

See all updates

We fund projects that connect people and communities to the national, regional and local heritage of the UK.

National Lottery Heritage Grants is our funding programme for all types of heritage projects in the UK.

Use this guidance to apply for grants from £250,000 to £10m.

You must first submit an Expression of Interest and, if you are successful, we will invite you to apply.

Your application will usually go through two phases: a development phase of up to two years, enabling you work on your project proposal, and a delivery phase of no more than five years. If you think a two phase application is not right for your project, please contact your local office to discuss.

Overview

Is this the right programme for you?

- Is your organisation looking to care for and sustain heritage in the UK?
- Will your heritage project run for no more than five years (excluding the development phase)?
- Do you require a grant of between £250,000 and £10m?

- Are you a not-for-profit organisation or a partnership led by a not-for-profit organisation?
- Does your project take into account our four investment principles?

If you answered yes to these questions, then National Lottery Heritage Grants could be for you.

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Our investment principles

Four investment principles guide all our grant decision making under our 10-year strategy, Heritage 2033:

- saving heritage
- protecting the environment
- inclusion, access and participation
- organisational sustainability

You must take all four principles into account in your application. The strength of focus, and emphasis on each principle, is for you to decide and demonstrate.

The investment principles, and our strategic initiatives, will help us achieve our ambitions for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone's future.

Things you need to know

- Your project must not start before we make a decision.
- You must first submit an Expression of Interest to tell us about your idea, and we will let you know if you are invited to apply.
- Deadlines for development and delivery applications are quarterly
- Once we receive your application and all the correct supporting documents, we will assess your application within 12 weeks and, following assessment, it will be assigned to the next scheduled decision meeting.
- For grants under £1m, you must contribute at least 5% of your project costs. For grants over £1m, you must contribute at least 10% of your project costs.
- Payments for development grants under £250,000 are made in three stages: 50% in advance, 30% in advance, and then 20% in arrears. Payments for development grants over £250,000, and all delivery grants, are made in arrears.
- We provide lots of good practice guidance. We recommend that you read the guidance that is relevant to you to help you develop and manage your project.
- We may consider applications for over £10m for truly exceptional heritage projects. If this applies to your project, you should contact your local office to discuss this.
- Explore our position and advice on using artificial intelligence (AI) tools in your grant application.

What we fund

We fund projects that value, care for and sustain heritage for everyone across the UK, now and in the future.

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.

This could include nature and habitats, historic buildings and environments, or cultures, traditions and people's memories. Explore a wide range of the types of heritage that your project could include.

We fund projects that:

- clearly focus on heritage – this can be national, regional or local heritage of the UK
- take into account all four investment principles
- have a clear plan with a defined start, middle and end
- have not already started
- can demonstrate the need for National Lottery investment

It is important to plan your project carefully, including costs, timescales and getting support for your project before you start to fill out an application. The guidance below will help you think about what you should include in your project and the costs we can cover.

Our heritage grants can support a broad range of activities and direct project costs, such as:

- volunteer expenses, new staff posts and training costs
- capital works, repair, maintenance and conservation
- professional fees, event costs and activities to strengthen your organisation
- acquisition of heritage and costs associated with the purchase
- costs to join Fit for the Future, a UK-wide environmental sustainability network

We cannot cover existing costs or any activity that has taken place before the grant is awarded, or anything that promotes the cause or beliefs of political or faith organisations.

We will not support projects that include installing artificial grass or plants, however specialist play safety surfacing and professional sports surfaces are allowed.

Heritage Enterprise

Some projects seek to achieve economic growth by investing in heritage. We call these Heritage Enterprise projects. The maximum you can apply for under heritage enterprise is £5m.

Welsh Language

If your project will take place in Wales, you must include the Welsh language in all aspects of your work. Tell us how you will promote and support the Welsh language and reflect the bilingual nature of Wales.

Make sure that translations are included in your project plan and project budget under the 'Other' costs category within the project costs section of the application.

For further information see our Welsh bilingual project guidance.

Promotion and acknowledgment of funding

Acknowledging your grant from the Heritage Fund is an important part of your project. It is your opportunity to show how National Lottery funding is being used to support heritage in the UK, and to publicly thank National Lottery players for making your project possible.

Planning early, and allocating appropriate budget, will help you to meet our requirements and acknowledge your grant in ways that are creative and suited to your project.

We encourage you to develop innovative offers or promotions for National Lottery players, for example, you might sign up for National Lottery Open Week to run special offers.

Please include budget for acknowledgement in the ‘Publicity and promotions’ costs category within the application project costs section of the application. We recommend you base these costs on quotes from potential suppliers.

If your grant is for more than £1m towards a new exhibition space, visitor centre, community garden or other public facility, we would also like to discuss how The National Lottery might best be incorporated into the name of the space or site.

Use our acknowledgement guidance to plan your activities proportionate to the size of your grant.

Evaluation and reporting

Good quality evaluation helps you understand your impact and provides the opportunity for others to learn from your experience. In turn, this information helps us identify the difference we are making through our grants.

We recommend you build in evaluation from the beginning of your project. Our evidence shows that the more carefully projects budget for their evaluation, the higher the quality of the final report.

You will need to include budget for evaluation and reporting in the ‘Evaluation’ costs category within the project costs section of your application, for both development and delivery phases.

Skills development

We encourage you to consider opportunities for people to develop skills as part of your project. This could include young people, those not in training or employment, and people not currently working in the heritage sector.

For example:

- heritage skills, where there are gaps, shortages or skills at risk of being lost, such as traditional crafts, building skills or digitisation
- organisational skills, including project management, business development, leadership or governance
- skills for climate adaptation and supporting net zero

You may also consider developing a skills programme, which aims to diversify the heritage workforce and support a wider range of volunteers.

You can include budget for skills development using the ‘training for staff’ and ‘training for volunteers’ cost categories within the project costs section of the application.

Full cost recovery

If you are an organisation in the voluntary sector (for example, you might have a board of trustees and be funded by grants and donations), we can cover a proportion of your organisation’s overheads through full cost recovery.

Full cost recovery means securing funding for all the costs involved in running a project. This means that you can request funding for direct project costs as well as a proportionate share of your organisation’s fixed costs.

This may include costs that partly support the project, but also support other projects or activities that your organisation provides, such as salaries of staff working across projects in administration, management, HR, or fundraising, office costs such as rent or utilities and legal or audit fees.

Funding that covers some of your running costs can be important for your sustainability, so we encourage you to consider including this in your budget in the ‘Full cost recovery’ costs category if you are eligible.

Recognised guidance on calculating the full cost recovery amount that applies to your project is available from organisations such as The National Lottery Community Fund.

Your contribution to project costs

You must contribute towards the costs of your project at this grant level. This is known as partnership funding and it can be made up of cash, non-cash contributions, volunteer time or a combination of all of these.

We use a standard rate of £20 per hour to calculate volunteer time.

If your project involves capital works, you can include the increased future costs of managing and maintaining the heritage for up to five years after practical completion as partnership funding.

For grant requests between £250,000 and £1m:

- You must provide at least 5% of the costs of the development phase and at least 5% of the costs of the delivery phase as partnership funding.

For grant requests between £1m and £10m:

- You must provide at least 10% of the costs of the development phase and at least 10% of the costs of the delivery phase as partnership funding.

If your project is receiving funding from other National Lottery distributors (for example, the Community Fund) this can count as partnership funding, but it cannot count towards your minimum contribution of 5% or 10%.

If you are providing the minimum required partnership funding, or you are unable to provide any partnership funding, you will need to explain why in your application. We will then consider your case for the amount of grant requested as part of our assessment.

Who can apply?

Under this programme, we accept applications from not-for-profit organisations and partnerships led by not-for-profit organisations.

Here are some examples of the types of organisations we can fund:

- charities, trusts and charitable incorporated organisations
- community and voluntary groups
- community/parish councils
- community interest companies
- faith-based or church organisations
- local authorities
- other public sector organisations

Organisations need to have a bank account, a governing document, and two or more members that are not related or living at the same address.

If you are unsure whether you are eligible to apply, get in touch with your local team by submitting an Expression of Interest.

Partnerships

We encourage you to work with other people to develop and carry out your project.

A partner is another organisation or third-party body that is integral to the delivery of your project.

Partners are not subcontractors. They will take on an active role in the project and will be involved in the project. They will help to report on progress, attend regular partnership meetings and support project evaluation.

If you plan to work with any other organisations to carry out a significant proportion of your project you must formalise your relationship with a partnership agreement.

If you are making a joint application, you will need to decide which organisation will be the lead applicant. The lead applicant will complete the application, and if successful, receive the grant and provide project updates. We usually expect the owner of the heritage to be the lead applicant. If the lead applicant is not the owner of the heritage, we usually ask them to sign up to the terms of grant.

Application process

You must first submit an Expression of Interest and, if you are successful, we will invite you to apply. You will have 12 months in which to submit an application.

If we are not inviting you to apply, we will explain our reason. You must wait three months before you submit a new Expression of Interest.

Your application will be in competition with other projects in both the development and delivery phases. A development grant award does not guarantee that you will receive a delivery grant award.

Development phase

Your application should usually include a development phase to help you work on your project proposal. You should include detailed information about this phase and outline proposals for your delivery phase. The development phase allows you to gain a better understanding of the costs, resources, timeline and the needs of your audiences. You should use this information to create detailed proposals for your delivery phase application.

You may take up to two years to complete this phase.

The development phase is likely to include:

- consultation with people outside your organisation
- a review of your governance, business planning and any legal issues
- detailed design and planning work
- any surveys or investigations needed

Reviewing your development phase

We will review your project during this phase to see how you are progressing with your delivery phase application.

For projects involving capital works, we will look at your plans when they are in line with RIBA work stage 2.

The main purpose of the review is to confirm that:

- the project is developing well and is following the approved purposes
- costs and partnership funding updates indicate a viable project
- risks are manageable
- there is a draft conservation plan for projects involving capital works for land or buildings

The review also provides the opportunity to review any significant changes and highlight any areas where further work is needed. If there are serious concerns, your project may fail the review and we will recommend that you do not submit a delivery phase application.

Delivery phase

We will discuss your delivery phase application with you during your development phase. You should provide detailed information about your delivery phase proposals in your application.

If you are awarded a delivery grant, you will have up to five years to complete your project unless we have agreed a longer project duration with you.

Application deadlines

There are quarterly deadlines for development and delivery phase applications.

Urgent decisions

In exceptional circumstances, we may consider a fast-track application process, if there is a compelling need for a faster decision (for example, if you have an opportunity to buy a heritage item at an auction but need to move quickly). If you think this applies to your project, you should contact your local office to discuss this.

How to apply

Use this checklist to make sure you are ready to apply:

Step one:

- I have read the application guidance and application questions
- I have read the terms of grant for this programme
- I have submitted an Expression of Interest

We aim to respond to your Expression of Interest within 20 working days.

If you are successful, we will invite you to make a full application.

Please note: an invitation to apply does not guarantee a grant from us in the future, but it does show that we see potential in your initial proposal.

Step two (if my Expression of Interest is successful, and I am invited to apply):

- I have drawn up a project plan and budget and checked my costings
- I have prepared all the mandatory supporting documents including my organisation's accounts
- I have considered any permissions or licences I will need, for example a bat licence or listed building consent
- I have planned how to evaluate my project
- I have planned how to acknowledge my grant, if my application is successful

Apply for or manage funding for a heritage project.

Supporting documents

You will need to provide relevant supporting documents, outlined in this section, as part of the application process.

Some documents are required during the development phase of your project, while others are required during the delivery phase. You will also need to provide updated versions of some of the documents provided with your development phase application as part of your delivery phase application.

Not all of the other documents listed below will apply to your project. The additional information and the application questions guidance will help you decide if they are relevant. Please do not submit any extra documents, as we will not use them in assessment.

Additional supporting documents are required for applications that refer to Heritage Enterprise projects.

Additional supporting documents may be required for applications that involve acquisitions. See further information in the Acquiring buildings, land or heritage items section.

Development phase supporting documents

You **must** provide the following mandatory documents:

- a governing document (unless exempt)
- accounts information
- a timetable for both the development and delivery phases
- a risk register for the development and delivery phases
- a document outlining the main risks after the project is complete
- a detailed cost breakdown for the development phase
- your organisation's current business plan

Governing document (for example, constitution)

You must provide a copy of your organisation's governing document.

You must have at least two people on your board or management committee who are not related by blood or marriage, or living at the same address.

Your governing document should include the following:

- the legal name and aims of your organisation
- a statement that prevents your organisation from distributing income or property to its members during its lifetime
- a statement which confirms that, if your organisation is wound up or dissolves, the organisation's assets will be distributed to another charitable or not-for-profit organisation and not to the organisation's members
- the date when it was adopted and the signature of your chairperson or other authorised person

We are unable to fund your organisation if your constitution does not include the above. The Charity Commission provides guidance on creating a governing document.

We do not need to see your governing document if you are:

- a public organisation, for example, a local authority or university
- a charity registered with the Charity Commissions for England, Wales or Northern Ireland, or the Scottish Charity Regulator

Accounts

You must provide your most recently audited or accountant verified accounts for the last three year and your management accounts for the current year.

If your organisation's accounts are older than 18 months, or your organisation was set up less than 14 months ago and does not have a set of audited accounts, you must provide your last three bank statements or a signed letter from your bank.

Risk register

You must submit a risk register for both the development and delivery phases.

A risk register is a document, usually set out as a table, that lists all the risks identified by an organisation and prioritised in order of importance.

We know all projects face challenges and risks. We will want to see what risks you have considered, the impact the risk would have on your project and how you would plan to manage each risk.

For each risk, outline:

- the nature of the risk, for example technical, market, financial, economic, management, legal
- a description of the risk
- the probability of the risk happening, using a percentage value or low, medium or high grading
- the effect the risk could have on project costs, time and/or performance
- the overall effect the risk may have on project delivery
- how you would deal with the risk

Detailed cost breakdown

You must provide a spreadsheet detailing the costs you outlined when completing your application.

We require a detailed spreadsheet of project expenditure and income, with reference to the budget headings used in your application, itemising each aspect.

For example, you may have included repair and conservation work in your initial budget, with a headline summary of 'roof repairs, £100,000'. You should elaborate on this in your detailed cost breakdown, providing a spreadsheet that contains an itemised list of the materials and labour involved with a separate row for each cost.

Business plan

You must submit your organisation’s current business plan.

If you do not have a business plan please submit the document you work with to manage your heritage. If you are an organisation that manages multiple sites or are, for example, a Local Authority, please submit the documents most relevant to the heritage in your application.

A business plan sets out the financial and organisational aspects of your business. It shows:

- an overview of your organisation
- the financial status of your organisation
- the context in which your organisation sits
- how you wish to develop your organisation

A business plan is not the same as a project plan. It focuses on the overall organisation and not specific project activities, but should convey how your proposed project aligns with your ambitions as an organisation. For further information see our business plan guidance.

Project timetable

You must provide a timetable for both the development and delivery phases.

This should include detailed information about the development phase and outline information for the delivery phase. This should also include references to the milestones you expect your project to pass, providing a comprehensive overview of how you expect your project to evolve over time.

Job descriptions (if applicable)

If you plan to recruit new staff or apprentices to help deliver your project, you need to provide a job description for each new post. Each job description should include the proposed salary and working hours.

Briefs for commissioned work (if applicable)

Briefs describe any work you plan to buy in during your project.

If you are commissioning work, for example, from an artist or architect, then you should provide a brief. The brief should describe the works, how long they will take, how much they will cost and the skills required.

Find out more information and use our briefs template.

Calculation of full cost recovery for the development phase (if applicable)

If you have included full cost recovery as a cost heading in your project costs, you must provide a document that shows how you have calculated this based on recent published accounts.

Recognised guidance on calculating the full cost recovery amount that applies to your project is available from organisations such as The National Lottery Community Fund.

We cannot accept applications that include full cost recovery from public sector organisations (for example, government-funded museums, local authorities or universities).

Project images (if applicable)

If relevant, please provide up to six images that help illustrate your project.

Please make sure you have all the permissions required, such as copyright ownership and participant consent forms, to share these images with us, as we may use them to tell people about your project, including our decision makers.

Evidence of support (if applicable)

Provide up to six pieces of evidence of support, for example letters, emails or feedback forms, from other organisations or individuals who are supporting or taking part in your project.

Providing evidence of support is a good way of showing us that you have spoken to other people and that they are interested and committed to your project.

Partnership agreements (mandatory if applicable)

If you plan to work with any other organisations to carry out your project, you will need to provide a partnership agreement. This document should outline all partner's roles and responsibilities and should be signed by all parties. This document should reflect the needs of your project and you may need to seek independent advice on how to best write an agreement.

Condition survey (if applicable)

If your project involves the conservation of heritage, you must provide a condition survey or another appropriate document to tell us the current condition of the heritage and the works that are needed to return the heritage to a good condition.

The survey or report should also indicate the relative priority of the proposed works so you know which are the most critical and need to be tackled most urgently.

There are other types of survey which may be relevant to include as part of a condition survey, such as a building performance and energy efficiency survey.

Ownership documents (if applicable)

If you are planning any capital works, or intending to purchase buildings, land or heritage items, you will need to provide copies of any documents relevant to your ownership. This could be Land Registry ownership documents, or a lease or heads of terms.

Delivery phase supporting documents

When completing a delivery phase application, you **must** provide updated versions of the following documents to reflect the new understanding of the costs, resources, timeline and the needs of your audiences you have gained during the development phase of your project:

- business plan
- full cost breakdown including additional columns comparing costs at the award of your development grant, your development phase review and the submission of your delivery phase application
- risk register for the delivery phase and after the project is complete
- a timetable for the delivery phase
- calculation of full cost recovery for the delivery phase, if applicable
- briefs for commissioned work, if applicable
- job descriptions for the delivery phase, if applicable
- images, if applicable
- partnership agreements, if applicable
- ownership documents, if applicable

You **must** also provide the following documents as applicable.

Activity plan or area action plan

You must provide an activity plan or area action plan as applicable. If your project relates to activities and people, you must produce an activity plan. If you are working on an area-based project, you must produce an area action plan.

Activity plan

An activity plan sets out everything you will do as part of your National Lottery-supported project to achieve positive outcomes for the people involved. These might be participants, visitors, volunteers or trainees but might also include new and existing staff and your trustees or steering group.

You will need to decide which specific groups of people you want to reach with your funding. Then set out all of the activity – in detail and properly costed – you will do to meet their needs and achieve our investment principles within your project.

Your activity plan is specific to the heritage project you are asking us to fund. It is not the same as your plans for everyday work or a general development plan for you organisation's activity.

Read more information in our activity plan guidance.

Area action plan

If applicable, your area action plan should include:

- a summary that explains the distinctive character of your area and how this has evolved over time – including all land, biodiversity, structures, buildings and features that make or could make positive contributions to the area's overall distinctiveness
- information on how the area is currently managed and protected, including assessment of current strategies and policies against appropriate sector benchmarks, and availability and need of heritage skills
- analysis of the area's demographic, social and economic conditions; an assessment of the different interest and concerns of stakeholders such as owners of heritage, local communities, business community, and visitors
- your organisation's agreed vision for the area
- information which will help you design activities which you will run as part of your scheme to engage local people with the area's heritage
- your rationale for your area's boundaries
- an assessment of policies and statutory powers that need to be put in place to protect the area's character and sustain the benefits of your scheme in the long-term for the benefit of the heritage and local communities
- threats to the area and opportunities to address these such as climate change; broader political environment and policy issues; social and economic changes; and local attitudes and understanding of the heritage
- summary of the type and category of work which could be carried out to preserve and enhance the character of land, biodiversity, structures, buildings, features and the overall area
- plans for the intended long-term legacy of your project and how this will be secured
- details of how you will evaluate your area-based project and what resources you will need to complete this evaluation

Your area action plan should be uploaded in a document such as a PDF. Include an executive summary no longer than a single A4 page and a contents page.

We provide further details on how to create an area action plan.

Cash flow report

You must provide a complete overview of the cash flow of your organisation throughout the duration of your project. This should include a monthly report of your bank balance, alongside any monthly cash surplus or deficit.

If you have a trading subsidiary, please prepare a consolidated cash flow for the parent organisation and the subsidiary.

Explain the assumptions you are making regarding any reasonably anticipated income from any other funding sources.

Income and spending forecasts for five years following project completion

You must provide a general financial assessment of your organisation as it relates to your project, representative of your day-to-day operation and your financial model including your main sources of funding, as you intend to operate for the five years following project completion.

This should include a forecast income and expenditure account, a cashflow forecast showing the expected monthly cashflow and statements of assumptions underlying the forecasts.

Include detail of assumptions made in your calculations. An assumption is anything that you are relying on to make forecasts. For example, the average number of visitors you are expecting based on the previous year, or any unknown costs of materials.

Make sure you also include details of any reserves that may impact your report.

Project management structure

You must provide a document to explain the management structure of your project, with reference to decision-making processes and lines of communication and reporting. It may be relevant to provide a simple organogram/network diagram to show your organisation’s governance, management and staffing structures as they pertain to the project.

Management and maintenance plan (if applicable)

If your project involves capital works, the creation of new material, or the purchase of a historic building, structure, transport heritage or land, we will ask you to prepare a management and maintenance plan as part of your delivery phase application.

The management and maintenance plan tells us how you will look after your heritage once the project is complete, including how you expect to maintain the benefits of your project in the future. We will expect you to make sure that the work we have funded is kept in good condition.

We will expect your organisation to adopt your management and maintenance plan, to integrate it into your existing policies for management and care, and to provide financial resources to implement that plan for the duration of your grant contract.

Your management and maintenance plan should detail how your project's results will be maintained, who will do it, what skills they will need, when things need to be done and what cost the cost of this work will be.

Your plan should represent works completed during the development phase, for example referring to ways in which you intend to maintain the quality of newly restored features. This may include the origin and specification of materials or the palette of colours used to paint features/furniture among other decisions that have been made during your project so far.

See a complete guide to creating a management and maintenance plan.

Design specification or interpretation plan (if applicable)

It may be relevant to include a design specification or interpretation plan that explains the way your project intends to display or share heritage.

Interpretation is the way we communicate stories and ideas about heritage to different audiences. It involves turning information into something accessible, relevant and engaging.

Include specific reference to the ways your project will deepen people's understanding of heritage, explore and make sense of historic sites and landscapes, objects, traditions or events.

You may include your plans for the wider experience that will help visitors engage with heritage. This may involve architectural plans and designs for tangible objects or buildings, a renovation or an exhibition.

Interpretation can take many different forms, from trails, audio descriptions and films to workshops, interactives and online displays.

Read our guide to creating an interpretation plan.

Developed conservation plan (if applicable)

If your project involves capital works, the creation of new material, or the purchase of a historic building, structure, transport heritage or land, you should submit a conservation plan that details the understanding of your heritage and the opportunities to share your heritage with others that you identified in your development phase. You may address any risks and threats that you have identified.

Read our guide to creating a conservation plan.

How we assess your application

Please choose when to make your application carefully. Do not rush to submit an application before you are ready, and make sure you have thought through the best way to shape your activity and how you are going to manage it.

We receive a higher number of applications than we can fund and need to prioritise where our investment can make a significant difference.

You should answer all of the questions in the application.

Once you submit your online application, we will check everything is in place and will be in touch to let you know when you can expect a decision. We will not be able to start the assessment of your application until we have the relevant information and supporting documents.

If your application is for a development grant award, it is unlikely that you will hear from us again until we notify you of the decision.

As an organisation that gives out public funds, we carry out some checks on the information you provide to us when you apply (for example, we may check your history with us or carry out identity or fraud checks).

When we assess your application, we will consider a range of factors including:

- whether your project is relevant to heritage in the UK
- the needs and opportunities your project will address
- how strongly your project will take into account all four investment principles
- how your project's impact will be sustained

We may also consider issues such as achieving a geographical spread of our funding.

If your application does not clearly relate to UK heritage or does not take into account all four investment principles, then it may be rejected earlier during the assessment process and we will let you know.

Considering risk

When assessing your application, we will make a measured judgement on the potential risks to your project and current organisational risks – and we will look to see if you have identified these and told us how you will mitigate against them.

All projects will face threats and opportunities that you need to identify and manage. We want you to be realistic about the risks your project and organisation may face so that you are in a good position to manage and deliver the project successfully.

You should also carefully consider inflation and contingency costs within your application.

Inflation for capital projects is likely to remain high for the foreseeable future. You should account for inflation based on the project timescale, plus other factors such as materials used, labour demands and location.

You can access analysis and projections for inflation costs from sources such as the?Building Cost Information Service ?and consultancies including?Gardiner & Theobold Market Intelligence,?Turner & Townsend?and?Rider Levett Bucknall.

The types of risk and problems you should consider are:

- financial: for example, a reduced contribution from another funding source
- organisational: for example, a shortage of people with the skills you need or staff needed to work on other projects
- economic: for example, an unexpected rise in the cost of materials
- technical: for example, discovering unexpected and wide-ranging damp
- social: for example, negative responses to consultation or a lack of interest from your target audience
- management: for example, a significant change in the project team
- legal: for example, subsidy control, or changes in law that make the project impractical
- environmental: for example, difficulties in finding sources of timber from well managed forests

Assessment time

Once we have everything we need, we aim to assess applications in 12 weeks and, following assessment, your application will be assigned to the next scheduled decision meeting. (Please note: we cannot start assessing your application until all the required checks are completed and we receive all the required supporting information.)

Decisions

Decisions are made on a quarterly basis by the committee of your nation or area or by our Board of Trustees.

If your application is successful

You must wait to receive permission from us before beginning your project. You will need to submit a form online and provide us with:

- your bank account details (mandatory)
- proof of ownership/leasehold requirements (for all capital projects, if any changes have taken place since application)
- details of statutory permissions and/or licences required and obtained (if applicable)
- confirmation of partnership funding (if applicable)
- cost breakdown and cashflow report
- project management structure and methods for choosing consultants, contractors and suppliers
- project timetable or work programme

Your organisation will need a bank account. The name on this bank account must exactly match the name of the organisation making the application.

You will need to sign up to our terms of grant. The duration of the grant terms depends on the type of project:

- activity: the date the project finishes
- capital: 20 years after the Project Completion Date
- digital: 20 years after the Project Completion Date
- acquisition: If your project includes buying a heritage item, land or building, the terms of the grant will last indefinitely. If you wish to dispose of what you have bought in the future, you must ask for our permission and we may claim back all or part of our grant.

The Project Completion Date is the date we let you know that we have recorded the Project as complete.

We will contact you to arrange a start up meeting. At this meeting you may be introduced to a consultant from our Register of Support Services (RoSS), who will support you in developing or delivering aspects of your project or help review risks.

How we pay your grant

For development grants up to £250,000, we will pay your grant in three instalments:

1. we will give you 50% of the grant up-front

2. once you have spent the first half of your total eligible project costs, we will give you the next 30%
3. we will pay the final 20% of your grant when you have finished your project and sent us a final completion report, project evaluation and proof you have acknowledged your grant

For development grants over £250,000 and for all delivery grants we will make payments in arrears. We will also hold the last 10% of your grant until we are satisfied that the project is complete, that the grant has been spent appropriately, and you have sent us your evaluation report and proof of your acknowledgement of the funding.

We will pay your grant as a percentage of your project costs. We describe this as the payment percentage.

For example, if your total project costs are £1m and your cash contributions are £250,000, your grant will be £750,000 and your payment percentage will be 75%.

If your project involves the acquisition of heritage, we will pay the full grant amount needed for the purchase is a single payment.

Reporting

We are really keen to hear about how your project is progressing and the achievements you have made with the funding. As part of your formal reporting on your grant, you must provide us with project updates during the lifetime of your project. We will expect a project update usually every three months, and at least each time you request a payment.

If your application is unsuccessful

The assessment process is competitive and we cannot fund all of the good quality applications that we receive. If your application is unsuccessful, we will tell you why and may suggest that you make another application, but you must talk to us about this before reapplying.

Acquiring buildings, land or heritage items

You may have plans to use our grant to fund the acquisition of a building, land or heritage items.

We can fund projects that involve the purchase of land and/or buildings that are important to our heritage and are for sale at or below market value. The principal reasons for your proposed purchase must be a benefit to the long-term management of heritage and for public access.

Private individuals or for-profit organisations cannot use our funding to acquire building, land or heritage items.

It is important that purchases align with our strategy and investment principles as a funder. If your project involves buying land or buildings, you must buy them freehold or with a lease with at least 99 years left to run.

We will only help to buy buildings, land or heritage items if you demonstrate in your application that:

- risks to the preservation of the buildings, land or heritage items will be reduced if the purchase is successful
- the price accurately reflects the condition and value of the heritage asset(s)
- the heritage asset(s) will be accessible to the public once purchased and the purchase will contribute to more people engaging with heritage

- you can show that you have adequate plans for the long-term care and maintenance over a period of at least 10 years after project completion
- you can demonstrate that what you wish to purchase is significant to heritage in a local, regional or national sense

Your application should include:

- Information about the history and significance of the buildings, land or heritage items.
- A statement about why you are the right organisation to own it. This should be supported by what you say in your policies, such as your acquisition, collections-management or collecting policy.
- Evidence that you will become the full owner, or a good case for well-planned joint ownership.
- Documentary proof of the provenance (origin) of the heritage item(s). Examples of proof include sale documents, legal documents, export documents, written statement by the current owner and history documents.
- Evidence that the current owners are the owners (have legal title) and have the right to both sell and transfer the title to the new owner. In the case of a property or land purchase, this may include evidence of any legal covenants, rights (such as fishing, shooting, mineral, drainage), long or short-term tenancies, rights of way or access, or any other interests which are attached to the land or building.
- An independent valuation on an open-market basis for the heritage asset(s) you wish to buy. This should include the valuer's reasoning to support the valuation, not just a statement of the value. For land and property acquisitions we welcome valuations by the District Valuer. You do not need to commission a valuation for items which are the subject of an export stop or part of the Treasure Valuation Process.
- Evidence that you have followed current guidance on portable antiquities, illegal trade, and items and collections that could be sensitive. You should provide a statement outlining your research into the relevant laws and guidelines on ethical acquisitions.
- A description of how you will manage the buildings, land or heritage items and keep them secure, both at the time you buy them and in the future.
- A conservator's report stating whether the heritage has any conservation needs and, if so, how you will meet those needs. The report should include evidence that your organisation has the right environmental conditions to house the purchase.

We will not support purchases that we think are above market value. An independent valuation of the item(s) you wish to purchase will take place as part of the assessment process. We will normally be prepared to support a purchase at a figure up to 10% above the top of any range in an accepted valuation.

The eligible costs associated with a purchase include:

- the purchase price itself
- fees incurred by your organisation as the buyer including valuations, agent's fees and the buyer's premium for purchases at auction
- unreclaimable VAT

Please make sure these are reflected in your cost table.

Ineligible costs include:

- seller's fees (for example, legal and agent's fees)

You should also include the costs of all the other activities you will do in your project once you have bought the buildings, land or heritage items.

If you already manage the heritage asset(s) that you want to buy, you will need to show us what extra benefits the purchase will bring. You will need to show that all options for entering into an appropriate management agreement with the existing owner have been explored before seeking a grant for purchase.

We will fund buying works of art, archives, objects and other collections that are important to the heritage and which were created more than 10 years ago. We will also fund buying more recent items of heritage importance, but only if they are part of a larger collection, which is more than 10 years old.

We will not give priority to a purchase simply because of an export stop. An export stop gives organisations a chance to raise money needed to buy an item or collection that is intended for export. The export stop defers the export licence for a specified period in order that an offer may be made from within the UK. If you intend to apply to us you should contact your local office as soon as possible, and within the first deferral period.

If your project includes buying buildings, land or heritage items, the terms of the grant will last indefinitely. We may require a charge on the item(s), land or buildings. If you wish to dispose of what you have bought in future, you must ask for our permission, and we may claim back our grant. If you already have the item(s) on loan to your organisation, you will need to show us what extra benefits buying them will bring.

There is unlikely to be sufficient public benefit in the acquisition of a heritage item by one publicly funded collection from another for us to consider funding the purchase. This may not be the case, however, if the acquisition directly relates to saving heritage at risk, and a grant may be approved if the object, land, building or collection is at risk of loss from the public domain due to the organisational failure of the current owner.

If you need an urgent decision from us, you must contact your local office to discuss this before you apply. You may use your application or Expression of Interest to indicate the reasons you require a fast-track application. We can only consider offering fast-track decisions for buying heritage items or collections if the deadline means we cannot assess your application within our usual timetable.

Our staff will discuss with you the implications of our fast-track procedure for your application. If you have a short amount of time to buy the item(s), we ask you to provide us with details of how this object will be integrated into your existing learning activities and public programmes. We will expect activities and programmes to be appropriate for the object you are acquiring.

Community grants

Community and third-party grants schemes are pots of money that you can use to fund other groups or organisations to deliver small projects that help you achieve your overall aims for heritage. They can help you enhance engagement and widen the impact of your project.

Community grants can be used to fund activities or capital works to heritage assets. They can be awarded to not-for-profit community groups or private owners of heritage to undertake capital works to conserve that heritage. Community grants cannot be given to acquire land, buildings or heritage items.

If you are the lead applicant, you will manage the community grant process and funding pot. You will be responsible for:

- inviting and assessing applications through a fair, open and transparent process
- establishing a panel to make decisions to award or reject grants
- reviewing progress made on the project to ensure it is satisfactory
- making grant payments
- monitoring compliance with the terms of the community grant, resolving any issues and repayment of the grant if necessary

In your application you should explain what the aims of your community grant scheme are, how it contributes to the wider project and how it will be managed.

We recommend that the community grants pot should not exceed £200,000. Individual grants should be limited to £10,000 for activities and £25,000 for capital works. If your project needs a larger community grants pot or to make bigger awards for conservation of historic buildings, you will need to justify this in your application.

You will need to formalise the grant award in a third-party agreement between you and the community grant recipient which defines the activities to be delivered and sets out the terms of the grant. Community grant recipients must sign up to our standard terms of grant, with particular reference to the following (where relevant):

- overall Grant Expiry Date
- acknowledgement of National Lottery funding
- clawback
- project monitoring
- unspent grant
- procurement
- digital requirements
- land and property in third-party ownership

You will need to reflect these areas in your agreements with the community grant recipients, as you will be responsible for ensuring they understand and agree to the terms of grant.

Agreements with third-party landowners, including private owners, must secure the management and maintenance of capital works from the start of the work on the project until 10 years after the project's completion.

You may include costs for managing the grant scheme, including the costs of adapting and setting up any third-party agreements and taking legal advice, as part of the costs in your application.

You will need to develop a fair and transparent application process with clear guidelines. You must submit your application and monitoring process to us for approval before the community grant scheme is launched.

You should have clear criteria for applications and make these criteria publicly available along with a list of your awards.

You must undertake due diligence before awarding community grants. As a minimum you will need to request the following from an applicant:

- the organisation's governing document (unless they are a public sector organisation or private owner of heritage)
- proof of ownership if the project involves work to land, buildings or heritage items (for example, deeds, leases or any information relating to mortgages)
- copy of recent accounts or last three months of bank statements

Decisions to award or reject applications must be made by a grants panel. Members of the panel should not all be from the same organisation, and it should not include organisations or individuals who may wish to apply for grants from the community pot. This is a conflict of interest.

You will need to ensure that the community grant recipients have complied with the terms of your community grant scheme and the grant has been used appropriately. To do this you will need to gather evidence from the community grant recipient. The level of detail you request should be proportionate to the grant amount.

You will need to resolve any issues with the community grant recipient including the arrangements for repayment or clawback of the grant.

You will have overall responsibility for reporting to us on the progress of the community grants and will need to produce an evaluation report at the end of your project. You must make sure that you allocate sufficient budget to undertake this evaluation work.

Legal and policy requirements

Ownership

We expect you to own any property (land, buildings, heritage items or intellectual property) on which you spend the grant or have a lease that meets our requirements.

You must own the freehold or have a lease with at least 20 years left to run after the Project Completion Date for your delivery phase.

The Project Completion Date is the date we let you know that we have recorded the Project as complete.

All leases must meet the following requirements:

- we do not accept leases with break clauses (these give one or more parties to the lease the right to end the lease in certain circumstances)
- we do not accept leases with forfeiture on insolvency clauses (these give the landlord the right to end the lease if the tenant becomes insolvent)
- you must be able to sell on, sublet the whole or part, and mortgage your lease but if we award you a grant, you must first have our permission to do any of these

If the subject of your project is land or a heritage building that is owned by a third party or multiple third parties we will usually expect the owner to become a joint grantee. In some situations, rather than make the owner a joint grantee, we may ask them to sign an additional letter agreeing to comply with any terms of grant that relate to their property.

In this instance, a legal agreement should also be put in place between each land or building owner and the grantee. There is no prescribed form of agreement but we have specific requirements which should be included in any third party owner agreements.

At a minimum, the agreements should include the following:

- confirmation as to how the land or building is held (freehold or leasehold)
- a description of the property (including plans)

- covenants on the part of the owner to maintain the property and provide public access in accordance with the terms of the grant (as applicable)
- a provision that any onward disposal should be subject to the third party agreement
- confirmation that the agreement will last from the start of the work on the third party land until 10 years following the Project Completion Date for your delivery phase

The agreements will need to be completed and in place before any grant monies are released for work on any land or building owned by a third party.

Taking security for the grant

In the instance that you are a non-public body, your project involves capital works and your grant is over £250,000, **it is our policy to take a charge over the grant-funded property**.

If you are a public body such as a local authority or a university we will require a restriction on your Land Registry title to ensure you seek our consent before entering into any future transactions relating to the grant funded property.

If any of the above applies to your project, you will need to send us your solicitor's contact details as soon as possible if you are awarded a delivery phase grant.

Your solicitor will need to provide official copies of the current title register with plan or the necessary information to enable us to draft the charge documentation. This will include an undertaking from your solicitor to act on our behalf to carry out all relevant pre-completion searches and to register the charge at the Land Registry and at Companies House (if appropriate).

You will be responsible for the fees and costs of your solicitor, but you may include the cost of legal advice as part of the project costs in your application.

Borrowing or loaning heritage items

If you are borrowing an item or collection as part of the project, for example, for an exhibition, and are asked to contribute towards the costs of conservation then we may accept this cost if it forms a small part of your project.

The owners of the item or collection may need to be included in your partnership agreement, or sign up to the terms of grant, if a grant is awarded. Please include this in your Expression of Interest if you think this will apply to your project.

If you are planning a capital building project with the purpose of storing or displaying a collection that you do not own we will require the owner of the collection to agree to the terms of grant (and any additional conditions set out in the grant contract) if a grant is awarded. Please include this in your Expression of Interest, if you think this will apply to your project.

Capital works

We can fund capital works as part of your project. Capital works are defined as works that create or improve an asset.

For example, conservation of a heathland, repairs to a memorial and digitisation of a photographic archive would all be considered as capital works. Conducting archaeological excavation and other types of archaeological activity can include capital works.

If projects involve construction, we encourage restoration, conservation and reuse rather than new build. If new build works are necessary (for example to make sites inclusive, accessible or financially viable), please explain why as part of your application. All new build aspects of a project should be delivered to the highest environmental standards.

Your planned capital works should reflect the appropriate RIBA Work Stage for the application you are making. For a development phase application, planned capital works should be developed up to and including RIBA Work Stage 1. At the time of your development review, RIBA Work Stage 2 must be completed and significant progress made towards RIBA Work Stage 3. For a delivery phase application, capital works should be developed up to and including RIBA Work Stage 3 as a minimum.

The Royal Institute of British Architects provides more information on RIBA Work Stages.

If it is relevant to your project, we may ask you to submit a condition survey, and further evidence showing that the work you plan to do follows good practice.

You should include appropriate costs to cover predicted capital works inflation and appropriate contingency to address the risks of a heritage project involving capital works.

For landscape and nature capital projects we will prioritise those that focus on one or more of the following themes; support nature's recovery, deliver nature-based solutions to climate change and/or help people reconnect with nature.

Projects involving land, habitat and species

If your project involves the conservation of a priority habitat or species, your project must help to meet UKBAP habitat and species targets, contribute to long-term sustainable management of the area involved and demonstrate a strategic approach to the conservation of a priority habitat or species.

While the land involved in the project may have some public access, such as paths or hides, we acknowledge that physical access may not always be appropriate or desirable for habitat conservation reasons.

Where appropriate, at completion, projects will be asked to apply for and achieve Green Flag Award for seven continuous years.

Though specialist play safety surfacing and professional sports surfaces are permitted as part of project plans, we will not support landscape projects that include installing artificial grass or plants, or use peat for horticultural or landscape purposes.

If applicable, planting stock should be sourced from bio secure sources such as Plant Healthy certified nurseries.

Any species observations must comply with the standards for data quality and accessibility as set out by the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) on the NBN Atlas. These observations must be made available to the public on an open licence at capture resolution, subject to sensitive species restrictions. If you are unsure how best to proceed, please contact the NBN directly to discuss the most appropriate data supply route.

Projects which include the re-introduction of species to the UK require a robust environmental case to be made, which will need to be supported by the relevant country nature conservation agency. The project will need to meet the guidelines established by IUCN/SSC Re-Introduction Specialist Group.

More information can be found in our nature and landscapes guidance.

Insuring works and property

You must, with your contractors, take out appropriate insurance for any property, works, materials and goods involved in your project. All of these must be covered for their full reinstatement value against loss or damage, including inflation and professional fees. They must also be covered for the full duration of your grant contract.

If your project is affected by fire, lightning, storm or flood to the extent that you cannot complete the project as detailed in your application, we may consider claiming back our grant.

Digital works

We have specific requirements for digital works produced as part of any project.

This covers anything you create in your project in a digital format that is designed to give access to heritage and/or help people engage with, and learn about, heritage.

For example, this could include photographs, text, software, web and app content, databases, 3D models, sound and video recordings. Items created in the management of the project, for example emails between team members and records of meetings, are not included in the requirement.

We ask you to share your digital outputs under an open licence. Our default open licence is CC-BY 4.0. This helps remove barriers to the use and reuse of funded works, enabling greater engagement with the UK's heritage. It also helps to ensure others give proper credit to your work.

Our regulations around digital works vary depending on grant size.

Read further guidance on producing digital materials as part of a project.

Procurement

You must follow our procurement guidelines. As an overview, projects with any single goods, works or services worth more than £10,000 (excluding VAT), should get at least three competitive tenders/quotes. For all goods, works and services worth more than £50,000 (excluding VAT), you must provide proof of competitive tendering procedures.

Your proof should be a report on the tenders you have received, together with your decision on which to accept. You must give full reasons if you do not select the lowest tender. Depending on the nature of your organisation and project you may be required to comply with UK Procurement Legislation.

If a project partner is providing goods or services paid for through the grant, then you need to tell us why they have been chosen and why an open tender process is not appropriate. We will consider whether this is the best way to carry out your project and expect you to show value for money and meet any relevant legal requirements.

If you are unsure about your obligations, we advise you to take professional or legal advice. If you have already procured goods, works or services for the project that are worth more than £10,000, (excluding VAT), you will need to tell us how you did it. We cannot pay your grant if you have not followed the correct procedure.

Staff recruitment

You must also openly advertise all project staff posts, with the following exceptions:

- You have a suitably qualified member of staff on your payroll that you are moving into a project post.
- You are extending the hours of a suitably qualified member of staff on your payroll so that they can work on the project. In this case we will fund the cost of the additional hours spent on the project and you will need to tell us about their role.

In these instances, you still need to provide a job description for the post that explains work the appointed staff member will carry out in the context of your project.

We are committed to ensuring that the heritage sector is inclusive and sustainable. You must use at least the Living Wage rate (and London Living Wage where applicable) for all project staff. Please show evidence of budgeting for at least the Living Wage rates in your staff costs and budgets.

Procedures to recruit consultants and contractors must be fair and open and keep to the relevant equality legislation.

Subsidy control

If your application is successful, it is important to remember our grant comes from public funds and is subject to the Subsidy Control Act 2022. We ask that you familiarise yourself with the key requirements.

A subsidy is where a public authority provides financial support from public money that gives an economic advantage to the recipient, where that recipient can be considered to be engaged in economic activities. The majority of our grants will either not be a subsidy or will be able to proceed as a lawful subsidy which meets the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

As a public body it is our responsibility to make the final determination of whether your grant is a subsidy and/or apply relevant exemptions as necessary and our subsidy control assessment is an important part of the application process. In preparing your application you should consider whether any particular subsidy control exemption is required for your project. We will expect your grant to comply with the principles of the subsidy control regime including the Act and published Statutory Guidance. If you are unsure whether your project will satisfy the relevant requirements you should seek independent legal advice.

We reserve the right to impose further requirements and seek further information in this respect and we will expect you to provide us with any assistance we may reasonably require in completing a subsidy control assessment.

Government embargoes and sanctions

Our grants must not be used to fund organisations who are supporting extremism, criminal activity and/or who are subject to government embargoes and sanctions.

You must follow all legislation and regulations that apply to your project and carry out your own due diligence on any funds, contracts or individuals linked to places that may be subject to government embargoes and sanctions.

If your project is affected, please contact your Investment Manager or local office. We reserve the right to withhold grant payments if we consider public funds are at risk.

Get in touch

If you have a question about our funding, please get in touch.

If you require further help with your application, find out more about the types of assistance and support we can provide.

If you want to find out about our complaints process, please visit our Customer Service page.

We are committed to treating all customers fairly and professionally. We expect the same behaviour in return. Find out more about our policy on dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

Guidance updates

We will regularly review this guidance and respond to user feedback. We reserve the right to make changes as required. We will communicate any changes as quickly as possible via this webpage.