CONNECTING**HISTORIES**
Guide

How to Get Funding

This guidance leaflet is designed to help groups and organisations think about how they may go about getting funding and putting together an application. It is not a definitive list of issues but provides a general overview and offers some thoughts on good practice.

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Introduction

Many communities and individuals have undertaken heritage projects and there are many more who want to embark on projects of their own. There is a clear need for projects of this type – communities do want to engage in heritage-related activities, they do want to learn about their own heritage, and they also want to inform others.

The process of embarking on a heritage project begins well before a project officially starts. There is an initial period when the project idea is developed, a variety of potential partners are approached, and when an application is carefully drawn together. This stage of the process is crucial because projects, on the whole, need to be supported with resources – and these resources cannot usually be secured without funding support. Projects may need staff, equipment, materials, travel expenses, costs of design and production of exhibitions, books or websites or for hiring artists, and office stationary and overheads all have to be covered. Of course, the exact needs of the project, and the level of resources required, is determined by the nature of the project itself.

Getting funding support for your project idea is in many respects the most important facet of undertaking project–related work. Very simply, without funding your proposed heritage project is unlikely to happen.

This guidance leaflet is designed to help you think about how and where to begin with your efforts to get funding, discuss the key issues, questions and approaches, and offer some practical details.

Why do you need funding? How much do you need?

In most instances funding support is necessary in order to enable a project idea to become a reality (although clearly this depends on the nature of the project and the resources already available to those proposing the idea). Generally funding is required so that a project (and all of its aims, objectives, outcomes and outputs) can be realised and because the organisation, group or individual proposing the project idea do not have the resources to proceed with a project.

Projects may propose a range of outputs and activities. All of these need to be accounted for in terms of the costs of those activities and outputs, along with general operating needs. A thorough understanding of this is required before an application can be drawn together and an appropriate understanding and communication of this will provide confidence in the funding organisation you may be looking to approach.

Below is an example of how a project might be 'costed' before an application can be drawn together and an approach for funding is made to the relevant organisation or body.

Estimated Budget Requirements		
1. Staff costs	£25,000	(Project Manager; incl. on-costs & tax, NI etc.)
2. Equipment	£ 2,500	(incl. computer hardware & audio equip.)
3. Materials	£ 1,000	
4. Project specific costs	£10,500	(exhibition, events, website, publicity, etc.)
5. Travel for Staff and Volunteers	£ 1,500	
6. Recruitment costs	£ 500	
7. Fees for freelance workers and staff on short-term contracts	£ 3,000	(e.g. transcription of oral histories)
8. Overheads	£ 3,000	(e.g. administration)
9. Office Stationary	£ 1,000	
10. Contingency	£ 2,000	
Total	**£50,000**	

The project 'costing' will be a key element of the proposal. It will determine how much the project will need in terms of funding support. However, the total budgeted cost of the project will not necessarily translate into the amount you expect to apply for. The organisation or funding stream may have criteria that requires you to match the funding support requested with a contribution from your own organisation. This is called 'match-funding' and is a percentage of the total project cost (or an additional amount) that a funding organisation expects as a contribution from the applicant organisation. For example, a proposal for a project seeking to acquire funding support to the amount of £50,000 may be required to find an additional 5% or 10% as a contribution from the applicant.

However, match-funding does not have to be a direct cash contribution. Some funding organisations will accept 'in kind' contributions – this could be, for example, voluntary or time offered to the project or the free use of office space or equipment. This nature and size of a match-funding contribution depends entirely upon the nature of the funding organisation and their criteria for funding projects and it varies from one funding body to another.

Who are you getting funding from? What are the funding Criteria?

Once you have acknowledged that you need to secure outside funding support for your project, it is important to identify likely funders. There are a number of funding organisations that will support heritage-focused projects and understanding the needs of the funder is crucial; the nature of the application, the specific content, the types of information required (project idea and supporting data) is very much determined by the criteria laid out by the funding organisation/body, and the particular funding stream or strand you may be eligible for.

The main funding organisation for heritage projects is the Heritage Lottery Fund, or HLF, and this is a useful example to illustrate how the criteria for various types of funding differ. There are, for example, distinct differences between the HLF's 'Your Heritage' project application criteria and a 'Young Roots' application. Whereas a 'Your Heritage' project may be understood as a more general strand (i.e. most community heritage projects fall under this strand and its respective criteria), 'Young Roots' is specifically designed to engage young people with an aspect of heritage through an approach that the young people have determined for themselves; having a say in what they do and how they go about doing it.

While organisations like HLF have a clear heritage remit, other funding organisations may not necessarily have heritage as a key focus, but may nevertheless still be worth exploring because they will fund projects that use heritage to achieve other goals. These organisations include for example the Arts Council, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, Big Lottery Fund, Community Champions Fund etc. In these instances heritage can be used as a vehicle for helping to achieve goals and outcomes such as engaging disengaged young people, improving community relations, developing skills and experience, encouraging health and fitness etc.

Whichever funding organisation you choose to approach and, more specifically, the funding stream or strand you choose to follow, it is essential that you match your proposal and application carefully to the criteria laid out for that strand or stream of funding. Familiarise yourself with the funding organisations via their websites which include most of the information you need. Telephone conversations and meetings will help to make sense of the process even further, particularly if you are unsure or have certain questions.

Application Form

The application forms vary from organisation to organisation. Some are relatively straight forward, while others may be longer and more complex and therefore require more thought and time to complete. Some also require you to submit a pre-application proposal before they will consider a full application from you. Doing this can save you wasting time and effort on an application that fails to meet their criteria.

There are ways to simplify the process, particularly to ensure that your application form has been completed to a standard that you can be happy with and that is less likely to have errors. One approach for dealing with application forms is to create a separate electronic Word document with the questions and sections laid out in the same order as they appear on the application form, and then to draft your responses to the questions and sections on this document before you attempt the actual form. This will ensure that your responses are succinct, thorough and relevant, as well as decreasing the likelihood of mistakes such as spelling and grammatical errors.

Once you are satisfied with what you have written, the information can be transferred across to the actual electronic application form by copying and pasting. Take care to read any guidance notes supplied with the form and if a specific number of words is stated then don't go over the limit.

It is important that you look at the entire application form so that you can account for, and respond to, each section relevant to you and your application/project idea – otherwise it is easy to miss sections out! If you are having problems with the form, you can approach the funding organisation or respective project partners for help.

Do get a second opinion before submitting your application. It is always useful to have someone else go over your work who can look at it with fresh eyes and spot mistakes or misunderstandings or gaps in your information.

Documentation

Most application forms and application processes require the submission of various types of supporting documentation. The kind of documentation required and how much of it is necessary depends upon the nature of the funding organisation. Different organisations have different criteria and guidelines. But also, crucially, the funding strand/stream you are applying to may also determine what kind of documentation is required and how much of it. Read the guidance carefully and make a note of any extra documentation you need to produce.

Here are a few of the kinds of supporting documentation you may be asked to submit with your application:

- Copy of your organisations constitution
- Copy of your organisations audited or certified accounts for the last financial year
- Letters of support from relevant parties
- Full breakdown of project costs
- Proof of other financial contributions to the project
- Project timetable
- Evidence of how you have worked out your project costs
- Evidence of demand or need for a project i.e. any consultation, comments, etc.
- Evidence of any advice you have received
- Other illustrative material or evidence e.g. maps, plans, photographs, etc.

It is important to make sure that you have ticked off each one of the required forms of documentation. Failure to get it right will most likely result in the funding organisation having to get back in touch to request the respective items, returning your application, or even worse – turning it down!

And always, always check your application over before submission. Good luck!

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