

Culture & Business sectors supported by Arts & Business Scotland in wake of pandemic

The launch of a new funding strand has been announced by Arts & Business Scotland that brings together the creativity of the culture sector (which comprises arts, heritage and creative organisations) with the business acumen of those in business and the public sector, to support all sectors in their recovery and renewal in the wake of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The Culture & Business Fund Scotland COVID-19 Renewal & Recovery Strand aims to broker long lasting relationships between organisations in the commercial, public and culture sectors, with partnerships that bring more than just financial support to the table. A continuation of the existing Culture & Business Fund Scotland (CBFS), the COVID-19 Renewal & Recovery Strand is subject to fewer regulations in terms of eligibility, meaning that more businesses, public bodies and culture organisations can apply than ever before.

In normal times, the CBFS has only supported partnerships where the business or public sector body is investing in or sponsoring arts or heritage activity within Scotland for the first time, or if it has not done so in the previous two years. It also provided potential match-funding of business investment in or sponsorship of an arts or heritage organisation within Scotland for up to a three-year period, albeit with the CBFS providing 50% match funding against the business investment for Year Two and 25% match funding for

Year Three.



TNCR and V&A. Credit (top and here): Ross Fraser McLean
The COVID-19 Recovery & Renewal Strand offers, up to, three years of 100% £ for £ match funding of between £1k – £40k and is open to all applicants, including those who have previously received CBFS funding, no matter how recently. These changes to the criteria and guidelines came into effect on 1st March 2021 and will be applicable for applications received before 31st March 2024.

The world has changed radically over the past twelve months and Arts & Business Scotland is committed not only to providing arts, culture and heritage organisations with much needed funds, but also to enabling businesses and public bodies to access the expertise, perspectives and skills that exist within arts, culture, heritage and creative organisations, that can help them on the road to covid recovery.

As we look back on a year of lockdown and consider the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on every aspect of our lives, from working from home and home-schooling, to not being able to spend time in groups, or meet new people, it is clear the landscape has and will, continue to change.

For example, with many having worked from home now for at least twelve months, the prospect of returning to the office can be daunting. There are also many who have started new roles since the pandemic began and may have yet to meet their colleagues in person. Embracing the fresh insights and creative approaches of culture organisations, from art galleries and ensembles through to theatres and festivals, can support businesses through these transitions by opening up new ways of working to facilitate team building and staff wellbeing.

The CBFS has a track record of helping businesses support and develop their people and staff. In 2018 the V&A Dundee secured a commitment from NCR Solutions Group through the fund to support their launch and NCR Dundee employees were given the opportunity to take part in events thanks to the partnership.

Leigh Duncan, Manager, Customer Experience Programme at NCR Financial Solutions Group, said: "In allowing us to become a sponsor for the launch event, the CBFS gave NCR's Dundee employees the opportunity to be part of a major event within the city. The feedback from them has been overwhelmingly positive as they felt they were deeply involved in the launch."

Not all businesses who have benefitted from a CBFS facilitated partnership are of the same global scale as NCR, nor the culture organisations of the same scale as the V&A, but that has not detracted from the success of these partnerships. The Sligachan Hotel and SEALL Festival of Small Halls partnered through CBFS in 2018.

Dierdre Curley, Director at The Sligachan Hotel, said: "The Isle of Skye is so often celebrated for its beauty, but we also need to keep investing in our culture, our music, our people. This is without a doubt a step in the right direction for Skye and its local communities, and for people in Scotland and around the world to get an idea of who we are as islanders and what we want to represent."



The Sligachan Hotel and SEALL Festival of Small Halls. Credit: Sara Bain

You can find more examples of [successful partnerships here](#)

David Watt, Chief Executive of Arts & Business Scotland, said: "There can be a perception that funding initiatives pairing the commercial and culture sectors is a white knight situation, where the arts, heritage or creative organisation is rescued by a business through solely financial support.

With the Culture & Business Fund Scotland Covid Recovery & Renewal Strand this isn't, doesn't have to be and shouldn't be the case.

Particularly now, after over a year of extreme uncertainty and varying degrees of isolation, businesses are looking at to how best to support staff and ensure the wellness of their workforce, and culture organisations can hold the key and provide diverse solutions.

“Informed by extensive stakeholder engagement and reflecting the impact of the pandemic on every aspect of life, the changes to the Cultural Business Fund Scotland mean more organisations and businesses are eligible than ever before and we hope to inspire the cultural and commercial sectors in Scotland to work together in building the road to covid recovery.”

Helena Ward, Creative Industries Manager at Creative Scotland, said: “This year's strand of the Fund is a fantastic opportunity for more businesses, public sector bodies and culture organisations than ever before, to support each other in a way that impacts their success and the wellbeing of their staff.

“It has been an incredibly tough year for everyone, but now is the time for our businesses, culture sector and places of work, to collaborate on, and invest in, creativity.”

A&BS will be running a series of free online workshops to help potential applicants and beneficiaries understand how to make an application to the fund. Those looking to receive information on these and other A&BS events, should contact: events@aandbscotland.org.uk or visit A&BS website to see all [upcoming events and opportunities here](#)