



**Education and Culture Committee  
Scotland's Educational and Cultural Future  
Museums Galleries Scotland**

**Background**

Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) is the National Development Body for the museum sector in Scotland. Our role is to work collaboratively to invest in and develop a sustainable museum and galleries sector for Scotland, in line with the aims of Going Further: The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries.

We work with a sector of over 400 museums and galleries, supporting and enabling them to meet their objectives in a number of ways, including through strategic investment, advice, advocacy and skills development opportunities.

**Call for Written Evidence Response**

MGS welcomes the opportunity to respond to the call for written evidence on behalf of the Scottish museums sector.

We have concentrated in our response on the cultural elements although we do work closely with the Higher education sector. In general our main points on the education sector are around developing a culture whereby routes of entry into the museum sector as a career are diversified and that a graduate or post graduate qualification from a University is not seen as a sole starting point for a career. This is a general challenge for the sector and we would flag that Scotland's Higher education sector is largely made up of universities with fewer further education colleges and with no infrastructure of foundation degrees, which could help to diversify routes of entry not only into museums but into other areas of cultural practice.

**Response to issues highlighted in Theme 3: Broadcasting and Culture**

Culture has now been devolved in Scotland for almost 15 years and in that time cultural policy has developed separately from the rest of the UK. The museums and galleries sector led by the national development body MGS has developed a ten year vision for the sector in Scotland with 'Going Further - The National Strategy for Scotland's

Museums and Galleries'<sup>1</sup>. The strategy sets out our six aims in areas that the sector has identified for future development. The Scottish Government were also partners in the development of this Strategy and have now adopted the Strategy as their policy for the museums and galleries sector. We do not anticipate that this will change as a result of either a 'Yes' or a 'No' vote as the National Strategy is widely adopted by the industry and is benchmarked internationally as best practice. The National Strategy is supported by the implementation of a Delivery Plan which is now entering its second year. There are areas within the Delivery Plan - such as standards - that relate to the rest of the UK and these areas are explored further below.

### **The benefits that could derive to Scotland if its cultural and creative output were promoted more widely**

In the case of a 'Yes' vote Scotland would have to make a transition to promoting itself as an independent confident nation, moving away from the sometimes introverted 'Scottishness' that can often be at the forefront of what is presented internationally. A good example of what is meant by this is contained in the document 'The Way Forward'<sup>2</sup>. This document outlines an approach to Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) where a very inclusive and confident interpretation of what this means in Scotland has been adopted. Instead of referring to Scottish ICH we now refer to ICH in Scotland. Perhaps the same could be said for culture. Instead of Scottish Culture, we are confident to think about culture in Scotland in all its diversity. Scotland is known globally for its tartans and aspects of heritage, but it is often stereotyped and we need to have the confidence to move beyond this in what we project and to celebrate some of the other aspects of Scotland's culture.

There are many benefits to be derived from promoting culture and creative outputs more widely internationally. For the museum sector these could include:

- Possible increase in visitors
- Possible change in demographic of visitors related to motivation for visiting
- Possible increase in opportunities for partnership working whether within or out with Scotland. This could include
  - Joint working on exhibitions
  - Joint working on policy / development areas

In the case of a 'No' vote all of the above would still apply as Scotland aspires to project a nation that is truly international in its outlook.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/national-strategy-and-delivery/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/research-and-resources/resources/publications/publication/65/intangible-cultural-heritage-in-scotland-the-way-forward-summary-report>

## **How new powers over the economy and an overseas diplomatic and trade network could encourage the Scottish cultural and creative sectors**

New powers over the economy would be an opportunity to be creative with tax raising powers and to look at corporate tax incentives for industry for the cultural sector. Examples of other countries where this has been particularly successful include Brazil, which recently introduced a corporate tax incentive scheme. This has led to an increase in corporate giving to the cultural sector far and above the tax incentives they have received. It has helped to develop a culture of corporate giving and has unlocked funding and new partnerships leading to an increase in cultural activity at all levels of society and community.

Other implications would have to be explored and the detail worked out particularly around existing UK schemes such as 'Acceptance in Lieu' or 'Gift Aid'. There are also implications for access to European Union funding.

On the diplomatic front Scotland already has an international development department and has targeted countries for aid and prioritised the relationship with Malawi.

A natural starting point for international recognition for Scotland as a nation would be UNESCO and there would be immediate implications for the existing and World Heritage Sites and the planned nomination of The Forth Rail Bridge for 2015. Scotland has expressed support for several of the cultural conventions in particular the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which the UK has not ratified. Scotland has internationally recognised expertise in this field with MGS being the only organisation in the UK to be accredited as an expert advisor to UNESCO on the convention.

## **How Scottish cultural bodies currently work together with their counterpart bodies in the rest of the UK, and whether this relationship may change**

Museums in the UK adhere to a standard called Accreditation. The scheme is owned by Arts Council England. Currently MGS deliver the scheme in partnership with the rest of the UK. The partnership agreement acknowledges the devolved status of culture in the UK.

ALMA-UK is a UK wide forum around libraries, archives and museums with a partnership agreement in place between the home nations. This would have to be renegotiated in the light of a yes vote. This should not be an issue as the Republic of Ireland has joined this partnership.

## **The likely future role for UK bodies that have some cultural or creative function in Scotland.**

Roles of organisations may be affected by their own governance or constitution, for example, who they are there to serve, what services they are there to provide. The way in which they themselves are funded may also be a consideration.

For some of these organisations there is no stand alone Scottish equivalent. Many have an office in Scotland, but are part of a UK wide parent body. Some of these organisations are also major funders of the Scottish museum sector. One example of a UK body that has some cultural or creative function in Scotland is given below.

- Heritage Lottery Fund
  - There could then be an impact on funding from this source. It is not clear whether the Scotland HLF office would continue to manage this lottery funding in Scotland, or whether this function would be taken over by a National Development Body as is the case with Arts lottery funding. If the second was to occur it would need to be decided who would deliver this role.
  - There is also the possibility of change to the National Lottery itself, of which HLF is only one funding distributor.

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