

Festival launches to cultivate innovation and entrepreneurship in Scotland

Today marks the launch of a festival supporting innovation and entrepreneurship in Scotland, as the reinvigorated VentureFest Scotland programme kicks off with 'Startup Summit' at the Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh.

Since Scottish Government launched the Scotland CAN DO agenda five years ago, organisations across the country have engaged in regular cooperation to help make Scotland "a world-leading entrepreneurial and innovative nation".

VentureFest, previously a one-day annual innovation summit held at Glasgow Science Centre, is transforming into VentureFest; a festival of discovery, innovation and entrepreneurship. It aims to support the Scotland CAN DO vision by connecting people, programmes, funding and delivery mechanisms to create more visionary, global businesses in Scotland that embrace the possibilities of tomorrow.

The new-look festival is set to deliver a bigger, punchier programme of events across the length and breadth of Scotland, culminating in a cluster of headline events in November of each year.

Startup Summit - recognised as one of the UK's leading events for entrepreneurship - is the first of the headline events in the programme for 2018. Other headline events taking place this autumn are the ClimateLaunchpad Global Grand Final - the world's biggest green ideas competition - on 1st and 2nd November at McEwan Hall, Edinburgh. The final event will celebrate Scotland's Year of Young People 2018, with Curiosity Live – an inspirational youth innovation summit – at Glasgow Science Centre from 9th to 11th November.

Glasgow City of Science and Innovation, the agency now leading on VentureFest Scotland activities, are taking over the mantle from Scottish Enterprise.

Dr Susie Mitchell, Programme Director, Glasgow City of Science and Innovation said: "Scotland is a nation of innovators and entrepreneurs, and SME's are the backbone of the Scottish economy, accounting for over 99% of all private sector enterprises".

"We're excited to be taking over as the custodians of VentureFest from Scottish Enterprise and look forward to delivering a programme of events, delivered by a range of national agencies, that will connect Scotland's SMEs to the game-changing innovators, academics entrepreneurs and investors that will help them to grow, scale and succeed."

"Moreover, an exciting development for next year's VentureFest will be Glasgow City of Science and Innovation's all-new CAN DO Innovation Summit at Glasgow Science Centre on 20th Nov 2019 that will connect culture, technology and enterprise."

Ivan McKee, Cabinet Secretary for Trade, Investment and Innovation said:

"The Scottish Government and our partners are working to create a world-leading entrepreneurial and innovative Scotland.

VentureFest embodies the Scotland CAN DO vision and will support the Scottish Government's efforts to boost our innovation performance and create a nation where growth and innovation go hand in hand with wider benefits to all of society."

Gillian Docherty, Chief Executive Officer, The Data Lab, hosting a panel at Startup Summit said: "Scotland has a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem supporting innovators to develop their ideas and events like Startup Summit and the wider VentureFest programme are a big part of that."

"We have actively participated in VentureFest and Startup Summit for the past few years and are delighted to see it come together in to a festival of innovation."

"At The Data Lab, we support the Scottish technology and business ecosystem in seizing the growing opportunity that data science offers. We are all about generating value for Scotland by connecting people, facilitating collaborative innovation, developing skills and bringing the community together, which closely aligns with the Scotland CAN DO vision and that of VentureFest, and we are delighted to support the festival programme."

VentureFest Scotland is supported by Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise, Entrepreneurial Scotland, Glasgow City Council, Scottish Funding Council, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Innovate UK and Glasgow Science Centre.

VentureFest is complimentary to CAN DO Fest, held annually each spring and co-ordinated by Entrepreneurial Scotland. Together they represent two major festivals in Scotland that support the Scotland CAN DO ambition and shared values that enterprise and growth must be accessible and for the benefit of all.

For more information or if you'd like your company, network or organisation to be part of the VentureFest festival you can nominate yourself as an event host by contacting the team at www.venturefest.scot

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Media enquiries

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Notes to editors

About Glasgow City of Science and Innovation: Glasgow City of Science and Innovation is a pioneering partnership engaging 96 multi-sector organisations (including academia, government, arts and culture, and business). The initiative acts as a science and innovation interface facilitating creative collaborations to drive innovation with impact; whilst building on, and profiling, Glasgow and the West of Scotland's offer as a world-class region of science, innovation, culture and place through a range of inspirational partnership programmes including VentureFest Scotland and the national CAN DO Innovation Summit.

www.glasgowcityofscienceandinnovation.com

About Entrepreneurial Scotland

Entrepreneurial Scotland is a member network and leadership development organisation providing opportunities for like-minded ambitious individuals to share experiences and develop their leadership skills. It aims to inspire, develop and connect Scotland's current and future leaders to build the most entrepreneurial society in the world.

Entrepreneurial Scotland is also the backbone organisation supporting the Scotland CAN DO movement. www.entrepreneurialscotland.com

About VentureFest Scotland

Venturefest is a UK-wide initiative that was set up to develop local innovation ecosystems by strengthening the connections between innovation and entrepreneurship. All VentureFest activities will support the shared Scotland CAN DO statement of becoming “a world-leading entrepreneurial and innovative nation”. www.venturefest.scot

About the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation (ECCI)

ClimateLaunchpad Global Grand Final host ECCI is the leading low carbon hub for Scotland and beyond, driving cross-sector collaboration and effective action for a zero carbon world. ECCI joins forces with leading national and international organisations to grow low carbon businesses and deliver ambitious projects. The centre is the official Scottish partner of Climate-KIC, Europe’s largest public-private partnership for action on climate change, providing start-ups with support and funding to help them take off. Entrepreneurs taking part in Climate-KIC business support programmes at ECCI have scooped more than 50 awards and more than £1 million investment since the partnership began in 2017. Find out more at www.edinburghcentre.org.

