

SOUTH OF SCOTLAND SCREEN STRATEGY

2025-2030

South West Media Factory for



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VISION FOR THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

Our ambition is the South of Scotland will be a thriving location for screen activity, a region that supports and invests in its sustainable creative economy and a place that embraces future opportunities in the screen industries.

INTRODUCTION

Dumfries & Galloway Council, Scottish Borders Council and South of Scotland Enterprise are committed to working in partnership to attract and develop the significant opportunities that the screen industries offer our region. We will do this through the development of a South of Scotland Screen Commission partnership.

This strategy will identify the actions required to deliver against our ambition that the South of Scotland will be a thriving location for screen activity, a region that supports and invests in its sustainable creative economy and a place that embraces the opportunities of future developments in the screen industries.

We will establish a South of Scotland Screen Commission partnership where both local authority areas collaborate to market and develop our screen offering to attract as much sustainable production activity to the South of Scotland as possible for the greatest economic impact.

Four key areas of activity have been identified which align to the Regional Economic Strategy and National Strategy for Economic Transformation themes of: New Market Opportunities, Innovative and Enterprising, Skilled Workforce and Green and Flourishing region:

- 1. Create a new South of Scotland Screen Commission Partnership** (*New Market Opportunities*)
- 2. Development of facilities, local crew and services** (*Innovative and Enterprising*)
- 3. Create opportunities to support local skills, creativity and talent in the region** (*Skilled workforce*)
- 4. A sustainable Screen Industry in the South of Scotland** (*Green and flourishing region*)

What is a Screen Commission?

A screen commission is a local government, non-profit, public service that markets its region to attract production companies including film, television, and commercials, to shoot on location in their area. This benefits the region by bringing in direct economic spend from productions, offers employment and skills development opportunities for residents and can showcase the area to new audiences, encouraging tourism.

The range of services a screen commission delivers includes the following to support those looking to film in the area:

- Market the region as a film location to film, television, commercial, music and other associated screen sectors, worldwide.
- Support and facilitate companies to find suitable locations for their production.
- Support with local knowledge of the area on crew, services, community connections and accommodation providers.
- Provide advice on road closures, permits and permissions required.
- Ensure all filming is carried out according to regional or national codes of practice including the promotion of sustainability and minimising the environmental impacts of filming.
- The collection of economic data to ensure the benefits of filming in an area are understood and maximised.

The screen commission provides a one-stop shop so that productions can accomplish their work smoothly and is pivotal in developing opportunities for the screen sector to grow and flourish in a community.

The screen commission services across Scotland are all members of the Scottish Locations Network, facilitated by the national agency, Screen Scotland.

A GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY

Economic Value of Screen Activity

Global (2021): **£414 billion**

UK (2022): **£5.37 billion**

Scotland (2021): **£627 million**

This is an exciting time for the Screen industries in Scotland.

There is currently a boom in worldwide production in screen material and this is matched by a demand for new types of streaming services and platforms. Increased audiences for all types of moving image material have meant that in the UK, the value of production activity for all content was £5.37 billion in 2022, a 6% increase on the previous year.¹ This UK success is helped by one of the most robust tax rebate systems in the world, a highly skilled work force and world class facilities. London is now one of the top three screen production centres in the world.

The screen industries are defined as digital content-making that includes film, television, animation, visual effects and games. It is an industry that continues to grow and develop, an industry where demand for new products is unlimited, and its growth and resilience far outstrips other parts of the creative industries. The economic value of global screen production activity in 2021 was £414 billion, employing 14.2 million people across the world.²

In Scotland, it was calculated that in 2021 the GVA of the screen industries was £627 million, supporting over 10,000 full-time equivalent jobs.

There are several reasons why the growth in value has increased over three years, but two key factors have been the development of permanent film studios and more television commissions for Scottish-based production companies allowing them to make returning drama television series, with the subsequent company investment in staff, training and future talent development.

Much of this production activity, spending, investment and training takes place in Scotland's central belt.

In 2021 the South of Scotland screen sector economic impact was £42.5m, 7% of Scotland's total, employing 760 FTEs.³

¹ <https://britishfilmcommission.org.uk/uk-inward-investment-film-and-high-end-tv-production-spend-reaches-record-figure-of-5-37-billion-in-2022/>

² Figures from Olsberg SPI 2020 Global report

³ <https://www.screen.scot/binaries/content/assets/screen-scot/funding--support/research/economic-value-of-the-screen-sector-in-scotland-in-2021/full-report-economic-value-of-screen-sector-in-scotland-2021-2023-08-21-1.pdf>

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The South of Scotland is already a region that is home to many creative practitioners, music and arts events and communities that are engaged and involved with all kinds of cultural activity. Our region should become more responsive to opportunities to develop screen activity, film tourism, support indigenous screen ambitions, and develop a workforce that has the skills, talent and ambition to work in this industry.

This mirrors the ambitions laid out in the South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy (RES):

"We will be a region of opportunity and innovation – where natural capital drives green growth, ambition and quality of life rivals the best in the UK, communities are empowered, and cultural identity is cherished, enabling those already here to thrive and attracting a new generation to live, work, visit, learn and invest in the South of Scotland."⁴

This strategy closely aligns with the newly published 'Screen Scotland Strategy to 2030/31' which outlines the overarching plans and priorities for the remainder of the decade. Screen Scotland's strategy seeks to further develop Scotland as a centre of global production, and a nation with its own vibrant, confident film and screen culture.

While most production activity is to be found in Scotland's Central Belt, the South of Scotland is well placed to be accessible to this centre of production, including the Scottish broadcasting hubs of the BBC and Channel 4. Our geography puts us in the centre of the UK. Our region also has good transport links to other key centres of production activity such as Belfast in Northern Ireland, cities in the Northeast of England, and good road and rail access to the well-established screen hubs of Manchester and Salford Quays.

The South of Scotland is a region uniquely placed to negotiate partnerships across borders, develop our own local infrastructure and skills base and take advantage of all opportunities to provide support for developing our workforce, infrastructure and business development.

The South of Scotland can play an important role in future environmental sustainability in the Screen sector and lead the way by example.

The RES places an emphasis on six key areas of growth – a skilled workforce, innovation and enterprise, fair work and prosperity, creative excellence, the green economy and thriving communities:

"We want to see a South of Scotland in 2031 that is exemplified by its outstanding natural beauty and cultural heritage, diverse economy and resilient people. It will be an area with thriving communities, proud and confident from young to old, benefitting from the quality of life on offer, improved connections and making best use of technology."⁵

⁴ south-of-scotland-regional-economic-strategy, September 2021

⁵ <https://sosrep.dumgal.gov.uk/article/21953/Regional-Economic-Strategy>

This is a critical time for the South of Scotland – as the RES puts it succinctly and boldly:

“Never has there been such momentum, coupled with the ability to seize control of regional agendas, reflecting, and responding to the issues that are most important to local people, communities, and businesses.”

The RES shows that the region can take control and create agendas that work specifically for the region, taking advantage of the new pathways for investment, funding and regional support. Where should the economy of the South of Scotland be in five years’ time? How can we take advantage of business growth happening across the UK, and how can we link the skills and talents of our population to full and active participation in the screen economy? One great opportunity is the global movement from heavy industrial use of land, especially agricultural land and forestry to a more mixed, greener, more diverse and economically stable economy. This is where looking at the creative industries, especially the digital creative industries – from screen production to writing, music composition to games – could play a pivotal role in developing the economy of the South of Scotland.

The initial RES action plan makes a specific reference to grow screen development opportunities:

“Grow and expand locally based film / screen development opportunities. Film and screen is a growing industry in the South of Scotland, and has the potential to create employment, and opportunities in production, support and facilitation, for a wide array of local businesses. We will look to develop a rounded, collaborative and sustainable offering for film and screen, which will attract new productions to the area, and explore opportunities for infrastructure development to maximise our potential”.

The most recent RES action plan continues this commitment with an action to:

“enhance our offering for film and screen to expand our screen sector, including developing opportunities for infrastructure development, skills and learning”.

The EKOS report on the creative industries in the South of Scotland in 2021 also reiterated the opportunities for filming that the region offers and listed ‘Attracting film and TV Productions: Making the most of the South’s locations and recent growth in the sector’ as one of nine priority areas for growth.⁶

There is also an obvious and immediate link between location filming and the health of the location itself. We will look in depth at Screen Scotland’s plans to make Scotland the greenest country for filming later in the strategy but there is consensus between major players in the screen industries – the studios, production companies and the broadcasters – to make the industry as carbon neutral as possible.

The South of Scotland is at an exciting juncture in its development of its screen sector, and this is the time to make bold steps for the future.

⁶ <https://www.southofscotlandenterprise.com/media/tqhpqyfa/creative-industries-in-the-south-of-scotland-report.pdf> EKOS report

TIME FOR CHANGE

There are currently film commission services provided by the local authorities in Dumfries & Galloway and the Scottish Borders but with limited resources. In Dumfries & Galloway the proportion of time available to the allocated officer is very limited and the service provided is generally reactionary rather than pro-active. Film Edinburgh, part of The City of Edinburgh Council, provides the service for the Scottish Borders on behalf of Scottish Borders Council. There is little or no additional resource attached to enhance either service which can lead to missed opportunities.

In Dumfries & Galloway, The South West Scotland Screen Commission (SWSSC) was set up in 1995 as a standalone initiative to promote the region for filming. Its first international success was the filming of the train stunt from the *Mission Impossible* feature film on the railway line between Dumfries and Annan. In 1998, the SWSSC was brought into the council, and funded by the European Regional Development Fund. From that time, it attracted a large variety of filming to the region from feature films to unscripted TV, wildlife programmes to award-winning short films.

Overtime, the allocation of resource for this service has diminished from a full-time post to the responsibility becoming a minimal part of an officer role. There is therefore no resource to be proactive: find new locations, engage with location owners, update the database, update image library or have an efficient and effective system for sharing images. What was once a highly respected screen commission service is no longer able to operate effectively. Developing a South of Scotland Screen Commission partnership will allow the rebuilding of the service and the ability to support the growth of a local screen economy and regain a high reputation within the industry.

For the Scottish Borders, the area has been supported and marketed by the Edinburgh Film Office. Established in 1991, it is the oldest Screen Commission in Scotland, and for many years, as a stand-alone agency, was managing the Lothians and the Borders as well as the City of Edinburgh to bring in additional revenue streams. The Film Office is now a service within the City of Edinburgh Council, giving it financial stability, but the long-standing relationship between the film office and the Borders brings benefits to both, and both wish to continue the partnership.

The most immediate benefit to the Borders is the number of direct enquiries coming into the Edinburgh Film Office for filming requests each year. In 2020, 73 productions of various sizes were asking about rural locations, and 79 in 2021. The total number of enquiries via Screen Scotland, the national Screen Commission, to Dumfries & Galloway Council in 2022 was 27. In comparison, as far back as 2011, Dumfries & Galloway was receiving over 200 enquires per year with over 100 productions filming, when a dedicated resource was in place.

A higher awareness of the region and its locations will lead to more enquiries, resulting in more filming and associated economic impact.

While there are immediate benefits for the Borders to be linked to the Edinburgh Film Office, one disadvantage for the region has been the lack of proactive work being

undertaken to find new locations, engage with location owners, and updating the locations library. It would be beneficial to allocate additional staff time to support the Edinburgh Film Office, so the Scottish Borders can be more proactive in finding new locations and maintaining relationships with existing locations. Currently there is a total of 297 Borders locations on the Film Edinburgh database.

New studio developments such as First Stage in Leith, Kelvin Hall and the Pyramids at Bathgate will continue to attract international productions requiring a wide range of crew, services and facilities, and these developments will have positive benefits for Edinburgh and the surrounding areas as productions may require rural locations close at hand. There is also a very good chance that they will ensure regular year-round employment for Scottish crew and facilities.

With the establishment of South of Scotland Enterprise in 2020 to support innovation and enterprise across both Dumfries & Galloway and the Scottish Borders, and the significant impact the organisation has had to date, this seems an ideal time to implement a South of Scotland Screen Commission partnership that would allow both local authority areas to increase capacity for production activity and support the Edinburgh Film Office in terms of time and resources.

It is a time of growth and change for Scottish screen production. Any developments in the South of Scotland could make a significant impact in terms of inward investment activity and capitalise on a global opportunity to unlock our potential.

UNLOCKING OUR POTENTIAL

The screen industries have the potential to be a catalyst and transform the region into a thriving location for production, a creative hub for screen developments, and a region that offers a range of skills and facilities to support screen activity.

Strengths:

- The South of Scotland is an easily recognisable geographical area from a screen perspective
- A rural region with an unparalleled variety of locations, including unspoilt natural landscapes, rugged coastlines, large forests, characterful towns and villages, iconic historic locations and many cultural heritage sites
- The UNESCO-designated Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere is world-renowned as an area that supports economic growth hand in hand with green tourism and environmental sustainability
- Lots of space with a low population density which can be a bonus for large scale productions
- Two local authorities and an enterprise agency keen to attract more production to the region
- Both areas are already part of the Scottish Locations Network
- A track record of agencies working in partnership across the South of Scotland
- Population has a high percentage of creative practitioners, well-established arts events and festivals with lots of opportunities for cross-fertilisation of skills, cultural practice and crafts

Weaknesses:

- Whilst connectivity is good from the north and south, drivetimes and distances can be lengthy, especially when travelling east to west
- Transport links to Edinburgh and Glasgow and their airports, from some parts of the region, can be slow
- Drivetimes from the Central Belt of over 90 minutes in many parts of the region can be considered too far away for a one-day shoot
- Productions tend to head north to the Highlands and Argyll & Bute when looking for rural locations, the South tends to be bypassed
- Currently there is little production infrastructure, including low numbers of skilled crew, production spaces and facilities
- Lack of hotels or accommodation for large numbers of people in certain locations
- Lack of production facilities operators - productions would have to bring every piece of equipment with them, which increases their costs
- No real focus on marketing the area for filming, it's a reactive service rather than proactive

- Engagement with local production support businesses or those wishing to become a film location could be improved

Opportunities:

- Joint marketing to encourage filming across the whole of the South of Scotland.
- More opportunities to develop links with Screen Scotland, Visit Scotland, South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA) and Creative Scotland to be part of the national marketing of Scotland to international productions and for screen tourism initiatives
- Filming protocols can be agreed across the whole area to simplify processes and deliver a film friendly service
- Continuing growth of the Scottish screen sector with increased opportunities for businesses and freelancers
- Opening of film studios in Leith and Bathgate, as well as the continuing development of Ward Park near Cumbernauld
- The potential development of filming facilities and spaces in the South of Scotland in collaboration with the private sector
- Good proximity and external road links with the North of England, with Newcastle and Manchester being important centres of screen production, as is Belfast
- The potential to provide training and film initiatives especially for young people
- Plenty of creative and talented people working in the region, with transferable skills and interest in developing further experience in this sector
- UK-wide funding to support upskilling and cross-skilling of the UK screen workforce and related industries to address key skills gaps in the UK
- Specific funding for Scotland has been identified to develop HETV (High-End Television) skills shortage⁷

Threats:

- The Screen Commission service covering Dumfries and Galloway can no longer provide an effective service due to lack of resources and outdated databases and image library
- Potential competition from the rest of the UK and globally, other parts of Scotland are now very much ahead in terms of crew and facilities
- Screen is a high-tech digital industry where innovation is fast moving. Our service provision requires to keep pace to effectively respond to filming enquiries
- We struggle in our region to retain young people and support our ageing population: we must develop strategies to counter the loss of young talent out with the region and to attract new young talent to the region

⁷ <https://www.broadcastnow.co.uk/broadcast-network/building-up-scotlands-talent-pool/5178540.article>

STRATEGY IN ACTION

1. Create a new South of Scotland Screen Commission Partnership

The South of Scotland has a unique opportunity to realise our shared ambition for the screen sector by targeting and aligning resources, to work in collaboration and through shared delivery for inclusive economic growth.

We will do this through a South of Scotland Screen Commission Partnership.

This section will explore how and why a screen commission operates and the actions required to realise our ambitions.

In recent years there have been large scale productions filming in the South of Scotland from Hollywood blockbuster movies such as *Marvel's Avengers: Endgame* at St Abbs, *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny* at Leaderfoot viaduct, to the Oscar-nominated *The Wife* filming on the Arbigland estate near Kirkbean, and cult classics such as Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin* shooting near Morton Castle and Wanlockhead. Productions will come if the right location is available.

In a successful year, inward investment spend (spending on locations, accommodation, local crew, services and facilities) could be as much as £2 million across the two local authority areas based on past figures. To achieve, or exceed this, there needs to be staff resource responding to location enquiries, liaising with productions and communities, researching and logging economic impact, managing complex relationships, and pro-actively marketing the region. There can be no guarantees about possible economic impact: one year may be a bumper year for filming, with very little coming in the following year – success in this sector requires a long game.

There are dedicated Screen Commission services across most local authorities in Scotland with the two busiest offices being Glasgow and Edinburgh. There is also a full-time member of staff covering the Tayside and Fife regions. Other parts of the country generally have part-time cover. The national Screen Scotland Commission, part of Screen Scotland, receives daily enquiries from all types of productions, both national and international, seeking support for their activity. Screen Scotland also helps productions find studio and production office space and directs enquiries to the rest of Scotland through the Scottish Locations Network.

As Screen Scotland's Screen Commission markets the whole of Scotland for filming, it relies on the support of local authorities and their staff. It is important for Screen Scotland to be able to say that all parts of Scotland are open for filming, and that all councils are film-friendly and responsive to filming requests. The reality is that all filming is constrained by budgets, any travel time over an hour and a half from base means an overnight stay for cast and crew, and practically all productions are keen to save money on

overnights. This does not mean that the rest of Scotland never gets productions, it just means that more work is needed in those areas outside the Central Belt to ensure their area benefits. The Scottish Borders proximity to Edinburgh is extremely beneficial whereas Dumfries & Galloway has to work harder to get filming as the region is just over a 90-minute drive time from Glasgow.

Location enquiries

Any production planning to shoot content will be looking for a huge variety of locations, from interiors of stately homes to a suburban street. This could be for drama production, reality TV, commercial, photo-shoot or music video – for anything, anywhere. There are location managers and location scouts looking for locations for feature films, television series, commercials and stills shoots all the time and any additional help in their search is very much appreciated and critical for securing the chance of securing production in an area. Showing interest, being helpful, pro-active and responding quickly is more likely to generate future enquiries.

An enquiry could be students wishing to make their first short film or a Hollywood studio with a blockbuster budget.

Screen Tourism

Screen tourism is a form of tourism where visitors explore locations and destinations which have become popular due to their appearance in film and television series such as the hugely popular *Outlander* series. Screen tourism provides a connection with the location and a trip to a set or filming location can create a visitor experience.

VisitScotland research values visitor expenditure because of screen tourism activities as £64.9 million and cites 49% of UK adults believe Scotland is a nation known for its film and TV locations.

The more filming the South of Scotland can attract, the more opportunity for screen related tourism experiences will be generated. This can be maximised through working collaboratively and in tandem with the key agencies that have recently launched ‘Scotland Starts Here: A Responsible Tourism Strategy for the South of Scotland’. This ambitious 10-year plan, created by South of Scotland Enterprise, South of Scotland Destination Alliance, VisitScotland, Scottish Borders Council and Dumfries & Galloway Council focuses on four strategic objectives:

- Inspire visitors to come to the South of Scotland
- Develop the visitor experience with a focus on quality
- Support business to succeed; and
- Act responsibly for long-term collective benefit

The tourism strategy refers to the opportunity for screen tourism across the South and alignment of both strategies is key to success.

Outlander has a huge number of fans who regularly visit key locations. It is now one of the best documented examples of screen tourism highlighted in the VisitScotland report, ‘The

Outlander Effect and Tourism', published in 2022. In 2014, visitor figures were 1.47 million visits and in 2020, these had grown to 3.2 million.⁸

This report not only looked at the visitor numbers, it also analysed social media clicks and followers, subsequent press coverage and viewing figures. Outlander is currently streamed in 87 territories across the world and has a huge following. 18% of visitors from the US cited the series as an influence to visit Scotland. The impact of a region being represented on screen can go far beyond the initial boost from filming and last for years.

For the partnership to function properly and capitalise on initiatives such as screen tourism, additional people resource is required in both local authorities to collaborate with VisitScotland to maximise opportunities around distribution, event and other tourism related activity and to take responsibility for delivering against this strategy.

In Dumfries & Galloway it is recognised that a new dedicated officer to carry out this work is required. In the Scottish Borders there is still the requirement for additional officer time to support the service provided by Film Edinburgh, to liaise with colleagues in Dumfries & Galloway and extra resource for joint promotional activity.

⁸ <https://www.visitscotland.org/research-insights/about-our-visitors/interests-activities/film-tv>. Figures compiled by VisitScotland

The following actions have been identified:

Create a new South of Scotland Screen Commission Partnership			
	Action	Lead strategic partners	Timescale
A1	Develop a partnership agreement between Dumfries & Galloway Council, Scottish Borders Council and SOSE.	DGC, SBC, SOSE, CEC	Short
A2	Identify the allocation of officer resource to deliver against the South of Scotland Screen Strategy.	DGC, SBC	Short
A3	Agree on the resources required to support the infrastructure for the new partnership such as rebuilding databases, updating picture library, web presence and support for marketing.	DGC, SBC	Short
A4	Explore the development of a data-sharing agreement for location enquiries and information on locations, across the local authorities, including a review of GDPR and other procedures relating to personal information.	DGC, SBC, SOSE, CEC	Short
A5	Communicate both internal and external on the new partnership approach.	DGC, SBC, SOSE, CEC	Short
A6	Develop a marketing strategy for activity to promote the South of Scotland as a sustainable film location to national and international productions.	SOSE, DGC, SBC	Medium
A7	Develop a Code of Practice for filming in the region, with guidelines on industry best practice including Health and Safety and Environmental Sustainability Guidelines for filming.	DGC, SBC, SOSE, CEC	Medium

Timeframe: Short – year 1, Medium – years 2,3, Long – years 4,5+

2. Development of facilities, local crew and services

UK Film and High-End TV production is likely to hit between £7.07 billion and £7.66 billion by 2025 and require between 15,130 and 20,770 additional crew to meet demand⁹ (*ScreenSkills, the UK training body for the Screen Industries*).

Historically the South of Scotland has been successful in attracting inward investment from film and television location filming due to the fantastic heritage and natural capital on offer. Whilst this is lucrative at the time, the ad hoc nature of activity and the lack of physical filming infrastructure has hampered long term growth of the sector.

Opportunities to work with the private, public and third sector to develop new facilities such as filming spaces, post-production and media access centres should be explored.

The advances in virtual film and TV production now mean that we can also explore how we can support the development of physical virtual studio space in collaboration with the private sector as the catalyst for generating, and retaining, creative content and people in the region.

The way to measure capacity in film and TV production is to measure crew depth: in other words, how many large-scale productions can be made in a country or region without having to bring in extra crew. This has always been an issue in Scotland, but changes have been made to address chronic training shortages and plug some skills gaps.

For filming in the South of Scotland, many productions will bring their own crew but there are opportunities to be pro-active and organise local recruitment, identify local people who can offer skills in location marshalling, security, catering, driving, nursing, or as chaperones are always useful. A production guide for the South of Scotland, with contact details for available crew and services is another way to promote the region and showcase the range of talent here, from hair and makeup designers to textile artists.

One challenge for the South of Scotland is to look at ways of professionalising the workforce, ensuring that people can update their skills, for example, by supporting local people to attend location marshal courses or industry runner courses. A valuable exercise will be to identify people who have experience in other relevant areas (arts events, music festivals, sporting events) that are available for work and have industry recognised credentials. While the region may not be able to currently show that it has a large professional crew base, setting up a production guide that shows the range of skills and crafts available across the region, perhaps encouraged by a skills survey or a call for an assessment of training needs across the region would be a start in the development of a crew base.

⁹ <https://www.screenskills.com/press-releases/new-forecast-of-skills-and-training-needs-in-film-and-hetv-production/> 24 June 2022

Attracting inward investment by means of bringing production activity here, supporting local business start-ups and encouraging relocation of businesses and sole traders in creative industries should also be aligned with local training and employment initiatives. These training and talent development initiatives can include screenwriting, filmmaking workshops, gaming development and design, digital craft in music and photography, and traditional crafts: all activities that this region could support or already does on a small scale.

Now that Screen Scotland is keen to support more skills and training opportunities (now an integral part of their funding agreements with productions), we also need to be thinking about ways of increasing access to training opportunities here in the South of Scotland, working with the colleges and the universities, as well as youth training programmes.

It is imperative that people living in the South of Scotland do not miss out on opportunities simply because of their geographic location.

Development of facilities, local crew and services			
	Action	Lead strategic partners	Timescale
B1	Explore and encourage opportunities for developing physical production space in the South of Scotland in partnership with the private sector.	SOSE	Long
B2	Explore the potential for marketing the region's creative economy from an inward investment perspective to attract new production companies and facilities to the region.	SOSE, DGC, SBC	Medium
B3	The Screen Commission partnership should identify all participants from the South who have completed any kind of industry recognised training.	DGC, SBC, SOSE, FHE	Medium
B4	Development of a South of Scotland Screen Production Guide including crew, services and facilities.	SOSE, DGC, SBC	Medium
B5	Explore and develop taster sessions in new technologies, such as Virtual Production and other advancements in the Screen sector.	SOSE	Medium

Timeframe: Short – year 1, Medium – years 2,3, Long – years 4,5+

3. Explore opportunities to support local skills, creativity and talent in the region

The South of Scotland probably boasts more artists and craftspeople per head of population than anywhere else in Scotland - this is one of our key strengths.

How do we harness creativity and nurture talent, especially in our young people? Where do we find it, and how can we support it? One key ambition is to find and develop future talent in the region, not simply to support training and skills, but to showcase the South of Scotland as a place that nurtures and supports talented people. It will be seen as a place where creative people can live, thrive, and network.

Training and skills development are crucial to attract high quality, high value filming, and it is one reason why the UK scores so highly in attracting international production. There has been additional Government funding for training across the UK, and Screen Scotland is very keen to support training initiatives to develop skilled practitioners in all departments of the film and television industry.

The presence of a National Film & TV School (NFTS)¹⁰ in Glasgow has been a real boost for training as it concentrates on specific skills gaps in the Scottish Screen industry and offers bursaries for training. The courses are open to all, especially if people can bring other skills or work experience to the table. The current shortage of production accountants in Scotland, for example, means that NFTS is running a course which gives an opportunity for accountants in other types of industries to look at working in production.

Short one day or online industry courses, traineeships, new entrants base and a producer development programme are run by BECTU Vision in Scotland. The traineeships focus on areas where skills are in short supply such as electricians and other construction skills, script editors and script supervisors – there is the potential to encourage some of the students graduating from our colleges here, to think about working in the screen industries.

There are organisations across Scotland that support filmmaking, screenwriting, documentary filmmaking and animation. Some of them have been active in the region, and there are also organisations in the region who have been active in promoting creative practices for all age groups such as Alchemy Film & Arts, CABN, CatStrand, and The Stove Network.

Alchemy Film & Arts' place-based creative learning and skills development programme Film Town engages cross-sectoral partners, young people and marginalised communities in a range of film production initiatives. Launched in 2019, Film Town won the SURF Award for Creative Regeneration in 2022.

¹⁰ <https://nfts.co.uk/nfts-scotland> Website for the National Film & Television School, Glasgow

Alchemy is currently testing Screen Scotland's Film & Screen Curriculum for Scotland in the Scottish Borders. This work, part of Screen Education's national pilot for a film and screen curriculum, builds on Alchemy's previous two-year skills enhancement project integrating digital film production into the primary curriculum in partnership with Scottish Borders Council and latterly through its Inspire Learning programme. Alchemy also funds and produces feature length films in Hawick and across the Scottish Borders, which stream globally and tour internationally. The Alchemy Film Festival is the UK's festival of experimental film and artists' moving image, recognised nationally and internationally for the platform it gives to local talent alongside international productions.

The Stove Network are currently working on a Creative Placemaking project in five locations across Dumfries & Galloway where they hope to support young people to develop creative skills in filmmaking, music and visual art¹¹. The Scottish Youth Film Foundation, who ran the Scottish Youth Film Festival in Dumfries in 2022, are also developing initiatives for two groups to make short films, for teenagers and young adults, in Dumfries. There are plans for both initiatives to work collaboratively.

However, our main goal should be to ensure that people who want to make more films can be supported effectively so they can make the leap into further study or work. Screen Scotland want to ensure that training is central to any production funding, and all productions who receive their Production Growth Funds (for incoming productions) or Production and Development funding (for Scottish-based productions) take on trainees. The more productions we can attract to the South of Scotland, the more opportunity we will create for training and meaningful work experience.

The Outlander TV Series, trainee scheme has successfully run for many years and trained numerous people in each department.¹² This ensures that there are skilled and experienced crew coming through the pipeline for Outlander as well as being available on other productions.

If we are to look seriously at this region receiving more Screen Scotland funding, we should explore options to develop a scheme that includes training, work placements and ultimately paid work. We should also encourage local talent to come forward to get involved with creative projects and encourage them to be ambitious about what they see as a career.

Further work in this area must be seen as a long-term investment in local talent and creativity, rather than brief one-off projects.

¹¹ <https://thestove.org/what-we-do-now/>

¹² <https://www.screen.scot/skills-and-talent/skills-development/outlander-training-programme>

Develop opportunities to support local skills, creativity and talent in the region

	Action	Lead strategic partners	Timescale
C1	Connect with national training providers such as NFTS Scotland, GMAC, BECTU Vision, Scottish Youth Film Foundation, Screen Skills and staff at Screen Scotland.	DGC, SBC, SOSE	Short
C2	Continue to work with partner organisations in our region and out with such as Alchemy Film and Arts, The Stove Network and the Scottish Youth Film Foundation to find creative young people who want to work in the screen industries.	SOSE	Medium
C3	Explore the opportunity of developing a microbudget feature film scheme with script development and trainee producer support.	SOSE	Long
C4	Explore the potential to develop a short film competition to encourage filmmaking and increase opportunity for South of Scotland films screened at film festivals.	SOSE, DGC, SBC	Medium
C5	Encourage and support local people to pitch and apply for national screen funding opportunities.	SOSE, DGC, SBC	Medium
C6	Encourage people to obtain industry qualifications such as drone operation.	DGC, SBC	Medium

Timeframe: Short – year 1, Medium – years 2,3, Long – years 4,5+

4. A sustainable Screen Industry in the South of Scotland

There is no doubt that our planet is facing a climate emergency. The Scottish Government has already enshrined in law the rate by which greenhouse emissions are to be either eliminated or off-set, reaching a 100% reduction by 2045. As the Chief Executive of the UK Committee on Climate Change states,

“All greenhouse gases matter and all need to be reduced. No sources of emissions can qualify for special treatment. All emissions from all sectors must be eliminated or offset with removals.”¹³

With the backing of the Scottish Government, Culture for Climate Scotland have recommended that Screen Scotland plan to make Scotland the number one destination for sustainable filmmaking in Europe. This would be a great selling point to all producers around the world hoping to reduce or eliminate, their carbon emissions and would bring in more responsible filmmakers to Scotland.

The screen industries, as far back as 2007, were looking into the issues of sustainability. The BBC initially established the pilot ‘albert consortium’, an organisation that developed tools for each production to measure and log its emissions and calculate its carbon footprint. This was then quickly adopted by BAFTA and many partners, mainly in the television sector, for all kinds of filming from drama to documentary. Any production who reduces or offsets their carbon footprint according to an online calculator is awarded a ‘we are albert’ logo for their credits roll. There is a further, more stringent test called albert+. Both schemes have their limitations, not least because film and television mainly rely on short-term freelance crew, working on short-term projects. It is difficult within the scope of the timetable of a production, always very focussed and all-consuming, to place even more tasks on top of what already is a busy schedule.

It is hoped that as more crew members are trained, the process of albert compliance will become easier. It may even become mandatory for anyone working in production, and at larger centres of production, such as the BBC, who have been working with the albert scheme for years and it is firmly embedded in their systems.

In Scotland, things are not so advanced. There has been some training around the albert scheme and other freelance training in sustainable production, but both training participants and Creative Carbon Scotland (now Culture for Climate Scotland), who produced a report on Screen Sustainability for Screen Scotland in 2020, have acknowledged there are practical issues with albert that make it difficult to apply to productions in Scotland.¹⁴

¹³ UKCCC Net Zero report May 2019 p17

¹⁴ https://www.screen.scot/binaries/content/assets/screen-scot/funding--support/research/screenproduction_sustainabilityreport_may2020.pdf Creative Carbon Scotland (now Culture for Climate Scotland)

Culture for Climate Scotland are looking into more specific Scotland training for crew members but have expressed concern that it is not enough to delegate sustainable production responsibilities to a junior crew member. The entire production must sign up to the process, and sustainability must be a key part of the production process. Issues investigated include transport (including the use of electric cars), power supplies on location, food waste, recycling, and disposal of sets and set dressing supplies. There are now a number of companies in Scotland, such as Re-Set Scenery, that takes old sets and furniture and finds community projects that can use them.

While there are several issues that must be addressed nationally if Scotland is to have its own scheme, there are several ways that the South of Scotland can get involved, and in some ways, pre-empt some of the challenges. There is a call for the Scottish Location Network (all the local film offices in Scottish local authorities) to help draw up a set of guidelines about filming on location in a sustainable way. Currently location shooting in rural Scotland relies on diesel generators and miles of driving with many cars. An early intervention could forestall some of the preventable environmental damage by requesting local suppliers or ensuring props and wardrobe items are dealt with in a sustainable way. One useful task would be to identify those firms in our region who can deal with re-purposing of materials or recycling.

The plan for developing Scotland's sustainable screen industry is still in its infancy but already plans are being drawn up to look at alternative fuel sources in rural areas and having a sustainability hub with useful kit for productions with a full-time manager to advise on the most up-to-date research on industry best practice. There are also plans for more training to be rolled out and there is research going on within the industry related to energy use which is always a major concern for the screen industries. It is acknowledged by everyone that this is the way forward, and the whole industry will have to work by these standards eventually.

For rural Scotland, advances in technology, especially in looking at alternative power sources, may prove very beneficial for all kinds of events, whether these are music festivals, arts events or sporting events.

The South of Scotland has an ideal opportunity to be an exemplifier and lead the way in developing a sustainable screen industry.

A sustainable Screen Industry in the South of Scotland

	Action	Lead strategic partners	Timescale
D1	Develop a circular economy directory for film production in the South of Scotland, aligned to action B4.	SOSE, DGC, SBC	Short
D2	Connect to BECTU/Screen Scotland and Culture for Climate Scotland and contribute towards the guidelines for filming on location, which will become a 'Green Charter for filming'	SOSE, DGC, SBC	Short
D3	Participate in Albert training or a Scotland equivalent	SOSE, DGC, SBC	Medium
D4	Explore local options for renewable power sources	SOSE	Short
D5	Ensure the South of Scotland can take advantage of any national schemes to reduce carbon emissions in rural areas	SOSE	Medium

Timeframe: Short – year 1, Medium – years 2,3, Long – years 4,5+