

New £2m annual fund to back film industry in Wales

A new fund with £2m of finance a year to back the Welsh film sector has been announced.

Welsh language channel S4C and Welsh Government agency for the creative sector, Creative Wales, have both committed £1m annually in funding over the next three years under a new memorandum of understanding.

The intention is to support the production Welsh language film projects worthy of cinematic release, which will boost the reputation of S4C and the creative sector in Wales around the world.

After the cinematic window the films will be shown on S4C,

Details of the fund are now being worked up. While the intention is for it to provide non repayable finance, S4C could take equity positions. The channel said this will vary from project to project and will depend upon a number of factors such as associated distribution deals.

S4C and Creative Wales have already been working together since January 2020, jointly supporting the Welsh independent production sector. The partnership has led to content, including S4C's new thriller Y Golau (The Light in the Hall) currently filming in Wales and due to be broadcast worldwide late this year.

S4C is funding its contribution from its general content budget. The three year funding deal, which could be extended, will be reviewed after 12 months.

S4C chief executive Sian Doyle, said: "We've been working with Creative Wales since it launched, and this MoU outlines how we

will work together in the longer term to support the Welsh TV sector post Covid and to ensure we target our resources effectively, adding value to wider investment and focusing on the areas of greatest need and return.

“I’m particularly pleased at our joint commitment to grow Welsh language film. I want S4C to build on its success and to create a world class collection of Welsh film for our audiences in Wales and beyond. And we’re equally committed to working with Creative Wales to grow factual and feature documentary content in Welsh developing the S4C originals brand. “

“To succeed in these aims, S4C’s content must be inclusive and representative, and made by a workforce and sector which reflects the Wales of today. That is why we’re also committing to giving new talent, particularly from under-represented backgrounds a clear pathway and support to become established in the sector, gaining the skills and training to succeed.”

Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, Dawn Bowden, said: “This partnership with S4C helps us to realise our vision for the creative industries which aims to drive growth across the whole sector, developing a skills base that is world class, working towards fair and inclusive working practices, expanding support and positioning Wales as the place to locate a creative business.

“We look forward to working in partnership to ensure Wales’ home-grown Welsh language screen sector can compete internationally as well as satisfy domestic demand. Our vision is a Wales which continues to develop into a world-leading creative nation, whose content reflects our country, on screen and takes our local and national stories to the rest of the world.”

Earlier this month Carmarthenshire headquartered S4C secured an improved funding deal from the UK Government, including

£7.5m in new money each year from the BBC licence fee to support its digital offering.

The new five-year agreement for S4C will see, from its next financial year starting in April, all its funding entirely sliced from the BBC's annual £3.7bn licence fee.

In the current financial year, to end of March, 2022, the public service broadcaster will receive £81m, which includes a £6.8m grant from the UK Government's Department for Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) and the rest from the licence fee, The new agreement will see this rising to £88.8m, starting from the 2022-23 financial year, and solely financed from the licence fee.

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