

BROADCAST



Nick Curwin's N&R masterplan

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The Garden co-founder eyes network of out-of-London indies to capitalise on PSB interest

The co-founder of Dragonfly and The Garden wants to create a nations and regions super-indie by backing a string of production companies, Broadcast understands.

Nick Curwin's vision for his next venture is to build a network of indies outside of London, under the banner of Matisse. A firm with that name has been registered at Companies House.

Established producers are in Curwin's sights, and he is also keen to help launch start-ups with both established and emerging off-screen talent.

Sources familiar with his thinking said Curwin believes Matisse can capitalise on the renewed push on producing in the nations and regions, particularly by the [BBC](#) and [Channel 4](#).

He sees a huge growth opportunity for indies as those broadcasters are committed to spending hundreds of millions outside of London, and plans to help them meet their quotas by launching and

developing a new generation of high-level indies across the UK.

Matisse is expected to target areas where there is scope to build critical mass, or where an indie community already exists. The location of C4's national HQ and satellite hubs, which are to be announced later this month, could play a part in his planning.



Nick Curwin

Matisse is expected to launch in the new year, and

sources suggested Curwin's long-term associate Scarlett Ewens is likely to be involved in the project. She was most recently managing director and chief operating officer at The Garden, before leaving in March.

Details of the company's strategy are starting to emerge as Curwin begins to piece together funding for the venture. He is expected to target broadcasters and existing production groups, as well as financial institutions and private individuals.

In pitching for backing, he will point to his experience of having created and then sold first Firefly (later Dragonfly) to Shine Group and then The Garden to [ITV Studios](#).

Curwin has spent the best part of a year sitting on the advisory board for the C4 Indie Growth Fund and has told plenty of people how much he has enjoyed the experience of mentoring its producers.

The pitch to potential start-ups will be that he and his team genuinely understand life from a producer's perspective and will offer significant strategic and creative contributions, but will ensure their partners retain their autonomy by only taking minority stakes.

C4's Growth Fund, which has recently taken on a nations and regions focus, was established with an initial pot of £20m. It is thought Curwin will want to raise a war-chest of close to that level.

Asked about Matisse, Curwin told Broadcast he is "not yet in a position to confirm my plans".