Using artificial intelligence in your funding application

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are being used more in our lives. Programmes like ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot and Claude are changing the way people work. We understand that organisations seeking funding may want to use these tools to help with their applications to us.

Our position on AI

You may use AI tools to help complete your Project Enquiry, Expression of Interest and application. We will not reject an application just because AI was used.

We understand AI can support you to develop funding applications, especially if you don't have much experience bidding for grants or have access needs. Many organisations find that using AI helps them write applications faster and with less effort.

Our recommendations for using AI

Use AI with caution

AI can provide a useful starting point but won't be able tell the unique story of the heritage project you want us to fund and may include plans that are not practical or suited to your requirements. The proposals in your application inform our decision making and form part of your contract with us. Proposing activity you can't deliver could be a breach of your contract.

AI produced applications may also include incorrect information. It's your responsibility to ensure your application isn't misleading or inaccurate.

Clearly tell us about the heritage you want us to support

AI tools often produce generic content or use buzzwords that don't capture why the heritage you want us to support is important to you and the people who may access it. Your application must tell us clearly:

- the heritage your project will focus on (see our what we fund guidance)
- why the heritage is important (see our understanding your heritage page)
- why your project matters by including any consultation feedback or research you've done to support your plans

Be specific and provide the evidence we ask for in our application guidance

Applications that provide clear, detailed information make it easier for our assessors to understand your proposals. If you use an AI tool to write your application, check the final version clearly tells us **what** you want to do, **why**, **when**, **where** and **who** will be involved. You must also describe the difference our funding will make to the heritage and how your project takes our investment principles into account.

Plan and cost your budget carefully

Your project budget is an important part of your application and our assessment process. We do not advise using AI to generate your budget, but if you do, check the final version carefully to make sure:

- it matches your project activities and supports your goals
- all the costs are eligible

Risks when using AI

Your data might not be private

AI tools, especially free ones, may store data you input. This could compromise confidentiality. Before you enter any data into AI tools, check your organisation's policies and relevant legislation such as UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in relation to personal data.

We advise against using any commercially sensitive or personal information in AI tools.

AI has an environmental impact

AI tools use large amounts of energy and fresh water to power their data centres. Estimates suggest that ChatGPT uses between 50 and 90 times more energy per query than a conventional online search.

Only use AI where it will clearly help you apply or significantly improve the quality of your application.

Updates and acknowledgements

This statement explains our current approach to applicants using AI tools. We may update our position and will keep this page updated.

We'd like to acknowledge the National Lottery Community Fund's AI guidance for funding applications, which has informed the development of this policy.