place on alternate years across the main Venice sites of the Giardini and the Arsenale. The approach includes:

- + **An International Exhibition** – devised by a curator invited by the Board of the Venice Biennale. A new curator is selected for each edition to refresh themes and perspectives.
- + **National Pavilions** – each with its own curator and project. There are **29** country pavilions housed in the Giardini and Arsenale.
- + **Collateral Events** – independent events are pitched for and approved per edition by the Biennale curator. At the 2024 Art Biennale **30** Collateral Events were registered; at the 2023 Architecture Biennale **9** Collateral Events were registered.³

In addition, during the April to November run of the Venice Biennale, the city hosts further exhibitions in its museums and cultural foundations to coincide with and capitalise on the professional and public audiences visiting the Biennale.

The Venice Art Biennale in numbers

The 2022 Venice Biennale recorded the highest visitor attendance in its 127-year history, with ticket sales up 35% on the previous (pre-pandemic) Art edition to 800,000.

- + 213 artists invited to the Exhibition
- + 80 National Participations
- + 27 National Participations in the Giardini
- + 26 National Participations in the Arsenale
- + 27 National Participations around the city of Venice
- + 5 National Participations presenting for the first time: Republic of Cameroon, Namibia, Nepal, Sultanate of Oman, and Uganda. 30 Collateral Events (of which Scotland + Venice was one).

The British Pavilion

Great Britain has been represented at the Venice Biennale since 1895, and its own official country pavilion was launched in 1909. The British Pavilion is in the main Giardini and has been managed by the British Council since 1939. Formed of six galleries, it has presented the work of over **600** British artists, of whom **2** have been Scottish (Cathy Wilkes in 2019, and Mark Boyle showing with the Boyle Family in 1978).⁴ In 2024 it is presenting *Listening all Night to the Rain* by artist John Akomfrah, curated by Tarini Malik, commissioned by Skinder Hundal, Global Director of Arts at the British Council.⁵ With funding from The Art Fund, John Akomfrah's commission will tour to Dundee Contemporary Arts in 2025.

Collateral events

Collateral events take place in venues and spaces across Venice and include presentations from countries not included in the Biennale's official country pavilions. Scotland, Wales and Catalonia have been regular presenters as collateral events, and increasingly individual galleries and foundations are using the collateral event platform. Scotland + Venice collateral events are selected and commissioned by the Scotland + Venice Partners from an Open Call application process.

Independent Scottish presentations have also taken place at the Art Biennale, and Scottish artists and architectural practices have been invited to participate either in the International Exhibition, or as representative artists, curators or groups for other countries.⁶

National profile, global dialogue

A review of recent national pavilion and country-led collateral event presentations shows that most are supported or funded by government departments. In most cases, funding and support is directed through the country's official culture, foreign affairs or enterprise offices, through delegated culture agencies, and some as direct sponsorship from embassies, suggesting that the Venice Biennale still performs a strong cultural diplomacy and international affairs role.

Spanning over 120 years of artistic presentation, academic studies on the Venice Biennale illustrate how the national pavilion structure has also been intrinsically bound by, and responded to, the contradictions, tensions, nuances and complexity of shifting national identities and relationships, world politics and global events.⁷

Activism and protest within Venice Biennales have been common over the last 100 years and are argued to contribute to the event's continued relevance,⁸ with both presentation and protest understood to contribute to the Biennale's research purpose to generate new knowledge and impact. In recent years, artist protests have focused on the environment, artist livelihoods, and social and political issues which “*exemplify the greater socio-artistic effects produced against the backdrop of the Venice Biennale.*”⁹

Diversity and gender politics, migration, racial injustice and climate change have also been explored directly through artist commissions presented through the Art and Architecture Biennales. The theme of the 2023 Architecture Biennale – Laboratory of the Future – was chosen by invited Scottish-Ghanaian curator Lesley Lokko to “*turn the spotlight on people and places that have been not only been under-represented here, but largely excluded from the story of architecture.*”¹⁰

Other studies explore the interconnectedness of the Venice Biennale with the international art market and the development of local markets important to the sustainability of the art world's ecosystem.¹¹

Scotland + Venice contributions to global dialogue

Through Scotland + Venice, Scottish artists and architects contribute to global dialogue and international knowledge exchange. For example, ***A Fragile Correspondence*** at the 2023 Architecture Biennale explored alternative perspectives and new approaches to the challenges of the worldwide climate emergency achieving an online media reach of over **0.5 billion**.¹² **Alberta Whittle's** Scotland + Venice commission *deep dive (pause) uncoiling memory* at the 2022 Art Biennale invited collective consideration of the legacies and contemporary expressions of racism, colonialism and migration, and recorded the highest Scotland + Venice visitor figures of **36,985** in Venice, and over **117,000** at home through the National Gallery of Scotland.¹³ **Charlotte Prodger's** 2019 commission SaF05 considered subjectivity, self-determination and queerness and generated an international online readership of **2.46 billion**, including being listed as one of “*The Shows to See*” by Frieze.¹⁴ While Scotland + Venice paused in 2024, it is worth noting that the main theme of the 2024 Art Biennial, ***Foreigners Everywhere***, is derived from an artwork featured in the main 2024 Venice Biennale exhibition by the now Palermo-based two artist collective *Claire Fontaine*, including James Thornhill, a Glasgow School of Art graduate.¹⁵

1

Scotland + Venice

Overview

Scotland is recognised internationally as a country that encourages and supports excellence and innovation in the arts, screen and creative industries, with major events and some of the world's largest international festivals supporting and maintaining that reputation, many of which attract inward international attention and visitors, such as the Edinburgh festivals which draw audiences of over **4 million annually**.¹⁶

In tandem, opportunities are made available through around **£1.3m annually** in public grants to showcase and network Scotland's arts and creative industries through attendance and presentation at international events such as Made in Scotland (which promotes Scottish theatre, dance and music internationally) and at some of the world's biggest film, media, music and literary events and festivals, including Cannes, Sundance, SXSW and WOMEX for example.¹⁷

Scotland + Venice international profiling

Scotland + Venice has made a significant contribution to this international activity and profile-raising, by presenting new work and thinking to industry specialists and audiences from across the world at the Venice Biennale through a total investment of **c.£4.5m over 20 years**.¹⁸

Up until its pause in 2024, Scotland + Venice had established a reputation as one of the Venice Biennale's most exciting collateral events with a strong identity and brand and, unlike other publicly funded opportunities for practitioners in Scotland, it was the only national showcasing of the best of visual art and architecture from Scotland at an international level.

The Scotland + Venice model

Scotland + Venice has evolved since inception around an **exhibition** model, most often including a solo artist exhibition, in a central and accessible location in Venice, with the artist and project delivery supported by an organisational co-commissioner and a freelance producer. Project duration from start to finish has usually been around 18 months. Venice visitor numbers for Charlotte Prodger in 2019 were **23,300**, and for Alberta Whittle in 2022 were **36,985**.

A **professional development** and invigilator programme has run alongside the Venice exhibition, delivered in partnership with Scottish HE/FE institutions. The review shows that this programme is seen as one of the project's biggest success stories, with **174 students** and artists graduating through the programme since 2003.

Exhibition **touring** in Scotland has also been a feature of some past visual art and architecture editions. Recent examples include the 2019 Charlotte Prodger presentation which simultaneously toured in Scotland whilst the exhibition was live in Venice. In 2023, Alberta Whittle's commission returned to Scotland with a screening tour delivered in partnership with LUX Scotland, and an exhibition at National Galleries of Scotland achieving home audience figures of over **117,000**.

History

Originally designed as a complimentary event to the British Pavilion at the Biennale, Scotland + Venice launched in 2003 driven by a number of factors, some of which include the strength and diversity of contemporary art practice emerging in Scotland at that time; the corresponding lack of distinctive Scottish presentation opportunities internationally and particularly within the Venice Biennial; and as a response to the Scotland Act 1998 which established a devolved Scottish Government and the opening of the newly formed Scottish Parliament in 1999.

The project's first collateral event (*Zenomap*) in 2003 was delivered in partnership with British Council Scotland and with support from the Scottish Government. It was followed in 2004 by *Landforms*, the first architecture event from Scotland to present at the Biennale. Scotland has maintained a consistent presence as an official collateral event at the Art Biennale with regular presentations at the Architecture Biennale. *A Fragile Correspondence* in 2023 was the first architecture commission to be delivered as an official collateral event for the full duration of the Venice Biennial.¹⁹

Following its 2018 review, the Scotland + Venice Partners and Creative Scotland’s Board made a four-year funding commitment to the project which enabled: parity to the delivery of both art and architecture commissions for the first time; a fully accessible venue to be secured on a four-year lease at the Docks Cantieri Cucchini, within easy reach of the main sites of the Giardini and the Arsenale, which helped create a strong and steady Venice presence in 2019, 2022 and 2023; appointment of a time-limited development manager to scope a business and development plan 2019–2022.

Unfortunately, planning, progress and delivery were severely impacted by COVID-19 from 2020, the development post came to an end, and the four-year venue lease lapsed. The Scotland + Venice Partners took the decision to pause the project for this review to be undertaken in 2024.

Scotland + Venice objectives

Through new commissions and participation at the Venice Biennale, Scotland + Venice has aimed to position Scotland internationally as a distinct, dynamic and diverse centre for creative excellence; to foster ambitious, innovative work in the fields of contemporary art and architecture; strengthened through international development, professional dialogue, public engagement and cultural exchange.

The project’s current objectives (which were framed in 2019) are stated as:

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

High quality work: To make a strong, globally relevant and distinctive contribution to the Venice Biennale to showcase the best of Scottish art, architecture and design.

Raising profile: 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 internationally and in Scotland.

Development: To support the creative and professional development of students, artists, architects, curators and producers.

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

Governance: To develop Scotland + Venice to achieve best value for money with clear governance, management and reporting structures.

The success of the project to deliver against these objectives is considered in [Section 2](#) of this report, and challenges to achieving these objectives in [Section 3](#).

The Scotland + Venice Partner Board

The first Scotland + Venice presentation in 2003 was led by the Scottish Arts Council in collaboration with the British Council. In 2005 an informal partnership was extended to include National Galleries of Scotland and expanded again and formalised in 2019 with the addition of Architecture & Design Scotland, V&A Dundee and the Scottish Government with a framework to oversee strategic direction and delivery of Scotland + Venice for both visual art and architecture editions.

Purpose

The Partner Board supports the governance, strategic framework and delivery of Scotland + Venice at both the art and architecture Biennales in Venice.

The stated ambition of the Scotland + Venice partners is to:

“*...position Scotland internationally as a distinct, dynamic and diverse centre for creative excellence, fostering ambitious, innovative work in the fields of contemporary art and architecture, strengthened through international development, professional dialogue, public engagement and cultural exchange.*”

Membership

The Scotland + Venice Partner Board has been constant since 2019, reflects Scotland’s visual art and architecture sectors, and includes curatorial expertise as well as high-level and diverse international and sector networks. It comprises:

Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS). Established in 2005 as a non-departmental public body by the Scottish Government to provide leadership in relation to Scotland’s Place Principle, A&DS is responsible for the development and implementation of national policy on planning, architecture and place. In the past, A&DS had led the Open Call for architecture editions of Scotland + Venice, coordinated procurement of the architectural teams, Chaired the architecture Steering Groups and has been directly involved in the project management of architecture editions.²⁰

British Council Scotland is committed to maintaining and growing Scotland’s international connections and contribution across the arts, education and society.²¹ Its strategic partnership with Scotland + Venice aligns with its aims to work with institutions, networks and partners to share Scottish excellence, expertise and experience with the world and bring learning and insight back home; to support an

international outlook among young people in Scotland helping to ensure they have international experience as part of their development; to help enhance the world's understanding of the contemporary devolved UK. In the past, British Council Scotland has provided in-kind and financial support for Scotland + Venice and has helped to build relationships with the British Pavilion.²²

Creative Scotland is Scotland's national public body for arts, screen and creative industries. It inherited Scotland + Venice from the Scottish Arts Council, and has led the project, its relationship with the Venice Biennale, and with the visual arts sector. It has been its principal funder through National Lottery grants and has provided significant in-kind support to the project over its lifespan, critically through the role of its (previous) Head of Visual Arts, and through its visual arts, communications and PR teams. Since 2021 Creative Scotland's strategic funding framework has prioritised activity relating to Quality and Ambition, Engagement, Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion, Environmental Sustainability, Fair Work and International.²³

National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) cares for, develops, researches and displays the national collection of Scottish and international fine art through a programme of exhibitions, education and publications with an aim to engage, inform and inspire the broadest public.²⁴ In the past, NGS has provided in-kind support through office space, curatorial expertise and advice on the sales of commissioned work and recoupment.²⁵ NGS has ensured that works commissioned for Scotland + Venice are shown in Scotland, either through exhibitions, or through the acquisition of works for the national collection for example *The Slave's Lament* by Graham Fagen (2015), *SaF05* by Charlotte Prodger (2019), and *Lagareh – The Last Born and Entanglement is more than blood* by Alberta Whittle (2022).

Scottish Government representation in the Scotland + Venice Partner Board since 2019 has been through its Planning and Architecture departments, contributing expertise and funding to the architecture editions of Scotland + Venice through representation on the Partners Board and architecture Steering Groups.

V&A Dundee is the first dedicated design museum in Scotland with a mission to inspire and empower through design. The museum has established itself as a vital cultural voice and is active in “*catalysing new opportunities for designers, creative communities, and collaborative partnerships.*”²⁶ The V&A Dundee joined the Scotland + Venice Partners Board in 2021 following its hosting of the 2020/21 Scotland + Venice architecture commission, *What If...?! Scotland* which took place during COVID-19.

Structures, roles and reporting

Detailed description of the governance structure, roles and responsibilities of the Partners, Steering Groups, Working Groups and Selection Panels can be found in the background reports.

A summary of key roles and responsibilities is included below:

Partner Board

The Scotland + Venice Partner Board has had oversight, accountability and responsibility for the project and its financial management. It has guided the strategic development of the project and has been responsible for providing formal reports to the Boards of the partner organisations, key stakeholders and funding partners. Each member organisation has nominated a staff representative to the Board, which meets 2-3 times a year.

Steering Groups

The Partner Board has been supported by Steering Groups (one for art and one for architecture). Steering Groups include representatives from the Partners, and members of each edition's delivery team. The Group oversees project delivery with delegated powers to make approvals and decisions on behalf of the Partner Board, which they report to.

Delivery team

The selected Delivery Team has been responsible for realising the exhibition and taking a lead role in areas such as the professional development programme.

Communications Working Group

A Communications Working Group has been established for each edition. Contracting of an independent PR/Communications supplier has been overseen by Creative Scotland for arts, and Architecture & Design Scotland for architecture. The Communications Working Group has been Chaired by Creative Scotland's Media Relations & PR Manager.

Selection Panel

Representatives of the Partner organisations and invited external advisors (refreshed for each edition) have formed Selection Panels.

Governance – international comparisons²⁷

Comparison of **10** international national pavilion and collateral events, and of **16** international art fairs and biennales shows that, while role titles may vary from country to country, the most common governance structure for these events comprises:

A commissioner / lead organisation with national representation and policy alignment (often a government department responsible for cultural diplomacy).

A representative public body with culture sector expertise, a development and investment remit, or international interface (e.g., Culture Ireland, Wales Art International, British Council).

An expert delivery institution with curatorial expertise and international networks (e.g., a national or independent gallery).

Example: Ireland at Venice (National Pavilion) 2024: Government of Ireland, led by Culture Ireland (Ireland's international development institution) in partnership with Arts Council Ireland.

Example: Catalonia in Venice (Collateral Event) 2024: led by Institut Ramon Llull, a consortium formed for the purpose of Catalonia's international cultural development comprising Government of Catalonia, the Government of the Balearic Islands, Barcelona City Council and Palma City Council.

SECTION

2

Model and impact

2

Introduction

The 2018 review of Scotland + Venice concluded that, in terms of relevance and importance, Scotland + Venice continued to be a priority due to the international status of the Venice Biennale. **76%** of its survey respondents said, “*Venice is important in raising the profile of Scottish contemporary art at home or abroad*” and **11 out of the 14** national and international experts interviewed at the time felt Scotland should continue to present at the Venice Biennale.²⁸

In terms of impact, the authors of the 2018 review reported the project having direct impact on the artists, curators, producers and invigilators who had taken part, and demonstrated that artist connections, international profiles and student careers had been strengthened through participation. In terms of profile, the report concluded that Scotland + Venice had achieved consistent audiences in Venice (although a variable audience in Scotland) and had developed a strong international ‘brand’ and identity.

The strengths of the Scotland + Venice Partnership were understood at that time to be underpinned by strong leadership and influence, consistency of support, and its knowledge and expertise to support delivery teams (although clarity in roles and responsibilities and an imbalance in terms of contribution to the partnership was noted).

A key recommendation in 2018 was that the impact of Scotland + Venice would be enhanced through strategic planning between editions, and through a stronger policy context being developed by the Partners in relation to international working for the project.

These recommendations led to the Partners and Creative Scotland making a four-year funding commitment and appointing a time-limited development manager for strategic and sustainable forward planning for the project (2019-2022). This work started in 2019, however planning and project delivery were severely disrupted by COVID-19, and Scotland + Venice was paused in 2023.

The aim of the 2024 review

The aim of this review in 2024 is to deliver research and conclusions to enable the current Scotland + Venice Partners to once again determine future viability for the project, taking into consideration critical issues impacting culture and international working since 2018 including policy change, climate emergency and how the project can achieve net zero.

This section of the report presents key findings from this review in relation to the Scotland + Venice model in two parts:

Part 1: An outline of the current Commissioning and Delivery Model, including the strengths and weaknesses of its component parts followed by overall threats and opportunities.

Part 2: An assessment of Scotland + Venice Relevance and Impact.

Who contributed to these findings?

The findings in this section are drawn from desk research, and the opinions and expertise of over **330** individuals who contributed to the review process through survey responses, in-depth interviews and round tables conducted between January and June 2024.

Contributors included organisational representatives from the Scotland + Venice Partner Board, representatives of selected Venice Biennale National Pavilions and collateral events, freelance and organisational participants in Scotland + Venice between 2018 and 2023, strategic stakeholders including representatives from Higher and Further Education, as well as artists, curators, architects, producers and students from across the visual art and architecture sectors in Scotland.

Further details of participants in the 2024 review are given in the **Methodology** section at the beginning of this report in '**Who took part in the 2024 Review**'.

2

Part 1: Commissioning and Delivery Model

This part provides an overview of the current model and related programme, reflects on the experience of participants and stakeholders who have used it, and draws comparisons with international or alternatives approaches to assess its effectiveness for both art and architecture.

The model in outline²⁹

The model was originally designed to respond to and amplify the success of artists emerging from the contemporary Scottish art scene in the early 2000s. The model has evolved since inception, and comprises:

- + **A national showcase exhibition** organised through partners who together commission a creative work designed and made in Scotland which is then presented in Venice at the Biennale. The model has evolved to focus on an exhibition, presented in a central and accessible location in Venice, which supports developmental creative practice and creates developmental opportunities for a co-commissioning organisation and freelance producer.

Running alongside most Venice exhibitions has been:

- + **A professional development and invigilator programme** delivered in partnership with Scottish Higher and Further Education institutions, which takes around **15-20** students and graduates to Venice for work experience, research and networking. This programme is seen as one of the project's biggest success stories, with **174** students and graduates going through the programme since 2003.
- + **A public engagement programme** through a returning exhibition or Scottish tour has been a feature of some past editions. Recent examples include the 2019 Charlotte Prodger presentation which simultaneously toured in Scotland whilst the exhibition was live in Venice. In 2023, Alberta Whittle's commission returned to Scotland with a screening tour delivered in partnership with LUX Scotland, and an exhibition at National Galleries of Scotland.

The Venice Biennale's announcement of the next art or architecture edition theme triggers the launch of an open call to the sector for art, and a public procurement process for architecture, both led by the Scotland + Venice Partners and a Steering Group. The open call/ procurement process invites proposals from experienced curators, creative teams and organisations, with a Selection Panel deciding on the winning commission.

Project duration has usually been around 18 months, with Partner and delivery teams meeting monthly for project management, decision-making and reporting.

Comparison with other international models ³⁰

For this review, desk research compared the models of **10 countries** presenting at the Venice Biennale in the last five years to compare (where possible) governance, selection process, public engagement, resourcing and approach.

Findings show that the size, scale and make up of delivery teams varies from country to country, and from edition to edition in relation to the commissioned artform and technical requirements.

A common pattern emerges for delivery teams however, with most comprising artist, curator, producer, support organisation, with technical teams (e.g., for exhibition build, installation, lighting, design, photography and digital support) and an independent communications and PR supplier, often sub-contracted by the producer or support organisation.

There is also evidence that the planning timeframe for some of these events is far longer than has been possible for Scotland + Venice in the past. For example, the open call for the **Pavilion of Finland** for the 2026 Art Biennale was live in June 2024, with a proposal deadline of August 2024, which will give the winning commission nearer **22 months** for production and shipping.³¹

What follows is a summary of evidence and options in relation to each part of the existing commissioning and delivery model to explore what works, what hasn't worked, and where there are opportunities for change or adaptation.

National showcase exhibition

Strengths

Artistic autonomy

Being largely publicly funded and supported by a partnership of bodies at arms-length from government, Scotland + Venice has been able to offer a level of artistic autonomy to the creatives it has commissioned and presented. International benchmarking shows that many national pavilions and collateral events are increasingly reliant on corporate sponsors and private investment, which can bring additional demands and constraint for artists and delivery teams.

Free-to-access

Interviewees were consistent in sharing a view that Scotland + Venice “*punches above its weight*” at the Venice Biennale with its exhibitions successful in bringing stakeholders together for the purpose of dialogue. While, as a collateral event, Scotland + Venice may not have the footfall of the national pavilions in the pay-to-access Giardini or Arsenale (there were over 800,000 tickets sold in 2022³²) several contributors noted the benefit of being in a free-to-access venue where those who did choose to visit were likely to do so purposefully to see the work. It was also noted that these ‘open’ exhibitions are also more accessible to Venice residents.³³

Flexibility

The project management and technical needs of each edition are determined after the selection process, therefore the size, scale and make up of delivery teams varies from edition to edition based on the artform, the commission and related technical requirements. For visual arts, the approach largely follows that of other benchmarked collateral and country events

For architecture, the model has varied with Scotland + Venice Partner Architecture & Design Scotland fulfilling the curatorial and project management support roles, with a mix of solo architecture practices and collectives presenting.

In interviews, art stakeholders shared that through experimentation with collective visual art showcasing in the early years of Scotland + Venice, its model had evolved latterly favouring a solo exhibition. The view shared was that this had proved most successful at building the international reputation and career pathways of the artists and their support organisations, for achieving press ‘cut through’ in the noisy media arena of Venice, and for increasing the selling power and market value of the artists in focus. In financial terms, the solo approach was also noted as “*the only feasible one – there’s not scope for any more paring back, therefore it’s rationale of resources.*”³⁴

Profile-raising

Interviewees and round table participants noted the importance of Scotland + Venice as a project encouraging ambitious outcomes to drive sector development, pushing practice boundaries which resulted in ‘successful’ and ‘desirable’ outcomes including (for visual art) the purchasing of commissioned works for national and private collections:

“*To be blunt Venice helps us set out our stall to international curators – we see this globally as Biennale artists within two years commanding prime solo exhibitions in major museums across the world. This helps keep the focus on Scotland and attracts inward cultural tourism as a result. We can’t do that without presenting the best new visual art from Scotland on an international stage. Our artists will be overlooked, and inward cultural tourism will find another more progressive arts sector to visit or collaborate with.*”³⁵

Open call and selection process

In response to the 2018 review, pre-application support and information for those responding to the Scotland + Venice open call has been improved. The information includes the strategic background and purpose of the opportunity, information about the opportunity itself, venue specifications, an indicative budget and application and submission information. For visual art editions, Creative Scotland has also run online information sessions for those thinking of applying.

Public engagement

Past commissions have illustrated the potential for Scotland + Venice to act as a catalyst for change and transformation through building meaningful local connections in Venice. As one interviewee noted:

““ *The role of artists and architects is to be external mediators... We are there to see things, to be a catalyst and active agent in situations that seem unfixable.*”³⁶

Public engagement in Venice

The Happenstance (2018) was a three phased project and residency that took place first in Scotland, then in Venice, before returning to Scotland. The presentation was designed in response to Grafton Architects theme of ‘Freespace’ and was realised in the garden of Palazzo Zenobio by WAVEparticle and their delivery partners who curated an active archive around a boardwalk-cum-climbing frame designed by Baxendale.³⁷

The project engaged with people of all ages in Venice, encouraging visitors and the local community into a relationship with the structure and project through the staging over **60 events**, exploring the process of rethinking and reclaiming Freespace.

Lasting impacts from the project include: in 2018, convening of over **100 local Venetian community groups** into one local ‘Association of Associations’ to consider and resolve issues of precarity for the Palazzo and its community in response to climate change (this Association is still functioning and taking action today); the delivery team helping to launch initiatives with the local community to reclaim a sense of connection and ownership for the community with the Palazzo; helping the community to fundraise and gain support for local building repairs and maintenance; helping to establish a community sub-project to build an archive of the local Armenian diaspora located around the Palazzo. There is ongoing communication between WAVEparticle and members of the Palazzo Zenobio community.

Weaknesses

Capacity

The workload to deliver a world-class exhibition in Venice is, simply put, demanding. Remuneration for the artist and co-commissioner in the delivery team is reported as having been limited and not accurately reflecting the real time and resource needed to deliver the project. This has created capacity and resourcing pressures for delivery teams, especially for smaller organisations and independent or freelance curatorial/creative teams:

“*Small organisations can't stop doing the day job to participate. Therefore, you end up running a large-scale international project, and a Scotland tour, on top of your usual business.*”³⁸

Some round table participants suggested that a lighter ‘expression of interest’ first stage to an open call, with an opportunity for shortlisted applicants to work up proposals with support and advice in a second stage, would open up the application process for more freelancers and smaller organisations in future.³⁹

Timeframe

In interview, Scotland + Venice Partners noted that there were many project constraints outside their individual and collective control. These included the timeframes and fees set by the Venice Biennale which all participating collateral events need to work within.

Some interviewees felt the timeframe set by the Venice Biennale and subsequently the open call encouraged applicants to generate ambitious proposals quickly, without sufficient time to appropriately cost them, resulting in unrealistic planning and budgets.

“*The call out time frame is ridiculous. We had to pitch an idea in four weeks. You can't make realistic estimates in that time. So, if you're selected, you have to cost all over again, but by then then the pressure is on and it becomes difficult to make sustainable choices.*”⁴⁰

Open call and selection process

While improvements had been made, some previous participants stated in interviews that briefing pre-selection, and information at the commissioning stage lacked transparency and depth, particularly in relation to budgets, costs, and responsibilities which had added unnecessary stress to what they already felt was a “*massive undertaking.*”⁴¹

Contributors to the review felt that still greater clarity about finance, budgeting and contracting were needed upfront to avoid ill-informed budgets and project plans. Some contributors across the review stated that they would welcome more blunt information pre-application in relation to processes, environmental conditions, targets and responsibilities, and how and who was involved in selection and decision-making to feel fully informed.⁴²

The architecture commission has been managed in recent years through public procurement (rather than open call) and has been project managed by Architecture & Design Scotland, with greater decision-making and sign off retained (e.g., final decisions relating to any budget spend for architecture over £10,000 are bound by public procurement process, managed by the A&DS project manager).⁴³ Interviewees for this review suggested the procurement process for architecture could present a barrier to some in the sector making an application, i.e., that the process favoured larger organisations and was “out of the reach of smaller organisations and practices”.⁴⁴

The Sculpture Placement Group’s environmental review of Scotland + Venice also highlights that:

“*The unpaid open call and pitching process, which this year was very late to take place, seems destined to generate potentially unsustainable outcomes where people are trying to produce a lot of work, to fill a specific space, in too short a space of time – all in order to provide the most interesting looking and comprehensive project, in order to win that pitch.*”⁴⁵

The authors note this runs counter to the time needed to consider suitable environmental mitigations and adaptations with build budgets reflecting actual costs.

Responding to constraints outside the project’s control

In addition to responding to the timeframes and fees set by the Venice Biennale, rising inflation, travel and transport costs have had an immediate effect on budget and decision-making. In addition, Partners noted in interview that there would need to be an understanding and appropriate measure of costs related to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through the project in any returning model.⁴⁶

An unsuitable model for architecture

Most architecture stakeholders to the review agreed about the need for and importance of having a platform to promote the best of Scottish architecture within an international platform:

“*Since the closure of The Lighthouse, the importance of this opportunity to learn from other country presentations and the wider agenda ...should not be overlooked.*”⁴⁷

While the processes involved in commissioning and getting an exhibition ‘live in Venice’ are largely the same, sufficient differences in the drivers and priorities for the international presentation of art and architecture were identified by contributors to this review, raising concerns about the suitability of applying a model seen to be largely successful for visual art to architecture as well. Key weaknesses noted by contributors included:

- + The public policy remit for architecture is “*firmly rooted*” in delivery of The Place Principle and community engagement. While this was thought to have been successful in some past editions (particularly referenced was *The Happenstance* in 2018), several interviewees felt the policy was disconnected from the international ambition of Scotland + Venice, and at odds with the primary purpose of the Venice Biennale as an international showcasing event comprising temporary interventions.
- + While exhibition curation and delivery are inherent skillsets within visual art practice and delivery teams, contributors to the review noted this as an inherent gap for architecture delivery teams, which the current model did not sufficiently resolve:
 - ““ *The architecture sector in Scotland is weaker in terms of curation and international involvement compared to visual art.*”⁴⁸
- + The preference for collective working and group shows in architecture editions have had positive results in the past. When architecture was given equal footing within Scotland + Venice from 2019 however, this extended what had been a normal duration for an architecture exhibition from a few days or a month, to a full nine-month run. While achieving parity for both artforms in the model (and maximising use of the four-year venue lease in Venice) it has seen some architecture project budgets stretched, with a negative impact on freelance fees.⁴⁹
- + Across visual art editions, delivery teams have utilised the fundraising skills and capacity of their co-commissioning organisations to augment the set core budget supplied by the Scotland + Venice Partners to realise ambitious or more costly design, production or installation costs. Fundraising is not generally in the day-to-day skillset of architecture practices however, and as the Scotland + Venice Partners are unable to fundraise (as public bodies) architecture teams have had to work within the core budget only.

Ultimately, the common view expressed was that an international platform and international opportunities were very much needed and desired for the architecture sector, but that “*You need different tactics for the trajectory of the architecture and visual arts editions.*”⁵⁰

Communications

Through desk research and interviews, there is evidence that the current model has placed unrealistic demands on contracted communications and PR suppliers, and unrecognised demands (in terms of time and budget) on the communications and media teams of (particularly) Creative Scotland.

Communications challenges were regularly cited by communications professionals contributing to the review as a lack of planning clarity at the contract/procurement stage; insufficient lead times for PR and media planning; insufficient fees to cover the range of skills required from a supplier (particularly in recent years where the desired skillset has been expressed as including digital, social media, broadcast, international and UK sector, and mainstream press, for visual art *and* architecture).⁵¹

Any partnership project increases complexity for project communications. This has been the case for Scotland + Venice also, complicated further by the project being initiated and led by Partners based in Scotland, followed by re-location to Venice for delivery, involving inevitable ‘unknowns’ which often need to be resolved quickly, through translation using local intermediaries.

Internal communication issues were raised by contributors to the review, which included a lack of transparency in reporting to, and communications between the Scotland + Venice Partner Board, Steering Groups, Communications Working Groups; and a lack of transparency and reporting relating to financial decisions, particularly in relation to crisis management of “*on-the-ground*” issues in Venice.⁵²

External communications issues were also raised by contributors to the review including unrealistic communications demands from partners; inconsistent promotion (or no promotion) of the project by partners; and a lack of digital and social media skills of contracted Communications/PR suppliers.⁵³

Professional development programme

Strengths

Interviewees consistently expressed the view that Venice was still ‘the international development opportunity’ for professionals in the art and architecture sectors with a particular emphasis on **profile, knowledge exchange** and **networking**.

The professional development and invigilator programme has been a feature of **12** out of **18** Scotland + Venice editions and has been consistently referenced across the review as a strength and success:

“*It is vitally important we can continue to support our network to access the Venice Biennale and we would welcome the return of Scotland + Venice as a critical professional development pipeline. While engaging with the Biennale through the British Council is an excellent opportunity to work within a UK context, the lack of a uniquely Scottish presence in Venice will affect Scotland’s visibility, the perception of Scotland internationally, and ultimately forms a massive challenge to graduate retention, so crucial for the future with knock-on implications for the sector in Scotland.*”⁵⁴

The Scotland + Venice professional development programme was considered by all interviewees to be one of the model’s core strengths, and something which they felt could be developed and supported by more consistent partnership working with Higher and Further Education partners.

The programme has provided opportunities for **174 students** and early career graduates, secured through **68 separate sponsorships** with **12 academic institutions** and **6 sector bodies or funders**, and has been a **Living Wage** opportunity since 2017. For programme sponsors, a significant draw comes from association with the Venice Biennale, and the calibre of the Scotland + Venice Partners:⁵⁵

“*We wouldn’t want to be the institution that isn’t doing Scotland + Venice. We want to be part of the Partners network and have that association with the Biennale.*”⁵⁶

Participants noted personal and professional benefits in previous evaluations of the programme as: increased confidence, work opportunities, career progression and practice development. Participants stated that they “*feel more equipped for graduating*”; have improved understanding of art sector roles and opportunities suited to their skills; and have acquired practical event and communication skills developed through invigilation and content creation around the exhibition.

HE/FE Partners to the programme also reported being aware that students who have participated return from Venice with a heightened awareness of their practice; “real world” experience; greater understanding of the reality of working in the sector; developed professional skills (oral and written communication, critical and analytical skills); and that the programme supports an “*outward mobility*” agenda complimentary to other HE/FE initiatives.⁵⁷

Weaknesses

Weaknesses were also referenced across the documentation and in the HE/FE round table for this review, most often in relation to:

The lack of “*institutional memory*” in the project meant sponsorship relationships had to be re-kindled each edition, with a lack of understanding about what HE/FE sponsors needed in order to sell the opportunity internally, secure departmental budgets in time, or successfully engage more diverse applicants to the programme.

Post-Venice opportunities for students and their institutions to share learning and extend benefit from the sponsorship were rarely achieved due to lack of resource, poor planning or timing (e.g., conflicting with exam or final year requirements for the students).

That there were no clear priorities defined for the programme at a strategic or a programme level in relation to environmental sustainability, or in terms of equalities, diversity or inclusion.

Role titles and job descriptions for the advertised invigilator roles were criticised:

“*The name invigilator was used in 2022 in response to the 2019 role which described both roles as Exhibition Assistants. This did not adequately acknowledge that the team when left in Venice are not actually ‘assisting’ anyone but running the venue themselves.*”⁵⁸

This was reflected in interviews and round tables where the lack of resource to appropriately line-manage and provide pastoral care for up to 18 fairly young participants in a busy European city alongside other responsibilities was noted as “*stressful*”.

The single biggest threat noted for the programme was that, as a result of relationship/timing weaknesses, the HE/FE sponsorship level was consistently falling short of the actual cost of placements, which resulted in some of the weaknesses outlined above. This shortfall has been picked up (often last minute) by the Scotland + Venice Partners in the past, but this is not a sustainable solution going forward.

Public engagement

Strengths

Several interviewees noted positive outcomes from having a model that allowed flexibility for the delivery team to develop and maintain relationships “*on the ground*” with Venetian communities, freelancers, suppliers and academics. Comparison of media coverage shows architecture editions being particularly successful in public engagement, both in Venice and Scotland.

10 of the 18 Scotland + Venice collateral events have recorded return activity, which varies from talks and events to rural touring, to major exhibitions.⁵⁹ The majority of respondents (**64%**) to the review survey, when asked if they had seen Scotland + Venice work commissioned in a Scottish venue on its return, said they had. Of those, the venues most associated with return touring were: **National Galleries Scotland, V&A Dundee, the Common Guild, Talbot Rice, DCA and Hospitalfield.**⁶⁰

Desk research for the review also suggests that, where a return tour has taken place, it has been successful both in terms of engagement with the public, and in terms of sector collaborations, for example:

Scotland + Venice home touring

In **2019** there was significant public engagement in Scotland with Charlotte Prodger’s film, which simultaneously premiered at The Tower in **Helensburgh** and the Venice Biennale, followed by a tour including: **Glasgow** Film Theatre and **Campbeltown** Picture House, Argyll & Bute (July), Aros Cinema, **Skye** (August), An Lanntair, **Isle of Lewis** (September), **Shetland** Arts/Mareel (October) and the Belmont Film House, **Aberdeen** (November) selling **1,062 tickets** (with four of the screenings ‘sold out’).

In **2020/21** 7N Architects and Bash Art Creative working with V&A Dundee engaged over **100,000** with their main exhibition *What if...?/Scotland* in **Dundee** (replacing a Venice presentation during the pandemic) which presented the work of **50** artists, designers and architects with a further **3** evening online talks achieving **233** attendees.

In **2022/23** Alberta Whittle’s film screened in **3** venues to audiences of **460** in **Glasgow, Lerwick** and **Inverness** prior to being shown in Edinburgh at the National Galleries of Scotland selling over **177,000 tickets**, with two further film screenings in **Johannesburg**. The artist worked in close partnership with Glasgow Sculpture Studios, Dovecot Studios, Forma, as well as costume designers, composers, sound designers and technicians in Scotland, the UK and further afield.

Weaknesses

Some interviewees contributing to the review felt that, due to the pressure of realising the exhibition in Venice, there was often a lack of budget, capacity or energy left for the “*onward journey from Venice*”, unless it had been fully planned in from the start.

Some contributors to the review noted disappointment at a lack of impact from returning exhibitions to Scotland.⁶¹ In some cases it was noted there had been less media interest in projects in Scotland, in others there was felt to be a general lack of awareness of what Scotland + Venice is at home:

“*Greater understanding and awareness of the return exhibitions as an opportunity, not just to view, but to engage with the sector and audiences. That comes back to having clear objectives around what the return opportunities are.*”⁶²

Round table attendees noted that in the past, timeframes for Scotland + Venice had not allowed sufficient planning with the receiving venues. A suggestion that factoring discussions in with the artists and commissioners well in advance would result in the work being presented more meaningfully, rather than “*just being housed*”.

Some contributors to the review felt that there had tended to be a lack of coordination with the sector to support and embed touring and partnership opportunities for Scotland + Venice. One round table contributor noted this had impacted the ability to build audiences for the work, another referenced the loss of opportunity to engage schools:

“*There could be so many schoolchildren seeing the exhibition in Scotland – they don’t get to do a class trip to Venice, unlike the rest of Europe – so how can talks and presentations from Scotland + Venice be brought to them?*”⁶³

Desk research suggests that while the volume of media coverage for Scotland + Venice does not seem to differ greatly between arts or architecture editions, that the tone and content of pieces does differ slightly: visual arts media more often focusing on presenting artists and their work; while architecture coverage is more concerned with the public engagement aspect realised from the work.⁶⁴

Threats arising from the existing model

“Always starting from scratch”

As was the case in the 2018 review, contributors to this review have consistently noted the main challenge of the current model to be the lack of continuous resource, and the short-term project approach. Negative impacts were expressed by contributors in relation to:⁶⁵

Inefficiency and knowledge drain – past participants interviewed for the review expressed that having no continuous resource in place had meant a loss in valuable knowledge, skills and experience which each newly commissioned team had to navigate resulting in delivery teams feeling they were “always starting from scratch”:

“*It is very unsettling for the artist that everyone is going into it new each year. Something needs to be consistent. No one is ‘accustomed’ to Venice. Just getting started takes a lot of relationship building.*”

A lack of retained knowledge, contacts and networks for adapted approaches – Sculpture Placement Group emphasise in its 2024 report that:

“*Building sustainable supply chains and storing and reusing materials require some level of continuity between editions and years. Maintaining continuity in the Scotland + Venice delivery team, or employing a local fixer on the ground, would help maintain these relationships and networks and retain the knowledge of what’s already in place (in terms of either materials or contacts). Pavilions with their own venues were able to save and reuse materials and store tools etc. from one edition to the next.*” recommending that moving forward “*Scotland + Venice could commission work to bring local contacts, fixers and suppliers together in one comprehensive database to help future delivery.*”⁶⁶

Fundraising – the short-term project approach was not conducive to fundraising or partnership building, both of which needed a case for support well-in advance of the lead times, and time to build and develop relationships.

Access and opportunity – for some interviewees, many opportunities for work or partnerships which arose in Venice could not be taken up or built upon because of time constraints in the project itself, or because the project ran out of budget (and energy) on its return and there was no conduit to keep conversations going.

Best practice – other interviewees who had had experience of participating at Venice noted that the short-term project approach, coupled with tight timeframes imposed by the Venice Biennale, had created challenges for best practice or “*ethical issues*.” The latter were commonly qualified as having to make on-the-spot complex decisions which affected climate impacts, sub-contracting, line-management and care of artists, participants and professional development invigilators while in Venice. Interviewees stated that these added significant and “*unnecessary stress*” to what they already felt was a massive undertaking.

Mitigation (GHG emissions) – needs longer project timeframes and cycles for proposals and selection, design and delivery, and environmentally conscious transport and freighting options. Sculpture Placement Group recommended that editions would benefit from a two-year lead-in time, even if this meant working to a provisional budget in planning stages:

“*It’s also fairly common for projects to be in discussion or appointed well ahead of any budget expenditure, although this time would need to be recompensed for curators/delivery partners not in a salaried position. ...Any additional pressure on the finances or fundraising that arise through the extended lead-in time would need to be absorbed by the Scotland + Venice Partnership, rather than the appointed team.*”⁶⁷

Communications and PR

The press and PR contract for each edition is tendered and awarded to an external supplier, responsible for designing and delivering a communications plan supported by the appointed creative team, Creative Scotland staff and a Scotland + Venice Comms Working Group.

Desk research and interviews note consistent challenges in securing a contractor who can satisfactorily deliver all the required elements of the brief, on the budget available (including traditional, sector, international press, social media, digital comms). This has resulted in Creative Scotland’s communications team often been drawn upon (both in terms of time and budget) to support and backfill press and comms shortfalls.⁶⁸

From across the desk research and interviews consistent challenges have been:

- + During delivery, being able to gain comms approvals at a busy time from Partners.
- + Partners not equally or consistently promoting their involvement with Scotland + Venice through their own channels (Creative Scotland has been the exception).
- + Inconsistent approaches to legacy communications and archiving of press and media.
- + Press and PR evaluations consistently note the lack of lead-in time to develop and implement press and marketing plans, and the lack of availability of artists to participate in media interviews.

The venue

Internal documentation identifies the need for an accessible and well-located venue, with Board papers in 2019 making a strong case for a four-year lease to support both art and architecture editions to strengthen the project's presence and visibility; enable longer lead times and improve planning; reduce costs and create efficiencies (this is noted as “*saving costs associated with yearly venue searches and trips*”).⁶⁹

“*Having a lease gives security for the artist – knowing where they will show and having time to plan for that space.*”⁷⁰

While a lease was secured in 2019 for four years as proposed, the planned efficiencies were not realised due to COVID-19, with the lease expiring in 2023. It is unknown if an alternative, cost-effective and as accessible venue could be secured if the project returns in 2026.

Opportunities for change or adaptation

An architecture model needs more time

Overall, interviewees felt it important that a visual art edition returns for presentation in 2026 so as not to lose profile. There was also consensus across contributors (including the Scotland + Venice Partners) that there was an opportunity to consider a much-refreshed approach for architecture from 2027, with greater input and “*ownership*” from the architecture and built environment sector in order to clearly define its purpose and objectives for returning.

Key questions which stakeholders felt still needed explored over a longer timeframe were:

- + What do Scottish architects and the wider profession need from Scotland + Venice?
- + How can this be delivered in Venice and in Scotland?
- + How does this get delivered and resourced to achieve net zero by 2030, and is 2027 realistic for a relaunch?

A programme with continuous resource

There was a common view across the interviews that a financial commitment to more than one edition, coupled with a continuous ‘producer’ role would be beneficial in a future model.⁷¹

The development manager role which had been contracted 2019 to 2022 was noted in interviews with Partners and past participants as positive step. While the role did not meet its full potential due to COVID-19, it was recognised as having been “...*valuable, you could see how it could bring consistency between the projects, hold knowledge*”.

In addition, participants suggested that greater efficiency could be achieved through adoption of online project management tools to improve coordination and communication, knowledge-retention, and a local and project-wide contact and supplier database for project efficiencies in relation to recycling and reuse, transport, travel and accommodation.

A re-envisaged Steering Group

Some interviewees noted an opportunity to re-envisage the existing Steering Groups for art and architecture to increase opportunities for curatorial leadership and development, and for more diversity of voice and lived experience in the project:

“*There needs to be more diverse perspectives and ethical priorities within the Steering Group – it is predominantly white and middle-class.*”⁷²

Some past participants suggested Steering Groups could invite international curators to bring fresh perspectives, new knowledge and international connections. Others suggested the addition of expertise in relation to climate action, monitoring and evaluation, and equalities, diversity and inclusion across editions.

Improving open call and selection processes

Contributors to this review said they wanted to see greater priority given to equalities and environmental sustainability within the open call and selection process. This included looking to the Scotland + Venice Partners to be more explicit about expectations relating to climate, equalities and Fair Work conditions and requirements as an integral part of commissioned projects.

Comparing international selection processes⁷³

Of the countries benchmarked for this review, most manage applications through an open call with a selection panel.

Some countries have a two-stage process (e.g., Finland and Catalonia) with a less onerous expression of interest first stage, followed by a more detailed process for a small number of shortlisted organisations to develop their proposal, some supported with a fee.

The size and make up of selection or judging panels varies, with several using panels to invite international curators into the selection process.

For example, the Jury for the **Pavilion of Finland** for 2026 has already been announced and includes: Charles Esche, Director, Van Abbemuseum, The Netherlands; Asrin Haidari, Curator of Swedish and Nordic Art, Moderna Museet, Sweden; Anna-Riikka Hirvonen, Director, Oulu Art Museum, Finland; Outi Pieski, Artist; with the jury Chaired by Juha Huuskonen, Director, Frame Contemporary Art.⁷⁴

Augmenting professional and public engagement

All interviewees who had previously been involved in managing the professional development programme stressed it was a “*massive amount of work*” from the application and selection process (e.g., c.400 applications and up to 50 interviews per edition) through to training, line-managing and safeguarding the 15-20 young people who participate in each Venice edition.

Round table contributors stressed the need to increase the resource and role of senior invigilators to fully reflect line-management responsibilities. Across interviews and round tables, there were suggestions to augment the professional development programme further with formal mentoring for students during the programme, and developing networking opportunities with other country pavilion programmes, for example with the British Pavilion Fellowship Programme.⁷⁵

Further connecting sector professionals and organisations with the programme were suggested both in interviews and round tables, with suggestions including potential to better engage Scotland's workshops with the project (particularly in relation to fabrication and production) and opportunities to network Scotland's residency spaces and projects with residency spaces and projects in Venice.

- “ There is a lack of opportunity for artists, curators, young professionals and organisations to work internationally outside of Scotland whether through residency opportunities, partnerships, touring or other platforms. This is the only opportunity that fulfils this.”
- “ It is so important that as part of the professional development programme that artists get to see work in Venice, as well as curators! OCA (Office for Contemporary Art) in Norway is all about international collaborations – it would be good to see Scotland + Venice more focussed on this.”⁷⁶

One round table attendee noted however, that any professional development opportunity that is residency based could exclude those with caring responsibilities. Providing an access budget, or a mechanism for contributing artists and curators to choose alternative professional development opportunities should be considered.

Finally, the lack of a visual arts touring structure in Scotland to increase public engagement with Scotland + Venice came up regularly in interviews and round tables. Developing a “*pathfinder*” for visual arts touring through Scotland + Venice was suggested to increase public engagement across Scotland, including with schools.

2

Part 2: Relevance and impact

This part provides an overview of relevance and impact recorded across the review. It draws on findings from the desk research, in-depth interviews and round tables with Scotland + Venice Partners, participants and stakeholders in the project between 2018 and 2023.

The desk research and interviews with Scotland + Venice Partners determined that monitoring and evaluation across these editions has been inconsistent, and systematically different between visual art and architecture editions, with interviewees stating that “*measures remained under-developed or ad-hoc resulting in poor visibility*” creating “*a weak position in terms of advocacy and relationship building.*”⁷⁷

Building on the available and new data, the key findings are explored here in relation to three key questions: Is it still important? Has it made a difference? Is it still needed?

Is it still important?

The broad survey undertaken for this review showed that for the art and architecture sectors at large Scotland + Venice continues to be viewed as an important international presentation opportunity:

The majority (**83%**) of all respondents thought Scotland + Venice was important to the development of the individuals and organisations it involved.

The majority (**79%**) of all respondents thought Scotland + Venice was very important to the development of both the visual art and the architecture sectors in Scotland.

The majority (**83%**) of both visual art and architecture respondents also perceived participation in Scotland + Venice as very or fairly important for sector development and the international profile of Scotland’s art and architecture.⁷⁸

Contributors across the review have emphasised the importance of Scotland maintaining an international presence. The strength of Scotland + Venice as an international platform for cultural diplomacy and building Scotland’s reputation through contemporary culture was often noted.

“Its significance is beyond that of Scotland’s own art context. With external relations being reserved to London, it’s a presence on a global platform, a chance to assert that we are a discrete contemporary cultural, political, economic and social entity. The value of this can’t be underestimated. As such I believe it needs proper political and financial backing, which in relative terms, is not that much.”⁷⁹

Interviewees taking part in the review stated they felt that Scotland + Venice was both “politically important for Scotland” and of sectoral importance for maintaining and growing opportunities for visual art and architecture professionals, with a particular desire stated to see alignment with the Scottish Government’s International Cultural Strategy.

Scotland + Venice Partners interviewed for the review also expressed genuine excitement for what Scotland + Venice could achieve in future.

“I want to see the project refreshed and strengthened. I want it to be more hard-hitting and to have more follow through to what happens on the ground at home in Scotland.”⁸⁰

Overall, interviewees and contributors to round tables commended the achievements of Scotland + Venice over its 20-year history, with many sharing a belief that it had significantly contributed to strengthening and increasing the profile of Scotland’s arts internationally.

Interviewees regularly used phrases like “There is no other project like it”, and the findings testify to the belief that the project has had a significant impact on its participants, on related partnerships and for the sector as a whole.

“Regularly participating in Scotland + Venice has not only inspired my work but has also played a pivotal role in shaping my future projects. The exposure to diverse artistic expressions and the chance to witness global trends in contemporary art have been instrumental in pushing the boundaries of my own creative practice.”⁸¹

Respondents to the Scotland + Venice survey cited a variety of reasons why maintaining an international platform for visual artists from Scotland was particularly important now. Reasons included the need for international dialogue in the face of continuing global unrest and disenfranchisement, Britain’s reduced global economic and political positioning, and the increasing disparity (post-Brexit) between the UK government’s distancing from Europe and the Scottish Government’s aim to rejoin the EU.

Interviewees and round table participants also stated an increasing need for Scotland's arts sector to have a platform to express and explore contemporary ideas around nationhood:

“ I want to see the cultural sector speaking more openly about wider ethical questions of nationhood, soft power, and the movement of people in our current geo-political climate. Even just acknowledging it. It is a privilege being able to work or travel abroad. ... Set alongside the current migrant crisis and anti-immigrant sentiments – it sits uneasily with me. This is beyond the scope of Scotland + Venice, but cultural organisations and workers do have a role to play in resisting these policies. Can Scotland + Venice be shaped in a way that starts to meaningfully challenge these in practical ways and through a programme? Could it provide stipends, rather than fees to not exclude those without a right to work? Could it shape a programme that actively challenges narratives around nationhood and national identity? Or that publicly speaks to the problems and contradictions in participating? ”⁸²

Has it made a difference?

Desk research for this review provided some impact data, survey responses provided evidence of direct impacts on individuals, and interviewees gave many positive testimonials.

Impact on creative and professional practice

Bearing in mind that the majority of this review's survey participants had not directly participated in a Scotland + Venice presentation, **44%** of all respondents still said that they considered Scotland + Venice to have had a direct impact on their own creative or professional practice, or career development. In one open response, visiting the Venice Biennale was discussed as having had an accumulative impact on an individual's curatorial career:

“ My experience of various national pavilions and collateral pavilions is that they are crucial at so many stages of development. I have personally benefitted from them enormously as a very young curator, a mid-career curator and as an institutional director. ”⁸³

In interviews, contributors shared what they perceived to have been direct impacts for the artists selected to exhibit at Scotland + Venice and their subsequent career and practice:

“ For the visual artists, there is a seminal change and growth in their status, the opportunities open to them through gallery representation, the collections their work is now in – and it shows in their market value. ”⁸⁴

Professional development and networking

Several respondents to the survey stated that attending Scotland + Venice had been impactful to their thinking and practice development, for example:

“*Yes, the Scotland + Venice experience has been an integral and transformative part of my career development. The opportunity to engage at an international scale has been invaluable, providing me with unique insights and perspectives that have significantly influenced my creative approach. The connections forged during these visits have not only expanded my network within the arts sector but have also led to meaningful collaborations and partnerships.*”⁸⁵

Among survey respondents, awareness of the Scotland + Venice professional development programme was high at **63%**, while interview and round table contributors regularly stated that the programme had been one of the project’s biggest successes. A range of specific impacts from the professional development programme are analysed in detail in the desk research report. In summary, clear measures include:⁸⁶

- + **174 students and graduating artists** engaged in professional development through the project 2003 to 2023.
- + **68 individual sponsorships** negotiated with **12 Higher or Further Education partners** (and 6 other sector partners) over 20 years. Of these, **5** core HE/FE sponsors were responsible for investing an estimated **£270,000** over **7 editions** since **2011**.⁸⁷
- + The programme has been a **Living Wage** opportunity since 2017.
- + Participants record increased confidence, work opportunities and practice development.
- + HE/FE Partners and desk research note “*demonstrable career progression routes for participants.*” An example is included below:

Professional development case study

Siobhan McLaughlin participated in the 2017 Scotland + Venice (Rachel Maclean) professional development programme, sponsored by Edinburgh College of Art. While in Venice she was offered additional work with the Venice Biennale working for the collateral event exhibition, Stephen Chambers RA: *The Court of Redonda* for a month.

In 2018, Siobhan was invited to exhibit in the ‘Guestroom’ of Sightseers at g39 Gallery, Cardiff by a Wales in Venice 2017 fellow invigilator Bob Gelsthorpe whom Siobhan had met while in Venice. In 2019 she worked as a curator for Dovecot Studios.

In 2020 she was selected as a member of the *Emerging Curators Group, British Art Network* and was awarded a place on the International Internship Program at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice.

In 2024 Siobhan exhibited at London Art Fair and is now in conversation about a residency with the 2017 Taiwanese Pavilion invigilator Yu-Ting Hsieh, who is now Curator at Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts in Taiwan.

Impact on sector visibility

Interviewees felt that awareness of Scotland + Venice had become cemented into the minds of press promoters over the years, partly fuelled by the quality of work presented, with success translated into demand for, and the purchase of the artist's work.⁸⁸

Visibility of the Scotland + Venice project is also critical to its success. Desk research illustrates that Scotland + Venice has consistently produced projects which have been well received, with coverage in national and international publications, as well as specialist visual arts and architecture press. In addition, Scotland + Venice exhibitions have often been included in 'best of' and 'must see' articles distinct from the British Pavilion.⁸⁹

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Press coverage

Media coverage for the project has promoted Scotland’s visual art and architecture sectors, and unique approaches within them. Coverage has included interviews with the key creative figures involved, and articles about their supporting organisations, such as articles on Cove Park in 2019.

While positive and impactful media has undoubtedly been achieved, there are challenges to measuring impacts through media coverage for Scotland + Venice, or in making evaluative comparisons year to year from 2018 to 2023. This is due in part to the different approaches taken by visual art and architecture editions, to necessary comms adaptations as a result of a different approach taken during the pandemic, and the change in press and PR suppliers each year (each with a differing approach to planning and evaluating their activities).⁹⁰ A comparison of reported statistics from individual evaluations of the last four editions illustrates this:⁹¹

Year	2019	2021	2022	2023
Artist	Charlotte Prodger	What if...?/ Scotland	Alberta Whittle	A Fragile Correspondence
Artform	Visual Arts	Architecture	Visual Arts	Architecture
Supplier	PR Company 1	PR Company 2	PR Company 3	PR Company 4
No. press pieces	168	71	c.100	369
Type of coverage (as reported)	Coverage in 15 countries; estimated circulation of 1.89m; online readership of 2.46m; est. views of 4.07m.	(COVID year) Coverage includes broadcast, with a focus on digital to drive footfall.	Coverage includes print, digital and broadcast. National, international, consumer, and specialist art coverage.	Print (23 pieces) Online (330) Broadcast (16) Specialist print (4)
Venice audience	23,332	100,000	36,985	15,000

While *A Fragile Correspondence* achieved the highest number of press and media pieces in 2023, many relate to the announcement of the pausing of Scotland + Venice (which generated significant interest) unfortunately detracting from the show.

In 2019 there are very high recorded circulation figures for Charlotte Prodger’s Scotland + Venice show. While the show received in-depth and high-level features, a high number of the resulting articles focus on Prodger’s announcement as a Turner Prize winner in 2018.

Audiences

Previous evaluations have noted audience figures being consistently high. From interview feedback it is understood that the audiences achieved by Scotland + Venice have been similar to other collateral events situated outside the main Giardini and Arsenale locations, however they are inconsistent and there was insufficient available data for this review to determine how the recorded figures for 2019-2023 compare with the footfall in collateral events over the same period.⁹²

Press evaluation for 2020/21 shows a strong digital focus being made to encourage and drive audiences to the exhibition held that year at V&A Dundee. This was successful in achieving an audience of over **100,000** during the pandemic. Notably, Alberta Whittle's 2022 commission attracted the **highest ever visitor numbers** for a Scotland + Venice presentation in Venice, indicating a strong post-pandemic recovery in Venice.

Audience figures for the architecture Biennale are generally lower than for art (c. 300,000 as opposed to the Art 800,000). As a result, while the 15,000 audience achieved in 2023 may look comparatively 'less successful' than previous editions, draft evaluation feedback indicated that "exit surveys show **100% of visitors** recommending the exhibition to others."⁹³

Is it still needed?

Overall, there has been a majority view expressed through the survey, in-depth interviews and rounds tables conducted for this review (engaging more than 300 individuals from across both art and architecture) that Scotland + Venice plays an important role for promotion, development, engagement and dialogue:

“*The project is critical in terms of ensuring Scotland is foregrounded alongside peers internationally. If Scotland is absent, there is a risk its profile diminishes both in the eyes of the design sector at home, and in terms of its international reputation.*”⁹⁴

Contributors to round tables and interviews reflected on what they believed had been “lost” when other countries that had ceased presenting in Venice:

“*It is very important for Scotland to be represented. Artists from Wales and Northern Ireland have been cut off since their Venice presentations ceased.... Venice is the one time when the entire art world is in one place, with press attention. There is no greater opportunity for artists.*”

Most contributors resolved that, for the time being, the Venice Biennale is still the primary focus for the global art world, and for international discussion through creative practice, and that it continues to offer opportunities that are needed and wanted by the sector. These are summarised below.

International opportunity and profile

A high proportion of survey respondents perceived Scotland + Venice to be meeting its objectives well in relation to international opportunity (**64%**) and excellence and ambition (**58%**) and reflect that future sector needs include:⁹⁵

- + Raising Scotland's profile on the global stage.
- + Creating an opportunity for cultural diplomacy.
- + Opportunities for knowledge exchange and professional networking.
- + Facilitating cultural exchange, dialogue, and stimulating discourse.

“*There is a lack of opportunity for artists, curators, young professionals and organisations to work internationally outside of Scotland whether through residency opportunities, partnerships, touring or other platforms. This is the only opportunity that fulfils this.*”⁹⁶

11% of respondents noted the strength of Scotland + Venice as an international platform for cultural diplomacy and building Scotland's reputation through contemporary culture:

“*Particularly in the face of limited mobility, lesser access to international networks and diminishing global relevance of the UK post-Brexit, Scotland must remain visible, open and ambitious in its international working, including through programmes like Scotland + Venice.*”⁹⁷

Public engagement

The vast majority (**85%**) of respondents to the Scotland + Venice survey were very or fairly familiar with the project, and **67%** had attended a Scotland + Venice collateral event in person.⁹⁸

64% of visual art respondents had seen work commissioned for a Scotland + Venice edition presented in a Scottish venue, compared to **36% of architecture respondents**.⁹⁹

One of the areas where respondents felt the Project should improve however was in relation to reaching more communities across Scotland through touring and increased media coverage in Scotland.

““Accessibility and inclusivity of events: prioritise making events and exhibitions accessible to a wider audience. I think that talent pipelines are really important at all stages of professional development in the arts, however, Scotland + Venice offers huge potential for Youth and Emerging Talent.”¹⁰⁰

Ethical working

Of the survey respondents who chose to provide further insight to the review through open text response, the most frequent comments relate to improving objectives and action in relation to environmental sustainability (**29%**) and equality, diversity and inclusion (**21%**), suggesting that both needed to be embedded into the model holistically in the future.¹⁰¹

““I think excellence and ethical working should be implicit in the project (and assessed at submission stage) and the other priorities are those which are important for the Biennale as an international event.”¹⁰²

SECTION

3

Critical issues for a future model

Introduction

Opportunities for change and adaptation of the existing model are explored in **Section 2** of this report, which builds on previous development success by the Partners group, the Scotland + Venice programme and strategic partnerships.

Challenges and contradictions for the project remain however, many of which are driven by forces beyond the control of the Scotland + Venice Partners. Crucially, if the project is to continue to be publicly funded (largely by Creative Scotland) it must contribute to efforts to meet net zero targets.

Challenges include the increasing urgency of **climate crisis**, the **impacts of Brexit** and geopolitics, of **social change** and **precarious livelihoods**, and **economic uncertainty** including rising costs and standstill public budgets. These present major challenges for the sustained delivery of Scotland + Venice. These challenges will also be familiar to any publicly funded cultural project, programme or festival with an international focus today, raising fundamental questions:

- + How to deliver ambitious international projects whilst also achieving net zero targets?
- + How to deliver bold international opportunities that are also inclusive, diverse and accessible?
- + How to ensure that innovative international projects follow and embed best practice, whilst working within available budgets and organisational capacity?
- + How to develop viable, sustainable investment and business models for dynamic international projects, whilst remaining ethical and maintaining artistic integrity?
- + As public bodies, the Scotland + Venice Partners are bound to meet and demonstrate best practice in relation to issues of **environmental sustainability**, **Fair Work** and **Equalities Diversity and Inclusion**, with **international** working and **public engagement** remaining central to some of their roles.

This section of the review explores these questions through the themes of:

- + Environmental sustainability
- + International
- + Equality Diversity and Inclusion
- + Fair Work
- + Finance and resource

Critical issue 1: Environmental sustainability

Context for environmental sustainability for Scotland + Venice

Venice

The city of Venice is already in a state of climate emergency with its flood barriers “*working overtime*” amid rising tidal levels and ever more extreme rainfall events causing extreme flooding in the ancient city, reaching unprecedented peaks with increased regularity.

Recent reporting from scientific journals and accredited media platforms indicates that severe environmental events in Venice are becoming more frequent, that these events are caused by climate changes, and the city itself is being damaged not only by water but by overwhelming levels of mass tourism. Venice’s main island has lost more than **120,000** residents since the early 1950s, driven away by many issues but predominantly a focus on mass tourism that has caused the population to be dwarfed by the millions of visitors who crowd its squares, bridges and narrow walkways at the busiest times of the year.¹⁰³

In July 2023 UNESCO recommended that Venice be placed on a world heritage site danger “*blacklist*”, unless more was done by the Italian authorities to protect the city. UNESCO stated that “*the city faced “irreversible” damage due to a litany of problems ranging from the effects of climate breakdown to mass tourism*”^{104, 105}

“*From a Venice perspective it is a double-edged sword – it contributes to the monoculture of tourism, but it also brings new ideas. The impact on the citizens is also double-edged – the Giardini and Arsenale you have to pay to get in. Citizens and visitors can stumble into the public and collateral events – they are different, a kind of open-door event into art. It is an embodiment of Italo Calvino’s Invisible Cities. The Biennale is a structure to work around and improve.*”¹⁰⁶

Climate change affects the whole planet, and other major cities and coastlines are under imminent threat of land-loss, disruption, and the need to relocate key infrastructure inland (roads, railways, airports, power plants). Along with Venice, major cities facing immediate losses are Amsterdam and Jakarta – the latter is home to around 11 million people, and is in such dire straits that it is in the process of being replaced as the capital city of Indonesia by a new city, Nusantara.¹⁰⁷

Climate must be a priority consideration for decisions relating to a future model for Scotland + Venice and be addressed through clear targets and responsibilities managed through monitoring and evaluation. Venice, as a high-profile treasure of the world, may act as a frontline ‘proving ground’ for new approaches paving the way for future practices of benefit to every country.

“The longer we delay reducing emissions, the faster and harder we will need to cut them to remain within our 1.5°C carbon budget. Reducing earlier, and with more ambition, buys more time”.¹⁰⁸

Visual art sector contribution to greenhouse gas emissions

In its *Art of Zero Report* (2021), climate arts organisation Julie’s Bicycle modelled greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of the global visual arts sector in 2019 to reveal a global figure of **70 million** tonnes CO₂e (tCo₂e) per annum. Within this figure, it estimates that **20,000** tCo₂e come from **100** major art fair venues. Global art shipment and business travel is estimated to account for **2 million** tonnes CO₂e per annum. An estimated **52 million** tonnes CO₂e is from visitor travel emissions.

The desk research shows that if the number of people able to experience culture is to grow, it is especially important that greenhouse gas emission reductions come from the ways people travel and access it. The air travel associated with business in the arts, together with freighting materials and exhibitions and visitor travel, constitutes a significant percentage of global emissions: reducing these could therefore make tangible difference to global figures.¹⁰⁹

“There are pockets of excellence but nowhere near enough...Many of the most exciting examples of climate leadership are small-scale activations that operate outside the establishment art world”¹¹⁰

The biggest overall levers for art fairs, such as the Venice Biennale, to drive change are through environmental policies; sustainable/green procurement chains; public transport; digital technologies; and tailored financial models. With respect to exhibition design, the research suggests that change needs to be driven by circular design principles.

The Art of Zero Report concludes, however, that the visual arts are predominantly not well prepared to deliver these actions, and advises that the sector needs a roadmap to net zero with targets informed by scientific data. It also states that the sector needs a common understanding of its environmental impacts; how to measure and report greenhouse gas emissions and assess progress; and ways to take effective action to mitigate and adapt to climate change. It advocates that this roadmap should align to a just transition:

“On the basis of our research the sector has a limited understanding of its environmental impacts, with a small number of galleries, fairs and artists making their carbon footprints public. More carbon footprint data is needed, and the methodology should be standardised, footprints shared, and progress monitored.”¹¹¹

Venice Biennale climate action

The combined impacts of the participating National Pavilion exhibitions and collateral events (including Scotland + Venice) are a very large part of the Biennale’s overall footprint, with the volume of attendances, scale of visitor travel emissions and behaviours onsite another major factor for climate mitigation:

Venice Biennale visitor figures

In 2022 the 59th edition of the Art Biennale, titled *The Milk of Dreams*, welcomed approximately 800,000 visitors, a 35% increase from 2019 and the highest attendance reported to date.

The 18th edition of the Architecture Biennale in 2023, and welcomed roughly 285,000 visitors, the second-highest figure recorded for that festival.

The Venice Biennale’s parent organisation, La Biennale di Venezia (LBV), has taken local measures to reduce its operational emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change, but these do not reflect the whole event. LBV states it has achieved carbon neutrality through offsetting (through the purchase of overseas carbon credits), however for the Venice Biennale, a holistic view of its overall footprint as a major art event needs to be understood. Desk research for the review suggests that, to date, there are no baseline figures calculated for the whole event, drawing a conclusion that the best Scotland + Venice can do is set a baseline from its own retrospective calculations from previous editions, and measure its target reductions against those going forward.¹¹²

National Pavilions at the Venice Biennale have a Global Commissioners Group which is an “*open association*” of organisers of Venice Biennale Pavilions. The aim of the Group is to consider sustainability and ecology within exhibition planning and approaches to projects within the Biennale.¹¹³

Whatever Scotland + Venice develops for its strategic approach and Climate Mitigation Framework, it is likely to be welcomed as a contribution towards the collective shift required in both thinking and practice. Scotland is, therefore, in a position to contribute to emerging transnational and sectoral dialogue on this issue.

Finnish Pavilion Sustainability Action Plan¹¹⁴

The Pavilion of Finland published details of its Sustainability Action Plan in February 2024 through a blog on Frame Finland’s website (the organising body for the 2024 Pavilion):

“*The Venice Biennale organisation encourages its collaborators and participants to take ecological sustainability into account in their productions. However, the means and measures are left for each national pavilion to decide... Bearing in mind the geographical, socio-economical, and political starting point of each partaking country, not to mention the versatility and scale of each project, no simple solution or rule applies to everyone. A common set of sustainability guidelines would nevertheless be a good starting point for everyone to follow,*”

The piece notes that:

“*Smaller organisations, such as Frame, cannot use our limited resources to compensate for emissions. Instead, we need to rely on adequate planning wise choices and prioritisation.*”

Its main strategic goals and targets are:¹¹⁵

1. Create sustainability standards with concrete actions for current and upcoming Venice productions.
2. Gather data and identify areas of work where carbon emissions can be reduced.
3. Make sustainability a selection criterion, alongside the budget.
4. Advocate results and effective actions to peers and collaborators.

The environmental policy context for Scotland + Venice

Desk research for the review has considered responsibilities under Scottish, UK and UN statutes on climate change and environmentally sustainable practice relevant for Scotland + Venice.¹¹⁶

In terms of best practice, some cultural organisations have taken the approach of framing their environmental and sustainability policies and plans through contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with examples (such as The Edinburgh International Festival) providing models of relevance for the logistics faced by Scotland + Venice.

The *Art Charter for Climate Action (ACCA)*¹¹⁷ sets an aim to “accelerate the global visual arts sector’s transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions” with a focus to reduce emissions and waste across the art supply chain. For visual arts, this means focusing on **international freight, energy consumption, packaging and recycling, and digital initiatives**. At the Venice Biennale in April 2024, ACCA announced joining with the UN Climate Change directorate to “unite the arts and entertainment sectors in transformative climate action” to reduced greenhouse gas emissions and to inspire climate action beyond the sector through artistic expression and innovation.¹¹⁸

Ireland: Funding support to drive climate action in the cultural sector¹¹⁹

In June 2023 Ireland launched a **€1.4 million** fund for the arts and culture sector to support organisations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The fund sits within a new national policy framework on Culture, Creativity and Climate Action to help cultural organisations play their part in combatting climate change in the context of national targets.

The new policy roadmap includes support for not-for-profit cultural organisations to help with the cost of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving accessibility and providing additional workspaces for artists.

Its Cultural Capital Scheme (originally launched in October 2019 with a total fund of €4.7 million) also has a new funding strand to help organisation’s reduce greenhouse gas emissions through activities such as:

- + Refurbishment and upgrading of facilities
- + Energy audits
- + Projects that reduce the organisation’s emissions, for example through insulation, solar panels, LED lighting
- + Projects that address access, including accessibility audits
- + Health and safety upgrades

Up to **150** arts and cultural organisations will be eligible to apply for grants of up to **€50,000**, on a rolling scheme, with no closing date, that will remain open until the funds are allocated.

Scotland + Venice Partners' existing environmental sustainability approaches

A review of the Scotland + Venice Partner organisations own plans, targets and ambitions for the transition to net zero suggests that adapting Scotland + Venice as an environmentally conscious international arts activity will make a major and direct contribution to each Partner's key leadership objectives (i.e., pathfinding towards net zero and setting an example of carbon boundaries with associated carbon budgets) as well as exemplifying collaborative and joined up working encouraged as part of Scotland's *Public Bodies Climate Change Duties*.¹²⁰

An international study published in February 2024 ranked National Galleries Scotland in the top five museums in the world for environmental sustainability.¹²¹ The researchers attribute the high rankings of organisations in Scotland and the UK to mandatory sustainability reporting for major institutions, raising the bar and stimulating forward practice.¹²²

Scotland + Venice as a project can be shaped in its entirety, by Creative Scotland and the other Scotland + Venice Partners, to provide an ideal opportunity to stand as a template for best practice, taking an important step in shaping Scotland's future approach to delivering environmentally conscious international arts events.¹²³

Transnational partnerships for climate action

There are examples of successful transnational partnership projects tackling climate action through appropriate funding programmes such as *Horizon Europe and the New European Bauhaus*:¹²⁴

Horizon Europe is the European Union's key funding programme for research and innovation with a budget of **€95.5 billion**. It tackles climate change, helps to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and boosts the EU's competitiveness and growth. The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing policies while tackling global challenges. In 2023 it ran an Open Call for a fund "*Ocean & water and arts: the contribution of creative sectors to Mission Ocean and waters*" with a budget of **€2 million**.

The New European Bauhaus (NEB) is a creative and interdisciplinary initiative that connects the European Green Deal to living spaces and experiences. The NEB delivered a collateral event at the 2023 Venice Biennale on the theme of "*Radical yet possible future space solution*" and launched a Local Chapter of the NEB during the event with the President of the European Union and the Venice Biennale curator. The former referenced the EU's *NextGenerationEU* plan, which allocates around **€6 billion** for Italy to reduce risk for flooding.

Practical considerations for a Mitigation Framework

The challenges of transforming practice to lead the way to environmentally conscious international arts practice is daunting, but the visual arts are ideally placed to challenge assumptions and habitual modes of operating. The fact that a major institution in Scotland (National Galleries of Scotland) is gaining recognition globally for its approaches to environmental sustainability, demonstrates the role that Scotland + Venice can play in leading best practice in the context of climate change.

The Sculpture Placement Group's observations in its 2023 report, *Towards a Sustainable and Ethical Delivery of Scotland + Venice*, is that this is a particularly opportune moment for effecting change in relation to environmental sustainability, and that Scotland is well-placed to lead the changes required on emissions reduction and transforming assumptions and practices through the project.¹²⁵

It is worth noting that there are inherent dilemmas for the Scottish Government around international working in tandem with its commitment to environment sustainability and its robust and ambitious targets for mitigation and adaptation. Projects like Scotland + Venice are of great importance for Scotland politically, culture being one of the few devolved areas in which Scotland can conduct independent international relations.

3

Critical issue 2: International

The context for international presentation and working for Scotland + Venice

Challenges and opportunities for international working

Respondents to the 2018 review stated that they felt having a presence in, and opportunity from international platforms was important, with a key recommendation that the Scotland + Venice Partners develop a strategic policy framework, noting the Scottish Government as an essential stakeholder to the project.¹²⁶

Since 2018, major political, economic and policy change has impacted the importance of, and challenges to the culture sector engaging internationally.

UK and global impacts on Scotland's culture sector

Since 2018, the impacts of Brexit on the culture sector have been various: reduced freedom of movement, reduced international opportunities, an increase in the related costs of participating and profile raising internationally, and a negative impact on the livelihoods and sustainability of many cultural individuals and organisations.¹²⁷

The global economic and political upheaval resulting from the pandemic, ongoing economic, and increasing global conflict since 2020 has also impacted viability for Scotland + Venice, whilst simultaneously increasing the need to 'be present' and part of a global dialogue.¹²⁸

Most respondents to the Scotland + Venice Survey 2024 identified key strengths of Scotland + Venice as "*raising Scotland's profile on the global stage, opportunity for cultural diplomacy, facilitating cultural exchange and dialogue, providing valuable networking opportunities and stimulating discourse.*"¹²⁹

Importance of international presence for stakeholders

Contributors to the Scotland + Venice Survey show strength of opinion that the project provides a strong international platform for cultural diplomacy and building Scotland's reputation through contemporary culture.

79% of all its respondents thought Scotland + Venice was important to the development of both the visual art and the architecture sectors in Scotland, and **83%** thought Scotland + Venice was important for raising the profile of the sector internationally:

“*Scotland + Venice is where Scotland meets the world on the creative stage, through both art and architecture, it is an opportunity for Scotland to represent itself outside of the shadow of the UK as a whole.*”¹³⁰

Contributors also shared ambition to build on the existing model, specifically to deliver against the *International Cultural Strategy*. There were international development opportunities highlighted by interviewees identified as unique to Scotland + Venice, including curatorial leadership, professional networking, market development and career and professional development for the emerging artists, curators, organisations and students participating in it international opportunities.¹³¹

Responses to the survey conducted for this review indicate a convergence of views between visual art and architecture about the need for an international platform to support transnational knowledge exchange. Both see benefit for the facilitation of professional networks and professional development. Both express a desire for greater emphasis on a post-Venice legacy in terms of touring and professional support – and there are real, shared concerns in relation to squaring the need for international working and the climate crisis.¹³²

Interviewees felt there was a dearth of international networks and opportunities for architecture, and a lack of Scottish architects being represented through the British Pavilion for architecture, which (along with the closure of The Lighthouse) had left Scotland's architects without encouragement or support for international working.¹³³

Interviewees felt that visual arts organisations and artists had access to more supported international opportunities and networks, while small architecture practices struggled to “*cut through*” into European or international markets for commissions or exposure.¹³⁴

The international policy context for Scotland + Venice

Inspiring Connections: Scotland's International Culture Strategy 2024-2030

The Scottish government published its International Cultural Strategy in 2024 which identifies Scotland + Venice as a strategic platform and network opportunity “*to support cultural exchange, collaboration and dialogue through domestic and international platforms.*”¹³⁵

This strategy now provides an overarching framework for the Partners, with strategy outcomes by 2030 determined as:

- + An innovative, more sustainable and economically stronger culture and creative sector.
- + An internationally connected and diverse culture and creative sector that contributes positively to people and communities.
- + An enhanced international reputation for culture and creativity including Scotland's response to global challenges.

The strategy emphasises that social justice and historic injustice are consistent, important and fundamental threads in cultural exchange, dialogue and development today. These are also aligned to aims and outcomes for the Scottish Government's programme of work to 2026.¹³⁶

Along with the Venice Biennale's stature as a primary platform for cultural presentation, it is also an established structure for cultural diplomacy and economic development, which positions the project well to deliver against Scottish Government aims.

Planned budget increases

The Scottish Government committed to increasing its investment in arts and culture by **£100 million** by 2028-29. In doing so, it said it will:

- + Increase opportunities for participation in creative pursuits; and
- + Support the production of new works; and
- + Ensure that Scotland's cultural output has platforms at home and abroad.¹³⁷

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture indicated that **£25 million** is intended to be added to the culture budget for 2025-26.

Scotland + Venice Partner existing international alignments

Importance of government alignment for international events

While there is Scottish Government representation on the Scotland + Venice Partners Board, this is currently through the *Local Government and Communities Planning and Architecture Directorate* which is an unusual anomaly when compared to other national examples.¹³⁸

Desk research suggests that the norm for national presentations in Venice (whether through national pavilions or collateral events) is for government support and funding to be led by culture and/or international relations departments (some have direct support from national embassies), or public bodies with a directive for culture or foreign development.

The British Pavilion is organised by the British Council, which is directly sponsored and funded by the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office. Ireland at Venice is directly supported by the Irish Government and its international development agency, Culture Ireland.

While Creative Scotland has a lead culture agency role with a direct relationship with the Scottish Government, funding for Scotland + Venice has historically been through Lottery funds rather than Scottish Government grants, with no direct sponsorship for the Scotland + Venice art presentation from the Scottish Government's culture and external affairs directorate.

The Scottish Government's Global Hubs were also noted by contributors to this review as an untapped asset for the future promotion and development of Scotland + Venice.¹³⁹

International comparators and alternatives

The Venice Biennale itself has significant competition internationally and across Europe. The Biennial Foundation records **285 art biennial, triennial and other international events**. The overwhelming majority of the events listed in its Directory are art focused. Only **8** are fully focused on architecture (including the Venice architecture biennale) and **3** on design.¹⁴⁰

A review of a selection of international events was undertaken for the desk research, from which a common purpose emerges:¹⁴¹

- + International showcasing and promotion of the ‘best new talent’ and thinking.
- + Platform for the exchange of ideas and critical exchange between global peers and stakeholders, often in relation to complex global issues.
- + Interface between an artform and the public, and a sector and marketplace for audience, sectoral and market development.

Of these events, biennials tend to present a curatorial theme guided by current political or cultural debate. For example, the promotion of the artists of Indigenous Cultures in the Sydney Biennale, or decentralising and decolonising of the North/Western canon at Documenta. Media searches related to Biennials tend to surface content with a focus on their artists and exhibition content.

In contrast, art fairs are inherently commercial, have a stronger focus on ‘showcasing’, with themes more closely related to professional practice, market trends and commercial developments. For example, a media search for *Art Dubai* surfaces as much promotional information about hotel stays as it does about artistic content.

Key differences across international events include:

- + **Duration** – the majority of all events are 3-5 days to 3 months duration. (The Venice Biennale is the exception with a nine-month run).
- + **Number of artists presented** – this can range from c.90 at the Sydney Biennale, to 100-200 for Manifesta, Venice Biennale, Art Sao Paolo, Art Basel, rising up to c.1,500 at Documenta.
- + **Visitor figures** – the Venice Architecture Biennale has an 8-month duration achieving 299,150 visitors, while the Chicago Architecture Biennale achieves 500,000 visitors in a 4-month run. Art Basel and Art Dubai achieve c. 80,000 visitors, while the Venice Art Biennale achieves c.800,000.

Listings on the Biennial Foundation’s Directory also suggests that the landscape for international events is changing. The Gulf States in particular are expanding their global cultural ambitions through international events. And the range of exhibitors and sponsors using auxiliary opportunities to established events (such as the collateral events in Venice) show increasingly independent and commercial interests presented through these international stages.¹⁴²

UK alternatives for international presentation

The Biennial Foundation Directory also lists **9** ‘international’ events which are hosted in the UK. These include the *Asia Triennial* in Manchester, *Brighton Photo Biennial*, *Folkestone Triennial*, the *International Print Biennial*, *Liverpool Biennial*, the *Tate Triennial*, the *Tatton Park Biennial*, *Whitstable Biennial* and, in Scotland, *Glasgow International*.¹⁴³

Glasgow International, established in 2005, has become a biennial platform that supports and collaborates with locally based artists and arts organisations, and commissions new work by artists working internationally. In 2024 it will present **45 exhibitions** and projects, performances and discursive events at over **30 venues** across the city and online, including work by over **70 artists**.

Although not listed in the Biennial Foundation’s Directory, *Edinburgh Art Festival* and the *London Festival of Architecture* have also become annual fixtures for the art, architecture and design sector.

The *Edinburgh Art Festival* was established in 2004 and is now the UK’s largest annual festival of visual art.¹⁴⁴ In 2023 it hosted 55 projects and exhibitions across **35 venues** in partnership with museums and galleries across the city. The Festival commissions new work, and attracts over **200,000 visitors** during the world’s biggest multi-artform festival.

The *London Festival of Architecture* was founded in 2004 and provides a city-wide programme of exhibitions and events for one month a year reaching over **500,000** architects, designers, professionals, students and members of the public.

Assessing the alternatives

There are many other opportunities then, both at home and abroad, for artists to engage with international peers and audiences. Choosing which international event is most relevant and purposeful for Scotland’s visual artists and architecture and built environment sectors must be based on which option can deliver best on sector priorities and provide the best overall ‘package’ for investment.

Manifesta and Documenta tend to feature gallery or artist-led presentations, therefore a 'national' focus is not relevant and there ceases to be a strategic project for government or public bodies to engage in. Manifesta is every five years rather than every two, presenting less scope or opportunity. And competition in terms of artists presented is far higher at an event like Documenta.

UK events do offer opportunities to engage internationally, with much lower locally generated greenhouse gas emissions, and potentially lower overall cost. However, the focus of these events is on bringing international content to the UK to show alongside the work of UK practitioners, which is a different offer and experience for the creatives and stakeholders involved.

As a package therefore, the Venice Biennale, in comparison, offers a national strategic focus with scope to shape a programme relative to sector (rather than individual) interests and benefit, with international networking and development opportunities, and the potential for coordinated public engagement at home.

3

Critical issue 3: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

The context for EDI for Scotland + Venice

Equality, diversity and inclusion were not a focus of the brief for the 2018 review, and the resulting report makes only one mention that “*Scotland + Venice makes a lower contribution to objectives around access*”, and in relation to freelancers it notes “*The financial position of artists and other creative individuals working as freelance and self-employed across the sector requires improvement.*”¹⁴⁵

One of the core objectives of Scotland + Venice today is to ‘maintain and develop a proactive and progressive approach to equalities, diversity, access, inclusion and environmental sustainability across the project’.

Positive steps to date have included ensuring gender balance in selected artists; building greater diversity in the lived experiences of the artists and creative teams; securing a fully accessible venue for both the art and architecture presentations; and working more consistently with local labour and supply chains.

EDI policy context for Scotland + Venice

The *Equality Act UK 2010* is the legislation which protects people against discrimination at work, acting as a framework of protection against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.¹⁴⁶

The Scottish Government’s International Cultural Strategy states equality, diversity and inclusion as an overarching theme with the aim to promote and advance equality, inclusion and human rights, and to support Scotland’s cultural sector to be an open and equitable place.¹⁴⁷

It references that “*the cultural policy environment in Scotland and the approaches within it are cultural assets with inherent values relating to social, democratic and egalitarian principles*”.¹⁴⁸ It also references its steps to uphold equality, diversity and inclusion as outlined in the Culture Strategy Action Plan, including through Fair Work, skills development, and board diversity.¹⁴⁹

Responsibilities of the Scotland + Venice Partners

All of the Scotland + Venice Partners are responsible for compliance with the Equality Act and, as public bodies with *Public Sector Equality Duty*.¹⁵⁰ This is a statutory duty to ensure public organisations consider how their functions will affect people with different protected characteristics. These functions include their policies, programmes, and services. It also requires public bodies to monitor the impact of the things they do. In general, the duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- + Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by the act.
- + Advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic.
- + Foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is one of Creative Scotland's four strategic priorities. In February 2023 Creative Scotland updated its guidance on Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion which lays out Creative Scotland's commitments to foster fairness and universal opportunity to access culture and creativity, as well as its expectations that funded organisations will take "*the same approach to employment, progression and work with freelancers and contracted practitioners*". If Creative Scotland is to continue as a principal funder of Scotland + Venice, the projects must evidence its commitment to EDI.¹⁵¹

Equality Diversity and Inclusion related to Scotland + Venice

The survey conducted for the review asked its respondents about future priorities for Scotland + Venice. All respondents placed equalities and sustainability as a high priority when considering future development of the model:

“*Explicitly highlight inclusivity and diversity as a priority within the project's objectives. Ensure that the representation of artists and artistic perspectives reflects the diversity of Scotland's creative landscape.*”¹⁵²

Many interviewees and round table participants saw potential for Scotland + Venice to positively impact the sector and audiences in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, recognising that some positive action had already been taken (i.e., increased diversity of representation through Scotland + Venice with specific references to Lesley Lokko’s appointment by the Venice Biennale, Alberta Whittle’s and Charlotte Prodger’s commissions for the 2022 and 2019 visual art Scotland + Venice respectively).

Interviewees noted the Scotland + Venice professional development programme as having been a positive vehicle to increase access and inclusion. An HE/FE round table participant stated “*There’s nothing else that allows young, marginalised people to be part of Venice*” with interviewees noting support from SCAN and A-N in widening recruitment to include non-student applicants in recent years. HE/FE round table attendees agreed however, that while art schools were working to broaden opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds across Scotland, further work was needed, and longer planning timeframes around the programme would help with this.¹⁵³

One interviewee, who identified as working class and disabled, had participated in the Scotland + Venice professional development programme ten years before being contracted to produce a Scotland + Venice edition. They described the opportunity to produce the project as a “*game-changing step*” because “*this is the role in Scotland for producers*” with the experience feeling “*almost a celebration of grassroots people and something I could identify with ethically.*”¹⁵⁴

Some survey respondents and interviewees noted the general lack of diversity in both the art and architecture sectors, with some noting an urgent need to support the cultural workforce in becoming more “*fluent*” in working with, and talking about, the work of diverse artists:

“*While organisations may be doing the work now, there is still a lack of confidence in how they talk about the work or about artists of colour. It’s not surprising – it’s like learning a new language. But I, as a Black artist, need to know that people can speak about my work with confidence. That needs greater and more consistent follow through.*”¹⁵⁵

This was particularly felt by one past Scotland + Venice participant who stated at interview that they had felt isolated and uncomfortable questioning decisions or asking for help from their support organisation because they had not felt confident doing so as a diverse artist:

“There needs to be an advocate for the artist. To push them along. Support and value them. I remember thinking “They will protect the institution and the curator and not me.”¹⁵⁶

Access to the opportunity

Some interviewees shared experiences of feeling that the opportunity of Scotland + Venice felt “remote” to them, with some survey respondents stating they felt this was because Scotland + Venice was aimed at “younger” artists and students.¹⁵⁷

Contributors to the review highlighted barriers to access also including the timeframe of the open call and selection process:

“It is not inclusive if you don’t have long lead in times – it doesn’t favour neurodiversity. The team needs to be in place early. There isn’t enough continuity – a new team comes in every time.”¹⁵⁸

In round tables, specific barriers were also noted for artists from refugee and other migrant backgrounds to accessing opportunities such as Scotland + Venice. Some, who had found their right to remain, or legal status increasingly challenged in recent years in response to changes in home office and government policy, noted that the “privilege of simply being able to work or travel abroad” is not open to everyone:

“My disappointment is that in reality artworks are more mobile than people. I wanted to go to Venice in 2022, but because of the UK’s hostile policies (you have to show you have a certain amount of money in your bank account) there are suspicions about why people like me want to go there. I couldn’t get a travel Visa. Visas and immigration are significant issues. I did go and see the work on its return to Scotland. But my peers were able to see it in situ.”¹⁵⁹

Testimony gathered by the Sculpture Placement Group from attendees at the Scotland + Venice opening event in 2022 confirmed that, in addition to time and financial barriers to access, other factors (such as travel, family commitments, or work pressures) present other social barriers – it may not be possible for everyone to travel by train, or to have prolonged time away from the home.¹⁶⁰

Survey respondents also felt there was a need to make Scotland + Venice events and exhibitions (in Scotland and in Venice) accessible to a wider audience, in particular in relation to schools and education:

“I think that talent pipelines are really important at all stages of professional development in the arts, however, Scotland + Venice offers huge potential for Youth and Emerging Talent.”¹⁶¹

Practical considerations for Scotland + Venice

Across the interviews and round tables contributors to the review identified a number of areas where Scotland + Venice could improve access and inclusion in future. These were particularly in relation to:¹⁶²

- + Ensuring fair recruitment processes so that curatorial appointments and artist opportunities realise greater diversity in the art and architecture sectors.
- + Environmental, fair work, equality, diversity and inclusion requirements should be made more explicit at open call and application stages, with clear articulation of the related challenges inherent in the project.
- + The diversity of voices and expertise in the leadership of Scotland + Venice should be considered so that the Partners have greater oversight on the implementation of equality, diversity and inclusion in the project.
- + Access to consistent support is required to ensure all participants feel equally valued and protected during delivery, if “*diversity and inclusion is to be built in.*”
- + In addition, some interviewees highlighted the need for more diverse perspectives, and ethical priorities, to be more evident within the Scotland + Venice Partnership and across project Steering Groups, noting that from their experience they had tended to be white and middle class.

3

Critical issue 4: Fair Work

The context for Fair Work for Scotland + Venice

Fair Work was not a focus of the brief for the 2018 review, and as is stated under Critical issue 3: EDI, its report makes only one mention that “*Scotland + Venice makes a lower contribution to objectives around access*” and in relation to freelancers it notes “*The financial position of artists and other creative individuals working as freelance and self-employed across the sector require improvement.*”¹⁶³

Fair Work policy context for Scotland + Venice

Since 2015, the Scottish Government’s Fair Work Policy has been successively integrated into public sector strategies and conditions for public funding and public procurement. Fair Work is defined through the Fair Work Dimensions of Effective Voice, Opportunity, Fulfilment, Respect and Security.¹⁶⁴

The culture and creative sectors have become increasingly aware of, and active in relation to fair working and fair pay, and opportunity for workforce development. Freelancers, disabled workers, under 25-year-olds, women, parents, and workers from lower socio-economic backgrounds were severely impacted by the pandemic and are priorities for Fair Work action.¹⁶⁵

Scottish Government commitment

Fair Work is a consistent policy focus for the Scottish Government, and it has reiterated its commitment to embed Fair Work principles in employment practices in Scotland. A key part of implementation is through Fair Work conditionality applied through public funding and procurement, and from 2023 recipients of public sector grants are required to pay at least the *Real Living Wage* and provide appropriate channels for *Effective Voice*.¹⁶⁶

Scotland is a founder member of the *Wellbeing Economy Governments partnership* (WEGo), a collaboration of national and regional governments interested in sharing expertise and transferrable policy practices to advance their shared ambition of building Wellbeing Economies. As of 2024 the partnership includes the governments of Scotland, Iceland, New Zealand, Wales and Finland, with Canada actively participating.¹⁶⁷

Responsibilities of the Scotland + Venice Partners

Fair Work conditions apply to all public bodies and national institutions. Fair Work is one of Creative Scotland's strategic priorities with related Fair Work funding criteria applied to both grant-in-aid, and Lottery Funds (which have been the source of Scotland + Venice funding to date).¹⁶⁸

Projects funded by Creative Scotland will need to meet Fair Work conditions, and commissioned organisations will need to evidence Fair Work in project delivery and reporting.

Since 2017, positive steps have been taken in the project to include payment of the Real Living Wage (a key requirement of Fair Work First) to all professional development invigilators.

Some interviewees taking part in the review expressed that Scotland + Venice Partners should take responsibility for compliance of Fair Work across the project.

While Scotland + Venice Partners currently do not directly employ through the project, confusion and concern were voiced by participants about where responsibilities did lie for fair and safe working, particularly while in Venice (e.g., liability during installation, clarity around insurances required). It was felt this could be clarified through better contracting and communication during the commissioning process.

Fair Work related to Scotland + Venice

Desk research shows that the workload to deliver this programme is demanding, especially for smaller organisations and independent or freelance curatorial or creative teams. In addition, remuneration for the support organisation has been limited, and not accurately reflected the real time needed to deliver the project. This has created capacity and resourcing pressures, especially for smaller organisations and creative teams.¹⁶⁹ Without sufficient resourcing, and given other external pressures (including climate costs) some stakeholders may not find Scotland + Venice an appealing opportunity in future.

Practical considerations for Scotland + Venice

Some interviewees for the review expressed that, as the creative sector becomes more familiar and active around fair work and pay, that greater sector scrutiny may be applied to Scotland + Venice in terms of how it delivers projects, and how it works with creatives.¹⁷⁰

Areas where contributors to the review (through survey, interview and round tables) commonly referenced improvements which would help Scotland + Venice reflect Fair Work best practice in the sector include:

- + **Fair recruitment** – applied to open call and selection processes, and recruitment for professional development participants.
- + **Security** – clarity in relation to contractual responsibilities for professional development invigilators; responsibilities for safe working conditions in Venice clarified; no unpaid hours due to unrealistic budgets or poor financial oversight.
- + **Real Living Wage** – payment of the full Real Living Wage for professional development participants.¹⁷¹
- + **Effective Voice** – action to ensure open, clear and effective communication channels across Scotland + Venice projects, with clarity about how to raise concerns in the knowledge that they will be met in a professional, respectful and timely manner.
- + **Fulfilment** – Scotland + Venice should be a positive leadership opportunity for participants. It is a project with known challenges in terms of timeframes, deadlines, budget, workload and away-from-home working – all of which have potential to negatively impact participants’ health and wellbeing, therefore appropriate safeguards and support should be in place.

Critical issue 5: Finance and resource

The funding context for Scotland + Venice

Historic practice

Participation in the art Biennale has been funded through Scottish Arts Council's, and then Creative Scotland's National Lottery budgets, rather than through ringfenced grant in aid.

Participation in the architecture Biennale has been separately managed, with funding coming directly from Scottish Government. Excluding *A Gathering Space* (presented in 2008) the format of earlier architecture editions and the order of costs was very different to the visual arts, with a focus on short run, discursive or event-based projects that did not have official 'collateral' status. As the architecture project began to gain traction it began to secure funding from both British Council and Creative Scotland.

Since 2018, there has been a significant investment by the Scotland + Venice Partners in both visual art and architecture – **c.£1.05m** into architecture and **c. £1.28m** into visual arts.¹⁷² As pressure on public funding increases, the need for transparent financial management and reporting, and the need for impacts and outcomes to deliver public value, mean evaluation and monitoring will must be a stronger feature in any future model.

International benchmarks

Some national pavilion and collateral publish outline financial information, budgets or indicative fees relating to their Venice Biennale presentations. For the most part however, actual funding, sponsorship or budget figures are *not* disclosed and as a result, pinpointing actual national contributions is difficult.

The 2022 review of New Zealand's presentation is the only source found which hints at the true cost of presentations, once in-kind support and "*above the line*" costs are considered. The report notes that its budget has been around **1%** of Creative New Zealand's annual budget at the time, but that "*the complex exhibition delivery process has previously required a workload that is "unsustainable"*". The report cites staff costs being absorbed "*within Creative New Zealand's International Services and Initiatives team and other teams including communications, HR, IT, finance and the governance framework.*"¹⁷³

The 2018 review of Scotland + Venice provides comparison figures with Wales and New Zealand for 2015 and 2017, however these cannot reliably be updated due to the pandemic and subsequent changes to participation from those countries.

In conclusion, benchmarking financial investment from other countries is unreliable.

Scotland + Venice costs

Desk research to review the costs of presenting Scotland + Venice provides a historic funding ‘picture’ for the project, drawn from published and unpublished documents.

The narrative is largely based on the project having been delivered on a core budget of £350,000 (on standstill since 2003) through Lottery Funding from the Scottish Arts Council and then Creative Scotland, with a Scottish Government contribution of c. £100k towards two architecture editions (2020/21 and 2023), supplemented by fundraising undertaken by commissioned delivery teams (to varying levels), augmented by sponsorship from HE/FE institutional partners of c.£55,000. There has been no consistent data or evidence of Scotland + Venice Partner in-kind contributions.

The desk research identifies a range of both fixed/known and variable/unknown costs which the Scotland + Venice Partners and delivery teams manage from edition to edition. As a result, while there has been a published budget of £350,000, actual costs to deliver each edition seem to have both been higher than the published budget, and different year on year, with art and architecture editions taking different approaches to resolving shortfalls in relation to fundraising.¹⁷⁴

Risks

Scotland + Venice has been heavily reliant on support from public bodies, principally from Creative Scotland’s investment of £350,000 drawn from Lottery Funds edition-to-edition, and the Scottish Government’s investment of c.£100,000 towards architecture. Neither sources are ‘guaranteed’ or ring-fenced for the project.

From the documentation, financial controls are reported to involve regular review of and approval of budgets, good record keeping and forecasting of annual budgets. Steering Group meeting notes and call out papers suggest there have been different processes in place for both visual art and architecture editions however, and there has been no designated person with clearly defined responsibilities for financial oversight.¹⁷⁵

The actual costs of delivering Scotland + Venice are not fully reflected within project budgets or reporting. End-of-project monitoring and evaluations are inconsistent in what is reported. Additionally, the documentation does not evidence any record of in-kind costs incurred by the Scotland + Venice Partners, although in-kind work and roles are evidenced in the process (e.g., active involvement in meetings, oversight, planning and management).¹⁷⁶ Records do show where Partners have invested financially (e.g., British Council support to Professional Development Programme) but these may be responsive rather than planned.

Inflationary pressures have impacted the overall Venice Biennale and its exhibitors. The relative weakness of sterling over the last decade has impacted expenditure, noted in both the 2018 review and end of project monitoring in relation to the cost of materials, labour, accommodation and travel. Flat public budgets and increasing costs have led to ‘tightening of belts’, and in some cases cessation (such as the case of Wales in Venice,) or pause (such as New Zealand).

Pressure on the available Scotland + Venice budget has also increased since a decision to fully align the art and architecture projects, and to extend the duration of the architecture collateral event to nine months. Funding from Scottish Government has previously been targeted towards the architecture project, but this support is not guaranteed. The loss of Scottish Government funds would impact the viability of the architecture project overall, and the overarching aims of a joint Scotland + Venice partnership.

The majority of income for the professional development programme has come through HE/FE institution sponsorship, with support from British Council Scotland. Programme evaluations (2017, 2018, 2022) and internal papers note “*the escalating travel and accommodation costs*” related to the programme, without an increase in commitment from sponsors, putting further stretch on the Partners.

As a result of there being no agreed cash or in-kind contributions from Partners, or KPIs for project delivery, the return on public investment is difficult to determine. Evaluation and reporting methods have therefore remained under-developed/ad-hoc since the 2018 review, resulting in poor visibility with key stakeholders and a weak position in terms of advocacy and relationship building.

Fundraising, sponsorship and philanthropy

With the core budget for Scotland + Venice on standstill since 2003, there has been an increasing need for the project to fundraise – at a time when fundraising is difficult to secure in a very competitive marketplace, with the burden of the task being placed on already stretched delivery teams (where skills and resource are available to do so).

The Scotland + Venice Partnership includes members who (as public bodies) cannot legally be involved in fundraising, and members who have a need to fundraise for their own activity.

The desk research suggests that projects with a focus on emerging or new talent can impact what is possible in terms of philanthropy and fundraising. An extreme example of this is in the U.S. where philanthropic requirement drives the project, and where there are fundraising expectations inherent in the selection process:

“*I think there is an understanding, even before a selection is made, that if you apply, then you have the ability to fundraise..... In that sense, it is self-selecting.*”¹⁷⁷

The danger of an over-reliance on, or expectation of philanthropy in Scotland is that an even more extreme situation than the U.S. emerges, where fundraising opportunities drive the choice of event that artists choose to participate in (consider, for example, writer boycotting of the 2023 Edinburgh International Book Festival against Baillie Gifford sponsorship), or where sponsors direct artists to events and countries where they want to do business. The rapid development of international cultural events in the Gulf States is an example of this kind of opportunity.

There is however opportunity in internationalising areas like business sponsorship or diaspora donations, developing the attractiveness of participating artists and organisations with sponsors and commissioners, and increasing philanthropy and donations, but these come with ethical requirements and implications.

Fundraising for the U.S. Pavilion

The U.S. pavilion exhibition of selected artist Jeffrey Gibson cost \$5 million in 2024 of which the government provided only \$375,000. *The Portland Art Museum* and *SITE Sante Fe* instigated a fundraising programme with donations funnelled through the Museum.

The only comparable philanthropic cultural effort in Scotland is by the *Edinburgh International Festival* which conversely raised 25% of its budget through fundraising in 2023.

Ethical considerations for Scotland + Venice

Financial support for Scotland + Venice must be sympathetic to its core values and ambitions, including those required by more recent critical issues. A fundraising programme will therefore be needed that is appropriate to, and likely to succeed within the parameters of Scotland + Venice, i.e. with:

- + A focus on Scotland's artists and architects.
- + Importance given to ethical concerns around fair work, environment and artistic freedom.
- + Modest philanthropic potential from donations and sponsorship.

The desk research suggests that the critical success factors for Scotland + Venice fundraising are:

- + Realistic expectations and targets.
- + A firm public sector commitment articulated by Scottish Government and the Scotland + Venice Partners.
- + A firm financial and in-kind commitment from stakeholders in the cultural and education sectors.
- + A longer-term approach to ensure fundraising is not always from a standing start once the artist is selected.
- + A coherent conduit and champion for the fundraising effort (such as National Galleries of Scotland or V&A Dundee).
- + A contribution to, and ideas about the fundraising effort forming part of the brief issued for the open call and selection process.
- + A budget for fundraising that includes contracted-in expertise.
- + A clearly expressed and constructed 'case for support' agreed by the Partners.

3

Critical issue 6: Leadership

The Scotland + Venice Partnership model has developed and evolved since 2003. Following the 2018 review, the Partners reviewed the Scotland + Venice overall aims and objectives (including their own reasons for being involved), secured a four-year funding commitment which enabled parity between art and architecture for the first time, and saw the partnership grow to include Architecture & Design Scotland, V&A Dundee and the Scottish Government.

Developing the governance structure

Scotland + Venice is currently overseen by the Scotland + Venice Partners Board comprising the key stakeholders for Scotland + Venice. Its work is supported by Steering Groups for arts and for architecture, each group with delegated powers to manage project delivery.

This is a strong governance framework for Scotland + Venice:

- + The structure involves the majority of key stakeholders in the oversight and strategic planning of Scotland + Venice.
- + The approach has supported the development of the successful focus on artists and architects.
- + There is a strong presence of relevant expertise in the framework.
- + Project overheads have been relatively low, with support from the Partners and particularly Creative Scotland staff resource.
- + The evolution of the framework has progressively improved governance.
- + The professional development programme has been successful, with the credibility of Scotland + Venice providing a strong platform for HE/FE involvement.
- + The approach has not been overly prescriptive and has provided sufficient flexibility to encourage imaginative and creative submissions.

However, there have been some challenges in its operation. Internal documentation, desk research and interview and round table contributions show:

- + The need to begin from a standing start for each edition has meant governance and strategy has been subordinated to an urgent (even crisis driven at times) need to produce the event in very short timescales.
- + The overall Scotland + Venice coordination has depended on Creative Scotland's Visual Arts team to hold the project together and to problem solve. This role has been additional to their core responsibilities requiring constant prioritisation, which is not sustainable.
- + The centrality of the environmental sustainability challenges and actions for Scotland + Venice if it is to meet net zero by 2030 are not adequately reflected in the governance.
- + The involvement of Scottish Government is lower, and investment is less than in comparator countries. There is no dialogue or activity with the international instruments of Scottish Government, including trade and tourism.
- + Key decisions around prioritising artistic independence in relation to government and the business community has resulted in the potential of these relationships not being fully explored.
- + The importance and potential of the professional development programme is not sufficiently reflected in the governance structure. The programme needs more advanced planning for Higher Education sponsors, or other potential funders to fully engage.
- + The governance framework has been seen as excluding some key organisations who are important to the success of Scotland + Venice.
- + The wider sector has become too distant to the project, with some in the sector even suggesting a lack of transparency. There has not been capacity or time to fully involve the sector in preparations or in legacy.
- + Scotland + Venice has largely resided in the heads of its project and delivery leads. There has not been time or capacity to carry out consistent and fundamental monitoring and evaluation. The positive impact of Scotland + Venice has to a large extent been a well-kept secret.
- + Fundraising has been narrow in scope, particularly concerning business sponsorship and donations. There has not been a conduit for donations that is clearly independent of government and its agencies.
- + In the absence of a dedicated international cultural development interface working between the cultural sector and Scottish Government (e.g., the equivalent of Wales Arts International, or Culture Ireland) there has been a gap in 'connecting up' Scotland + Venice with Scottish Government international initiatives to increase awareness and visibility.

Governance considerations for the future

Based on these findings, it is recommended the Scotland + Venice governance structure is expanded as follows:

Enhanced Scottish Government representation

An enhanced Scottish Government presence in the Partner Board will reflect the support and commitment by other national governments in international reputational projects of this scale and calibre. It will support Scotland + Venice foster mutually beneficial connections with Scottish Government international trade, tourism, diplomacy and cultural work streams (e.g., through Brand Scotland, Scotland Development International, Visit Scotland, Event Scotland) and relevant Directorates (e.g., Culture, Climate Change Directorate, International Affairs). In doing so, Scotland + Venice can prove an efficient vehicle for early results in the delivery of Scotland's International Cultural Strategy.

Higher or Further Education

The involvement of HE/FE representatives at Partner level and in steering groups to develop and adopt a forward-looking strategy covering the period 2026-2030, and consider developments for research of mutual interest and benefit and interest.

Climate mitigation and adaptation

The importance of addressing the environmental element of the programme and the need for it to develop over the coming years means that Creative Carbon Scotland (CCS) or an equivalently expert alternative should be involved at Scotland + Venice governance level. There are various options for this depending on what capacity CCS can bring to Scotland + Venice, and this may result in Scotland + Venice requesting or commissioning CCS (or an alternative provider) to advise and support the Partner Board on a continuous basis.

Commissioning and development

Additional expertise should be invited onto the Partnership Board with a particular role to support the commissioning and legacy activity of Scotland + Venice. In previous editions The Art Fund has been well-placed to support artists commissioned through Scotland + Venice to be seen by domestic audiences in Scotland and across the UK. Indications suggest the Partners could approach such a body for funding to support advance planning for Scotland + Venice, particularly in relation to the touring of returning exhibitions.

Conclusions

4

Introduction

This section includes the headline conclusions drawn from this review of the **Scotland + Venice Model**, its **Relevance and Impacts** and the **Six Critical Issues** identified as being most relevant for future viability and sustainability.

These are presented in the order of the report, with each noting a specific need, which are taken forward in considering the future options (**Section 5**).

More time to consult and develop an architecture model

As previously stated, the Scotland + Venice Partners agreed that work on the approach to architecture, including appraisal of future options, can take place on a longer timeline. This will also allow thinking to align to the findings of the current review of architecture policy delivery involving the Scottish Government, Architecture & Design Scotland, the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, and others. **It is the Partners' intention to reconvene consultation with architecture professionals around Scotland + Venice later in 2024, with a view to returning to Venice in 2027.**

Summary Conclusions of individual elements

These conclusions (and the resulting proposed options in [Section 5](#)) relate to a continued art presentation of Scotland + Venice only.

National showcase exhibition

Desk research and interviews determine that a **national, country-wide presentation** as provided by Scotland + Venice at the Venice Biennale still offers **the best aligned international showcasing opportunity** for Scottish professionals in Europe.

A Scotland + Venice collateral event with a tiered open call and supported selection process remains the most advantageous model: it retains **artistic autonomy**, with a high degree of **flexibility** while **raising the profile** of the participating artist and Scottish art **internationally**. It incorporates **public engagement**, while remaining **free-to-access**.

There is a need to ensure workload and capacity demands, as experienced by delivery teams and suppliers, are **resolved in an adapted model which brings longer planning timeframes, funding continuity and dedicated resource**.

Professional development

Scotland + Venice, and its dedicated professional development programme, remain ‘the international development opportunity’ for professionals with a particular emphasis on **profile, knowledge exchange** and **networking**.

There is potential to develop the reach, **diversity and impact** of the professional development by **defining related priorities and targets** for climate and EDI, **increasing opportunities** for professional **peer learning** and engagement, and strengthening **educational partnerships** at HE/FE and schools levels.

Public engagement

Where a Scottish tour has formed part of past editions, it has been successful in public engagement and facilitating **sector collaboration**. There is a strong desire (from funders, professional and public stakeholders) to see **increased opportunities for engagement** with Scotland + Venice commissions.

There is a need for sufficient **planning and partnership** working to **meaningfully present** commissioned work on its return, **grow audiences** (including through schools) and **raise awareness and understanding** of Scotland + Venice as a national programme of international standing.

Threats and opportunities

As in the 2018 evaluation, consistent challenges for the model continue to be the **lack of continuous resource** and the **short-term project approach** which creates **inefficiencies**, and **reduces capacity** for fundraising, climate mitigation, EDI and communications and PR.

There is a need to develop a rounded programme (rather than a project) approach to **increase viability** and **environmental sustainability**, grow **partnerships and fundraising**, and to deliver increased **impact** and **value for money**. Securing and retaining an **accessible venue** within the funding envelope in the busy Venice Biennale 'marketplace' is also essential.

There are opportunities to **increase diversity at Partner and Steering Group levels**, increase **transparency in governance, evaluation and monitoring** and **financial management**.

There is also a desire for Scotland + Venice **objectives and application guidance** to be more explicit about **environmental sustainability** conditions, and priorities for **equalities, diversity, inclusion** and **Fair Work**.

Relevance and impact

It is a finding of the review that Scotland + Venice is still perceived to be an important and relevant event and platform for stakeholders:

- + **83%** thought Scotland + Venice was important to the development of the individuals and organisations it involved.
- + **79%** thought Scotland + Venice was very important to the development of both the visual art and the architecture sectors in Scotland.
- + **83%** perceived participation in Scotland + Venice as very, or fairly, important for sector development and the international profile of Scotland's art and architecture sectors.

Contributors across the review emphasised the importance of Scotland maintaining an **international presence**, with Scotland + Venice identified as an opportunity for **cultural diplomacy**. Desk research identifies the Scottish Government's commitment to "*Ensure that Scotland's cultural output has platforms at home and abroad*" and its interest in Scotland + Venice as a **strategic platform "to support cultural exchange, collaboration and dialogue."**

There is an expressed desire from stakeholders to see Scotland + Venice **strengthen its relationship with the Scottish Government** (reflecting the level of support seen across other country presentations at Venice), **delivering immediate results for the International Cultural Strategy** through this 'tried-and-tested' model.

Interviewees and round table participants in the review regularly used phrases such as "***There is no other project like it,***" with testimonial and desk research evidencing **positive personal, professional, career and workforce development impacts**. It has received partnership and investment from returning Scottish HE/FE institutions achieving a **minimum of £360,000 of HE/FE investment** over 12 programmes since 2003.

Desk research and interviews across the review determined that **hard impact measures were not created or implemented** for the project. Consequently, Scotland + Venice **monitoring and evaluation has been inconsistent**, resulting in "*a weak position in terms of advocacy and relationship building.*"

There is a need to ensure **future approaches are outcomes focused**, with a rigorous and applied **monitoring and evaluation framework** in order to make a continued **case for support**, demonstrate **value for money** and **appropriately and effectively advocate** on behalf of the sector and practitioners.

Visibility of the Scotland + Venice project is critical to its success. There is **evidence of consistent communications and PR strengths**, particularly in relation to the **promotion of creative excellence** and ambition through commissioned work and practitioners, **achieving substantial visitor figures in Venice**, and significant **audiences figures on return tours**.

There is a need to build in **longer lead times for communications planning**, and **sufficient fees** to attract a supplier with the relevant skills to maintain **consistent and high-level communications** across the **full programme of Scotland + Venice** work, both internationally and in the UK.

Critical issues for a future model

The review identifies six key contextual challenges pertinent to the long-term viability and sustainability of Scotland + Venice.

1: Environmental sustainability

The city of **Venice is in a state of climate emergency**, in July 2023 UNESCO recommended that Venice be placed on a world heritage site danger “*blacklist*”. If Creative Scotland is to remain a key funder, the project **must contribute to meeting Creative Scotland’s environmental sustainability targets** for net zero by 2030.

Climate must be a **priority consideration** for decisions relating to a future model for Scotland + Venice and **must be addressed through clear targets and responsibilities** managed through monitoring and evaluation.

2: International

As has been mentioned, contributors across the research identified Scotland + Venice as an important platform for “**raising Scotland’s profile on the global stage, opportunities for cultural diplomacy, facilitating cultural exchange and dialogue, providing valuable networking opportunities and stimulating discourse.**” There are stated alignments in the Scottish Government’s International Cultural Strategy.

There is an expressed desire from stakeholders to see Scotland + Venice **strengthen its relationship with the Scottish Government** (reflecting the level of support seen across other country presentations at Venice), as a result of which Scotland + Venice could deliver **immediate results for the International Cultural Strategy** through a ‘tried-and-tested’ model.

3: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The findings show **positive steps** in relation to **gender balance; diversity; lived experience; accessible presentations;** and increased **working with local suppliers**. Contributors to the review however, placed EDI and environmental sustainability as **high priorities** when considering future development of the model.

There is a desire to see **increased diversity in the model** (Partnership and Steering Groups), **processes** (application and selection processes) and the **embedding of best practice** (training, language and behaviours) to create an ambitious, desirable, accessible, fulfilling and inclusive **leadership opportunity**.

4: Fair Work

Findings evidence that compliance with Fair Work and best practice in relation to working with freelancers will be **conditional** for programmes procured through public organisations. **Positive steps have been taken in implementing Living Wage** payments (Fair Work First) for professional development invigilators.

There are opportunities to **improve and demonstrate best practice** through Scotland + Venice in relation to each of the Fair Work Dimensions, which many contributors to the review feel should be **explicit in programme documentation and requirements**.

5: Finance and resource

Desk research illustrates that Scotland + Venice has been largely delivered on a core budget of **£350,000 from Creative Scotland**, supplemented by fundraising, and with **additional investment from Scottish Government**. Interviews confirm that **public investment is not guaranteed**. In addition, the **actual costs** of delivering Scotland + Venice **are not fully reflected in the core budget**. The **variable nature of each commission**, and the **rising costs** associated with international presentation contribute to the **financial risk** related to Scotland + Venice.

Research and analysis identify the need for a range of **risk mitigation strategies** for the Scotland + Venice Partners to undertake, including: **improved financial controls** and reporting; increasing **strategic investment** (e.g., through the Partnership and by augmenting the Partnership); developing an **ethical fundraising framework**; and considering **contracting fundraising expertise** with targets related to an enhanced Scotland + Venice Programme.

6: Leadership

The findings show the Scotland + Venice Partnership model has evolved since 2003. While its **current structure demonstrates many strengths**, it has also experienced some **challenges in its operation**.

Based on the findings of the review, there is evidence that the Scotland + Venice governance structure would benefit from: **enhanced Scottish Government representation; Higher or Further Education representation; climate mitigation and adaptation expertise; commissioning and development expertise**. Following a decision and commitment to return, new **Terms of Reference** should be agreed.

In order to deliver on the opportunities and needs identified above, a cash and in-kind funding commitment from Scotland + Venice Partners of at least two editions is required to allow cost effective planning, climate mitigation and fundraising across a new adapted Programme.

SECTION

5

Options for the Future

The options process for Scotland + Venice 2026

Options for the Scotland + Venice model emerged through the research findings. A longlist was shared for discussion with the Scotland + Venice Partners in March 2024, with results enabling the development of a shortlist which was assessed by the Partners in April 2024, through which preferred options were identified and agreement given for visual art sector testing.

Testing of elements of the preferred options was undertaken through round tables with broad visual art stakeholders in June 2024. Three round tables were hosted by the research team, consulting with **28 individuals** including **18 senior and emerging curators**, and **10 visual artists** from across Scotland.

Assumptions

Assumptions were used to frame the options assessment discussions including that:

- + Agreement would be sought and given by the Scotland + Venice Partners in principle for visual art to return to the Venice Biennale in 2026, with architecture continuing its review process through 2024 to inform its return to Venice in 2027 with an appropriate and tested model under the Scotland + Venice brand. The shortlisted options reviewed in April 2024 were focused on a visual arts model as a result.
- + The Scotland + Venice objectives were robust assessment criteria for the shortlisted options. In relation to Objective 6 (Ethical working and environmental sustainability) there was agreement to prioritise environmental sustainability as an assessment measure, on the basis that Fair Work and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion would be conditional to any publicly funded model, with compliance and best practice written in to any option taken forward.

Options shortlisting assessment criteria

The Scotland + Venice objectives were the measures against which each option was assessed, currently stated as:

- + **International:** To make a critically relevant contribution to international discourse about art and architecture and generate international opportunities for Scotland's creative sector.
- + **High quality work:** To make a strong, globally relevant and distinctive contribution to the Venice Biennale to showcase the best of Scottish art, architecture and design.
- + **Raising profile:** 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 internationally and in Scotland.
- + **Development:** To support the creative and professional development of students, artists, architects, curators and producers.
- + **Equalities and environmental sustainability:** To maintain and develop a proactive and progressive approach to equalities, diversity and inclusion and environmental sustainability across the project.
- + **Governance:** To develop Scotland + Venice to achieve best value for money with clear governance, management and reporting structures.

A summary of the longlist and shortlist options follows.

Discarded options

Contributors to the review were able to suggest innovations and improvements for Scotland + Venice at different stages of the review. This thinking was augmented by options through the desk research and international comparisons.

Several options were discarded as part of the longlisting as they were not able to meet essential criteria. A summary of these is included below:

Discarded Options	Reasons for Rejection
Three-nation event (Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland)	While this option might provide financial savings, and potential for partnership working with Wales and Northern Ireland, it presented a number of disadvantages: incoherent offer in terms of international identity and recognition in relation to the British Pavilion; a high degree of complexity in terms of planning and delivery; increased uncertainty concerning funding commitments; a complicated fundraising and sponsorship offer; loss of impact for Scottish artists and the wider visual art sector, and a 20-year investment in the Scotland + Venice brand lost.
Presentation of existing work	While this option might offer emissions savings through no new production and longer shipping times, it presented several disadvantages: the approach may exclude early career stage artists; fewer sponsorship or partnership development opportunities; Scotland + Venice Partner roles less clear; reduced launch and media impacts around the work in Venice; existing works may not 'suit' or work in Venetian venue; confusion of Scotland + Venice purpose and brand.
An 'as and when' project, decided on as part of the Creative Scotland Open Fund	Any project wishing to present in Venice would do so on an equal competitive footing with any other project applying for open funds. Disadvantages: no strategic alignment for the Scotland + Venice Partners, and Scotland + Venice ceases to be a strategic project or national collateral event in Venice; without strategic partners the scope, continuity and impact for visual arts development and public engagement is curtailed (inc. through professional development and/or touring); overall erosion of international reputation, connectivity and brand identity.
Professional Development Programme (PDP) only	After pausing collateral event presentation in Venice, Wales has maintained a PDP only approach working with HE/FE and sector partners. Disadvantages: without a presentation focus and programme the skills development opportunities are more limited and substantive career and networking development opportunities are reduced.
Venue free option	While this option eradicates the costs of venue hire, the lack of a venue in an international art market has disadvantages: it is less likely the event would qualify for collateral event status; sponsorship opportunities are reduced; impact and visibility are significantly reduced; narrows the field of artists who might engage.
Digital only model	While this option might increase access and distribution, or potentially reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it has disadvantages: depending on the digital model applied, environmental impacts may not be fully resolved; narrows the field of artists who might engage.
Themed country partnership	British Council announced a UK-Kenya partnership to design and deliver the 2025 British Pavilion. As a dedicated international network, British Council has capacity to forge, sustain and develop international delivery partnerships. Disadvantages: there is insufficient time and resource for Scotland + Venice Partners to identify and develop a co-country partnership that aligns sufficiently with Partner and visual art sector needs in time for 2026.

Shortlisted options

The shortlisted options assessed in the process are briefly summarised below.

Option 1: Cease Scotland + Venice

Description

- + Scotland + Venice ceases as a strategic partnership and project.
- + In its place, visual artists engage internationally by range of other means, for example:
 - Artists/galleries rely on invitation to present as part of the British Pavilion.
 - Artists/galleries compete for funding to participate at other international events, or support to participate in UK-based international festivals and events.

Features

- + British Council Scotland with Creative Scotland promote Scottish artist inclusion within British Pavilion. (If operated on four nation rotation basis, Scottish artist opportunity every eight years.)
- + Forthcoming Creative Scotland International Strategy clarifies related funding pot and expectations for international visual art participation through marginal events.
- + Any artist/visual art organisation wishing to present internationally would apply for funding on an equal competitive footing with rest of the sector.

Advantages

- + Scotland + Venice Partner investment commitments immediately reduced.
- + The Scotland + Venice project no longer generates greenhouse gas emissions.
- + Inclusion in British Pavilion enhances UK and international profile of artist.
- + Open fund opportunities for international working, presenting and networking.
- + A fresh approach (different to other countries) with opportunity to present in non-EU trading blocs (e.g., Asia Pacific / Gulf States).
- + Bigger presence in more modest/shorter duration events.

Disadvantages

- + Reduction in overall international impact and visibility for Scotland's visual art sector.
- + British Pavilion does not currently operate a nation 'rotation' basis; invitation for Scottish artist to exhibit not secured; opportunity cannot be 'advertised' to Scottish arts sector.
- + Creative Scotland may not ringfence equivalent of its Scotland + Venice contribution for international connectivity for visual arts through open funds.
- + Loss of strategic / national promotion, development and public engagement framework for visual arts.
- + Potentially increased travel/greenhouse gas emissions for opportunities further afield.
- + Independent visual art applications compete for funds, with other artforms.
- + Loss of 20-year investment in Scotland + Venice brand.

Option 2: Continue with existing model

Description

Scotland + Venice continues to deliver a collateral event in Venice in current format.

Features

- + Continuity of current partnership, commissioning and delivery model.
- + Funding commitment agreed each edition by Creative Scotland Board.
- + Continue to select artists, curator, co-commissioner, producer, comms/PR suppliers each edition.
- + Venue secured in Venice as available.
- + Professional development and touring model dependent on securing sponsorship / income per edition.

Advantages

- + Continuity of approach.
- + Simple but strategic governance.
- + Maintains strategic / policy alignment with Scottish Government.
- + International leadership opportunity maintained.
- + Domestic impact through touring (as and when resource / capacity allows).
- + Strategic alignment with International Cultural Strategy

Disadvantages

- + Continuity of ongoing project challenges (inconsistent resource, knowledge drain, starting from scratch each edition).
- + Signals to the sector that Ambition and Excellence / International is on a short-term commitment.
- + Strategic development, partnerships, fundraising unsupported.
- + Higher and Further Education sponsorship brokered anew each edition.
- + Public engagement and access with visual arts through home touring dependent on budget / organisational capacity on return from Venice.
- + Unable to realise full potential from alignment with International Cultural Strategy in terms of international diplomacy, networking, Scottish Government and transnational partnerships.

Option 3: Scotland + Venice three-edition programme

Description

Scotland + Venice Partners (and Creative Scotland Board) commit to supporting a three-edition programme for visual art 2026 – 2030.

Features

Led by Creative Scotland, as part of Scotland + Venice Partner Board, with:

- + Enhanced Scotland + Venice Partner Board with representation for:
 - Scottish Government culture / international representation
 - Higher or Further Education
 - Climate mitigation and adaptation
 - Commissioning and development
- + Selection Panel including invited external advisors (refreshed each edition)
- + Two-tier open call: Expression of Interest leading to fee-supported shortlisted/developed proposals, one selected.
- + Programme Manager appointed by Scotland + Venice Partnership on time-limited three-year contract, 'hosted' by Scotland + Venice Partner body, to meet agreed objectives; establish new models of working; coordinate fundraising.
- + Monitoring and evaluation framework implemented by Programme Manager with oversight and responsibility for compliance with Scotland + Venice Partner Board.

Advantages

- + A longer programme can achieve strategic outcomes that a one edition approach cannot.
- + Resolves critical ongoing project management challenges relating to continuity of resource, strategic planning, financial commitment.
- + Refreshed Scotland + Venice Partners Board injects new expertise and diversity of voices, with expert advice for systemic management/monitoring of climate mitigation framework.
- + Diversity and inclusion opportunities increased through enhanced open call process and selection panel.
- + Enhanced workforce development and public engagement impacts and opportunities through partnerships in touring, professional development, academic research.
- + Enhanced Scottish Government relationship supports Scotland + Venice in achieving early results in delivery of Scotland's International Cultural Strategy.
- + Programme approach enhances potential for sponsorship and fundraising.
- + Increased, continuous domestic and international visibility and engagement for Scotland's contemporary artists.
- + Positive signal to the sector re commitment to excellence/ambition, international, and to expectations for sustainable/new international working approach.

Disadvantages

- + Financial requirement / commitment over long term.
- + Integration of new partners into known Partnership model.

Option 4: Outsourced model (two options)

Description

Scotland + Venice brand and model outsourced to third party

Features

1. Sector briefing and tendering process seeking proposals from relevant organisations or agencies with existing capacity and expertise to deliver Scotland + Venice, with assessment of £ requirement to deliver project over two- or three-edition cycle. Tender process led by Creative Scotland. Viability of proposals assessed by Creative Scotland and Scotland + Venice Partners. For 2026 visual art return, tender process to be completed by November 2024.

2. Application for independent charity status (SCIO). Scotland + Venice Brand and assets transferred to charity, with its own constitution and board, ability to employ staff, trade and fundraise. Return to Venice 2026 managed under existing model until charity application completed, with detailed transfer managed in advance of 2028.

Advantages

- + Scotland + Venice brand retained, but with an extra degree of independence.
- + Potential for increased risk-taking as further removed from Scotland + Venice Partner organisations and Scottish Government, partially or fully (risk levels defined either by contract remit, or by charity articles).
- + Potentially more 'fleet of foot' – independent, continuous, responsive decision-making.
- + Fundraising, sponsorship, trading opportunities potentially enhanced, depending on which host model adopted.

Disadvantages

- + Loss of control over Scotland + Venice brand, reputation and programme (decision-making outsourced to host or charity board).
- + No guarantee under independent charity model that all elements of Scotland + Venice (or existing objectives) will be met. Responsibility of trustees is to the charity.
- + Independent status in current funding and political climate more risky – increased chance of delivery failure, reputational risk, loss of security / commitment.
- + Less attractive for Scottish Government support.
- + As independent charity, outcome of public funding applications not guaranteed; applying into same funding pots as sector the organisation is aiming to support.
- + Timeframe to realise either option too tight for 2026. Option could be revisited at a later date with more certainty.

Preferred option

The assessment undertaken by the Scotland + Venice Partners resulted in agreement on the preferred option. The preference overall was to pursue working up of a three-edition model (Option 3) as an output of the review, with an alternative (Option 1) as a reserved choice for the Scotland + Venice Partners.

SECTION

6

Recommendations

Following the Review and Options Appraisal processes, it was the key recommendation of the Review to pursue an adapted visual art Scotland + Venice model.

This adapted model (**Option 3**) is informed by the conclusions and needs identified in this report, builds on Scotland + Venice strengths, and amplifies its opportunities for the future.

It is based on the premise that, following agreement and an in principle commitment of funding by the Scotland + Venice Partners in the summer of 2024 that:

- + A visual art Programme will move forward in planning to return to Venice in 2026;
- + There is a workable financial framework in place to deliver a Scotland + Venice visual arts Programme running 2026-2030;
- + Planning and development can begin in 2024/25, including the required sector engagement to achieve Venice Biennale timeframes;
- + Sector consultation will continue to determine an appropriate model with funding for architecture to return to Venice in 2027;
- + The new visual art Programme will be supported by an enhanced Partnership in the form of Associate Partners;
- + With contracting of a time-limited Programme Manager to provide continuous producing support across the Scotland + Venice visual art Programme;
- + And that at all levels of planning and delivery, the programme will meet:
 - Partner environmental sustainability commitments and requirements
 - Best practice and industry standards in working conditions, recruitment practices and remuneration
 - Good governance and transparent financial management and reporting
- + Underpinned by a robust and consistent approach to monitoring and evaluation.



Endnotes

- 1 Scotland + Venice Review Survey Report, 2024, Relevance and Impact, pp.21-22
- 2 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Collated Desk Research Report, p.15
- 3 Ibid, Appendices 6 and 7
- 4 UK at the Venice Biennale History, British Council website, accessed March 2024
- 5 Malik's Associate Curator role is sponsored by the French entrepreneur and art collector Shane Akeroyd.
- 6 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Collated Desk Research Report, Appendix 9
- 7 *The Venice Biennale at its Turning Point*, Colicelli Cagol, Martini, Taylor & Francis, 2024
- 8 *Interventions in Venice: Art and politics at the Biennale*, James., A, University of Arizona, 2020
- 9 *(Dis)Rupture, (Re) Engage: Occupation and Protest at the Venice Biennale*, Altamonte, J, Mississippi State University, 2020
- 10 Venice Biennale resets the post-colonial balance, The RIBA Journal, 13 June 2023
- 11 *Art, market and agency at the Venice Biennale, 1895-1993*, Journal of Modern Italian Studies, Ricci/Tavinor, 2021
- 12 Scotland + Venice Architecture PR and Digital Report, The Corner Shop PR, 2023
- 13 Scotland + Venice Press, PR and Digital end of project report, 2022
- 14 Scotland + Venice 2019, Charlotte Prodger SaF05 Press Archive.
- 15 Claire Fontaine shines a light on foreigners at the Venice Biennale, Art Basel, 17 April 2024
- 16 Only the Olympics and the World Cup exceed the number of tickets sold for Edinburgh's festival events (BBC News)
- 17 Made in Scotland supported and promoted 52 organisations with c.£700,000 of public funding in 2022-23; Scottish organisations and individuals were supported with public funds to attend international showcase events inc. SXSW, Cannes, Sundance, JazzAhead and WOMEX with c.£610,000 in 2022-23. (Data supplied Creative Scotland 2024.)
- 18 £4.5m is the total public funding via Scottish Arts Council, Creative Scotland, Scottish Government and the Lighthouse across 20 years of Scotland + Venice (i.e., a budget of c.£350,000 per edition, supplemented by fundraising).
- 19 Most architecture presentations in Venice before 2018 were shorter (a few days to a month). An exception was *The Happenstance* (2018) which had its planned residency at the Palazzo Zonobio extended to six-months at the invitation of its community-owners.²⁰ Architecture & Design Scotland, Scotland + Venice
British Council Scotland is part of the British Council, the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and education sponsored by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The British Council is responsible for managing the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. British Council Scotland hosted the Scotland + Venice Development Manager post (2019-2022) and has financially supported the Scotland + Venice Professional Development Programme.
- 22 British Council Scotland, *How we Work*
- 23 Creative Scotland Strategic Framework
- 24 National Galleries of Scotland Strategic Plan 2022-2027
- 25 Scotland + Venice Steering Group Minutes, 6 June 2016
- 26 V&A Dundee an Impact Study, 2023, BOP and tialt
- 27 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Collated Desk Research, International Comparators, pp. 32-37
- 28 Scotland + Venice Review 2009-2017, Jackson, et.al, 2018, p. 34
- 29 Detailed analysis and comparison of the model can be found in the Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Collated Desk Research Report, pp 57-78.
- 30 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Desk Research Report, Appendix 5.
- 31 Frame Contemporary Art Finland, Venice Biennale Open Call Process, Guidelines, Selection Panel, for Visual Art 2026



- 32 Venice Biennale website, November 2022
- 33 Scotland + Venice Round Tables, June 2024
- 34 Notes on the Scotland + Venice Review, Creative Scotland Visual Arts Team Member, April 2024
- 35 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Survey Report, p.18
- 36 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview Report, p.23
- 37 The Happenstance, 2018, Scotland + Venice website archive.
- 38 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 interviewee, 15 February 2024
- 39 Scotland + Venice Round Tables, June 2024
- 40 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Survey Respondent
- 41 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview Report, p.21
- 42 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 interviewee; Round Tables June 2024
- 43 Internal documentation: A&DS Letter of Appointment, and Appendix to Letter of Appointment (24/11/22)
- 44 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview Report, p.17
- 45 Towards a Sustainable and Ethical Delivery of Scotland + Venice, Sculpture Placement Group (2023), p18
- 46 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview Report, p.17
- 47 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Survey Report p.23
- 48 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 interviewee, 13 February 2024
- 49 For example, the 2023 team for *A Fragile Correspondence* was made up of three architecture collectives comprising fifteen people in total, working to the same fee budget as the 2022 visual art edition comprising a solo artist, curator, producer and co-commissioning organisation. Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Desk Research Report, p.144
- 50 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 interviewee, 19 February 2024
- 51 Scotland + Venice PR Media Supplier tender documents, 2022/23
- 52 Internal documentation: Steering Group Minutes, End of Project Monitoring reports 2018-2023
- 53 Scotland + Venice End of Project Monitoring reports; stakeholder interviews February 2024.
- 54 Stakeholder contribution to the review by email, 28 June 2024
- 55 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Collated Desk Research, Appendix 12
- 56 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 HE/FE Round Table participant, February 2024
- 57 Scotland + Venice Review 2024, HE/FE Round Table, February 2024
- 58 Scotland + Venice Professional Development Review of 2022, Anderson, L., 2023, p.14
- 59 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Collated Desk Research, Appendix 13, Summary of Scotland + Venice editions 2003 - 2023
- 60 For architects, the main venue associated with return activity was The Lighthouse (43%) which closed as Scotland's centre for design and architecture in 2020.
- 61 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview Report, p.16; Survey Report p.21
- 62 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interviewee, 7 February 2024
- 63 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Round Table participant..
- 64 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Collated Desk Research, Appendix 10 and 11
- 65 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview Report, p.18
- 66 *Towards a Sustainable and Ethical Delivery of Scotland + Venice*, 2023, Sculpture Placement Group, p.19-20
- 67 *Towards a Sustainable and Ethical Delivery of Scotland + Venice*, 2023, Sculpture Placement Group, p.19
- 68 Scotland + Venice Review Collated Desk Research 2004, Appendix 10, Appendix 11
- 69 Scotland + Venice Board Paper, October 2019, Agenda No.11
- 70 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 interviewee, 7 February 2024
- 71 Scotland + Venice Review Interview Report, p.18
- 72 Scotland + Venice Review Interview Report, p.17
- 73 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Desk Research Report, p.33



- 74 Frame Contemporary Art Finland, Pavilion of Finland, open call Venice Biennale 2026
- 75 British Pavilion Fellowship Programme, British Council website, accessed June 2024. In the absence of Scotland + Venice in 2024, the British Pavilion's Fellowship Programme included 4 Scottish students / artists supported by Glasgow School of Art and SCAN.
- 76 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Round Tables participants
- 77 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Collated Desk Research Report, p.14, p.52 p.71
- 78 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Survey Report, p.21-22. The survey ran for four weeks (22 Jan – 16 Feb 2024) and achieved 243 responses from art and architecture stakeholders and members of the public.
- 79 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Round Table contributor, June 2024
- 80 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interviewee, 7 February 2024
- 81 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Survey Report, p. 20
- 82 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Round Table participant, 20 June 2024
- 83 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Survey Report, p.20
- 84 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 interviewee, 13 February 2024
- 85 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Survey Report, p.20
- 86 Scotland + Venice Collated Desk Research Report 2024, pp. 51-62
- 87 These are minimum figures, as documentation is not complete or available for all years.
- 88 Scotland + Venice Review Interview Report, 2024, p.11
- 89 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Collated Desk Research Report, Appendix 10
- 90 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Collated Desk Research Appendices 10 and 11
- 91 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Collated Desk Research Report, pp. 37-41; Interview Report, p.11
- 92 The 2018 review benchmarked audience figures for Scotland, Wales and New Zealand. This showed comparable figures for Scotland and Wales, and a significant increase in figures for New Zealand from 40,014 to 625,168 following its move into the Arsenale in 2017. Neither Scotland nor Wales can be included in the Arsenale due to the British Pavilion.
- 93 Internal document: End of project monitoring report draft, 2024
- 94 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Round Table participant, 18 June 2024
- 95 Scotland + Venice Review Survey Report, 2024, Objectives, options and priorities, p.35
- 96 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Survey Report, p. 23
- 97 Ibid. p.23
- 98 Ibid. p.12
- 99 Ibid. p.15
- 100 Ibid. p.30
- 101 Ibid. p.32
- 102 Ibid. p.30
- 103 *Scotland + Venice as an environmentally- conscious international art event*, Blanche, R., 2024, p.12
- 104 The Guardian, UNESCO recommends putting Venice on heritage danger list, 31 July 2023
- 105 Contributors to this review drew parallels between the impact of mass cultural tourism between Venice and Edinburgh. Venice implemented a controversial tourist tax to regulate visitor numbers to the city in April 2024, the Scottish Parliament passed a bill in May 2024 enabling legislation for councils to tax overnight accommodation in Scotland, with Edinburgh City Council currently consulting on its implementation with an aim to “sustain Edinburgh’s status as one of the world’s top UK cities to visit, and to develop Edinburgh’s culture, heritage, art.” City of Edinburgh Council, [Proposals for a visitor levy](#).
- 106 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview and Round Table Report, p.44
- 107 *Scotland + Venice as an environmentally- conscious international art event*, Blanche, R., 2024, p.14
- 108 *The Art of Zero*, Julie’s Bicycle, 2021, p.8
- 109 *Scotland + Venice as an environmentally-conscious international art event*, Blanche, R., 2024, p.17
- 110 *The Art of Zero*, Julie’s Bicycle, 2021, p.17. Regrettably specific examples of this aren’t made explicit in the report.
- 111 Ibid p.17

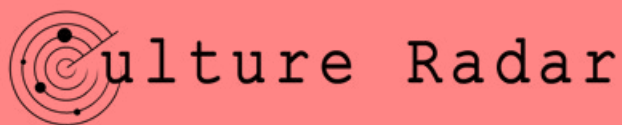


- 112 For a detailed analysis of LBV's environmental sustainability measures taken, and its decarbonisation approach, see *Scotland + Venice* as an environmentally-conscious international art event, Blanche, R., June, Section 3.
- 113 *Towards a Sustainable and Ethical Delivery of Scotland + Venice*, Sculpture Placement Group, 2023, p.11. No other details of the National Commissioners Group have been located.
- 114 Towards more sustainable exhibition practices at the Venice Art Biennale, Frame Finland website, March 2024
- 115 Pavilion of Finland Sustainability action plan, Frame Finland website, March 2024
- 116 *Scotland + Venice* as an environmentally-conscious international art event, Blanche, R., 2024, p.30
- 117 ACCA was established in 2023 by founding members Julie's Bicycle, Gallery Climate Coalition, ART 2030 and the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art (CIMAM). It represents over 1,000 members from 70+ countries. The Art Charter for Climate Action was published 30 May 2024.
- 118 UN Climate Change Partners with Global Visual Arts Sector to Increase Climate Action, 19 April 2024
- 119 Press Release: New initiatives to drive climate action in the cultural sector, Government of Ireland, 14 June 2023
- 120 Public Bodies Climate Change Duties, Scottish Government, 2011
- 121 University of Lausanne, scoresheet: How sustainable are cultural organisations? A global benchmark
- 122 The Art Newspaper, 8 April 2024, UK museums take global lead in sustainability
- 123 Following the announcement in April 2024 of the Scottish Government's withdrawal of the 2030 target, all Public Bodies (which includes all of the Scotland + Venice Partners) are awaiting news of the legislation change and what will replace it in the interim to 2045. Creative Scotland's Climate Emergency & Sustainability Plan was published in April 2022 and includes actions to inform a plan for Creative Scotland's organisational pathway to net zero by 2030. If Creative Scotland were to remain as principal funder of the Scotland + Venice project, any work procured or commissioned by it for the project will need to meet its organisational targets and priorities.
- 124 Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Fund to 2027; New European Bauhaus
- 125 *Towards a Sustainable and Ethical Delivery of Scotland + Venice*, Sculpture Placement Group, 2023, pp12-13
- 126 *Scotland + Venice Review 2009-2017*, Jackson et al., p.56
- 127 Brexit: impacts on the arts and culture, UK in a Changing Europe, April 2021
- 128 This is regularly noted by contributors to the *Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Survey*, Interview and Round Table reports.
- 129 *Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Survey Report*, 2024, p.39
- 130 *Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Survey Report*, p.23
- 131 *Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview Report*, p.12
- 132 *Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Survey Report*, p.22, 23
- 133 *Ibid.*, p.25
- 134 *Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview and Round Table Report*, p.20
- 135 *Inspiring Connections: Scotland's International Culture Strategy 2024-30, Platforms and Networks*, p.17
- 136 *Equality, Opportunity, Community: New Leadership – A fresh start*, Scottish Government programme to 2026, p.27
- 137 *Scottish Parliament Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee Pre-Budget Scrutiny Exercise 2025-26*
- 138 *Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Collated Desk Research*, Appendices 5, 6 and 7. Scottish Government financial support has been aligned to architecture editions of *Scotland + Venice* only.
- 139 *Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview and Round Table Report*, p. 30
- 140 Biennial Foundation Directory, architecture listings: Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism (China), Chicago Architecture Biennial (US), International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (Netherlands), Lisbon Architecture Triennale (Portugal), Oslo Architecture Triennale (Norway), Tallinn Architecture Biennale (Estonia), Venice Architecture Biennale (Italy). Design listings: Design Doha (Qatar), Ljubljana Biennial of Design / BIO (Slovenia), Porto Design Biennale (Portugal)



- 141 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Collated Desk Research, pp. 19-32, Appendices 2 and 3. The event landscape tables consider governance, purpose, participation, themes, outputs and funding of eight art and eight architecture international events.
- 142 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Collated Desk Research Report 2024, Appendices 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8.
- 143 Other regular large UK art events do exist outside of the 'Bi' and 'Tri' format.
- 144 Edinburgh Art Festival Press Release, 2023
- 145 Scotland + Venice Review 2009-2017, 2018, Jackson et al, p.13, p.17
- 146 Equality Act 2010
- 147 Inspiring Connections: Scotland's International Culture Strategy 2024-30, Platforms and Networks, p.24
- 148 British Council (2022) Arts and Cultural Assets Research Report
- 149 Inspiring Connections: Scotland's International Culture Strategy 2024-30, Platforms and Networks, p.24
- 150 Public sector equality duty, HM Government, 2012
- 151 Creative Scotland, Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Guidance, 2023
- 152 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Survey Report, 2024, p.29-30
- 153 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview and Round Table Report, p.26 Collated Desk Research Report p.51-62
- 154 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview and Round Table Report p. 26
- 155 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview and Round Table Report p. 27
- 156 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview and Round Table Report, p.27
- 157 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Survey report, p.17. 29% of respondents who were eligible to apply for Scotland + Venice but hadn't, cited age as a barrier.
- 158 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview and Round Table Report, p. 48
- 159 Ibid.
- 160 *Towards a sustainable and ethical delivery of Scotland + Venice*, Sculpture Placement Group, 2023, p. 25. Round table participants also noted that accepting fees and payments could also impact carefully negotiated benefits payments for some.
- 161 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Survey Report, p.30
- 162 Scotland + Venice Review Interview and Round Table Findings, 2023, pp. 14, 22, 25, 26
- 163 Scotland + Venice Review 2009-2017,2018, Jackson et al, p.13, p.17
- 164 Fair Work Convention
- 165 Scottish Government Culture Strategy Action Plan Update, 2023
- 166 Fair Work First Guidance, Scottish Government, 2023
- 167 Wellbeing Economy Governments, Scottish Government, 2024
- 168 Creative Scotland Strategic Framework; Creative Scotland National Lottery Open Fund Guidance for Applicants, Feb 2023
- 169 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Collated Desk Research, pp. 46-50
- 170 Scotland + Venice Review 2024 Interview and Round Table Report, p.27-28
- 171 *Scotland + Venice Professional Development Review of 2022*, Anderson, L., 2023, p.14., p.16. Evaluations suggest Living Wage payments have previously been "adjusted" which could be exclusionary.
- 172 Scotland + Venice internal documentation and reporting.
- 173 NZ Venice Review, Tony Grybowski and Associates, 2022
- 174 End of Project Monitoring and internal documents shows actual expenditure in excess of initial budgets.
- 175 Steering Group Meeting Minutes from September 2016 suggest that 90% of the edition grant was awarded up front to the creative team. Internal documentation for architecture suggests a more phased release of funding to the creative team. However, like-for-like papers are not available for comparison.
- 176 Scotland + Venice internal documentation and reporting.
- 177 To Star at the Venice Biennale, Artists Need Partrons' Deep Pockets, New York Times, Oct 26, 2023. Brooke Kamin Rapaport, artistic director and chief curator at Madison Square Park Conservancy, commissioner of the 2019 U.S. Pavilion exhibition.

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