We believe international working is vital for a strong



The UK’s heritage is critical to our reputation around the world. Here’s how we can help the sector work internationally.

In our Strategic Funding Framework, we are championing UK-based projects which take an international approach to heritage.

As part of this commitment, we funded research to understand better where the sector is currently, and what could improve. We found that nearly half of the organisations surveyed were already active internationally – that means just over half were not. Below we look into these findings in more depth.

What do we want to support?

Through our open programmes, we want to support projects which help UK heritage organisations work with other countries, promote their heritage abroad or exchange knowledge and work with partners.

There are many benefits in working internationally:

- exchanging knowledge and skills
- promoting heritage in new areas and to new audiences
- connecting with the UK's diverse communities

- gaining new contacts and partners
- driving inbound tourism
- developing new approaches to financial sustainability

And it is also worth considering how, in a time of fracture and political instability, working internationally can bring us together.

> The National Lottery Heritage Fund will support the UK heritage sector to build the capacity it needs to grasp the opportunities that working internationally can bring, both to individual organisations and the UK heritage sector as a whole.
>
> Ros Kerslake, CEO

What was the research?

We commissioned BOP Consulting to produce a report on current international activity in the heritage sector.

The research findings are based on survey responses from over 400 recent grantees from across the heritage sector. The data was supported by desk research and 12 interviews with grantees who had carried out international projects.

We found **48%** of respondents had been active internationally, but the majority of those (**68%**) had worked on fewer than five projects.

What did the projects involve?

- 79% involved knowledge sharing such as taking part in or hosting international conferences, sharing digital resources, training or consultancy.
- 47% took part in showcasing – taking exhibitions or performances abroad, or hosting them in the UK
- 23% took part in international heritage conservation

What are the barriers?

International work is already integral to many large organisations. However, for much of the heritage sector it is the lack of capacity and funding which is holding them back.

We found that **70%** of respondents saw finance as a barrier. Behind this at **64%** was: “capacity to do it when you have lots of other things on your plate”.

Other problems cited include: organisations' awareness of international working as relevant, and access to contacts and information.

We are working on new ways to support heritage organisations to grasp the opportunities that international work can bring.

Interested in working internationally?

We can fund:

UK-based projects which include costs associated with overseas activities. For example:

- travel (both from and to the UK)
- insurance
- heritage activities
- learning involving people from the UK
- translation
- making international contacts
- promotion of your work in new areas
- supporting inbound tourism

We cannot fund:

- projects based outside the UK or lead by overseas organisations
- conservation or capital works outside the UK
- projects that do not demonstrate clear benefit to heritage and people in the UK
- projects in the Isle of Man. If you are based there, you can access funding through the Manx Lottery Trust.

There must be:

- a genuine need for funding
- a clear reason for the work
- a benefit for heritage, people and communities in the UK
- a contribution to our outcomes including involving a wider range of people in heritage
- value for money

Applications and advice

We welcome applications through all of our open programmes. If you've got an idea, explore our funding section or get in touch with your nearest office.



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International working helps build a stronger heritage sector at home