

BIEN Congress 2021 Proposal - Scotland

Why Scotland?

As a small country in a period of flux and challenge, there is a strong appetite in Scotland for ideas which could offer space for significant social and economic progress. Basic Income, supported by the Scottish Government, academia and civic society, has been identified as being an exciting possibility for a future Scotland.

2021 is the perfect opportunity to host Congress in Scotland. It will be a powerful focal point for communities and activists in Scotland to rally round; it will occur shortly after Scottish Parliamentary elections allowing for maximum impact on the political process; and will be seen as a practical space for innovation, dissemination of research and international network building. Beyond that, the Congress will be a driver for activity and impact with other parts of the UK and Ireland.

Focus

The Congress will focus on the steps required to take basic income forward from idea to reality, and the crucial role communities play in making that happen. This offers both a chance to reflect upon the impacts which have been made globally by basic income advocates and researchers and to explore tangible ideas for making further progress. The Congress will be a practical experience – a combination of learning and doing, with delegates bringing their skills and leaving with new ideas and connections.

Practicalities

The proposal is for the Congress to be held in Glasgow. As Scotland's biggest city, and one of the potential experimental sites identified by the Scottish Government, Glasgow offers an ideal site for both facility based activities and wider site visits. Currently the University of Strathclyde, an academic institution with active interest in basic income (particularly in relation to the interaction between basic income and mental health) is the intended venue. The University is ideally located in the city centre, and has a wide range of conference facilities available. We are working with Prof Matt Smith of the University on confirming the plans.

Glasgow has an international airport, and is easily accessible by all major transport routes. As the biggest city it has a wide range of accommodation options, including low-cost options, and offers access to the rest of the country for those delegates wishing to use the opportunity to explore the beauty of Scotland more widely. As well as tapping into the skills and networks of our Organising Committee, we will also work with organisations such as the Glasgow Convention Bureau on planning and organising.

Congress will be hosted at the end of August or early September 2021 – this will ensure that the Scottish Parliament has returned from its summer recess so that key local and national politicians will be accessible, but still during the summer break for the academic institutions. The Congress will include a Civic Forum day focussed on community-led activity; and then the main conference. We will host a Civic Reception with Glasgow City Council, and organise opportunities to engage with local and international projects.

Funding

The costs to host BIEN Congress 2021 in Scotland will be met from a number of sources. We will look for sponsorship and funding from a range of sources, including the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council; businesses in the Glasgow area (including organisations such as the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce); public sector bodies with interest in basic income; and voluntary sector organisations such as the RSA. Delegate fees for the conference will be pitched at a cost that is as accessible as possible, and we will ensure that delegates are provided with details of different options for accommodation etc. We will also look to have sponsored places available for key groups who might otherwise struggle to attend, including young people and people with disabilities.

Contact Details

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