



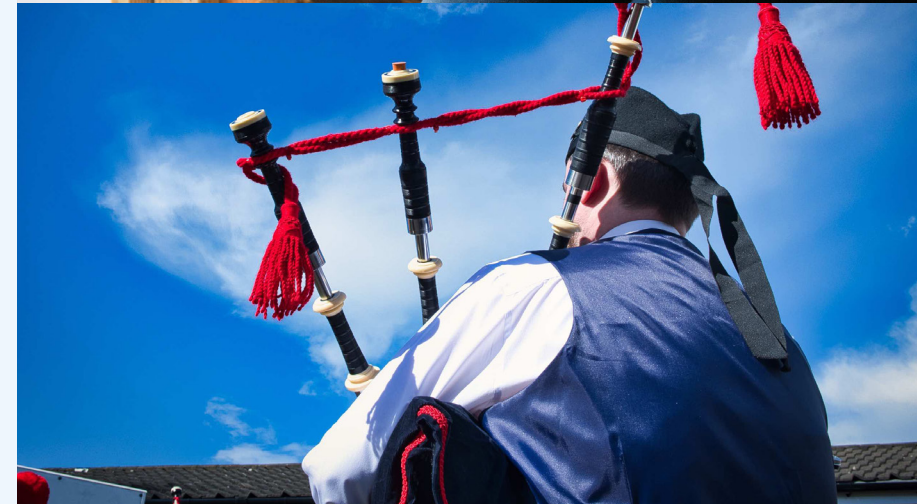
TRACS (Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland)

Business Plan
2025-28



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1. Executive Summary

TRACS is a co-operative sector development organisation for the traditional arts of music, dance, and storytelling which, during the life of this business plan, will also incorporate traditional crafts.

TRACS was founded to provide a coherent collective voice for traditional arts at national and international level; 2025-28 is conceived as a timely period of consolidation and change. The programme for the duration of the plan as a partnership of three artform forums - the Traditional Music Forum, the Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland and the Scottish Storytelling Forum - will build a framework for Scotland's traditions from the community-based to the professional level fit for the modern age. If funding is secured, successful delivery of this plan will invest £3.45 million in strengthening the traditional arts sector in Scotland.

Localism

The traditions with which TRACS works are centuries old and have developed as varied and distinctive cultural expressions in response to local contexts, landscapes and ways of life. They have been vital in supporting ambitions surrounding place-making, which we embed in this plan. Places are often already made in song, dance, music or story, and regularly expressed in local languages of Scots and Gaelic. This plan will support TRACS and its Forums in actively helping communities to “dig where they stand”, to reconnect with their everyday traditions, and to future-proof local distinctiveness.

Principles

We have a solid foundation. Nonetheless we believe there remains much to be done for traditional arts pursuing the principles of **knowledge, practice, access, advocacy** and **sustainability**, all with **community** ownership at their heart. This plan, therefore, is founded on our beliefs about the importance of traditional arts for wellbeing, inclusion and cultural confidence. Thus we seek to emphasise working locally wherever possible, to increase access, as well as to maximise sustainable engagement and participation through making our work relevant to communities of place, practice, and interest.

Our approach is informed by recent initiatives: our Forums' community work across the country, our involvement in Culture Collective with The People's Parish project working in 14 communities nationwide, and our localised festival programming. Our key work for the sector also includes mentoring, skills development for communities and practitioners, and the enhancement of knowledge and awareness of traditional arts.

Tradition relies on continuity, yet we must equally embrace openness to change, evolution and adaptation. The inherent inclusivity and communality of traditional arts - including those practised by communities who have chosen to make Scotland their home - will be used as a pathway to support our ambitions for EDI, Fair Work and Sustainability.

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

We are the only arts-based organisation in Scotland accredited as an NGO (non-governmental organisation) advisor to UNESCO on the 2003 Convention for ICH, and this status is central to our plan and aims. This international agreement seeks to celebrate and foster traditional arts and folk cultures, and the UK's ratification of the Convention in spring 2024 provides a vital opportunity to amplify their role in Scottish society through our collective work in delivering this plan. Echoing UNESCO's use of the term “living heritage” to describe ICH, our vision is to position living heritage at the heart of life in Scotland.

Tradition relies on continuity, yet we must equally embrace openness to change, evolution and adaptation.



Resilience

The plan marks a major aspirational change for TRACS as an organisation; thus it is axiomatic that additional funding is required to carry out the most ambitious work plan in our history. TRACS will evolve from a collaborative body coordinating shared interests and services, to an organisation which fully establishes its status as a sector leader in Scotland and internationally. Building on the success of our flagship event, the Scottish International Storytelling Festival, we will use our programmes and festivals as showcases to raise the profile and status of all our traditional artforms, locally and globally.

As a sector development organisation, we recognise that our financial future essentially relies on public funding. We undertake to use our work over the next three years to demonstrate the vibrant role traditional arts have to play in public life. Our work plans are all underpinned by making the case that our traditions can be sustainably maintained only through a robust community-led approach, and meaningful collaboration. These are the grassroots from which quality and ambition spring to support and develop the excellence of our leading traditional performers on the world stage.

TRACS has methodically built up the capacity and resilience to carry out the necessary work, such that in the next three years we can enhance our ability to deliver our aims successfully in a measured yet impactful way. Our approaches to planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation have been redesigned under new leadership. Alongside this is a refresh of our governance through new mechanisms which seek better to support board involvement and collaborative working across existing and envisaged Forums.

Our work will also ensure the resilience of the sector itself, fit to face the various challenges surrounding funding, demographics, and societal change. We assume the responsibility to ensure that we support traditional arts in an environmentally sustainable way, recognising various areas of vulnerability and commonality. A major aspect of our plan is to help the sector to document itself as a means of supporting practice, expanding knowledge and increasing awareness of traditional arts in wider society. In short, we will not only sustain Scotland's traditions and communities, but interact with other traditions globally, raising local voices together.

Our work plans are all underpinned by making the case that our traditions can be sustainably maintained only through a robust community-led approach, and meaningful collaboration.



2. Who We Are

TRACS is Scotland's collective voice for living heritage: our shared traditions of music, song, dance, storytelling, crafts, customs and local languages.

Established in 2012, TRACS is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO SC043009). We incorporate, as our constituent members, three artform Forums - each one a membership organisation and separately-constituted SCIO with its own board:

Scottish Storytelling Forum (SSF) SC052330, est. 1992

SSF is a diverse network supporting Scotland's storytelling culture, and curates a directory of 170 accredited professional storytellers.

Traditional Music Forum (TMF) SC042867, est. 2004

With over 130 member organisations nationwide, TMF seeks to maximise the potential of traditional music in Scotland.

Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland (TDFS) SC045085, est. 2014

TDFS is a network of over 220 members advocating for all forms of traditional and social dance practised in Scotland, with the aim of getting more people dancing.

During the life of this plan, we intend to support the development of a Traditional Crafts Forum, informed by recent research with the sector.

2.1 Why TRACS Exists

Recognising that traditional artforms have always interacted, TRACS exists to offer support and shared services to its three Forums and to enhance their impact through a range of projects on cross-cutting themes, cross-artform collaboration, strategic development and collective advocacy for the sector overall.

We trace our origins to the 2010 Ministerial Working Group on Traditional Arts, responding to the need to develop a broader based

networking organisation. Several organisations working collaboratively makes for a more resilient, sustainable footing in a sector that has often been on the margins of the cultural mainstream. In promoting a collective platform for traditional arts, this reduces the risk of fragmentation and diffuse voices after several decades of vital work in bringing the sector together.

We estimate that across the Forums and their memberships, we represent over **25,000** traditional arts practitioners and participants in communities across the country.

2.2 What We Do

TRACS has a development and leadership role in enhancing the position of traditional music, dance and storytelling within Scotland's communities and cultural life. Through our Forums' distinct yet often interwoven programmes of work, we support the practice of, the increased knowledge of, and access to the traditional arts at all levels.

We offer a range of community programmes, workshops, festivals and development support for our practitioner networks, as well as information, resources and learning opportunities for the wider public. We aim to work in sustainable ways, both environmentally and in furthering the transmission of traditional artforms which are an essential part of Scotland's cultural ecosystem.

Focussing on locally-based creativity which reflects a sense of place, we regularly work with communities to celebrate the cultures of their local area or lived experience, including those expressed through Scots, Gaelic, and other local languages. In doing so we promote cultural confidence and inclusion.

We also advocate on behalf of the Forums and the sector at local, national and international level in areas such as cultural strategy, community planning and empowerment, health and wellbeing, human rights, and the UNESCO framework for ICH.

2.3. The Context In Which We Work

We work in a context of very positive development for traditional arts, but one which we believe needs greater coordination and collaboration, with attention directed to particular artforms at different stages of development. Much focus has been given to the professional performance level but we see a clear need to support this with a stronger grounding for traditions at community level in the modern global age. Viewed from the ICH perspective, there are a range of traditions in need of safeguarding, including some at significant risk.

TRACS is the lead networking body in the traditional arts infrastructure of Scotland. We include within our wider membership all of the key local and national organisations but we do not duplicate their valuable work. We add value by representing the sector in a range of areas, emphasising the links between the artforms, and giving a concrete identity to the idea of 'traditional arts'.

TRACS bridges the space between community cultural activity, professional performance practice, and a small but vital academic sector which has helped identify and highlight many aspects of the tradition in recent decades. We need to combine these strands to move the safeguarding and celebrating of local cultures into the hands of communities themselves, mirroring the North American concept of 'public folklore'. Communities and practitioners are the experts on their own traditions and should lead on planning their future.

2.4 Our Current Base - The Scottish Storytelling Centre (SSC)

While we work nationwide, our longstanding formal partnership with the SSC in Edinburgh enables our community work from across Scotland to be showcased in the capital, as part of a year-round co-programming approach. The SSC's facilities also support our capacity for digital delivery across the country and beyond.

3. Vision, Mission & Principles

Vision

Living heritage at the heart of life in Scotland

Mission Statement

TRACS exists to empower communities across Scotland to discover, develop and practise their unique traditional arts and heritage in the context of our daily lives.

TRACS Principles



Community

We foster collaboration to enable participation, togetherness, confidence, identity and respect for our living heritage.



Knowledge

We seek excellence to showcase practitioners' expertise, local distinctiveness, and transmission of knowledge across generations and cultures.



Practice

We celebrate and respect tradition, innovation and creativity, as it comes alive through practice, discipline, development and sharing.



Access

We include and support all varieties of traditional culture and demographic backgrounds to enable everyone in Scotland to feel seen, represented and part of the traditional arts community.



Advocacy

We take responsibility for the awareness, lobbying and appreciation of traditional arts and culture.



Sustainability

We safeguard our shared natural environment and traditions.

4. Programme Plans

Over the next three years, we will coordinate a comprehensive nationwide programme of development for traditional arts, including support for our festivals and the Scottish Storytelling Centre. To give context to our Aims and Objectives, we first highlight some key work streams which support the delivery of this plan, through expanding or mainstreaming existing projects and advancing several new areas.

The range and diversity of our overall programme is detailed in the expanded Forum work plans in Appendix 1. We generally work on an annual cycle focussed around a calendar of Forum development work and festivals such as TDFS' Pomegranates Festival of International Traditional Dance and TMF's North Atlantic Song Convention (NASC).

We seek to promote excellence and ambition, engaging effectively with a range of participants, performers and audiences in an inclusive and environmentally mindful way, while sharing Scotland's story with the world. We will embed Fair Work principles into our practices and programmes to support traditional artists at all levels, in a way which is fairly paid, fulfilling, and sustainable. Our Action Plans around EDI, Environmental Sustainability, and Fair Work are contained in Appendices 8, 9 and 10 outlining our objectives over the 2025-28 period.

Alongside each area, we give indicative budget allocations per year from TRACS central funds, although overall amounts spent may differ (e.g. external funding for Forum festivals; ICH priorities delivered through multiple work streams).

4.1 Core Projects

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) - £12,000

A central pillar of our development plans for 2025-28 is our accreditation as NGO advisor to UNESCO for 2003 Convention. We are one of four partners in the ICH Scotland Partnership¹ recognised by Scottish Government, expected to advise UK Government as it ratifies the

Convention. Our development plans for ICH and the Partnership are outlined in Appendix 11.



Forums' Annual Programmes & Festivals - £84,000

TRACS' Forums for music, dance and storytelling - and in time traditional crafts - each carry out distinctive programmes of engagement for their respective artforms, practitioners and communities, including key festivals, and a bid to host the 2026 Europeade folk dance event. Further details in Appendix 1.



The People's Parish (PP) - £75,000

Piloted and developed as part of Culture Collective Covid recovery funding, PP has emerged as TRACS' central methodology for local communities to explore local traditions and ICH based on the principle of celebrating people and place. PP trains practitioners as 'Creative Fieldworkers' to collect local community stories and folklore, and co-produce creative outcomes. Having worked in 14 areas to date, we will mainstream this approach to reach at least 30 areas in total by 2028.



Traditional Arts Mentoring - £25,000

We have supported 56 traditional arts practitioners as mentees to date and developed a cohort of 22 mentors across artforms, areas and languages. We intend to expand this programme to reach another 20 new mentees over the next three years, and explore how we can train additional mentoring coordinators to support other traditional arts organisations.



¹ Alongside Museums Galleries Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland and Creative Scotland. See *Inspiring Connections: Scotland's International Culture Strategy 2024-30*, Scottish Government, March 2024, p. 17

Scottish Storytelling Centre (SSC) - £94,000

We contribute significantly to SSC's programme, co-creating a year-round programme of multi-artform events, festivals and workshops, showcasing high quality performance, as well as providing space for community projects and gatherings. Working closely with this iconic venue allows us to innovate and push the boundaries of traditional arts in an inclusive and progressive way. Details of the programme plans are contained in Appendix 1.



Scottish International Storytelling Festival (SISF) - £245,000

We run the world's largest celebration of storytelling each October: performance, workshops, talks and children's events in Edinburgh with local programming nationwide. SISF is part of the Festivals Edinburgh grouping and will turn 40 years old at the end of this plan. Goals during the 2025-28 period include expanding programming to include other traditional artforms, and showcasing minority traditional cultures from around the world. We will also review Festival operations and staff roles, and succession planning for new artistic leadership. We plan to enhance our community delivery mechanisms such as Story Ripple and Go Local.



The need to document and celebrate 'everyday culture' as a creative wellspring is our motivation.



4.2 New Areas of Work

Traditional Crafts - £15,000

Research conducted with partners² in 2023 aimed to understand the landscape for traditional crafts in Scotland, engaging with over 400 individual craft makers. With natural alliances with other traditional artforms, we anticipate forming a new Traditional Crafts Forum as part of TRACS' structure during the life of this plan. We will begin initial discussions with the sector based on the outcomes of the research published in summer 2024 and a makers' gathering thereafter.



Project Documentation, Citizen Fieldwork and Trad Treasures - £48,500

There is an erroneous assumption that in today's digital world everything is recorded and available. The need to document and celebrate 'everyday culture' (as identified by the Scottish Government Culture Strategy) as a creative wellspring is our motivation to develop a training programme of Citizen Fieldwork for individuals and community groups. They will be able to curate their own local stories and traditions that they wish to carry forward into the future.

We also need to ensure our advocacy is backed up by compelling information around our activities for our networks and the wider public. A Project Documentation Officer will transform our ability to tell the story of TRACS and the communities we work with.

We wish to recognise and document the styles and repertoires of treasured traditional artists to provide stimulus for future creative work. Inspired by the Irish Traditional Music Archive programme, 'Drawing from the Well', Trad Treasures will highlight recognised tradition bearers to enhance the resilience of the sector and transmission of traditional practices.



²Craft Scotland, Creative Scotland, Museums Galleries Scotland

5.0 Aims & Objectives

5.1 Empower communities to use traditional arts to explore and celebrate their local place, connecting with their intangible cultural heritage

The communal nature of traditional arts is a means by which to build thriving communities. Music, dance, song and story are bound together in the same flow of social activity. The UNESCO Convention on ICH states that celebrating and safeguarding local traditions should be led by communities themselves. We can empower people by drawing on local knowledge, tradition, and creative expression through a shared sense of place, and in so doing, support cultural confidence, cohesion and wellbeing. A sense of community is also key to good global citizenship: the inclusiveness, diversity and internationalism of its traditional arts can help Scotland to prosper as a distinctive creative nation connected to the world.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE OF SUCCESS/KPI
TRACS & Forums Support communities across Scotland to connect with their culture and heritage through our networks and programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wide range of community engagement work through TRACS work streams and Forum programming • Development days and workshops in different parts of Scotland, as well as continued offer of Edinburgh / Glasgow locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRACS / Forum presence in over 75% of local authority areas of Scotland • Further Forum network members outside the Central Belt
Festival programmes Use festival programming to offer a range of locally-based trad arts activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SISF: Go Local programming • Big Scottish Story Ripple: 40 storytellers in communities over 120 sessions • Pomegranates Festival: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – free world trad dance sessions in Edinburgh Libraries – CPD workshops for dance artists and dance musicians • North Atlantic Song Convention (NASC): open singing sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 new regions annually as part of Go Local • Ripple: engage over 5,000 people with at least 30% in new schools and community groups • 15 world trad dance sessions with live music delivered in 3 new libraries per year • Up to 12 CPD workshops delivered for 60 practitioners per year • Increased singing participation, feeding into year-round events such as The World's Room singing clubs

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE OF SUCCESS/KPI
Creative Fieldwork Prioritise collaborative place-based working established through People's Parish / Culture Collective model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit trad arts practitioners as Creative Fieldworkers to lead place-based projects, including upskilling and training where required Develop legacy of projects to date, including case studies for future learning and reporting Encourage creative use of archival and newly collected material to emphasise value of such resources as community assets, especially those still in living memory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of 30 community-led People's Parish projects delivered from 2021-28 - 5 per year during the life of this plan A network of over 25 Creative Fieldworkers experienced in delivering place-based projects in communities across the country by 2028 New creative projects inspired by local material, with community legacy of collecting and archiving
Grow local networks and partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand our reach through identifying future community partners to sustain a network of locally-led projects Identify sources of funding to support communities to self-sustain local trad arts projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New projects started and sustained by communities using local partners and funding routes Increased pool of funding sources: town regeneration schemes, local area partnerships, health & social care to support community-led projects
Citizen Fieldwork Pilot a 'Citizen Fieldworkers' programme for local people to gain skills in documenting local folklore and ICH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train local people in recognising, recording and celebrating local traditions and engage with ICH inventory and safeguarding processes Develop a 'tool library' of fieldwork equipment for Citizen Fieldworkers to use Establish routes to collate and publish materials nationally and locally, e.g. partnerships with local and national repositories / museums / archives Research best practice via partners such as the Regional Ethnologies of Scotland Project Encourage engagement with ICH inventory process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New collecting work by a range of community groups capturing ICH and used in local creative projects Greater skills base for trad arts in local communities Material safeguarded and made accessible for creative community use Best practice integrated into our work, supporting a common approach Submissions made to national ICH inventory from every local authority area in Scotland
Adapt ICH learning with a range of partners for enhanced community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the ICH Scotland partnership to explore other models of engagement from the museums and historic environment sector Promote the TRACS People's Parish / public folklore approach to other partners Explore models from Ireland, Finland, Netherlands, North America relating to ICH safeguarding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater collaboration with ICH Scotland partners using PP / public folklore model Increased partnerships with local authorities, third sector organisations to deliver People's Parish / ICH work Evidence of incorporating learning and models from international partners for ICH safeguarding

5.2 Improve the knowledge of Scotland's traditional arts

Sources of knowledge about traditional arts – music and song, dances, stories, customs and traditions, material culture, local folklore of every kind – need to be made more accessible in Scotland. Although there have been major advances in the past decade, the wealth and local variety of traditional arts in wider society could be much better understood. Scotland is fortunate in having major digital and physical collections which document traditional arts practice, but awareness of these needs improvement. Practitioners and local communities need support to engage with existing resources, and to develop their own collections for the future. Scots- and Gaelic-speaking communities being a stronghold of traditional arts, we will use our projects to grow awareness of Scotland's linguistic traditions.

The localised, volunteer- and community-led nature of traditional arts may lead to a lack of focus at a national level. TRACS has a unique overview of the sector across performers, organisations and community activists, alongside researchers, teachers and enthusiasts. We can facilitate the dialogue between levels of government, academia and the third sector that traditional arts need to thrive, in particular through the lens of the ICH Convention.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE OF SUCCESS/KPI
Learning and Development Provide a diverse programme of workshops and learning opportunities for the traditional arts community and wider public through TRACS, Forums and key partners, accessible across Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Forums Workshop Programme • Festival Workshops, Summer Schools and Special Events • Conferences i.e. ICH, Trad Talk • Annual Forums Development Days / Gatherings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim for 80% of attendance of Forum and TRACS workshops • A wide variety of tutors and approaches offered • High satisfaction rate with learning programmes, based on survey results and monitoring
Information sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the flow of information on traditional arts activities within our sector, to external partners and wider public • Develop suite of podcasts for SISF, Scots and Gaelic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New TRACS Website including Forums, Languages, ICH • 'Blethers' relaunch - biannual TRACS publication with a range of key information on trad sector • Up to 20 podcast episodes per year
Intangible Cultural Heritage Increase knowledge of ICH Convention and its potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public awareness campaigns around ICH Convention and central role of trad arts in supporting community confidence and wellbeing • Carry out surveys around public awareness of ICH • Use Citizen Fieldwork outcomes to support communities to engage with local traditions and safeguarding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of trad arts practices to the ICH national list • ICH approaches adjusted in response to survey findings • Projects based on Citizen Fieldwork

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE OF SUCCESS/KPI
Resources & Archive Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signpost key local and national resources for learning, development and context around traditional arts practices • Develop our own accessible, engaging resources for a range of audiences to enhance understanding of traditional arts' diversity, including those of migrant communities in Scotland • Highlight the practice and excellence of key tradition bearers through Trad Treasures strand alongside wider archiving, documentation and creative re-use • Appoint a Project Documentation Officer to record and publicise our activities and assemble a range of information including statistics, audiovisual capture, project logging and evaluation and reporting • Develop wider archiving work to support future access to knowledge and include all artforms • Develop good practice guides on creative community use of archival and newly collected material to revitalise traditions and inspire new work • Make the case to government and other funders for a national traditional arts archive for Scotland and its potential for community creative engagement, cultural confidence and wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater visibility, cohesion and accessibility of key resources • New library, museums and archive partnerships in local regions • New TRACS website including Forums, Languages, ICH • Additional resources produced on traditions of migrant communities to support cultural exchange, inclusiveness and internationalism • Trad Treasures delivered, up to 10 practitioners per year, with creative outputs • Good practice adopted by communities and practitioners through Forum activity, People's Parish and other work streams, e.g. around EDI and languages • Relationship established with suitable repositories for safeguarding of and access to collected material • National trad archive funded as a key national collection, as an ongoing resource for community creativity and inspiration
Sector Research Commission robust and credible research to address gaps in sector knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out survey work for entire trad arts sector, modelled on the Arts Council of Ireland's Trad Arts Survey 2024 • Obtain updated trad crafts research towards the end of the period to monitor progress with the emerging sector as Crafts Forum takes shape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on trad arts sector informs future business planning and TRACS development work for 2028 onwards • Crafts development adjusted in light of initial research outcomes to ensure sustainable development

5.3 Encourage and support the practice of Scotland's traditional arts at all levels

Traditional arts practice includes the acquisition of skills and knowledge, teaching, the making of work, and performance in a variety of settings - from the intimately domestic to the public arena. The traditional arts sector needs to support training, pedagogy, performance skills and related questions of personal and professional development, mentoring, quality and reflection. There is also a responsibility to facilitate access to routes of transmission, ensuring continuity of traditional practices while balancing tradition and innovation, highlighting the relevance and meaning of traditional arts in contemporary society. In addition to established formal routes, the sector needs to develop more non-formal settings to support intergenerational learning and transmission for individuals and communities.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE OF SUCCESS/KPI
Support Practitioners Support individuals of all ages and stages of their development, whether learner, amateur, semi-professional, or professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional sector development opportunities and workshops through our Forum networks, including accredited CPD qualifications • Support 10 practitioners per cycle through Traditional Arts Mentoring Scheme, minimum of 2 cycles • Residencies for traditional dance artists • Apprenticeship schemes for practitioners in consultation with Forums and the sector with clear entry routes and paths of progression • Trad Craft Forum and development support - assess case based on 2023 Trad Crafts survey outcomes • Review rates of pay for our own projects based on existing scales, e.g. storytelling day rates, with a view to setting sector standards • Update trad music non-formal teaching and learning census in 2025 & 2027 • Convene meetings of non-formal education organisations • Create spaces for connection and conviviality to support practice and learning across generations and in community settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 10 CPD courses / workshops per year offered • By 2028, over 80 practitioners across all artforms and regions mentored through Trad Arts Mentoring since inception • An established cohort of at least 30 trained mentors across traditional arts • New mentoring coordinators trained • 20% increase in mentees from under-represented sectors of the traditional arts such as dance, crafts and those with lived experience as Gaelic, Scots, Cant or Beurla Regaird speakers • Over 15 trad dance artists engaged across education, museums and community partners per year • Trad Crafts Forum framework established • Clear pathways for apprenticeships identified and piloted, incl. trad crafts • Sector rates review published • Non-formal teaching census published and analysed to help develop sector • Wider awareness in non-formal education of TRACS & Forum aims • Increased opportunities through accessible sessions and performance spaces i.e. World's Room, Guid Crack Club, Folk Club networks

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE OF SUCCESS/KPI
Safeguarding Artforms and Practices [see also table 5.6 under Sustainability]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted activities to support under-represented or at-risk practices, e.g. Scots song, stepdance, Shetland lace knitting, Traveller languages Highlight the practice and excellence of key tradition bearers of all artforms through Trad Treasures strand alongside wider archiving and documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects delivered supporting practices in need of additional support Greater representation of storytellers, dancers, craftspeople in documentation and archiving work, with creative re-use
Youth Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools learning and advocacy programmes through TRACS work streams, Forums and festivals Build on existing relationships with Sgoil Chiùil na Gàidhealtachd (Plockton) and Royal Conservatoire to harness the skills of students and graduates to support practice and transmission in communities Develop other relationships with Further and Higher Education to develop network of trad arts, folklore and fieldwork skills in local areas. e.g. UHI, Elphinstone (Aberdeen), Celtic & Scottish Studies, including audiovisual documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools programmes delivered in up to 4 new locations per year Youth caucuses established by Forums Plockton Music School - existing Finland Exchange developed further Additional students with folklore and fieldwork skills to future-proof delivery of TRACS aims in local communities
Sector Support and Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with the Traditional Arts Working Group to consider how best to support the sector's needs around practice, ensuring greater representation for non-music artforms Develop European Folk Network (EFN) events and engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TRACS / Forum involvement in development initiatives for practitioners Increased participation and visibility for Scottish / European Folk Day

5.4 Make traditional arts **accessible** throughout Scotland

Traditional arts are inherently accessible, enabling artistic participation for all levels and abilities with the potential to provide entry points into wider cultural activities. We believe that opportunities to engage with traditional arts should be more readily available, and that this is best achieved through facilitating access in the communities where people work and live. Used in this way, the traditional arts can support renewal and innovation as an important source of cultural energy and confidence. Traditional artists can bring communities together to tell their own story, especially that of ‘everyday culture’ which is often overlooked. Emphasising the value of local community culture helps demonstrate their immediacy and relevance to our society today. We include the ICH of ritual events and celebrations which are part of the fabric of community life in every culture; these can be a valuable focal point for cultural exchange and inclusion.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE OF SUCCESS/KPI
Forums & TRACS: Access for Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower and support our Forums to carry out diverse programmes of work, including with new communities of practice and interest and a range of ages and abilities • Explore opportunities to access traditional arts for under-represented groups, e.g. Forum work around inclusion of learning-disabled and neurodiverse performers; work with the BIT Collective on gender parity in trad arts • Offer more awareness work / training in Scotland’s languages as part of Languages Policy re-development • Bursary Schemes to combat geographical and financial barriers for apprentice schemes, workshops and in-person events • Provide a range of events online including on-demand content to suit those with a busy schedule or caring responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSF develops Deaf Storytellers Branch • SSC co-programming engages with a wide range of practitioners from under-represented groups • Strategies and action plans developed with Forums and sector partners to support access and representation for a diverse range of groups • Regular language awareness sessions, themed events, opportunities to use languages, e.g. suite of podcasts year-round including Scots, Gaelic, BSL, Traveller/Nawken languages • Bursaries support more practitioners from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and a range of lived experiences • Flexible delivery of events and workshops achieved to support practitioners with a range of needs

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE OF SUCCESS/KPI
Forums & TRACS: Public Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and support performance in formal and informal contexts (home, community, venues, festivals) • Subsidised ticketing, free places, pay it forward and pay what you can schemes • Delivery using a range of languages and methods • Increase geographical spread nationally, in Gaelic and Scots speaking areas, as well as cultural 'cold spots' such as post-war urban housing schemes • Develop a Digital Delivery Plan, building on pandemic experience to enhance digital access • Work on the principle of ICH 'in' Scotland, offering opportunities to engage with traditional arts practitioners from other parts of the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater participation in a wide range of TRACS and Forum activities by people from a range of backgrounds, abilities and ages • Wider range of TRACS & Forum activities in new areas of the country • BSL Interpretation for TRACS events • English translations or summaries of performances / material in Scots and Gaelic for migrant communities / New Scots • Increased access through digital means • Greater visibility of ICH and traditions of migrant communities in our programme
International exchange and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festivals (SISF, Pomegranates, Europeade, NASC) bringing international performers and audiences to Scotland • International projects and collaborations • ICH UNESCO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festivals continue to attract a range of local traditions from around the world • Europeade successfully hosted in 2026 • Appropriate collaborations undertaken, mindful of environmental impact • TRACS' and Scotland's profile grows in ICH UNESCO discourse
Audience Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research perceived barriers to participation for both practitioners and audiences • Increase monitoring and evaluation of our audience impact • Engage with other trad arts audience research e.g. Access Folk at University of Sheffield, considering a protected characteristics and lived experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers identified and mitigated or removed • Programme planning informed and tailored through evaluation outcomes • Research refines approaches to engagement, ensuring wider access and inclusion for under-represented groups

5.5 Advocate for traditional arts as a key part of cultural and community life

Traditional arts have developed considerably in terms of state support over the past 40 years. However, the case still needs to be made continually for recognition and respect for traditional arts as a vital, living aspect of Scottish life, especially in education, the media and government. As a flagship for traditional arts and ICH, TRACS must work in partnership with a wide range of civic and civil bodies, to demonstrate how our approach can help fulfil objectives around everyday culture, community cohesion, inclusion, wellbeing and sustainability. We recognise that traditions are not static: they have a past, a present and, crucially, a future. The collaborative work of TRACS and the Forums, alongside communities, organisations and practitioners provides a coherent and confident structure enabling traditional arts to flourish as a key part of Scotland's cultural life.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE OF SUCCESS/KPI
Advocate to Partners, Networks, Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and maintain relationships in civic and civil society through cross-party groups, Culture Counts, Creative Lives, Music Education Partnership Group, European Folk Network, COSLA • Conduct sector research as a basis for effecting change • Lobby for traditional arts officer roles in local government and arms-length cultural trusts • Continue to participate in the Traditional Arts Working Group at Creative Scotland to collectively address issues for the sector • Become the lead agency in Scotland on ICH for traditional arts, local folklore and traditional crafts - "Living Heritage" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings with relevant groups and published contributions to reports and consultations on behalf of trad arts • Long-term support via government funding • Recognition from local and national government of the key role that traditional arts have in community development, regeneration and wellbeing through inclusion in policies and funded programmes • More traditional arts officers at local level • Issues for the sector addressed through collaborative projects via Trad Arts Working Group with CS support • TRACS' profile established as an NGO advisor on ICH; seen as lead agency, working with the ICH Scotland Partnership to advise government
Awareness raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure traditional arts representation in the public sphere through awareness campaigns, effective marketing and engagement work • Deliver Marketing Plan objectives [see Appendix 7] • Engage with formal and non-formal education partners to ensure traditional arts have a more visible presence • Advocate for the status and role of performers as key contributors to Scotland's cultural ecology who should be supported to develop their practice, and if desired, livelihood as professional performers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of marketing objectives delivered, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – National and regional trad arts news coverage increased by 5% annually – Social Media - online community grown by 5% annually for both TRACS and SISF • Awareness-raising and learning resources for formal and non-formal education produced • Traditional performers are empowered through greater recognition and respect for traditional arts practice in terms of improved fees and fair work principles

5.6 Use traditional arts as a vehicle to communicate practical and positive messages about environmental and cultural sustainability

With the intimate relationship between everyday ways of folk life and the environment, it is clear that traditional arts can be a natural ally in meeting the challenges of the climate crisis. There are many parallels between climate justice, cultural respect and the international frameworks of human rights. Working with minority, marginalised and at-risk cultures both within Scotland and from around the world, we are duty bound to use our insights and expertise in these areas to help address the climate agenda. Questions around safeguarding, viability and continuity of traditional practices are very current priorities for ICH, with obvious links to climate concerns. Through nurturing community connections, TRACS should be a sector leader in using traditional arts to support sustainable futures locally, nationally and globally.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE OF SUCCESS/KPI
Sustainability of Transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that our aims consider safeguarding principles and transmission routes to support continuity of traditions • Heritage Crafts “Red List” approach considered for traditional arts at risk • Convene working group to explore issues around transmission of traditional styles and repertoires relevant to local needs and contexts, with community and practitioner input, drawing on existing initiatives such as Fèisean nan Gàidheal’s Fuaran project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities and practitioners empowered to document and pass on traditions • Trad Treasures programme delivered and used to sustain transmission • At-risk practices identified and supported based on community desires • Working group findings complement and inform ICH Partnership activity, as well as mentoring and apprenticeship schemes, Forum activity and the formal and non-formal education sectors
Sustainability for TRACS Operations & Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with Creative Carbon Adapting our Culture toolkit • Deliver our Environmental Sustainability Action Plan [Appendix 10] • Produce a Trad Arts Green Guide for the sector • Use our position as a networking and advocacy body to influence actions around climate for the sector in working towards Net Zero • Emphasise how the principles of the UNESCO ICH Convention on safeguarding local cultural practices also extend to the climate justice agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational adaptation plan developed as part of our Environmental Sustainability Action Plan • Trad Arts Green Guide adopted and implemented by the sector • Successful delivery of our Environmental Sustainability Action Plan targets including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reduced office carbon emissions by 75% – Reduced carbon emissions from air travel by 70% – Ensuring TRACS is climate resilient and adaptive to change – A local, community-centred and ‘climate just’ approach

continued on following page

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE OF SUCCESS/KPI
Sustainability for Programming & Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus TRACS programming on environmentally sustainable practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Engage with ecological themes in our programming including events within the natural environment – Support practitioners who are working ecologically and sustainably, and encourage others to adapt their practices – Emphasise localism, proximity to target audiences, and working with people in their local places through local hubs of activity such as People's Parish, SISF Go Local, Forum work – Encourage participation in events and activities with low environmental impact, e.g. community singarounds, dances, storytelling clubs, and crafts using renewable materials – Continue to build on SISF partnership with Earth Charter International, global narratives with ecological connection – Continue working with marginalised and endangered cultures from areas of the world at high risk from climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced participation in SISF programme strand Global Lab • Multi-venue appearances for international performers who travel to participate at our festivals (avoidance of any one-off) • Enhanced programming partnerships in the natural environment, e.g. with RBGE, NatureScot, Borders Forest Trust • The majority of our own projects are delivered locally, with more place-based initiatives offered from amongst our wider networks • Earth Stories Collection developed further through SISF • New cultural exchanges with local traditional cultures from around the world highlighting themes of cultural equity and climate justice



6. Marketing & Communications

With TRACS' sectoral knowledge and position as an NGO advisor to UNESCO on Intangible Cultural Heritage, it is our aim to position ourselves as the lead agency in Scotland on ICH for traditional arts, local folklore and traditional crafts. Our Marketing focus for 2025-2028 is to further increase the awareness of TRACS and its aims as an organisation, and to strengthen advocacy for the sector both locally and internationally.

Marketing Position Statement:

TRACS (Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland) is a co-operative network which champions our shared traditions of music, song, storytelling, dance, crafts, customs and local languages. We empower communities across Scotland, to discover, develop and practise their unique traditional arts and heritage in the context of our daily lives.

What Makes Us Different?

- TRACS is unique in encompassing all traditional artforms (music, dance and storytelling)
- TRACS is the sole arts organisation in Scotland accredited as an NGO advisor to UNESCO for the ICH Convention
- TRACS' combination of community, practice, research and advocacy - with events programmes running across the year and across Scotland
- TRACS' extended Network and Membership across all traditional arts and culture in Scotland (combination of Scottish Storytelling Forum, Traditional Music Forum, Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland)
- TRACS' localism and focus on enabling communities to flourish and develop their own cultural identity

Sector Partnerships

A wide range of organisations and individuals is active in supporting aspects of the traditional arts. TRACS seeks to work with others, fostering creative partnerships and collaborating at local and national levels in order to maximise delivery and effectiveness, ensuring that efforts are not duplicated but instead that we increase our impact.

Brand Essence:

What value can we bring to our audiences in-person and across our digital channels?

Warmth: Community is at the heart of what we do. We seek to create a sense of belonging, inclusion and welcome wherever we are present.

Expertise: We are passionate advocates for traditional arts, educating, entertaining and supporting our community with confidence.

Accessibility: We are helping others access and understand our shared cultural heritage, being inclusive by connecting generations and people across different cultures, enabling the practice of traditional arts and culture.

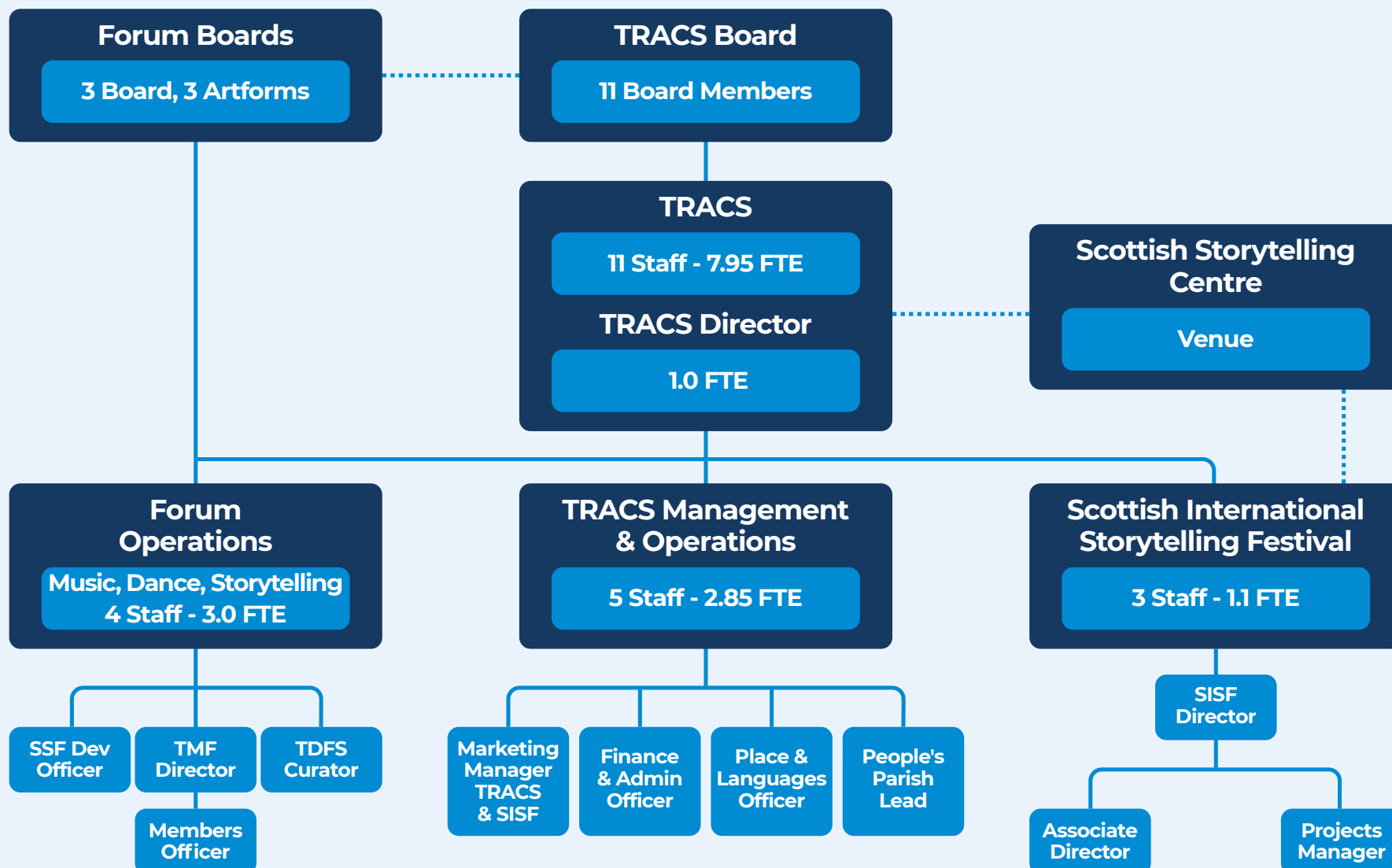
We have budgeted for an approximate spend of £59,000 per annum for Marketing support (not including staff costs) across TRACS projects, SISF and Forums. More detailed Marketing & Communications objectives and actions are outlined in Appendix 7.

Increase the awareness of TRACS and its aims and strengthen advocacy for the sector.



7. Resourcing & Operations

Current Organisational Structure



7.1 Staffing

7.1.1 TRACS & Forums Staffing

TRACS currently employs a total of 7.95 regular FTE staff, with an anticipated increase to at least 9.35 FTE over the next three years. TRACS staff, like many of its projects, are spread across Scotland with a hot-desking office base at the Scottish Storytelling Centre (SSC) on Edinburgh's Royal Mile. Projects are tracked through fortnightly staff meetings and online teamworking portals, plus a once a month all-staff day at our office base.

7.1.2 Future Staffing - TRACS

During the lifetime of the plan, a review of staffing across key projects will take place, seeking to give a range of roles clearer definition and responsibilities. This includes the Scottish International Storytelling Festival, which will undergo a review of operations, including recruitment of new leadership once the current Artistic Director retires.

In order to fulfil the aims and implement the actions proposed in the 2025-28 plan, the following additional staff will be required:

- 1. Project Documentation Officer** [0.6 FTE] to support the documentation, evaluation, archiving and visibility of TRACS and Forum activities, plus training and support for other staff and freelancers.
- 2. SISF Marketing Officer** [0.8 FTE, annualised hours] to enable the TRACS Marketing Manager to focus on core TRACS activities related to our expanded programme.
- 3. Traditional Crafts and ICH staffing support** on a project basis initially until future funding options become clear.

In early 2025, a Depute Director [0.4 FTE] will be appointed as part of reshaping existing staffing, to provide additional senior management capacity. Current roles will be redefined around the retirement of

the TMF Director who presently carries out some senior project management and advocacy functions for TRACS.

7.1.3 Future Staffing - Forums

Forums each have a 1.0 FTE role in place to support their work plans, line-managed by the TRACS Director, with input from the Forum boards. Forums will have the flexibility to discuss apportioning elements of their allocated project funds (see 8.3) towards staffing requirements if additional capacity is needed, e.g. marketing support for specific aspects of their programme.

7.1.4 Staff Development & Training

Our staff development objectives for 2025-28 focus on job security, team working, work-life balance, skills and opportunities, detailed in our Fair Work Policy and Action Plan in Appendix 9. We use professional HR support provided by SCVO, and we conduct Personal Development Reviews with staff each January. Our Employee Handbook was given a thorough refresh in 2023 and will continued to be reviewed, supported by new mechanisms such as Effective Voice routes for staff via our board.

7.2 Governance & Management

7.2.1 TRACS Board

TRACS has a non-executive board of up to 15 trustees, including Office Bearers (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer). The current TRACS trustees and their relevant experience are listed in Appendix 3.

The Board of Trustees is legally responsible for the organisation's operations. This is underpinned by a set of Principles and Protocols [Appendix 4.] agreed between TRACS and its three member Forums, and a newly revised Constitution (approved at EGM April 2024).

The TRACS Board meets approximately 6 times a year including an annual all-Forums strategic discussion day in September, which usually incorporates the AGM.

7.2.2 Board Sub-groups

We plan to increase the use of board sub-groups and committees to improve planning, monitoring and evaluation. In particular, we will activate the board to support our objectives around Fair Work and Effective Voice for staff through offering additional routes for staff feedback. These are detailed in our Fair Work Policy in Appendix 9.

The Board currently devolves into 3 strategic sub-groups, which meet on an ad hoc basis to discuss specific governance matters in detail and then report their findings back to the full Board. Where appropriate, the TRACS Director sits in attendance:

1. Finance and Risk (Chair, Treasurer + at least 1 Ordinary Member)
2. Governance and Constitution (Chair + at least 2 Ordinary Members)
3. HR (at least 2 Ordinary Members)

We have a range of development targets for our board during the 2025-28 period, which are listed in Appendix 3.

7.2.3 Operational Management

TRACS applies for and administers core funding for TRACS and the Forums, providing shared services including contracting of staff, HR, training and overall marketing. Collective voice is fostered through board meeting structures, a Chairs sub-groups and an annual all-Forums day each September to consider overall strategic development.

On a day-to-day basis, the ultimate responsibility for all TRACS' activities, strategies and management control rests with the TRACS Director. The Director has a critical role in maintaining good internal communications, underpinning effective working across the TRACS team and between the boards of TRACS and the Forums. The Director reports directly to the Board, attending all meetings in an advisory capacity, and is line-managed by the TRACS Chair.

We will formalise a 'Management and Operations' branch of TRACS staff comprising the Director, Depute Director, Marketing & Communications Manager and Finance & Administration Officer to support our planning and monitoring processes.

7.3 Other Key Resources

7.3.1 Website

During the initial phase of this plan we will finalise a new website for which funding has already been designated. Our principles around knowledge, access and advocacy will inform the web development process. This will be a major opportunity to:

- redesign and relaunch our public profile in line with our marketing plans, including a review of branding and marketing guidelines [see section 6]
- enhance our public engagement, including internationally
- offer more accessible resources for practitioners, communities and the public
- support collation and publication of fieldwork and ICH material around our various projects and work streams
- launch our Digital Delivery Plan for more inclusive engagement
- develop fundraising and donation channels.

7.3.1 Audio-visual Equipment

We will invest a modest amount from general reserves to enhance our audio-visual equipment to support fieldworkers and communities with local projects and ICH work, as well as the proposed Project Documentation Officer role.

8. Finance

8.1 Recent Funding Context

Since 2015, we have been a Creative Scotland 'Regularly-Funded Organisation' (RFO), our principal source of operational funding, which runs until April 2025. Our multi-year funding request of £2.24m is made against a backdrop of RFO funding at the following levels:

2015-2018: £1,270,500

2018-2021: £940,000 (sustained for 7th year, 2024-25)

We also receive a revenue grant of £41,000 per annum from the City of Edinburgh Council as part of its Literature Partnership grouping with the Edinburgh City of Literature Trust, Scottish Poetry Library, and the Scottish Book Trust (renewed for a further three years from April 2024).

Other recent projects have been supported by targeted funds from Creative Scotland (e.g. mentoring, Creative Industries, languages support). The Scottish International Storytelling Festival has been supported by PLACE (Platforms for Creative Excellence) and Festivals EXPO. From 2021, we received £380,000 through Culture Collective, pandemic recovery funds, which supported The People's Parish.

8.2 Financial Plans & Projections

To deliver this business plan, we envisage our activities and operations will cost an average of £1.15m per annum, investing a total of £3.45m in traditional arts in Scotland over three years.

To enable this plan to be implemented, a funding request averaging £746,000 per annum has been sought from Creative Scotland's Multi-Year Funding programme. This represents a significant increase compared to RFO funding to date, for the following reasons:

- the transformative effect of additional Culture Collective funding received through the pandemic which we now wish to mainstream into our programme

- the combining of several other targeted funding streams through Creative Scotland such as our Mentoring Programme
- increasing staff numbers modestly to support new areas of work in response to sector research findings, e.g. around ICH, traditional crafts
- the introduction of new streams including: Project Documentation, Citizen Fieldwork, Trad Treasures
- the ambition to give Forums greater certainty and flexibility by allocating specific Forum budgets for each year of the plan
- building in headroom to allow for staff and freelancer pay increases to support our Fair Work priorities
- the likelihood of reduced festivals funding from other sources in the short term

Our detailed budget and financials are contained in Appendix 2. Expenditure will be broadly similar for each of the three years, with slight uplifts in 2026 around one-off events. For Year One, our planned expenditure is as follows:

2025-26	%	£
Creative Programme (including project staff)	60%	685,500
Core staffing TRACS and Forums	24%	275,000
Marketing & Communications costs (excl. staff)	5%	59,000
Mentoring and Training	2.7%	31,000
Premises	3%	32,000
Administrative costs (excl. staffing)	1.3%	15,000
Access costs	1%	11,000
Contingency on creative prog portion	3%	30,025
Total	100%	1,138,525

8.3 Forum Support & Finances

The plan will see annual investment of approximately £70,000 per existing Forum from TRACS central funds across projects, festivals, development, board support, marketing, staffing costs and travel. We seek to support each artform equitably and Forum networks can also benefit from TRACS-wide programmes.

It should be noted that Forum activities outlined in our work plan are not wholly reliant on funding through TRACS; the individual SCIOs have the ability to seek additional funding from other sources for specific projects.

8.4 Funding Diversification

From a future planning, resilience and risk perspective, we recognise a need to diversify our funding mix and we will establish a working group with the Board to take forward a new fundraising strategy, including exploring opportunities through our SCVO membership and the Funding Scotland portal. We will also draw on the experience and networks of our boards and partners. This may involve, if considered appropriate and feasible, a fundraiser role as part of our staff.

8.5 Restricted, Designated & Reserve Funds

In the initial year, we expect to carry forward some restricted funds from the 2024-25 period. Additionally, funds designated at March 2023 from our general reserves may be spent in part in 2025-26, subject to the outturns of our 2024 external audit due to be completed in June 2024.

Our distinct Stability Reserve Fund, presently £101,000, represents approximately six months' basic operating costs. We have increased this reserve by 25% over the past three years. An increase in activity and staffing to implement this plan means additional provision is required; where resources allow, we aim to increase the fund annually by 10%, giving a cumulative increase of 33% by 2028.

8.6 Financial Management, Oversight & Planning

Following the appointment of our new Director in April 2023, new financial management processes were introduced.

We now use Xero cloud accounting, supported by training from our auditors. We can track income and expenditure more closely in alignment with our work streams, supporting clearer financial reporting. A new Finance & Administration Officer has brought additional focus, oversight and transparency to financial processes. The accounts system requires regular reconciliation and the system has a range of advanced payment approval and reporting functions.

Online banking access and debit cards are held by the Director and Finance Officer. We will explore offering limited charge cards to allow for smoother operational use, devolving trust and authority to staff. Funds for specific projects will continue to be devolved to individual Forums, and budget allocations for common operational costs, e.g. travel, help track our carbon impact.

The TRACS Director and Board Treasurer prepare annual budgets to be approved by the TRACS Board. From 2024, our annual external audit process has been brought forward by four months from September to May. This will allow for:

- earlier clarity around Restricted, Designated and Unrestricted funds
- outline budget setting in the autumn of each year
- greater certainty to aid forward planning for TRACS and the Forums

The audit includes scrutiny of our processes including fraud prevention and risks to the business including analysis of its status as a Going Concern.

We recognise that we need additional professional financial management experience on the board and staff. We will provide further training as part of our development plans and risk management, to increase the number of staff and trustees with financial oversight. We aim to recruit additional board members with financial skills by the start of the 2025-26 year.

9. Risk

A major review of our organisational structures has taken place under our new Director since April 2023, including a brand new Risk Register, contained in Appendix 6. It considers external factors, governance, people, operations, finance & funding, environmental sustainability, and reputation.

9.1 Key Risks At Present

Public Sector Funding [Risk Register item E1, F2]

We rely on funding from public sources, as a network development and advocacy organisation which cannot generate significant commercial income. We need to sustain a strong case for support, demonstrating the effectiveness of collective voice and responding to demand and the needs of the sector, practitioners and communities.

The Future of the Scottish Storytelling Centre (SSC) [E3]

The future ownership of the SSC may change. While there may be a short term risk here, there is also an opportunity, as we recognise the need to improve our visibility and footprint nationwide. As of December 2023, we are operationally independent of the SSC / Church of Scotland systems and can operate administratively from a different location if necessary.

Capacity [P2]

Careful workflow management is required to ensure effective delivery. With the scale of planned activity, priorities need to be carefully set and work spread across the year, supporting staff wellbeing and productivity. Additional staff resource will improve capacity around SISF in particular.

Coordination Across Forums [O5]

The autonomy of Forums allows for flexibility and innovation, but also risks silo-working. We will enhance collaboration through increased team gatherings and information sharing. At governance level, regular Board Chairs meetings and all-Forums days will support our collective approach, as well as enhanced Director involvement with Forum activities.

9.2 Risk Monitoring

The TRACS board Finance & Risk Sub-groups monitors and updates the Risk Register at six-monthly intervals along with the Board Chair, the TRACS Director and Finance & Administration Officer. The Risk Register has been prepared initially by the TRACS Chair who has extensive senior management experience in the charity sector. We have also assessed our risk using PESTLE and SWOT analyses, which are contained in Appendix 5.

10. Monitoring & Evaluation

10.1 Strategic Monitoring & Evaluation Approach

Across all of our activities, from the planning to the completion and review stages, we continue to ask these key questions:

- Are we benefiting our Forums, their networks and artforms?
- Are we strengthening the wider sector?
- Does our work have clear community benefit?
- Are we safeguarding traditional practices?
- How does our work align with Creative Scotland themes?
- Does it help fulfil our principles and aims?

10.2 Existing Processes

We have existing monitoring processes in place as current recipients of Creative Scotland RFO, local authority grants, Festivals EXPO and PLACE funding. We will continue to refine these approaches to support our activity planning and inform our EDI, Environmental and Fair Work plans. Our policies and action plans are dated and timetabled into our annual calendar for review by a new board sub-groups.

10.3 Short & Long-term Approaches

Short term review	Longer term review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Logging • Fortnightly Management & Ops meetings • Fortnightly team meetings online • Monthly all-staff team days on site • Staff 1-to-1s with Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly board meetings and reporting, both TRACS and Forums • Board subgroups inc Annual Policies Review • Board Chairs Group • Annual strategic review at all-Forums meeting • PDR process with staff • Sector surveys, research and analysis

10.4 Data Sources

Programming & Audience Research

The Scottish Storytelling Centre box office captures a range of festival, workshop and events data from our programmes. Engagement is monitored through a range of subscription schemes, memberships, festival passes, and loyalty rewards for return visits.

Statistics

We compile annual statistics for our existing funder reporting through:

- Surveys and questionnaires across events, festivals and Forums capturing both quantitative and qualitative data
- Participant feedback, customer satisfaction scores, audience figures (in person and online)
- Recording visits and service users
- Postcode analyses
- Participant demographics, where appropriate
- Performer surveys, including EDI data
- Creative Carbon systems and toolkits, including claimexpenses portal for majority of TRACS and Forum activity

Project Logging

Piloted in 2024-25, our project log system captures project data from initial proposal through to completion and legacy development, outlining key staff roles, responsibilities, funding and timelines. This ensures effective handover, identifies gaps and monitors capacity. The log is reviewed regularly by the Management & Operations group.

Staff are asked to identify at an early stage how projects align with Creative Scotland themes around Quality & Ambition, Engagement, EDI, Environmental Sustainability, Fair Work and International activity. This challenges us to interrogate projects' value and purpose at the outset, and ensures effective and timely reporting is achievable.

Sector Surveys

TRACS has a responsibility to conduct research on behalf of the sector and its artforms. Outcomes relating to our aims around public awareness and perception can be less straightforward to measure. Inspired by our Culture Collective experience, we will develop qualitative data approaches, including through the proposed Project Documentation Officer post, to look at how our community work makes people feel.

We will draw on examples from the Wellbeing Economy Alliance Scotland, Creative Lives, GlasgowLife's Artists in Communities projects and other sectors and international partners as appropriate.

TRACS has a responsibility to conduct research on behalf of the sector and its artforms.





Living Heritage at the Heart of Life in Scotland

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