

Festivals can now bank on funding of £15 million over five years

In a three partner arrangement among The Scottish Government, The City of Edinburgh Council and Edinburgh Festivals the Platform for Creative Excellence (PLACE) programme will provide £15 million funding over five years.

This money will be used to support local national and international projects and it is described as a game-changer in the festivals world. At an event this morning at St Bride's the PLACE programme was explained as a co-investment programme which is a tangible legacy of the 70th anniversary season. The funding will be used to programme innovation, allow mentoring and creative development programmes to develop and to engage with communities, schools and young people.



Sorcha Carey Director of Edinburgh Art Festival, Cabinet Secretary for Culture Tourism and External Affairs Fiona Hyslop and City of Edinburgh Council Leader Adam McVey pose at the funding announcement with instruments used by three young jazz musicians to entertain the VIP audience

Following the 70th anniversary of the Festival last year this will refresh the programmes and allow the festivals to be more diverse and global.

Community engagement will become much more important and global partners will hook up with local enterprises here in Edinburgh to widen their creative development. Scottish and international writers will work together to explore world politics and share inside stories of their journeys.

Major exhibitions from organisations like the Edinburgh International Science Festival will be created and then exported for use around the world.



The invited audience was made up of the directors of the various festivals which entertain us during the summer months

Schools will be involved in developing the skills of pupils and teachers with a new schools programme called Inspiring Generations. It will bring world class theatre and dance into schools with year round artist engagement.

A nationwide film programme of curated screenings, workshops and masterclasses will involve young people from all over Scotland.

The Fringe will work with 31 charities in Edinburgh's socially excluded communities, producing new public artworks in some and in St Bride's where we were this morning there will be a new jazz performance centre. This will offer rehearsal space and there will be an open access music hub at the heart of the Gorgie/Dalry community.

Cabinet Secretary for Culture Tourism and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop said : "The investment is about ensuring

Festivals can continue to develop and innovate so they can be world leading in a competitive market, to share the cultural experiences of the Festivals more widely across Scotland and to help more residents and communities of Edinburgh to be part of the Festivals city.”

Our festivals attract a huge audience akin to that attending a FIFA World Cup according to a recent study. The audience is half Scottish and the other half is made up of visitors to Scotland. The economic impact is £313 million each year with the majority of that being spent in the accommodation and tourist sector.

The purpose of using the PLACE programme is to ensure that the festivals are developed as key national assets with the hope that more jobs will be created, more money brought into the economy and our country’s international creative reputation much enhanced.

The initial funding announcement is for £5.8 million for the first three years of the PLACE programme with a possible further £4.2 million in 2021/22. Festivals will support this with £5 million bringing the total funding package to £15 million.



Councillor Donald Wilson explained that St Bride's seating structure is very innovative and pushes back to allow the space to be used as a rehearsal or performance space.