Heritage Recovery Fund Northern Ireland

Closed programmes

The Heritage Recovery Fund is part of the £29million which the Department for Communities announced on 24 September to support the culture, language, arts and heritage sectors impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic.

This page was last updated on 30 November 2020.

Important

The Heritage Recovery Fund Northern Ireland is now closed to new applications. Explore our available funding.

The Communities Minister has acknowledged the substantial contribution that the culture, language, arts and heritage sectors make to our local economy, quality of life and health and wellbeing.

They shape our standing as a place to live, work and visit and they have a vital part to play in delivering social renewal for communities and people impacted by COVID-19.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund is distributing the £5.5m Heritage Recovery Fund on behalf of Department for Communities to help the sector recover from the pandemic and become more resilient.

Key features

- **£5.5m fund**
- **Grants of £3,000 to £250,000 for non-profit or private heritage organisations**
- **Grants of £3,000 or £5,000 for individuals working in the heritage sector**
- **Open for applications between 2 November and noon on 27 November 2020**
- **Funding must be spent by 31 March 2021**

Heritage organisations

The Heritage Recovery Fund will support organisations across the heritage ecosystem that were financially sustainable before COVID-19, have exhausted all other reasonable financing options and are now at risk of failure.

The fund will support these organisations to ensure that successful applicants can reopen by 31 March 2021. If reopening under social distancing is not permissible or does not represent a value for money approach, the fund will support organisations to operate on a sustainable and cost-efficient basis so that they are able to reopen at a later date.

Grants of £3,000 to £250,000 are available.

Individuals working in the heritage sector

The Heritage Recovery Fund also has a separate strand for individuals working in the heritage sector, such as specialist heritage builders, conservators, tour guides and craftspeople registered with an appropriate professional body.

Grants of £3,000 or £5,000 are available.

We are distributing this government funding based on criteria set by the Department for Communities.

When you are ready, apply on our application portal

Stability and renewal fund for organisations

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Overview

Grants from £3,000 to £250,000

This fund is for heritage organisations operating in Northern Ireland whose primary role is in relation to:

- historic buildings and monuments
- independent museums and libraries, archives and collections
- industrial, maritime, defence and transport
- community heritage
- landscape and nature

Funding must be spent by the end of this financial year, 31 March 2021.

What we mean by heritage

Heritage can mean different things to?different people. It can be anything from the past that you value and want to pass on to future generations.

As a guide, this could include:

- people’s memories and experiences (often recorded as ‘oral history’)

- cultural traditions (for example, stories, festivals, crafts, music and dance)
- community archaeology
- historic buildings, monuments and environments
- designed landscapes, such as parks and gardens
- collections of objects, books or documents in libraries or?archives
- histories of people and communities or places and events
- the heritage of languages and dialects
- places and objects linked to our industrial, maritime and transport history.

Grants of more than £250,000

If you think you require a grant over £250,000 you should complete an enquiry form by noon on **Friday 13 November 2020** and email to Heritage.RecoveryNI@heritagefund.org.uk**.**

We will review your request and let you know whether and how to proceed by Wednesday 18 November 2020.

Grants at this scale will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. You will have to explain why you would need support at that level, for example, you may have large overheads or you manage multiple heritage sites.

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Who can apply?

We are accepting applications from heritage organisations operating in Northern Ireland.

It isn't possible to list every type of organisation that makes up our broad and varied heritage sector. If you don't see your organisation in the list below, we still encourage you to make an application.

As a guide, organisations could be:

- Not for profit organisations that manage heritage sites, venues, collections or attractions.
- Private owners of heritage sites, venues or attractions that are normally open to the public 28 days a year or more.
- For profit businesses that are a vital part of the heritage ecosystem and who generate the largest portion of their income from heritage work. This includes conservators, contractors, specialists, suppliers and cooperatives.
- Universities and other public sector bodies that manage heritage sites, venues or attractions. As separate funding is expected to be made available for local authorities they are not being prioritised under this fund.
- Organisations that provide significant support to the heritage sector.

If you manage more than one heritage site, please submit one application for your organisation as a whole. We ask you to do this so you can demonstrate the financial risk to your organisation and to ensure that your business planning needs are considered in the round.

Under this fund we are not accepting applications from:

- Organisations that manage heritage that is not in Northern Ireland. If your organisation is based in England, Scotland, Wales or Ireland and you manage heritage in Northern Ireland, you can apply for a proportion of your organisation's costs related to the heritage in Northern Ireland.
- Organisations that were not operating sustainably before March 2020.
- Organisations that can apply for support from the Stability and Renewal Programme for Organisations through Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

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What can you apply for?

Recovery costs

You can apply for the costs you need to help your organisation recover from the economic impact of COVID-19 and to make sure that you are financially viable in the future. You will need to consider the most effective route to future sustainability for your organisation, and the public benefit, including economic benefit, to the wider heritage ecosystem. This may include a combination of re-opening, partial re-opening and mothballing.

Public health

As part of your planning, you will need to factor in assumptions about social distancing which do not entail significant financial risks for your organisation. Guidance is available on incorporating public health measures into your assumptions. Organisations should also ensure that they do not propose activity which represents significant risks if the situation worsens, and be aware that they will need to operate for the remainder of the financial year within the funding envelope allocated to them.

Long term viability

We want you to consider your longer term viability so your application must include costs to help you achieve this. For example, you should think about costs to review your business plan, governance and financial management. If you are awarded a grant we will require you to report back on this and update your business plan or equivalent document.

Costs period

The costs you apply for should cover the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 only.

Partnership funding

There is no partnership funding requirement for this fund.

Examples of costs

To help you plan your application, we have included some examples of the type of costs you may want to include. We can cover any reasonable cost that helps your organisation recover and become viable. This list is a guide.

Stabilisation costs

Costs to stabilise your organisation in the immediate term to make sure the vital heritage you care for is not put further at risk by COVID-19. These could include:

- Staff (except for staff on the Government furlough scheme).
- Overheads such as rent.
- Costs to plan and initiate mothballing (putting aside or withdrawing from use) of your physical asset/s and other approaches to protecting your physical assets/heritage that is at risk.
- Costs to run immediate risk management reviews and the actions identified as needed to safeguard your organisation.
- Essential operational costs, for example, site security or maintaining climatic conditions for collections.
- Costs to permanently close an organisation including redundancy, winding up or merger costs.
- Deficits incurred as a direct result of COVID-19 including the replenishment but not creation of reserves.

Adaption and recovery costs

We can help your organisation to recover from the economic impact of the pandemic and become financially sustainable in the future. You could include:

- Essential overheads from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, for example salaries, rent, rates and insurance.
- Costs to help your organisation be more resilient in the future, for example, adapting business plans, risk management reviews and piloting new ways of working.
- Testing and consulting on new activities that will help recovery and diversify your income streams.
- Training and skills development costs.

Reopening costs

We can provide funding to help you re-open and follow public health guidelines, if this is the best option for your organisation. You could include:

- Operational costs of recovery actions (reopening and resuming activity).
- Costs associated with sub optimal reopening (eg lower audience numbers).
- Organisational/skills development to ensure you are fit for purpose during and after COVID-19.
- Specialist skills for on-line presentation of existing or new work.
- Modest requests for capital equipment.
- Staff costs to allow you to respond, design and deliver plans.
- Costs to reconfigure business plans, governance and activity needed to help safeguard the future of your organisation.
- Costs to help manage your site during social distancing. This could include additional staff to help manage queues, PPE for staff and volunteers, training, additional cleaning, implementing contactless payment methods, or temporary structures to help manage visitors, like shelter for queues or additional toilets.
- Costs to get advice from professionals, for example on risk, safety, how to support your staff or on new business models.
- Costs to cover essential IT equipment and connectivity to support homeworking and activities to enable your organisation to put information online and to interact with your community/customers.

Costs to help you temporarily scale back

You may need to temporarily change the way you work to stabilise your organisation or consider longer term withdrawal and protection of your heritage, if this is the most cost effective option. You could include:

- Staff costs to allow you to respond, design and deliver plans.
- Essential IT equipment and connectivity costs to support homeworking.
- Activities to enable your organisation to put information online and to interact with your community/customers if your site is closed, for example, digital expertise, equipment or customer relationship management system.
- Essential costs to protect your heritage, for example, site security, maintenance, environmental monitoring for collections.
- Stabilising heritage that is at immediate risk, for example, scaffolding or urgent conservation work.
- Temporary storage for collections, artefacts and documents, including necessary secure transport or insurance.
- Costs to help you transition out of the mothballing period, including hiring staff.

Costs of Renewal Actions

Costs described in a Business Renewal Plan which can be delivered by 31 March 2021, including:

- New revenue projects and content which will assist longer term sustainability.
- New apprenticeships.
- Pilot projects to test longer term plans set out in your Business Renewal Plan.
- New projects which reach different audiences and users, focused on poverty, social exclusion and deprivation.

What can’t you apply for?

- Costs that are eligible to be covered by Government support, for example furloughing.
- The remaining salary costs for staff on furlough not covered by the Government’s Job Retention Scheme, or any additional salary costs above the furloughing cap.
- Any costs you will incur beyond 31 March 2021.
- Anything that contravenes Government advice on COVID-19.
- Recoverable VAT.
- Costs related to promoting political campaigning or the promotion of religious beliefs.
- Costs already covered through other emergency support funding, for example through our Heritage Emergency Fund, The National Lottery Community Fund, or the Social Enterprise Fund.
- Capital works, such as repairs to a building or monument.
- Organisational debt incurred before March 2020.
- Deficits not directly related to COVID-19.
- Costs or losses not incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Costs already covered by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, The National Lottery Community Fund, other funders or Government schemes to cover salaries or provide grants to manage COVID-19 related costs.
- Costs that are avoidable in the short term.
- Work that forms part of under-graduate or post-graduate study or is intended to be assessed as part of an academic course.
- Study leading to a professional qualification.

- Applications for projects/commissions already in receipt public funding.

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How to apply

Before you apply

Please note: The National Lottery Heritage Fund uses the same forms across a variety of our programmes. Some questions need to be answered differently for the Heritage Recovery Fund NI so you must carefully read the application help notes to understand what information is required where. Do not use the help icons embedded in the online form.

We are not offering pre-application or one to one advice for this programme so make sure you read the guidance carefully and check that you are eligible to apply. It should cover everything you need to know to apply.

We have designed the application process to be as straightforward as possible and we are requesting only the information we need.

Mandatory documents

Have your mandatory supporting documents ready. Please note your application is not complete without your mandatory supporting documents.

Governing document, accounts and cashflow forecast

- Governing document eg constitution.
- Your most recent financial accounts. We expect these to be for the financial year 2018/2019 or 2019/2020. You must be able to provide evidence of cash reserves at 31 March 2020.
- A cash flow forecast, completed using the cash flow forecast template for this financial year. You should explain the baseline assumptions for this cashflow forecast and explain the current financial position, details of deficits and/or unavoidable costs up to 31 March 2021. It should also reflect all other grants/support received. If necessary, details of permanent closure costs including redundancy should also be included.

Recovery costs

A description of recovery costs (reopening, adaption and/or resuming activity costs) including:

- Details of how resuming operations will be undertaken and associated costs.
- Proposals for managing sub optimal operations (where this is as a direct result of COVID-19 impacts and restrictions).
- Demonstration that where venues and facilities will remain closed, that costs of maintaining the facilities and organisation are justifiable and that the cost of later reestablishment would be greater.

Renewal costs

Description of renewal costs including:

- Details of proposed new activity and projects which can be delivered in full by 31 March 2021.
- Description of how this activity will contribute to the organisation's Business Action Plan and longer-term outcomes.
- A Business Renewal Plan, completed using the Business Renewal Plan template. This plan must include the steps you will take to make your organisation financially viable in the future. You will need to tell us:
    - Your plan for the best value for money route to sustainability. This should set out the key cultural activity you plan to progress with, which is good value for money with social distancing in place, and which does not entail significant financial risks for your organisation. Your plan must demonstrate you have taken appropriate steps to reduce costs. You should have a clear plan to maximise income as fully as possible in a cost effective way, including extending opening hours if appropriate and taking advantage of temporary changes to Government rules and regulations.
    - How you have considered whether full reopening, scaled-back reopening, or remaining closed with a reduced cost base provides your best chance for longer-term survival.
    - How you have the skills and experience available at a senior level to enable you to adapt and flex your business to the changing external environment, and ensure the best chance of longer-term viability, sustainability and recovery.
    - What financial controls, monitoring and reporting processes you have in place to ensure the effective financial management of your organisation.
    - How your plans are change orientated and consider how they can contribute to the following Department for Communities key objectives and outcomes:
        - Maintaining a balanced and sustainable sector for the longer term.
        - Tackling poverty and social exclusion.
        - Improving mental health and reducing isolation.
        - Responding to the needs of people with disabilities.
        - Preserving jobs and underpinning job creation.
        - Supporting new skills development for those in most need.
        - Supporting and generating new apprenticeship opportunities.
        - Supporting projects involving heritage craftspeople.
        - Creating new partnerships with other organisations and individuals.
        - Digitising and adapting to changing audience, visitor and customer demands.
        - Increasing audiences, particularly those from the most deprived backgrounds.

Application portal

When you are ready, apply on our application portal

If we award you a grant

If we award you a grant, we will send you a letter which includes the amount you have been awarded and outlines the conditions of the grant.

You will need to complete and sign a permission to start form to confirm that you are accepting the grant and signing up to the terms in the letter. When you have completed this process, we will pay your grant upfront.

We will expect evidence of delivery and expenditure, such as reports, invoices and receipts. More detailed information will be provided at point of grant award.

We will be evaluating the impact of the whole fund and we will require you to take part in data collection to support this work. We will provide more information about this requirement in due course.

When to apply

We are accepting applications from 2 November 2020 until noon on 27 November 2020. We will aim to assess applications and make decisions by the end of January 2021, with a view to making payments in February 2021.

Technical support

For technical support or assistance with accessibility, please contact our customer service team by email: Heritage.RecoveryNI@heritagefund.org.uk.

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Application help notes and FAQs

Application help notes

Please carefully read the application help notes before you apply.

FAQs

We have compiled this list of frequently asked questions to help you with your application.

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How will we assess applications?

When assessing your application, we will consider whether you meet the essential criteria for the fund. If you do not meet the essential criteria, we will not assess your application further.

We will also consider if your plans and risk level are proportionate to the amount of funding you are applying for.

Essential Criteria

You should only apply for this funding if you are able to meet all of the essential criteria:

- You must have been financially viable before COVID-19 (March 2020).
- You are at risk of no longer trading viably by the end of this financial year.
- You can demonstrate that you have exhausted all other reasonable financing options, for example by applying for other emergency funds, reducing costs, diversifying income streams or taking advantage of government easements.
- You have a clear plan towards future financial viability.

We will assess the level of financial risk you are facing and also consider the impact the loss of your organisation would have on the heritage you manage, your local community and the wider heritage sector.

We will ask you to tell us what would happen to your heritage if your organisation stopped operating and will take into account whether it would put significant heritage at risk or lead to a loss of skills or a statutory service.

Priority criteria

If your application meets the criteria outlined above, we will prioritise applications that demonstrate:

- high heritage significance
- high economic and cultural impact in your place
- heritage at risk

Heritage significance

Priority will be given to applicants that are significant in Northern Ireland or internationally. To assess this, we will take into account whether applicants:

- Are recognised as significant in Northern Ireland or internationally excellent within their sector. This might include whether the heritage is award winning or formally designated.
- Care for heritage or deliver a service that is nationally or internationally important, irreplaceable, or scarce in their place or region. This may include a recognised designation.
- Have a Northern Ireland remit or responsibility that impacts on the wider cultural landscape, and their failure would risk the future of their sub-sector. For example, they may have a convening role, provide significant support for their wider sector or play a significant role in nurturing growth, diversity and creativity in the sector.
- Lead or deliver strategically important national and/or international activities or partnerships.

Economic and cultural impact in your place

Priority will be given to applicants that play a role in creating and maintaining a sense of place in their area. We will consider the relationship between the applicant, the heritage, and the local area, looking at things like:

- How many cultural organisations there are in the area, and what impact the loss of the organisation or heritage would have on cultural engagement locally.
- What opportunities local people have to engage with culture and heritage, particularly those in underserved audiences, including young people.
- How the organisation fits into the local community, and whether it plays a vital role in tourism, supply chains, developing creative skills, or bringing other cultural and community organisations together.

- Whether the heritage is unique or has particular resonance with the local community. This might include whether heritage is formally designated, is in a conservation area, or is featured in a local heritage list.

Heritage at risk

Heritage at risk includes:

- Heritage that is likely to be lost, damaged or forgotten.
- Heritage that is designated as ‘at risk’.
- Physical heritage sites that are decaying or neglected.
- Heritage at risk due to financial difficulty.
- Intangible heritage and cultural practices that might be lost.

Organisations that do not meet the heritage importance or economic and cultural impact priority criteria outlined above will not be funded.

Balancing criteria

After the priority criteria have been applied, our decision makers will use the following criteria to balance the investment and differentiate between fundable applications:

Geographic spread

We want to support organisations across Northern Ireland. We will also consider whether your organisation is based in an area of low heritage engagement, low heritage provision, or of economic disadvantage.

Economic growth

We want to support organisations that contribute to economic growth and heritage sector employment.

Types of organisation

We want to support a wide variety of heritage organisations to represent all sizes and all sub-sectors.

Diversity

Heritage has a crucial role to play in contributing to a flourishing, more equitable society. We want to make sure the people who visit and benefit from heritage are reflective of society.

To ensure this, we will consider whether the organisations applying have a track record of broadening access and participation in heritage, particularly for those that are underrepresented, and promoting positive social outcomes through place based collaboration.

Once you have submitted your application

We will check that your organisation and application meet the criteria outlined above. If your application does not meet the criteria, we will not be able to assess your application and we will let you know this.

If your application meets the criteria, we will use the information provided in your application and supporting documents to assess your application.

We will make decisions by end of January 2021.

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Receiving a grant

Terms

If you are awarded a grant, we will require you to sign up to the terms of this grant, which include specific requirements from the Department for Communities:

- Demonstrate a commitment to increasing organisational diversity and the diversity of your audiences.
- Demonstrate a commitment to increase educational outreach.
- Ensure you take reasonable steps to protect the heritage assets you are responsible for, in particular their physical estates.
- Participate in the proportionate monitoring and evaluation of this fund.

Receiving payment

You will need to submit additional forms on our system so that we can make a payment. We will let you know when you need to do this and guide you through the process.

If we award you a grant, we will send you a letter which includes the amount you have been awarded and outlines the conditions of the grant. You will need to complete and sign a permission to start form to confirm that you are accepting the grant and signing up to the terms in the letter. When you have completed this process, we will make your grant payment.

Publicising your grant

All successful applicants will be asked to publicise their grant in a proportionate manner. We will provide more information on how to do this in your grant award letter.

Reporting on your progress and evaluation

All grantees will be required to participate in monitoring and evaluation of this programme and we will monitor the health of your organisation.

Department for Communities will be evaluating the impact of the whole fund and will require you to take part in some data collection to support this work. We will provide more information about this requirement as soon as it is available.

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State Aid

It is an applicant's responsibility to confirm that their application has been considered and checked in relation to State Aid rules.

State Aid is a European Commission term that describes forms of assistance (usually financial) from a public body given to undertakings on a discretionary basis with the potential to distort competition and affect trade between Member States of the European Union.

State Aid rules prevent undue competition arising when there is potential for organisations to gain an economic advantage by having all or some funding provided from state resources to the detriment of other organisations who can only use their own private funding.

We are a public funder and our grants are subject to State Aid rules. If we awarded a grant that was subsequently found to be in breach of State Aid rules, we would be required to reclaim those funds from the grantee with compound interest, noting this must occur irrespective of the outcome, be that financial hardship or bankruptcy.

Further advice on State Aid rules is available on the Government's website.

Applicants should seek independent legal advice if they are unsure whether their project will be compliant with these rules before submitting their application. When making their declaration that their application has been considered and checked against these rules, they should flag any aspects of their application that may have State Aid implications. If steps are needed to address State Aid issues in an application, these may form a condition of any grant awarded.

State aid is only present when carrying out an economic activity – i.e. offering goods or services on a market (and competing against other private sector businesses). To decide if State Aid is present please consider the following two questions:

1. Are you an undertaking? E.g. do you provide goods or services on a market directly in competition with private sector businesses?
2. Do you provide goods and services beyond your local area? I.e. do you attract any customers from another Member State (for example Republic of Ireland)?

Please note: If the answer to either of the above questions is 'no' then State aid would not be present and the de minimis declaration is not required.

If the answer to both of these questions is 'yes' then State aid is likely to be present and if successful with your application, you will be asked to complete the de minimis declaration as part of your grant award.

Managing your data

For more information about how your data will be processed under this grant programme please see our privacy policy.

Individual resilience fund for self employed and freelance individuals working in the heritage sector

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How to apply

Grants of £3,000 or £5,000

We are accepting applications from self-employed and freelance individuals working in the heritage sector. Individuals must have a principal private residence in Northern Ireland

These could include specialist heritage builders, conservators and craftspeople registered with an appropriate professional body. It could also include tour guides who provide heritage tours/tours at heritage sites.

This is an indicative list and is not exhaustive. The fund is aimed at workers in the heritage economy in whatever capacity.

Awards to individuals will be at two levels: £3,000 and £5,000.

Purpose

The overriding objective of this programme is to retain a vital workforce within the heritage sector which is at risk of being lost as a result of COVID-19.

Many freelance workers, craftworkers and those with specialist heritage skills have lost all earned income this year. If not given critical support this fragile sector risks losing them and their skills. This poses a major risk for when we return to a functioning heritage economy.

Consequently, this programme has been designed to help support individuals working in the heritage sector to sustain and build their creative, professional and technical skills in these challenging times.

We also wish to assist these workers adapt to the new market conditions that have been brought about as a result of COVID-19.

Applications will also be considered from groups of individuals working in collaboration, provided there is a lead individual making the application.

Priority for funding will be given to those who have been unable to access other forms of financial support from Government or other sources.

Value of awards

We are offering awards of either £3,000 or £5,000.

Your request should be based on the information you give us on the impact that this award would have on the sustainably of your professional skills. You must state which level of award you are applying for.

Eligibility

- You need to be over 18 and living in Northern Ireland.
- You must supply a CV/statement about your career in the heritage sector to date.
- You must supply a reference from an independent source to verify your practice.

Note: your reference is confirmation from an independent source (for example from your employer, promoter, venue owner, booking agent etc) that your role in the heritage sector is as you have described, and if possible, confirmation of your lost work due to the pandemic.

You are responsible for retaining evidence/records of paid work affected due to COVID-19. Please keep emails/correspondence or other proof as we will reserve the right to request these in the event of your application being successful.

You are responsible for disclosing awards if you are in receipt of means tested benefits. You should seek advice from the government department or agency which handles your benefit before application is made, because in certain circumstances it may have implications for future benefit entitlement should there be a break in claim.

You are also responsible for managing your own tax affairs and should contact HMRC to seek confirmation about the impact of this grant on your tax status and liability.

Please note if you've received funding from the Arts Council's Individual Emergency Resilience Fund, you won't be eligible for this fund.

Please read our application help notes for individuals to help guide you through the application process.

Assessment and decision-making process

Your application will be assessed on the following factors:

1. Your CV and your contribution to the heritage sector in Northern Ireland before COVID 19.
2. The benefit that this award will have on the sustainability of your professional skills.

What you provide above will be used to evaluate the impact your work and practice has had and will make to the heritage sector in Northern Ireland.

The amount offered, if any, will depend on the number/value of applications received and the available budget.

Funding comes from the Department for Communities and is being delivered by the Heritage Fund.

Funded by Department for Communities www.communities-ni.gov.uk | An Roinn Pobal | Männystrie o Communities

Heritage Fund

Changes to this guidance

We have developed this funding programme very quickly in order to respond to the immediate needs of the heritage sector. We will continue to review our processes to ensure we are able to provide support where it is needed. We reserve the right to make any changes needed to the guidance and programme. We will communicate any changes as quickly as possible via this webpage.