

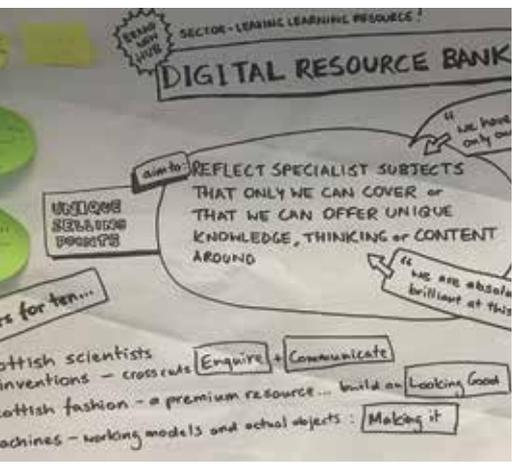
National  
Museums  
Scotland



# Across Scotland

Working to engage and inspire

National Strategy 2016–2020



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National Museums Scotland is proud of its contribution to Scotland's heritage and culture. Millions of people from across the country and across the world visit our four museums.

We care for the nation's treasures – one of the most diverse national collections in the world. We are an essential support to Scotland's heritage and cultural ecosystem and we reach many communities across the country.

In spring 2016 National Museums Scotland launched a new Strategic Plan, which sets out our priorities for the next five years. The Strategic Plan includes a much stronger emphasis on the effect we have 'beyond our walls' – cultural, social, educational and economic. Our work has always been outwardly focused, and we aim to increase its impact.

As part of that plan, we took the opportunity to review our national programmes, our performance to date and priorities for the future. This document outlines our new approach to working nationally, building on a ten-year track record of collaboration and support, and finding a new focus to increase the positive benefits we can offer.

We aim to ensure the value of our collections, expertise and programmes is felt as widely as possible beyond the walls of our museums Across Scotland.

Dr Gordon Rintoul CBE  
Director, National Museums Scotland

# A truly National Approach

In the past ten years National Museums Scotland has worked with people, places and collections across Scotland in many different ways.

We have provided thousands of objects on loan, created several touring exhibitions, devised and delivered multiple learning activities and events, offered expert advice and training to hundreds of staff at other museums, and built new channels to reach those who cannot visit us.

In these and other ways, we have been active in every part of Scotland.

This reflects our continued drive to share our collections as widely as possible, to increase knowledge, and to inspire people from every background in every part of the country.

This new National Strategy builds on our strong track record and sets out our priorities for the next four years (2016–2020).

Our National Programme in numbers.  
In **2015/2016** our work across Scotland  
included the following activity:

**135** museums  
supported

engaging through training,  
loans, touring and community  
engagement projects, talks and  
expert advice

**2,349**

items loaned

to 93 venues,  
including 275 items  
to 10 new venues

**250**

training  
experiences

to 164 museum staff, working  
in 75 organisations across  
26 different local authorities

**21%** increase in  
visitor numbers

at four venues across Scotland through  
the touring exhibition *Next of Kin*

**53,000**

pupils engaged

from over 500 schools  
via workshops, using our  
teacher-led tours or our  
handling session resources

**18,000**

people engaged

through our outreach programmes, including  
over 7,500 subscribers worldwide in our first  
Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) inspired  
by our major exhibition *Photography:  
A Victorian Sensation*

**67** acquisitions  
supported through  
the National Fund  
for Acquisitions

worth over £1 million  
enriching the collections  
of 27 organisations across  
19 different local authorities.



Picture courtesy of South Lanarkshire Council

## National Commemoration: Next of Kin

This First World War Centenary project, exploring the personal stories of separation and loss experienced by Scottish families, involves partners across Scotland, bringing national and local collections together in a touring exhibition to eight museums. Displays are jointly customised at each venue to include locally relevant content, sharing skills in areas such as marketing, and creating new film, educational and digital resources. Thanks to funding from the Scottish Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund this project has shown how investment in high profile national collaborations can pay great dividends, boosting the profile and capacity of local museums, increasing visitor numbers and inspiring audiences.



© Kat Gollock

## Inspiring New Perspectives: Panjab Connections

Working with the Young Sikh Leaders network at Glasgow Gurdwara and professional artists we researched the history and collections associated with the Maharaja Duleep Singh, the UK's first Sikh resident who settled in Scotland in the nineteenth century. This creative project helped the group to explore the history of Sikh culture in Scotland while learning new skills in film, photography and jewellery design.

# Aspiration

Our vision sets out what we aspire to achieve through our national programmes:

*To engage and inspire people across Scotland by sharing our collections, their stories and our expertise for the widest benefit.*

## Our national aims

The aims for our National Strategy (2016–2020):

- We will provide positive cultural, educational, social and economic benefits to people and places, with as wide a reach as possible.
- We will support others to enable them to achieve their aspirations, directing our core national programmes to where we can add the most value to local and national interests, and to other museums.
- We will engage other partners and funders where possible to expand our reach and impact.
- We will ensure that our national activities are of a high quality and effectiveness, and will track the benefits of this in its recognition by peers, stakeholders and funders.

# External environment

There are particular opportunities and challenges in delivering this Strategy over the next four years. A national consultation, undertaken in 2015, revealed particular demands from potential audiences in local communities and online from our museum peers, from major funders and from stakeholders.

The following are key considerations going forward:

- We have a strong track record nationally which is widely acknowledged, with expressions of interest in greater collaboration and for innovation and leadership from our organisation.
- Recent changes in national and local cultural policy encourage focus on seven key areas: working in partnership; place making; strengthening and evidencing social and economic impact; promoting community involvement; encouraging diversity; and supporting educational attainment.
- There is a strategic need to build resilience and confidence across the cultural sector, an area in which we can further develop our advice and support activity.
- Key stakeholders and funders are encouraging us to grow our capacity in order to lead and coordinate larger, longer-term projects (3–5 years) that will drive wider benefits and impact nationally. This aligns with our ambition to extend our existing delivery channels.
- There is high demand for us to build on our past work with other museums to target different audiences and share collections and expertise, noting that collaboration with national institutions can enable partners to engage key stakeholders, media and funders and grow audiences, profile and capacity.
- There are some challenges in delivering partnership activities across Scotland: limited resources in a very challenging economic environment for museums and wider public services, growing gaps in expertise and an under-developed infrastructure to support loans and touring exhibitions. Wherever possible we should build in such critical support for our prospective partners in externally funded projects.
- Effective partnership working across Scotland's museums is immensely important. We will develop our role in consultation with key stakeholders and aim to support the delivery of the National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries.



## Building Skills: Entomology

We provide targeted knowledge and skills training for Scottish museums in curatorial and other areas with topics as diverse as managing Egyptian collections, the use of handling objects for learning, exhibition marketing and how to bid effectively at auction. A group of curators came to our National Museums Collection Centre to learn about our entomology (insect) collections, their storage and care requirements, as well as practical training in techniques such as pinning and gluing.



## STEM Learning: Get Energised!

This ScottishPower Foundation funded programme encourages school pupils and teachers to explore, discover and understand renewable energy in Scotland and provides inspiring learning opportunities around the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths). Due to its popularity with teachers and pupils it has continued to grow each year. The programme now includes: Challenge Days for National Qualification Physics pupils; Science Investigation Days for S1–3 pupils; Magic Carpet sessions about weather for Nursery–P1 pupils; interactive STEM workshops for P5–7 pupils; and training and support for teachers.



“Partnership with National Museums Scotland has been an essential factor in the development of the new Museum nan Eilean at Lews Castle. Our close working relationship has contributed to a high quality exhibition which will provide an excellent visitor experience.”

**Nick Smith, Heritage Manager, Lews Castle**

### **Place Making: Lews Castle**

We are delighted our collections are playing a major role in the transformation of Lews Castle with over 80 items on loan to the new facility. This follows nine years of formal partnership with Museums nan Eilean in Stornoway, including collaborating on training, audience engagement programmes, touring exhibitions and object loans.



### Local and Global: Pacific Collections

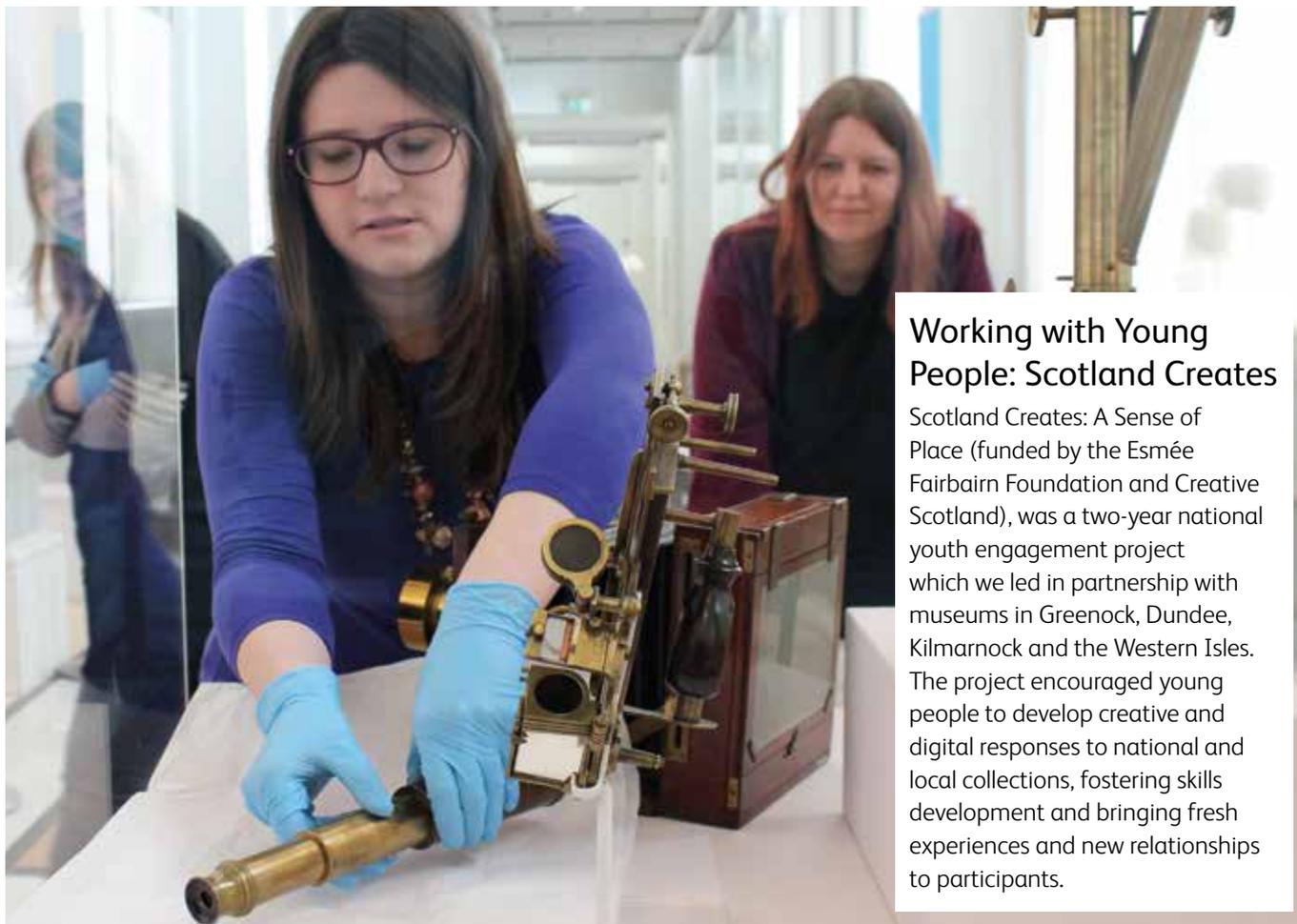
This national review of collections from the Pacific region was undertaken with 30 Scottish museums. Thanks to funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, with our partners we have developed curatorial skills and uncovered valuable knowledge about the objects and the history of these collections which provide a legacy for future generations.

### Online Learning: Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

To accompany our exhibition *Photography: A Victorian Sensation*, we collaborated with the University of Edinburgh to create our first MOOC. The course attracted over 7,500 subscribers in 146 countries worldwide. The five-week course offered free online audio lectures, films, quizzes and discussion forums inspired by the exhibition.

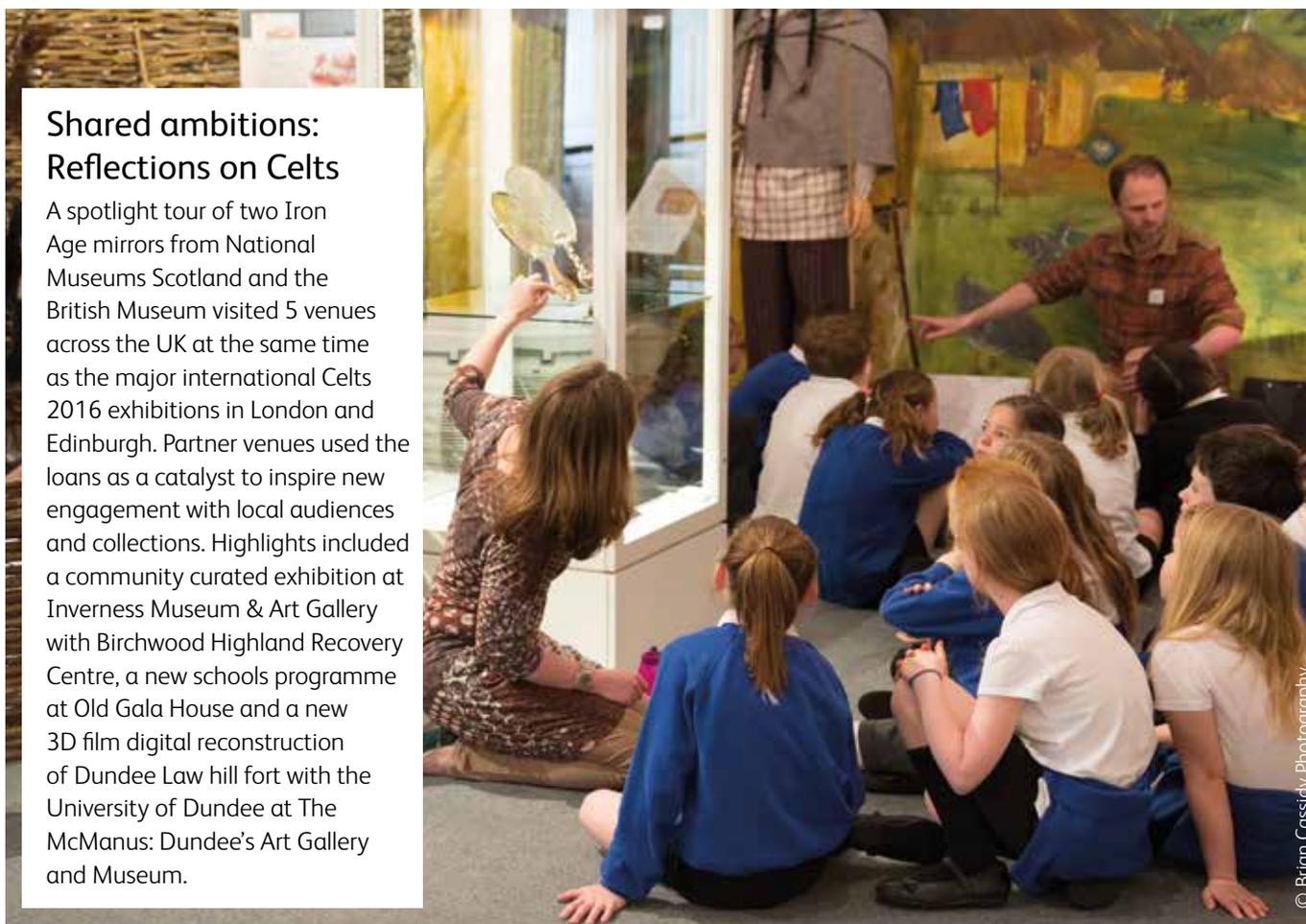


From the Howarth-Loomes Collection,  
© National Museums Scotland



## Working with Young People: Scotland Creates

Scotland Creates: A Sense of Place (funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Creative Scotland), was a two-year national youth engagement project which we led in partnership with museums in Greenock, Dundee, Kilmarnock and the Western Isles. The project encouraged young people to develop creative and digital responses to national and local collections, fostering skills development and bringing fresh experiences and new relationships to participants.



## Shared ambitions: Reflections on Celts

A spotlight tour of two Iron Age mirrors from National Museums Scotland and the British Museum visited 5 venues across the UK at the same time as the major international Celts 2016 exhibitions in London and Edinburgh. Partner venues used the loans as a catalyst to inspire new engagement with local audiences and collections. Highlights included a community curated exhibition at Inverness Museum & Art Gallery with Birchwood Highland Recovery Centre, a new schools programme at Old Gala House and a new 3D film digital reconstruction of Dundee Law hill fort with the University of Dundee at The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum.

# Looking to the future

We want to prioritise activities that generate the greatest benefits to people and places across Scotland. This means growing our impact and reach through targeted programmes that bring positive benefits to people, places, prospective partners, collections and audiences as a whole.

In particular, we aim to increase our focus on the following:

- Develop our leadership and support for nationwide projects that will build capacity and increase public engagement with Scotland's collections in their entirety.
- Expand our touring exhibition and loan programmes to widen reach and increase profile.
- Prioritise particular strands of our learning and outreach activity nationally, including growing the use of digital, broadening our community engagement work with under-represented audiences, and expanding our role in science engagement.
- Direct our advice, support and collaboration with other museums where there is greatest need and potential for impact, revising the focus and content of our National Training Programme and enhancing our advising museums activity.
- Build on the success of past national partnership projects which included strong capacity building support for museums and communities nationally – such as the *Next of Kin* touring exhibition, the Pacific Collections Review project and the Scotland Creates and Panjab Connections community engagement projects.
- Harnessing external funds to enable national projects to be carried out with greater impact.
- Improving communications and efficiencies in current programme administration and facilitating strong relationships to support effective delivery of all our national programmes.

# Our national priorities

## Share Scotland's Collections

- We will develop and raise funds for a series of large-scale national projects that build the impact of our work 'beyond our walls' to benefit collections, people and places across Scotland.
- We will offer a more frequent and wide-ranging programme of touring exhibitions, working with local partners to build engagement with national and local collections and their audiences.
- We will continue to offer objects on loan, and showcase more high profile objects at local venues.
- We will continue to champion the National Fund for Acquisitions, advising applicants effectively and promoting the quality and variety of acquisitions to maximise visibility and impact.



## Engage and inspire people

- We will devise and deliver a range of outreach and engagement activities which attract and inspire broad audiences, including schools, young people and communities.
- We will develop innovative, rich and accessible digital content and use new digital channels to engage new and diverse audiences.
- We will increase awareness and understanding of our programmes, our partners and our impact to maximise support and participation.

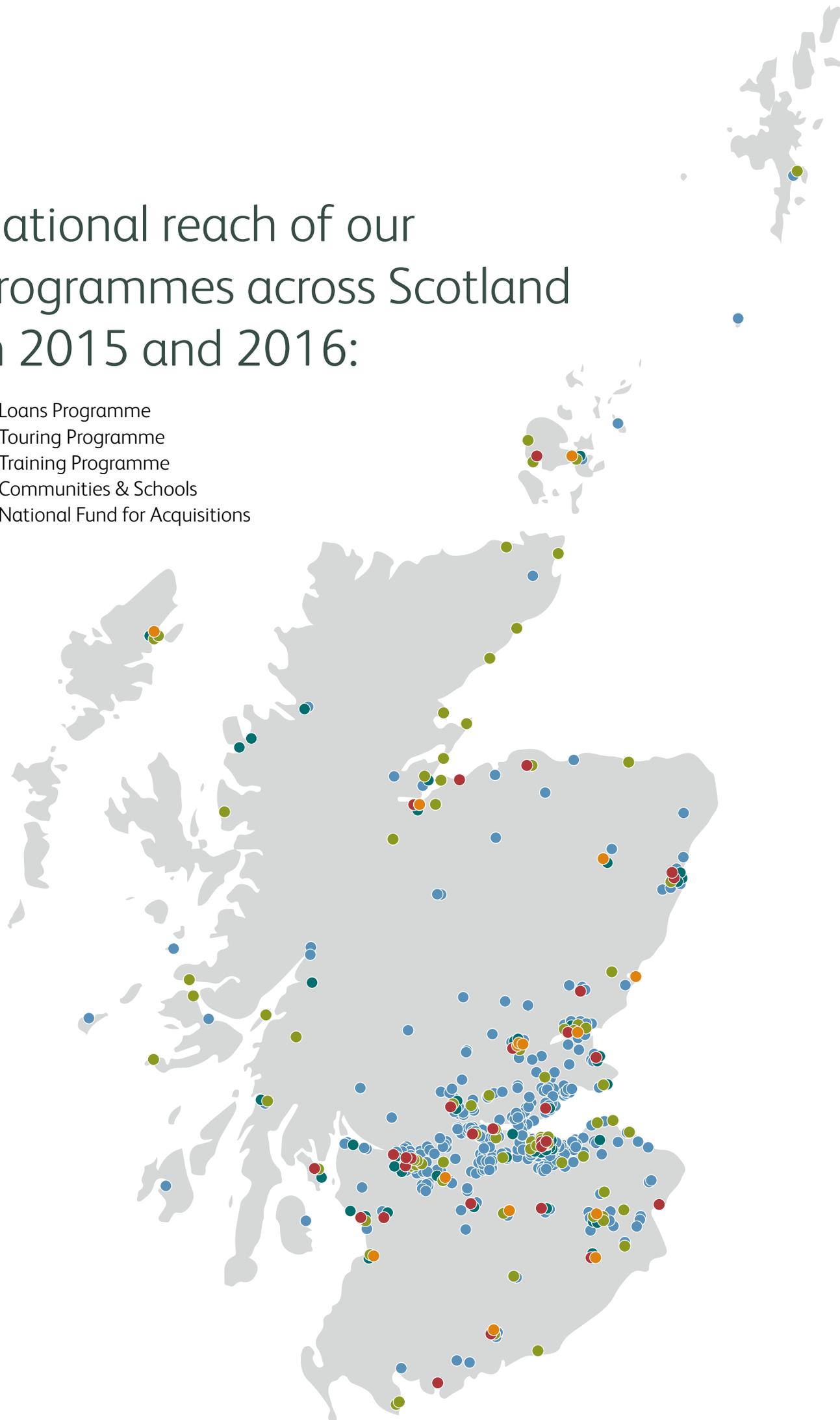
## Strengthen skills and expertise

- We will provide support to peers on request through our policy on advising museums.
- We will align our skills development and training provision with national priorities and with our major projects and core programmes.
- We will use our collections strengths and our expertise to address known skills gaps and to build confidence and resilience nationally.
- We will streamline our own processes to help partners work with us more easily.



# National reach of our programmes across Scotland in 2015 and 2016:

- Loans Programme
- Touring Programme
- Training Programme
- Communities & Schools
- National Fund for Acquisitions



## NFA Building Collections: The Pier Arts Centre

We administer the National Fund for Acquisitions on behalf of Scottish Government, providing £150,000 per annum to support acquisitions for collections across Scotland. In 2015/16 the total value of objects supported was over £1 million, including £20,000 towards the acquisition of a sculpture by Barbara Hepworth for the Pier Arts Centre in Stromness. *Two Forms (Orkney)*, 1967, is a significant addition to their important collection of works by artists associated with the British Modernist movement.

Hepworth © Bowness: Photograph Rebecca Marr



# Delivering the Strategy

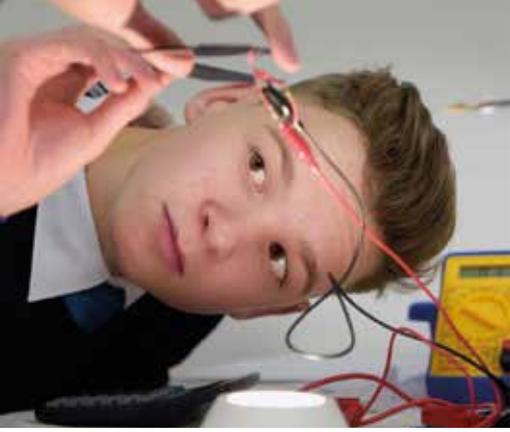
We will produce and monitor an annual National Plan which sets clear targets and actions to deliver our aims and priorities, focused around the following action areas. Against the backdrop of an increasingly challenging financial environment our ambition to deliver and enhance our programmes across Scotland remains high. Delivery will be focused on achieving the following outcomes:

- Deliver significant benefits to Scotland's people, communities and museums.
- Increase impact by seeking external funds which will enable us to deliver more.
- Increase the profile of our programmes to benefit both our partners and ourselves.
- Build skills and capacity with our partners.
- Enhance our effectiveness and efficiency.
- Evidence our cultural, educational, social and economic impact.

# Evidencing our impact

We will measure our performance and its impact annually, both in qualitative review and quantitative evaluation. This will include:

- Measuring levels of engagement with our national loans, training, advice, touring exhibitions, learning and community programmes.
- Monitoring participation levels in our national programmes in terms of the type of programme accessed, location and target audience reached.
- Collecting and reporting audience and stakeholder feedback on our effectiveness across all our national programmes.



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