



# *Our Heritage* Review

EVALUATION  
EXPERTISE



# Our Heritage Review

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## Executive summary: what is this review about?

*Our Heritage* is a Heritage Lottery Fund open grant programme. Applicants can apply for a grant of more than £10,000 and up to £100,000. Applicants must be non-for-profit organisations, private owners of heritage or partnerships. Funded projects range from museums and historic places to archaeology, the natural environment and cultural traditions. The programme supports the Heritage Lottery Fund's key objective to "sustain and transform a wide range of heritage and generate a lasting impact on people and places".

All *Our Heritage* projects are required to submit an evaluation of their project on its completion. Our review covers the quality of reports submitted for projects completed between January 2015 and April 2016. Quality is judged using HLF's six criteria for a good evaluation report: logical framework, appropriate and methodical evidence, robust analysis, objectivity, clearly presented results and useful conclusions/applicable lessons learned.

We assessed each of the reports on a four point scale: excellent, good, adequate or poor.

The Heritage Lottery Fund uses an outcome framework to describe the difference it wants to make. The Framework sets out 14 potential outcomes from its investment: 4 outcomes for heritage; 5 for people and 5 for communities.

We reviewed the information in the *Our Heritage* evaluation reports to map the outcomes achieved by completed projects onto each of the 14 elements of the framework.

# Executive Summary: Outcome Framework and *Our Heritage* project examples

## The Heritage Lottery Fund's Outcome Framework

### Outcomes for **heritage**:

With our investment, heritage will be:

- Better managed
- In better condition
- Better interpreted and explained
- Identified/recorded

### Outcomes for **people**:

With our investment, people will have:

- Developed skills
- Learnt about heritage
- Changed their attitudes and/or behaviour
- Had an enjoyable experience
- Volunteered time

### Outcomes for **communities**:

With our investment:

- Negative environmental impacts will be reduced
- More people and a wider range of people will have enjoyed heritage
- Your local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit
- Your local economy will be boosted

- Your organisation will be more resilient

## Examples of *Our Heritage* Projects



*Urban Buzz Birmingham* was a land and biodiversity project which set out to enhance Birmingham's habitat for pollinators by providing hot spots rich in pollen and nectar for bees, hoverflies, wasps and beetles to feed on as well as providing ample shelter and nesting habitat for them. Some 350 people took part volunteering 1,300 hours. The Heritage Lottery Fund made a grant of £22,700 to the project.



*Fares Please!* was an oral history project about London Bus Workers. The project's aim was to train young people in the study, research and collection of this history of working on the buses through archive and oral history research and recording and the dissemination of material via community and online sharing. 56 primary children were taught as part of the project. The Heritage Lottery Fund made a grant of £39,700 to the project.

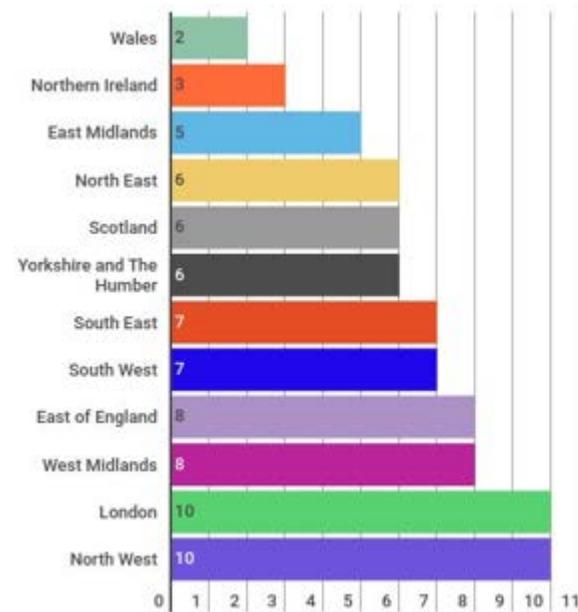
# Executive Summary: the projects covered by our review

Number of projects reviewed	Average project grant	Smallest project grant	Largest project grant
78	£48,578	£15,000	£99,300

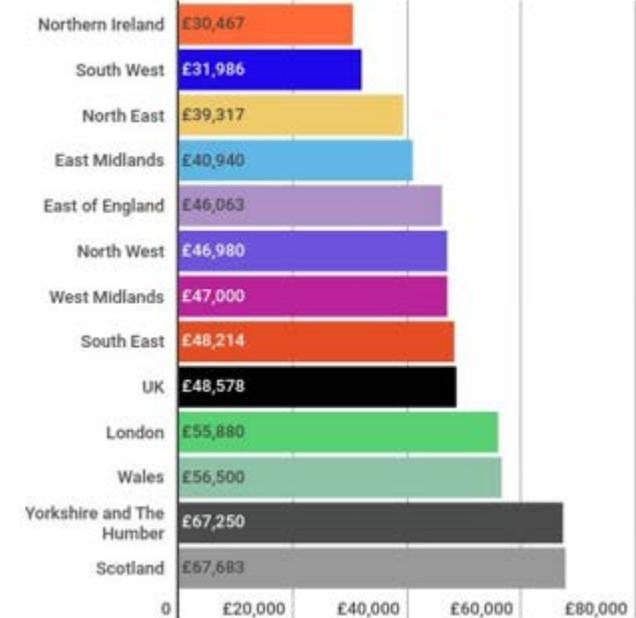
154 projects completed between January 2015 and April 2016 provided evaluation reports to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

About half of these have been reviewed In this report. We ensured the sample reviewed was reflective of the population submitted by selecting equal proportions of report by type, region and grant size of projects (see Appendix A)

Number of projects reviewed by country and region



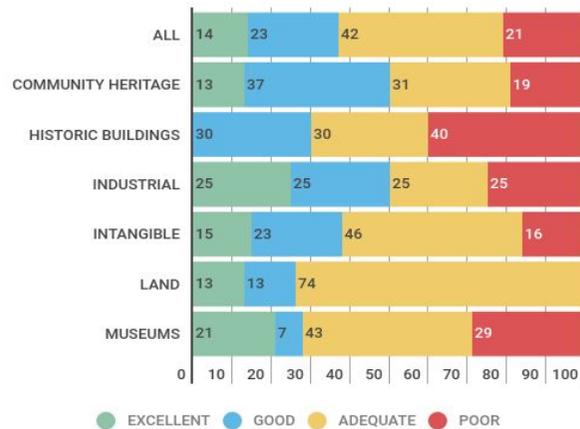
Average award by country and region



# Executive summary – key findings on evaluation quality

## Quality of evaluation

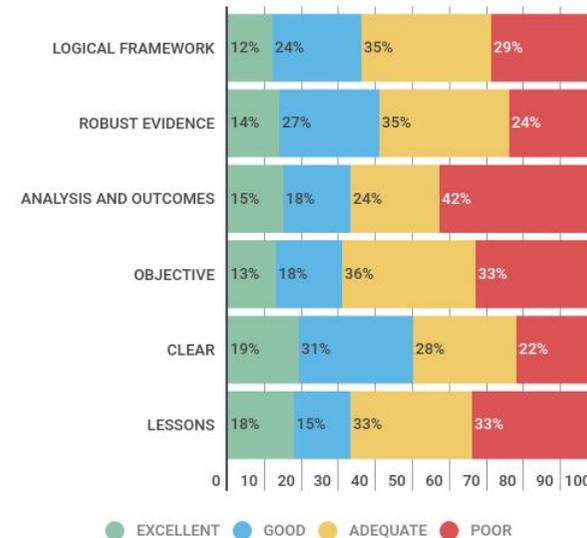
-  **14%**  
The proportion of evaluations graded as **excellent**
-  **23%**  
The proportion of evaluations graded as **good**
-  **42%**  
The proportion of evaluations graded as **adequate**
-  **21%**  
The proportion of evaluations graded as **poor**



Evaluations of community heritage; intangible heritage; and industrial, maritime and transport projects were as a whole better than those of historic buildings and monuments; museums, libraries, archives and collections; and land and biodiversity projects

## How well each of the criterion for a good report were met

-  **Objectivity**  
The criterion that was most frequently only poorly or adequately met
-  **Clarity**  
The criterion that was most frequently graded excellent or good
-  **Analysis and outcomes**  
The criterion which was addressed poorly by the largest number of reports
-  **Containing lessons**  
About a third of reports were graded either excellent or good for this criterion



# Executive summary – key findings on quality, budget and use of guidance

## Spend on evaluation



1 to 3%

The proportion of HLF grant that can be applied for to cover evaluation of an *Our Heritage* project



48%

The proportion of projects that applied for specific budget to cover evaluation



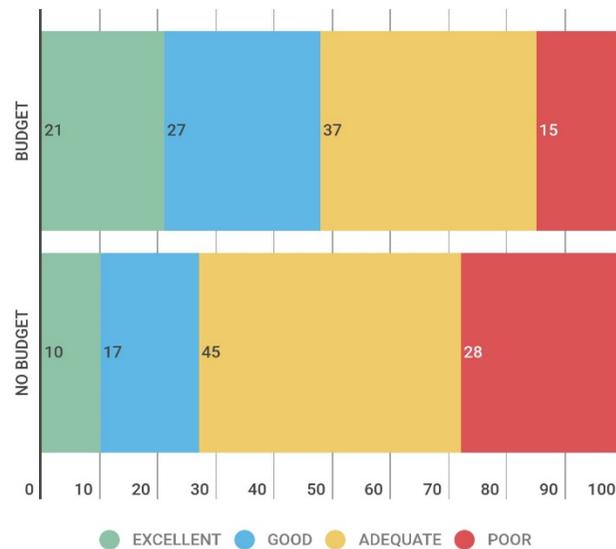
1.03%

The average proportion of grant spent on evaluation



£80 - £3,521

The lowest and highest budgets to cover evaluation



## Impact of evaluation spend on quality

Projects that applied for specific budget to cover evaluation in general had better evaluations than those that did not have a budget

## Quality and use of guidance



67%

The proportion of projects that indicated awareness of HLF evaluation guidance



32%

The proportion of reports that indicated awareness of HLF outcomes framework



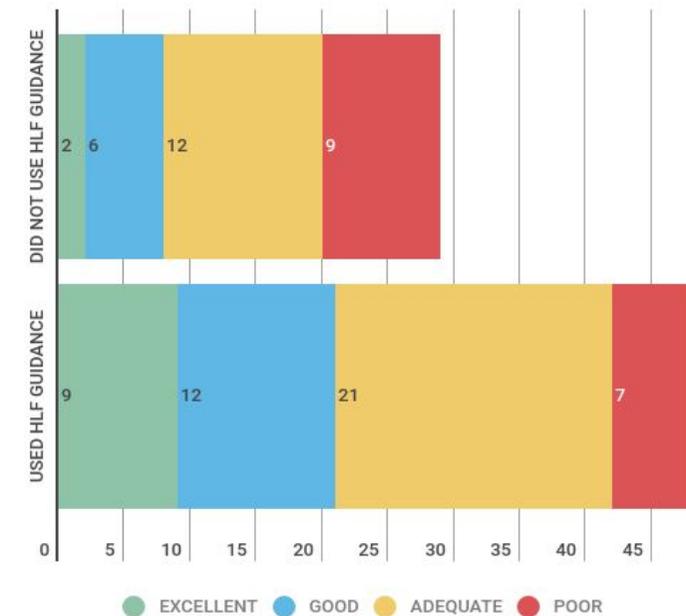
81%

The proportion of reports which drew on HLF guidance and which were graded excellent



56%

The proportion of reports that did not draw on HLF guidance and which were graded poor



# Executive summary – key findings on outcomes

## Outcomes for heritage

### Better interpreted and explained

The outcome for heritage which was reported by the most projects (86%)

### Better managed

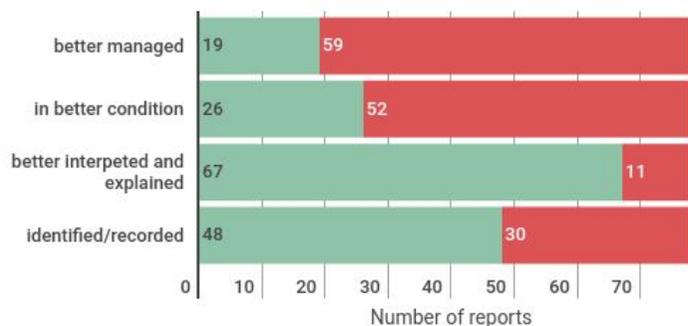
The outcome for heritage which was reported by the fewest projects (24%).

### In better condition

33% of projects reported this outcome

### Identified/recorded

62% of projects reported this outcome



● PROJECTS WITH OUTCOME ● PROJECTS WITHOUT OUTCOME

## Outcomes for people

### Volunteered time

The outcome for people reported by the most projects (94%)

### Changed their attitudes and/or behaviour

The outcome for people reported by the fewest projects (26%).

### Developed skills

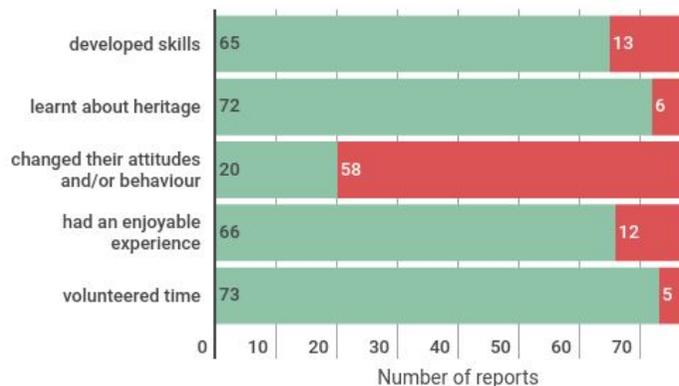
83% of projects reported this outcome

### Had an enjoyable experience

85% of projects reported this outcome

### Learnt about heritage

92% of projects reported this outcome



● PROJECTS WITH OUTCOME ● PROJECTS WITHOUT OUTCOME

## Outcomes for communities

### More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage

The outcome for communities which was reported by the most projects (85%)

### Your local economy will be boosted

The outcome for communities which was reported by the fewest projects (6%).

### Negative environmental impacts will be reduced

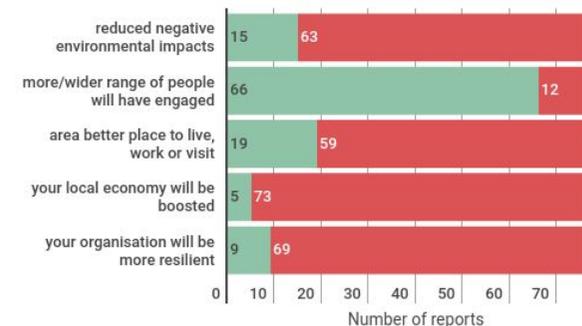
19% of projects reported this outcome

### Your local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit

24% of projects reported this outcome

### Your organisation will be more resilient

12% of projects reported this outcome



● PROJECTS WITH OUTCOME ● PROJECTS WITHOUT OUTCOME

# Executive Summary: Key review issues and potential ways to address

## EVALUATION QUALITY ISSUES

Key issue raised by the review	Potential ways to address
<p>Projects that included a specific budget for evaluation tended to produce better self-evaluation reports. However, less than 50% of projects included a specific budget for evaluation in their application.</p>	<p>Encourage more projects to include a specific budget dedicated to evaluation within their grant application.</p>
<p>Evaluation needs to be proportionate. But for small scale grant programmes such as <i>Our Heritage</i> limiting the amount available to a proportion of the grant (1 to 3%) does not reflect the fixed costs involved in delivering strong evaluation, regardless of the scale of the project.</p>	<p>Provide some flexibility to smaller projects by permitting a higher proportion of the grant to be dedicated to evaluation. For example, where a project is developing an innovative approach or evaluation lessons are identified to be of particular value.</p>
<p>HLF evaluation good-practice guidance was revised in 2017 subsequent to the projects subject to this review. If applied locally this guidance should help to ensure future reports do not display the weaknesses found in this review. Nevertheless for applicants of small-scale projects there is scope to provide further practical and hands-on support.</p>	<p>The particular areas where such support would benefit the quality of evaluation are:</p> <p>Better explain the difference between quantitative outputs achieved by particular activities, events or strands of a project and qualitative outcomes achieved by a project as a whole.</p> <p>Emphasise the need to give thought as early as possible to planning the evaluation as part of overall project planning</p>

<b>Key issue raised by the review</b>	<b>Potential ways to address</b>
	<p>(perhaps by suggesting giving specific responsibility for evaluation to a particular volunteer or holding an evaluation meeting/workshop for those involved in the project at an early stage)</p> <p>Provide advice on the advantages of questionnaires over comments books and where comments are only available the need to aggregate as many as possible rather than relying on one or two.</p> <p>Make clearer the expectation to report data (activities organised, number of attendees, volunteers recruited etc.) against the relevant indicator/target/plan in the project application.</p>
<p>Some successful evaluation reports were presented or part-presented in tabular format, so for example activities in one column were related to outcomes and/or aims in another or achieved activity outputs were compared to those planned. This encouraged report writers to report more about what was achieved than simply what happened.</p>	<p>HLF might wish to consider further the advantages and disadvantages of developing a recommended tabular format for evaluation reports for small scale projects.</p>

Key issue raised by the review	Potential ways to address
Whilst recognising that HLF project application, approval, monitoring and completion procedures help to provide assurance that project grants provide Value for Money (VFM), the HLF evaluation guidance does not reflect the concept of VFM.	The HLF should give long term consideration to how the concept of VFM is built into evaluation guidance. HLF should consider the practicality and benefits of asking projects to provide examples of how they have achieved economy and efficiency in their evaluation report.

## OUTCOMES ISSUES

Two thirds of the *Our Heritage* evaluation reports reviewed showed no awareness of HLF’s outcomes framework. Since 2017 HLF has referenced the framework in its evaluation guidance which should help to bring about greater awareness and support evaluators in considering the achievement of their project outcomes against the framework. Nevertheless the review indicated some issues for the HLF to consider.

Key issue raised by the review	Potential ways to address
Compared to outcomes for heritage and outcomes for people, the <i>Our Heritage</i> projects examined were far less likely to report outcomes for communities.	Evaluation guidance could emphasise the need for questionnaires to ask specific questions designed to solicit evidence against the outcome “ <i>your local community will be a better place to live, work or visit</i> ”.
The least commonly indicated outcome for people in the Our Heritage evaluation reports was “ <i>people will have changed their attitudes and/or behaviour</i> ”. This outcome is more difficult to	Evaluation guidance should provide support on how to include an appropriate question in surveys (or other tools) in order to solicit evidence against this outcome.

Key issue raised by the review	Potential ways to address
evidence compared to most of the others since it requires before and after data, or a tailored survey question of participants.	
Whilst most of the <i>Our Heritage</i> evaluations indicated that more people were engaged with heritage as a result of the project, few reports indicated a wider range of people were engaged.	HLF may wish to consider how to ensure evaluation reports give appropriate consideration to collecting evidence on a “ <i>wider range of people</i> ”, not just “ <i>more people</i> ”.

## Background and Approach

### The *Our Heritage* Programme

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was set up in 1994 under the National Lottery Act and distributes money raised by the National Lottery to support projects involving the national, regional and local heritage of the United Kingdom. HLF invests in the full breadth of the UK's heritage and aims to make a lasting difference for heritage and people.

*Our Heritage* is one of three open grants programmes operating under the HLF's current strategic framework and supports HLF's key objective to 'sustain and transform a wide range of heritage and generate a lasting impact on people and places'. Funded projects range from museums and historic places to archaeology, the natural environment and cultural traditions.

*Our Heritage* open programme is for any type of project related to national, regional or local heritage in the UK. Applicants can apply at any time for a grant of more than £10,000 and up to £100,000 with the HLF assessing the application within eight weeks. Under the programme, HLF fund applications from not-for-profit organisations; private owners of heritage, including individuals and for-profit organisations; and partnerships of the above. Examples of the types of organisations *Our Heritage* funds include community or voluntary groups; Community Interest Companies; charities or trusts; social enterprises; community/parish councils; local authorities; other public sector organisations, such as nationally funded museums; and private owners of heritage, including individuals and for-profit organisations.

The programme opened in April 2013 with a budget of £22m. The HLF anticipated this budget would fund between 300 and 400 projects per year. This review covers projects completed between January 2015 and April 2016.

### Project self-evaluations

All *Our Heritage* projects are required to submit an evaluation of their project on its completion. HLF guidance (issued in 2013 and revised in 2017) notes that the report should use a locally chosen format and should be attached to a final prescribed format completion report. An appendix to the guidance (<https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/our-heritage>) identifies the quantitative information the project will need to collect during its lifetime. The guidance notes that numbers will not, on their own, tell the whole story of what the project was about, and makes it clear the report will need to cover the quality of the project as well. It also notes that most

projects will be evaluated by staff in the project's own organisation but that depending on the scale of the project and how complicated it was, the project might want to employ somebody to help evaluate the project and assess whether you are successfully achieving the outcomes you set out in your application. The HLF can contribute between 1% and 3% of the project's grant amount towards evaluation.

## **Project outcomes**

Since April 2013 HLF has been operating under its current Strategic Framework: 'A lasting difference for heritage and people'. It uses an outcomes framework to describe the difference it wants to make. The framework sets out 14 potential outcomes from its investments: 4 outcomes for heritage; 5 for people and 5 for communities. The guidance for *Our Heritage* projects (see Figure 1) notes it is not necessary for a single project to contribute towards all the outcomes but states that the outcome most valued is that "people will have learnt about heritage" and describes this as a weighted outcome.

Figure 1

## The difference we want to make

We describe the difference we want to make to heritage, people and communities through a set of outcomes. These outcomes reflect the full range of what we want to achieve and are drawn directly from our research into what HLF-funded projects have actually delivered.

You do not have to contribute towards all of the outcomes listed here. Different combinations can make a successful application. For example, a project could either:

- contribute a little towards a number of outcomes; or
- contribute a lot towards a few outcomes.

We will consider the quality of the outcomes that your project will achieve. This means that contributing towards more of the outcomes listed here will not necessarily make your application stronger.

The outcome that we value most is that 'people will have learnt about heritage'. We describe this as a 'weighted' outcome.

We provide detailed descriptions of these outcomes in **Section three: Your project** in **Part four: Application form help notes**. These tell you what changes we want to bring about with our funding, and include some suggestions of how you can measure them.

**Outcomes for heritage:** W Weighted  
With our investment, heritage will be:

- better managed
- in better condition
- better interpreted and explained
- identified/recorded

**Outcomes for people:**  
With our investment, people will have:

- developed skills
- learnt about heritage W
- changed their attitudes and/or behaviour
- had an enjoyable experience
- volunteered time

**Outcomes for communities:**  
With our investment:

- negative environmental impacts will be reduced
- more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage
- your local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit
- your local economy will be boosted
- your organisation will be more resilient

**As a minimum, we expect projects to achieve one outcome for heritage and one outcome for people.**

## **Aim of this review**

This review had two main aims and associated tasks:-

### **To identify the quality of self-evaluations from a sample of completed *Our Heritage* projects**

This task involved developing an appropriate and robust method for selecting a sample of self-evaluation reports. We then assessed the quality of the submitted self-evaluation reports on a four-point scale (excellent, good, adequate or poor) using six criteria. These six criteria focused on the extent to which the evaluation:

1. Provided a logical framework
2. Included appropriate and methodical ways of providing robust evidence
3. Demonstrated that data was subject to robust analysis and provided evidence on outcomes
4. Was objective and free from bias
5. Presented the results clearly
6. Included sufficiently clear conclusions and recommendations to enable stakeholders to apply any lessons learned

### **To map the activities and outcomes achieved by *Our Heritage* projects against the HLF's Outcome framework.**

This task involved using the information in the self-evaluation reports to summarise the type, range and quality of activities and outcomes achieved by completed projects, and to map these onto HLF's 14 outcomes for heritage, people and communities.

## **Methodology**

The methodology is described in detail in Appendix B. It should be noted that whilst we replicated the methodology used for assessing the quality of evaluation reports that has formerly been used for the Heritage Grants Programme, we adjusted the marking schedule to reflect reasonable expectations for smaller scale projects funded by smaller grants, including evaluation budget, compared to the Heritage Grants Programme.

# The projects covered by the review

## Sampling *Our Heritage* projects for review

HLF made available a spreadsheet of the data it holds on the 177 projects completed between January 2015 and April 2016. The spreadsheet identified that some 21 of these completed projects did not have evaluation reports available for review. Of the remaining 156 projects which the spreadsheet identified had evaluation reports, some 154 were available. The population frame was therefore 154 projects.

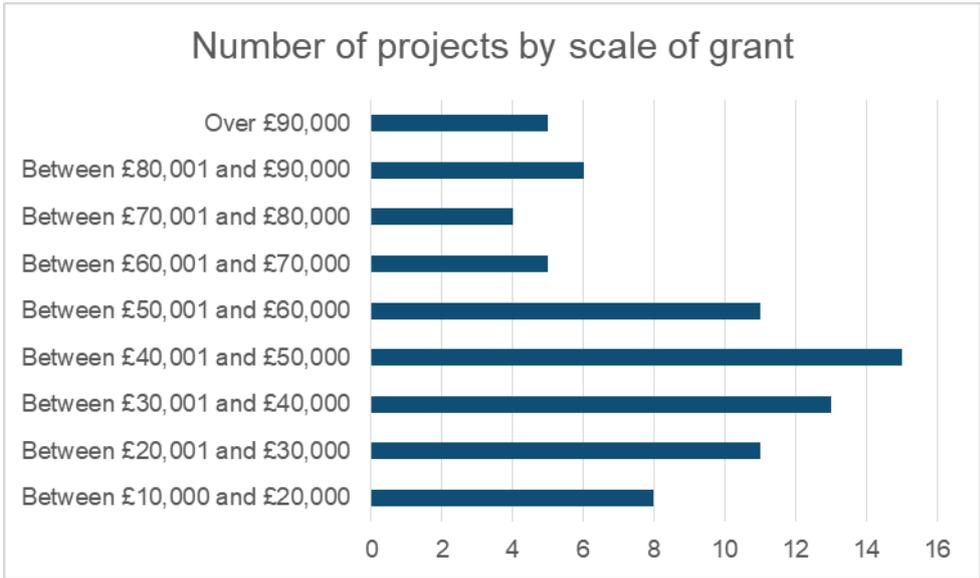
We were asked to choose a sample of about half the projects to submit to detailed review. As far as possible we wanted the sample of projects for detailed review to be as representative as possible of the population of the 154 completed projects. We therefore identified appropriate criteria for analysing the characteristics of the population frame and the projects it contained so we could ensure the sample contained as far as possible similar criteria and characteristics as the population. We undertook multiple criteria analysis using a sequential stratified random sampling methodology to identify an appropriate sample of 78 projects.

Appendix A provides further details of our sampling strategy including a table setting out the fit between the sample and the characteristics of the population.

## Spread of projects covered by the review

Overall HLF funding of the 78 projects subject to review was £3,789,100. The largest grant was for a project to celebrate 40 years of Punk in London (£99,300) and the smallest grant was £15,000 for building a traditional currach for rowing on the river

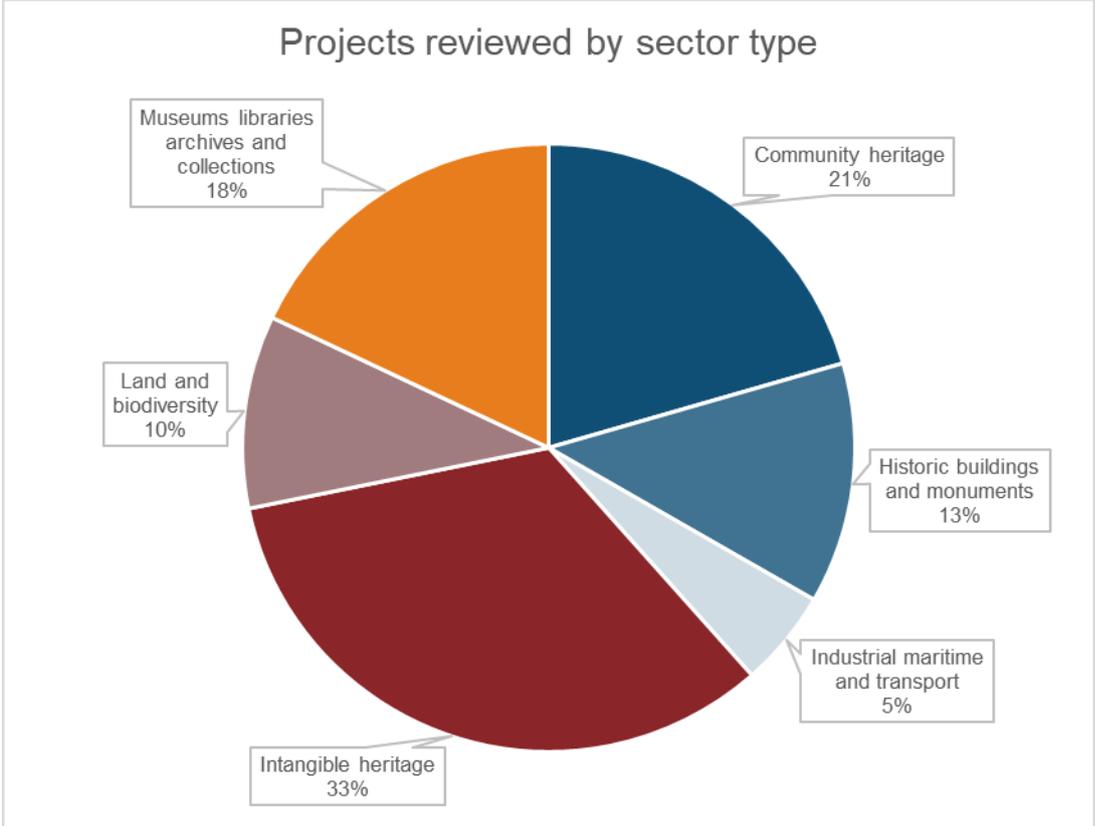
Figure 2



Lagan in Belfast. The number of projects within £10,000 bands of grants is shown in Figure 2. It shows that most projects received grants between £40,001 to £50,000. Less than a fifth of the projects received more than £80,000.

HLF ascribe each *Our Heritage* project to one of six sector type categories: Community heritage; Historic buildings and monuments; Industrial maritime and transport; Intangible heritage; Land and biodiversity and Museums libraries archives and collections. The percentage of projects falling within each of the sector types is shown in Figure 3. The largest number of projects fell within the intangible and community heritage brackets. This included projects such as *Clapton Orient and the First World War* and *Celebrating 800 years of Swaffham market*. The categories with the least *Our Heritage* projects were industrial, maritime and transport and land and biodiversity. These accounted between them for only about 15% of the projects reviewed.

Figure 3



## Regional spread of projects covered by the review

Figure 4 shows the spread of the projects by English region and home nation.

**Figure 4**

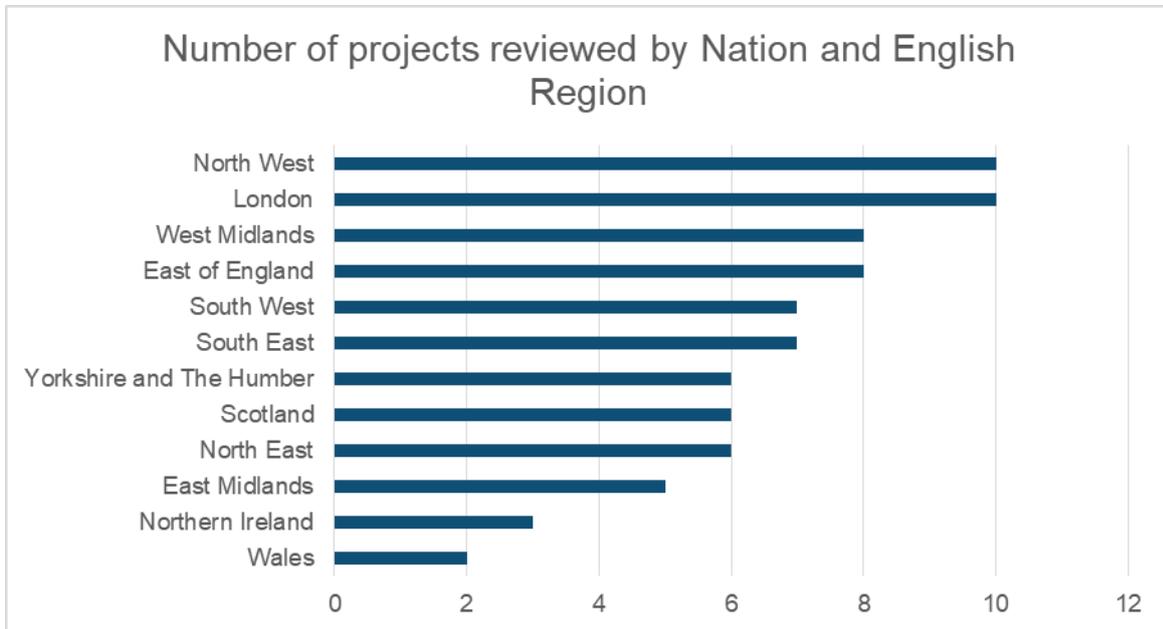


Figure 5 shows the average size of the grants awarded to the projects in the sample by nation and region. Projects in Scotland, Yorkshire and the Humber, Wales and London received on average higher grants than the UK average. Projects in Northern Ireland, the South West and the North East received on average the smallest grants.

**Figure 5**

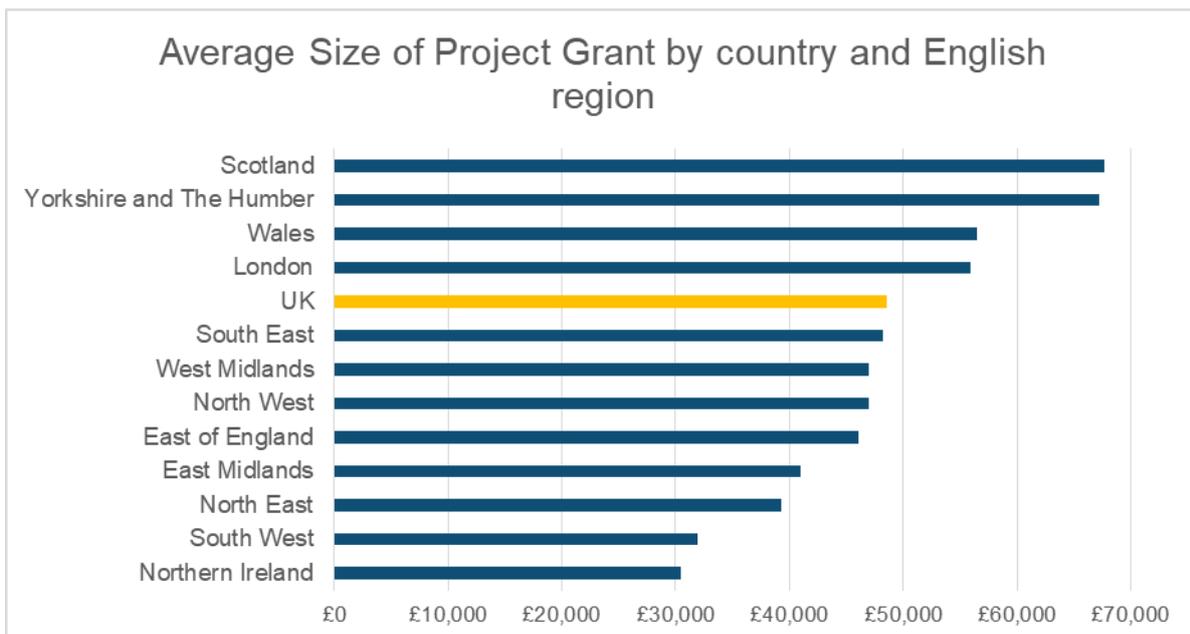
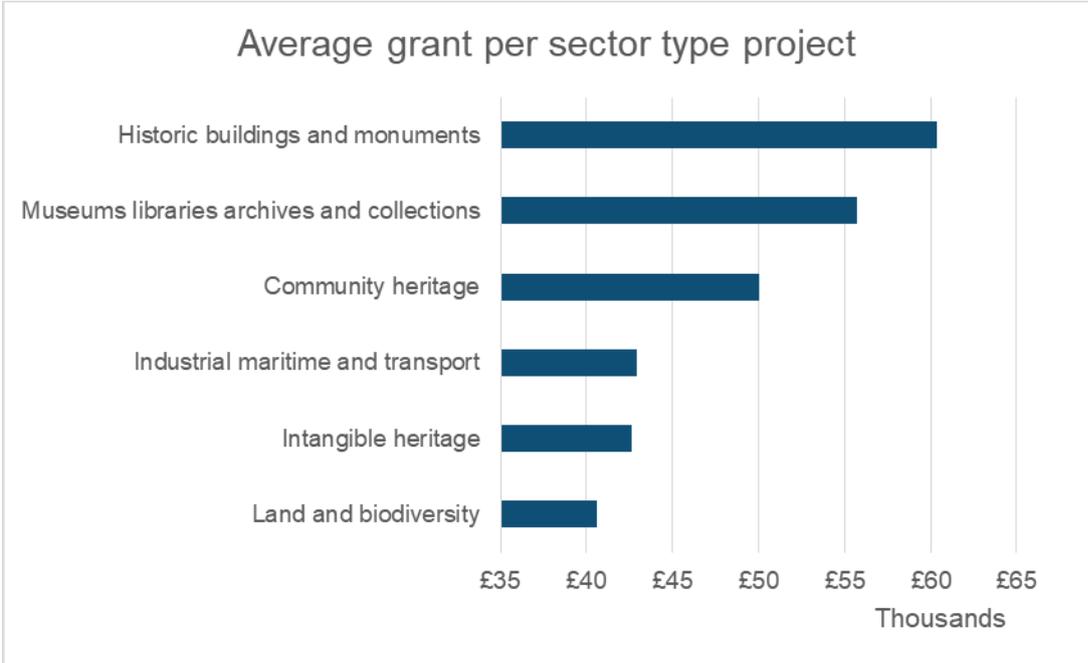


Figure 6 shows the average grant size of the projects falling within the six sector types. It shows that the historic buildings and monuments; museums, libraries, archives and collections; and community heritage projects were on average granted more than the industrial, maritime and transport; intangible heritage and land and biodiversity projects.

**Figure 6**



**Evaluation spend**

Applicants for HLF funding can apply for a specific budget to cover the costs of evaluating their project. The *Our Heritage* guidance states that the HLF can contribute between 1% and 3% of the project’s grant amount towards evaluation.

We found that just under half the projects (38) had applied for specific funding for evaluation. Total specific grant for evaluation was £34,614. The median evaluation spend was £700 but funding for evaluation ranged from just £80 for a project on restoring underground shelters receiving a grant of £86,600 to £3,521 for an oral history project receiving a grant of £39,700.

The average spend on evaluation as a percentage of total project grant (for those projects that applied for specific evaluation funding) was at the low range of that available – 1.03%. But six projects used more than the 3% maximum specified in the guidance.

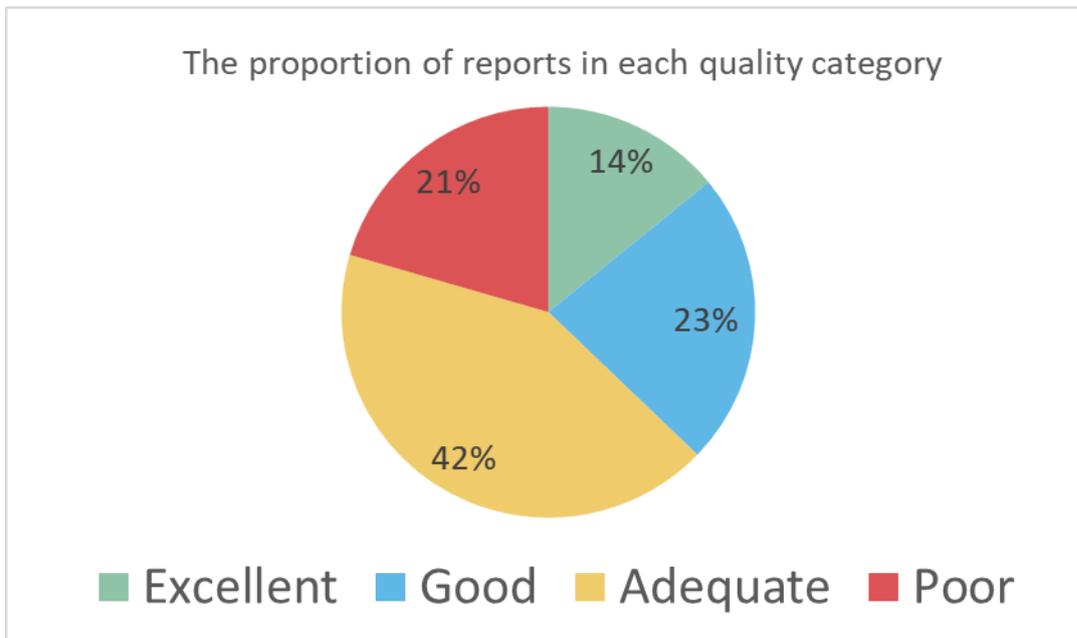
## Evaluation quality

In this section we set our findings on the quality of the evaluation reports we reviewed.

### Overall quality

Overall we graded 11 reports as excellent, 18 reports as good, 33 as adequate and 16 as poor. The proportion of reports falling in each category is shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7



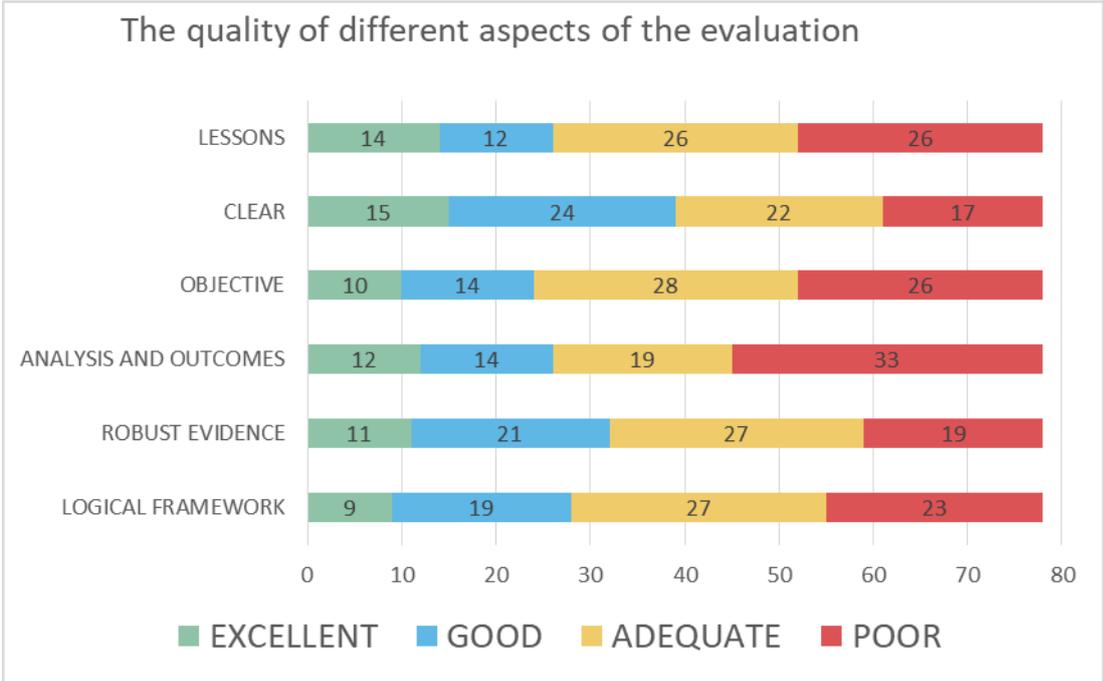
### Aspects of quality

We graded six different aspects of each report to come to our overall grade: These different elements were that the report:

1. Provided a logical framework
2. Included appropriate and methodical ways of providing robust evidence
3. Demonstrated that data was subject to robust analysis and provided evidence on outcomes
4. Was objective and free from bias
5. Presented the results clearly
6. Included sufficiently clear conclusions and recommendations to enable stakeholders to apply any lessons learned

Our review showed that the elements most frequently covered poorly were objectivity, demonstration that data was subject to robust analysis and provision of evidence on outcomes and insufficient clear conclusions and recommendations to enable stakeholders to apply any lessons learned. The elements best covered by the reports were presenting the results clearly and including appropriate and methodical ways of providing robust evidence. The total number of assessments for each element of the reports is shown in Figure 8.

**Figure 8**

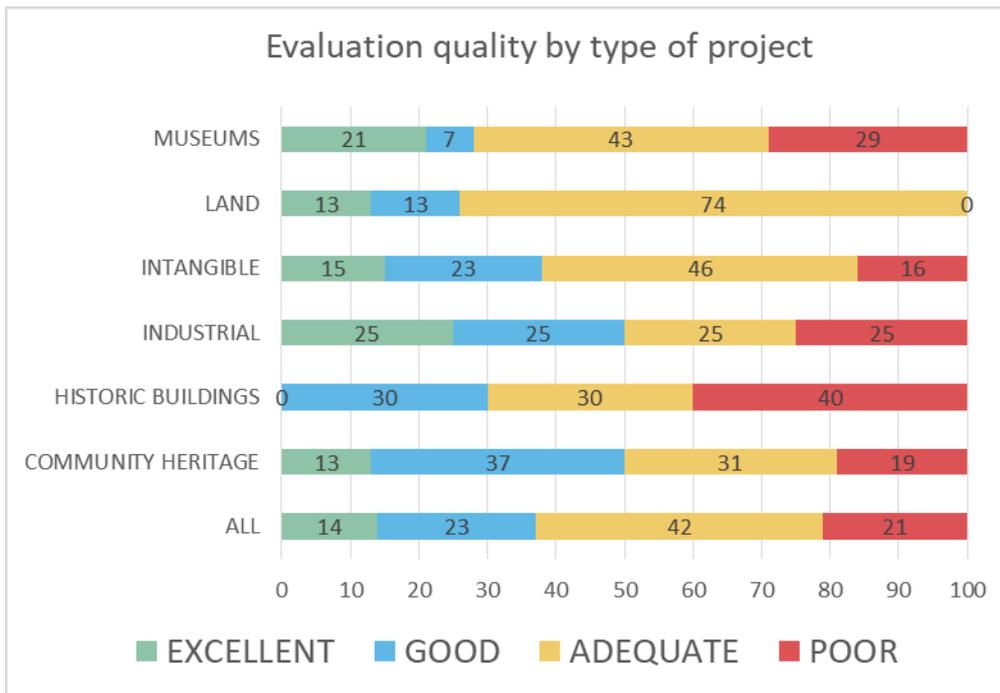


### Quality and the type of project

HLF categorises each of the *Our Heritage* projects into one of six categories describing the nature or type of heritage to which it belongs. The categories are: community heritage; intangible heritage (including oral history), industrial, maritime and transport; historic buildings, monuments and churches; land and biodiversity; and museums and archives.

The evaluation reports of community heritage; industrial, maritime and transport; and intangible heritage projects were on average better than those of land and biodiversity and museums and archives. Figure 9 shows the proportion of reports in each quality category by project type/sector.

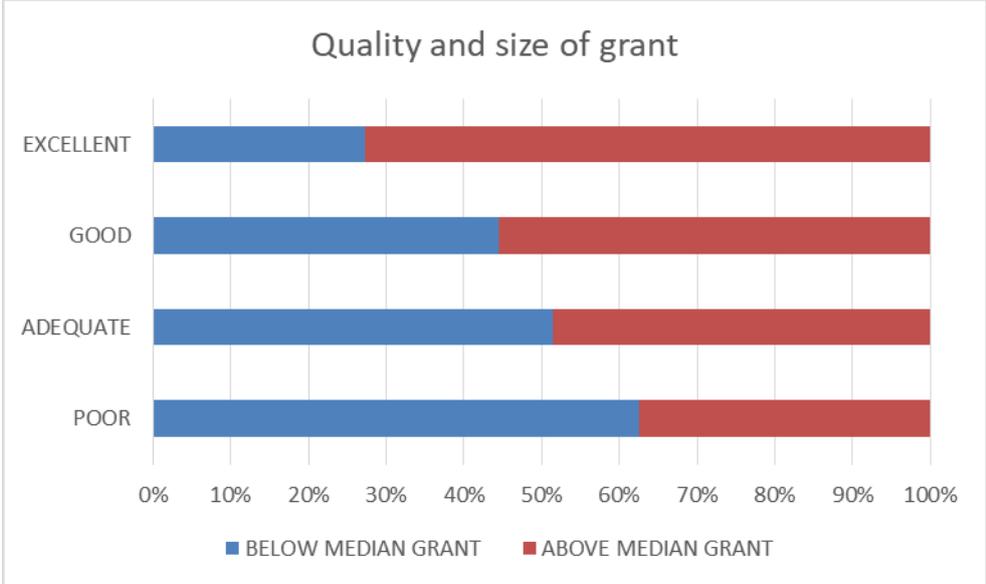
Figure 9



## Quality and scale of the project

We assessed the extent to which the scale of the project as indicated by the amount of grant they were awarded made a difference to the quality of evaluation. We compared projects with above and below the median grant of £45,450. We found that in general larger projects had better quality evaluations than smaller projects. The proportion of reports graded in each category for projects below and above the median grant size is shown in Figure 10.

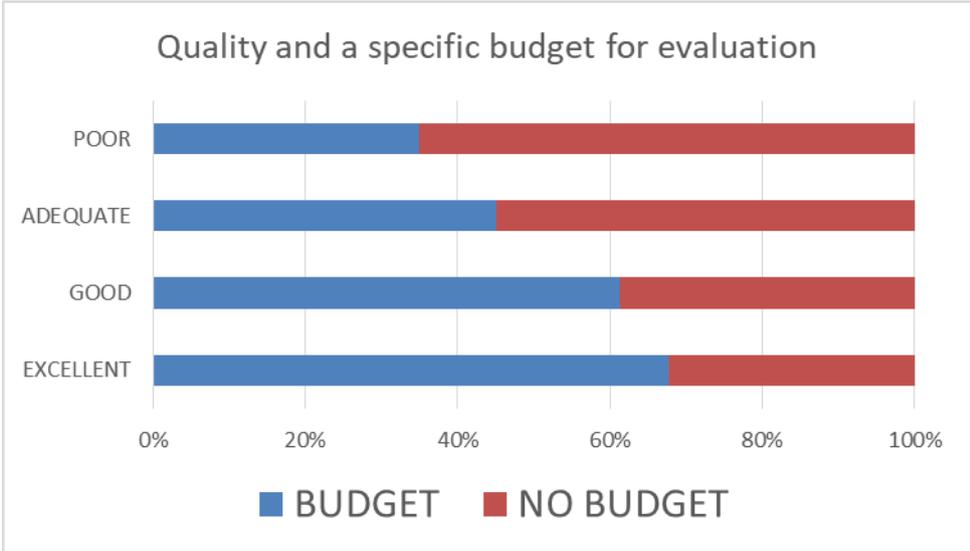
Figure 10



### Quality and evaluation spend

Just under half of the projects asked for a specific budget to cover evaluation. We compared the quality of reports with and without specific budget provision for evaluation. We found that projects which had themselves allocated a specific budget for evaluation were more likely to be graded as good or excellent and less likely to be graded as adequate or poor. The proportion of evaluation reports graded in each category for projects with and without a specific evaluation budget is shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11



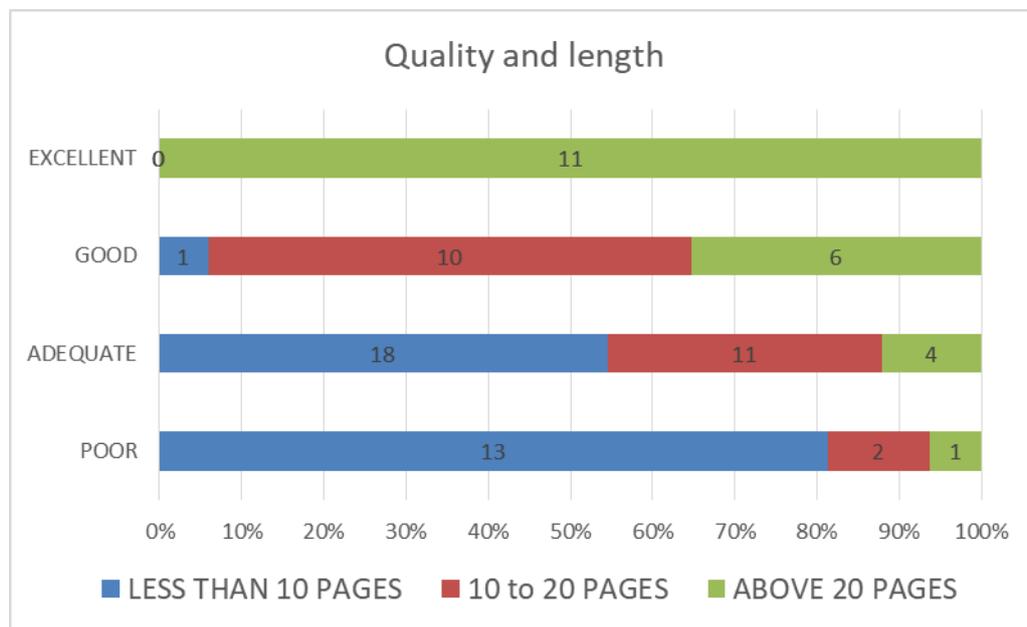
## Quality and the length of reports

For even small scale projects it is difficult to do justice to its evaluation in very short reports. We examined the relationship between the length of reports and their quality.

The median length of reports found to be poor was just 4 sides. The median length of reports found to be adequate was 8. The median lengths of the good and excellent reports were 18 and 35 sides respectively.

We found that just over 80% of the poor reports were less than 10 sides long as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12



This does not mean that reports necessarily need to be of a particular length to be good. We found six good reports of less than 15 pages and four excellent reports less than 30 pages. We also assessed one 42 page report as poor.

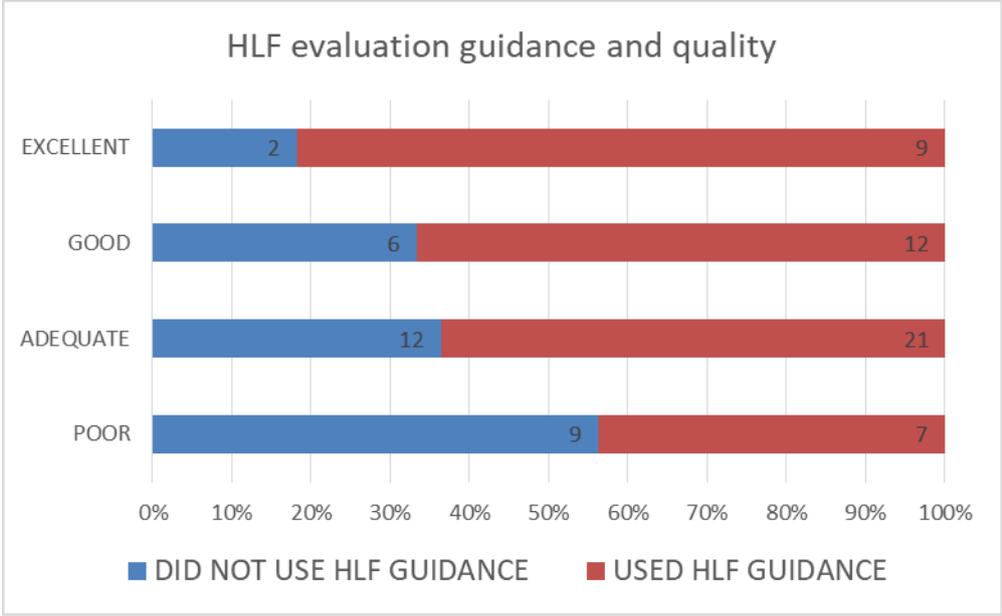
## Quality and HLF guidance

We also assessed the extent to which HLF guidance may have had a bearing on the quality of the evaluation reports. We examined each report for evidence that the author had been influenced by the HLF guidance. This was indicated by evidence of the use of terminology found in the evaluation guidance or use of the recommended report format or elements of the recommended report format found in the guidance.

We found that whilst 63% of the reports provided an indication of being influenced by the HLF evaluation guidance, 37% reports provided no such indication.

We found that reports that indicated they used HLF guidance were more likely to be excellent or good. Reports that did not indicate they used HLF guidance were more likely to be poor. The proportion of reports in each category that indicated HLF evaluation guidance had or hadn't been used is shown in Figure 13.

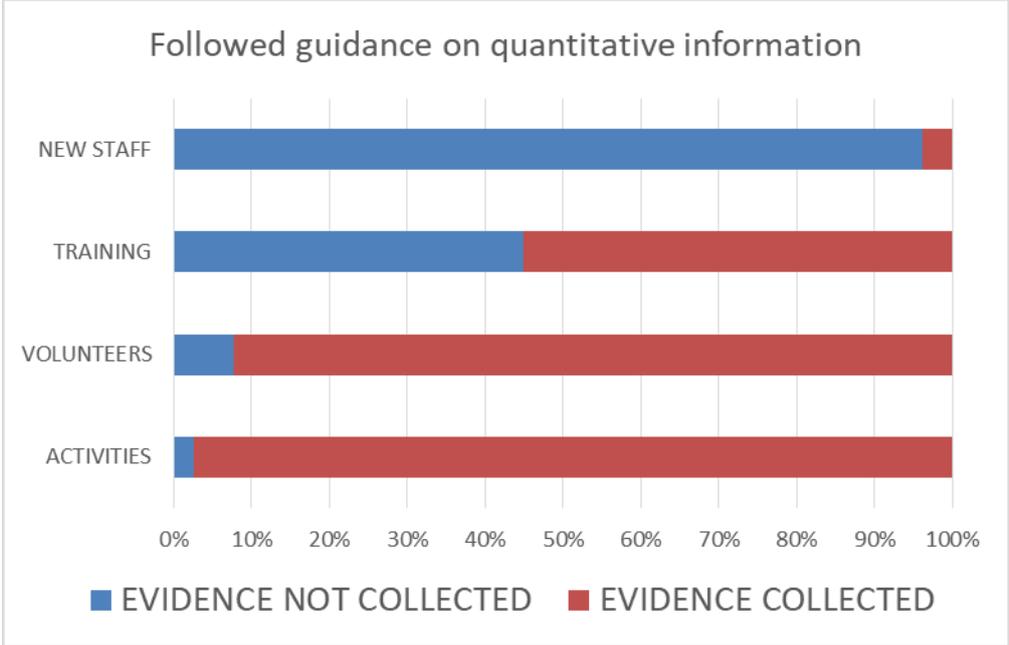
**Figure 13**



The HLF guidance also includes an appendix which sets out the quantitative information that the HLF expects projects to collect in an evaluation questionnaire. It recommends collection of data on the number of activities, volunteers, people trained and new staff.

We examined the extent to which projects had collected quantitative evidence in these areas as set out in Figure 14. We found that the vast majority of projects had collected information on activities and volunteers. Fewer reports contained information on number of individuals trained. Only a few reports mentioned new staff posts but this is not unexpected given the relative small scale of the projects and grants.

Figure 14



## Evaluation quality - issues raised by the review

In this section we identify the key quality issues identified by our review of the evaluation reports and consider how to bring about improvement.

### Logical framework

The great majority of reports were able to provide a narrative setting out a list of activities and providing a description of what had taken place and explaining how the activities had contributed to particular outputs.

While the poorer reports were able to provide lengthy narrative describing the individual activities or elements of the project and what had happened, they did not bring out the extent to which what had happened was in accordance with what they had wanted to happen and how this impacted on project outcomes as a whole.

The poorer reports often displayed confusion between the outputs of individual activities, events or strands of the project and the outcomes that may or may not have demonstrated that overall aims or objectives had been achieved. Many of the reports did not mention outcomes at all.

The better reports collected qualitative evidence as well as quantitative information. The qualitative information was better able to demonstrate the outcomes achieved, rather than just the outputs evidenced by quantitative information.

### How to bring about improvement

The 2017 revised HLF evaluation good practice guidance places less emphasis on telling the project story and more on the need for a logic chain linking activities and outputs to outcomes and the aims of the project. There is still scope however for advice to smaller scale projects to:

- Better explain the difference between quantitative outputs achieved by particular activities, events or strands of a project and qualitative outcomes achieved by a project as a whole
- Explain how the collection of qualitative information from participants will help to ensure the evaluation will be not be just about what happened and how many were involved but what was achieved

## Evidence

The revised 2017 HLF evaluation guidance notes that acceptable methodologies for projects less than £250,000 would include visitor books, Trip Advisor Feedback etc. and that the focus should be on participation and engagement.

We found a huge range in the quality of the evaluative evidence contained in the reports as well as of the sophistication of evidence collection tools used. The best reports included a wide range of sources of evidence and different methods for collecting it.

The great majority of reports were able to provide evidence on the number of activities (such as events) and could make estimates of the number of people who had attended. The better reports had collected qualitative evidence from people engaged by the project. For many reports the sample sizes of those providing feed-back were very small.

The poorest reports demonstrated that thought or resources were devoted to evaluation too late to collect robust or appropriate evidence. For example, one report consisted of a three sided note of a one hour meeting of people involved in delivering the project after it had taken place reflecting on its achievements.

Very few projects collected demographic information that would provide evidence on the make-up of those benefitting from the project, despite the inclusion of help in this area within the former HLF evaluation guidance. Only some of those projects which were specifically targeted at particular communities made particular efforts to collect this data. And whilst most projects were able to demonstrate that they had been successful in engaging more people with heritage, very few were able to demonstrate they had engaged a wider range of people.

### How to bring about improvement

The HLF evaluation guidance for smaller scale projects should:

- Emphasise the need to give thought as early as possible to planning the evaluation as part of overall project planning (perhaps by suggesting giving specific responsibility for evaluation to a particular volunteer or holding an evaluation meeting/workshop for those involved in the project at an early stage)
- Provide more detailed guidance and suggestions on ways to collect feedback and help ensure more people provide it
- Include some examples of how projects have managed to ensure feedback forms and other evidence collection tools allow for demographic analysis

## Analysis

This was the aspect of quality in which we assessed the highest number of reports to be poor – more than 40%. Many reports were unable to demonstrate that data where it had been collected had been analysed.

35 reports referred to the use of a survey to collect information from project participants. But many of the surveys referenced fell short of a legitimate survey – they were often just used to describe any self-selecting collection of evidence including evidence from comments books.

Some reports that mentioned a survey failed to include any data from the survey in the report. Five reports included the form they had used to collect data in an appendix and referenced it in the report but did not include any data derived from the survey in the report.

The weaker reports included individual examples of comments from feed-back forms or questionnaires without providing any idea of the totality of evidence the forms or questionnaires provided.

Only about one third of reports referred to the levels of activity or participation anticipated before the project was delivered and attempted in some way to relate this to the actual levels of activity or participation delivered. The better reports referenced the quality or robustness of the evidence they had collected or its limitations and qualitative research was used to elaborate on the evidence collected. 22 reports contained charts which helped to explain or elucidate the data collected.

### How to bring about improvement

The HLF evaluation guidance for smaller scale projects should:

- Provide greater clarity over the advantages of conducting questionnaires compared to relying on comments books
- The importance of aggregating and analysing as many comments made on the project as possible
- Make clearer the expectation to report data achieved (activities organised, number of attendees, volunteers recruited etc.) against the relevant indicator or target in the project application

## Objectivity

This was the weakest quality element of the reports examined. Only 24 reports were judged as excellent or good and more than two thirds judged as adequate or poor.

In about 65% of the reports there was no indication of how the evaluation had been undertaken and the conclusions reached. Most reports struggled to demonstrate they had avoided bias.

This was perhaps not surprising given the nature of the *Our Heritage* programme and the scale of the projects. Many of the reports had clearly been compiled by a single author without any or much external scrutiny. These reports tends to be written from the perspective of the project lead and provided detailed information about what they had done and how they had overcome challenges without attempting to be particularly objective.

The better projects that had been written by a single individual attempted to adopt a neutral tone and included more evidence from participants and those not involved in the delivery of the project.

The reports that scored well in this quality category included an appropriate level of evidence from those external to its delivery - participants and stakeholders - and which could clearly demonstrate a level of independence of thought.

Nine reports had been compiled by external consultants which provided more comfort over objectivity. Five of these reports were assessed as excellent and four as good.

The revised 2017 HLF evaluation guidance suggests that evaluation of projects less than £250,000 should be completed internally and that 2-3% of total project costs should be allocated. It should be noted that five of the nine reports we examined which were compiled by external consultants had evaluation budgets of over £1,000 and three had budgets over £2,000. We found a high correlation between the size of the project evaluation budget and the objectivity of the report. 40% of the projects which had included an evaluation budget had asked for less than £500 or less than 1% of the project grant. This is a small amount with which to plan and implement a strong evaluation.

### ***Examples of partiality or lack of objectivity in extracts from evaluation reports***

“Funding a private restoration is not the same as funding a community project and the one cannot be turned into the other. More by luck than anything else, I have been able to call on community goodwill. Many other private owners, even with the best will, would simply have no means of doing so. This is an area where I believe there needs to be a review of expectations.”

“For me, as project manager, this has been a very happy and fulfilling project to work on. Everyone I have dealt with has been full of enthusiasm and professional.”

“This project provided an ideal opportunity and platform for local community to participate, express and engage at different levels which has positive impact on their cultural roots particularly culture of folk lore.”

“An ambitious, exciting project delivered on time (allowing for foundry down time) and on budget.”

### **How to bring about improvement**

HLF need to consider:

- Whether more can be done to encourage projects to provide for specific evaluation provision when applying for grant
- Whilst recognising that evaluation needs to be proportionate, consider whether limiting the sums available for evaluation to 1 to 3% of the project costs is desirable for a programme such as *Our Heritage* given the fixed costs involved in delivering any objective evaluation and the small scale of overall grants.

The HLF evaluation guidance for smaller scale projects should:

- Make it clearer that evidence collected from participants and stakeholders will be more objective than that collected from people involved in running the project
- Emphasise the need to actively collect as much evidence as possible from all user groups

## Clarity

Reports varied widely in their style of presentation and the amount of effort that had gone into compiling them. This ranged from a poor report which was more or less a side and a half of bullet points to an excellent 103 page report, fully illustrated and professionally designed containing a wealth of independent quantitative and qualitative evidence.

We found that reports did not necessarily need to use the HLF report format to provide a good or excellent evaluation of the project. However they were more likely to provide a report that was scored adequate or good than poor if they drew on the report format compared to those reports which ignored it.

Seven of the reports were presented broadly in tabular format. Some were more successful than others in adopting this approach. For the more successful attempts, the tabular approach helped to concentrate the author's mind on the relationship between the activities and the outcomes, on what was promised and what was delivered and on aligning the outcomes with the HLF 14 element outcomes framework.

### **How to bring about improvement**

For small-scale projects the HLF may wish to consider:

- Developing tabular formats to support evaluation report compilation

## Examples of different tabular approaches to presentation of evaluative findings

### Extract from table in an evaluation of an archives project

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Target output</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Deliver a minimum of 6 talks about the archive and its history to local groups and societies	Minimum of 150 people engaged with local heritage	To date seven talks have been delivered in this and the neighbouring county to 158 people interested in the property, its family and local history. Two further talks are scheduled for February 2017.
Repair and digitise the Autograph Album	Fragile volume conserved & repaired & accessible to researchers for the first time	The conservator has undertaken extensive repair work on this to make it accessible for people to use. Three volunteers have indexed the entries and have provided short biographies of the people featured therein.
Recruit volunteers to work on different aspects of project	Minimum of 5 volunteers recruited	The project retained thirty seven volunteers for the project term. Many volunteers have remained, working on other projects at the Record Office, thus extending their skill set even further.

### Extract from table in an evaluation of a graveyard restoration project

<i>What we wanted to achieve</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Repair 21 monuments and clean the remainder.	We have worked on 75 monuments. Work is complete on 36 of them, including the 2 obelisks and the chest tombs. All but a few others are displayed satisfactorily though bonding of a number of fractured slabs would be desirable.
Hold 3 open days where visitors will be able to view copies of monument inscriptions and the biographies of the people buried there.	Five open days have been held with copies of inscriptions and biographies on display.
Develop a dramatic performance in partnership with Cathedral Education to take place at sites which have connections with the story of Dissent in Exeter.	Four performances have taken place, 2 in partnership with Cathedral Education and 2 by the specially formed Dissenters Alive Tour Group.

## Lessons learned

26 reports were found to be poor in regard to this quality category. Many of these reports did not include a conclusion or include reflections on what had gone well or not so well and the lessons learned as a result.

There was a wide range in the amount of analysis and detail in those reports which did not identify lessons and the extent to which they reflected issues raised in the main text of the report. Many reports included lessons which were anodyne or did not provide any insight, such as “delivering projects takes up time” or “expect the unexpected”.

The reports that scored well in this category tended to be written by independent consultants or by project officers within voluntary organisations. They provided insights into how things might have been done differently and how that would have impacted on overall delivery and outcomes of the project.

## **Examples of stronger and weaker *lessons learned* from evaluation reports**

### **Stronger**

“We were able to recruit members of minority communities to take part in the training. However for a number of different reasons they were not able to attend. Whilst there is always an expectation for drop out, and we recruit accordingly, it is unfortunate that it resulted in no minority ethnic people receiving training. This underlines the necessity for sustained engagement with these communities and dialogue around how to best engage with them. In the future, we will consider taking the training to them rather than inviting them to us.”

“Raising awareness has been a challenge. Despite entering our events in 18 local and national free websites, contacting 15 local and national papers, posters in local amenities and digital media such as Facebook and Twitter, turnout for some events could have been better. Publicity could have been mounted earlier and more extensively, with more and better signage, which will help improve attendance at individual events. More links should be made with stakeholder organisations with an interest in local history and events, and local authority facilities such as libraries and community centres.”

“Whilst the project produced quality digital content with a legacy value, the website would have attracted even more traffic if search engine optimisation techniques had been utilised. This expertise is needed in future projects.”

“Throughout the project, a more active use of volunteers could have been made. With greater time allocated at the start of the project, and more in-depth planning as to the roles that could have been played by volunteers (and the experiences and specialist knowledge that they brought) even more could have been achieved from their engagement.”

“Research how communities work, how communities respond to requests to take part in projects and allow sufficient time within a project framework for individual and group consultation”

### **Weaker**

“Never underestimate the difficulty of managing activities with multiple partners”

“Try to reduce the average age of attendees”

“Allow plenty of time for fundraising and do not rely on national groups to support an event in the North of England”

“Start to plan big projects with plenty of time to spare”

## Value for Money evaluation

'Value for money' is a term generally used to describe an explicit commitment to ensuring the best results possible are obtained from the money spent. It is often broken down into the requirement to demonstrate the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which a programme or project has been delivered.

Whilst recognising that HLF project application, approval, monitoring and completion procedures help to ensure that projects receiving grants are delivered economically and efficiently, the HLF evaluation guidance and the basic principles of a good evaluation report which it contains do not reflect the concept of VFM.

Some of the reports recognised the need to demonstrate that public money had been handled frugally and displayed pride in contrasting the amount delivered given the grant provided. Many of the reports that focused on project management and the unexpected challenges and hurdles that had been overcome within budget were anxious to demonstrate how this had been managed. There is scope for the HLF to build on this. Explicitly asking projects to self-report on how they had gone about achieving economy and efficiency would give additional evaluative assurance over VFM.

### How to bring about improvement

The HLF should:

- in the long-term give consideration more generally to how the concept of VFM is built into evaluation
- in the medium-term ask projects to self-report on how they have achieved economy and efficiency

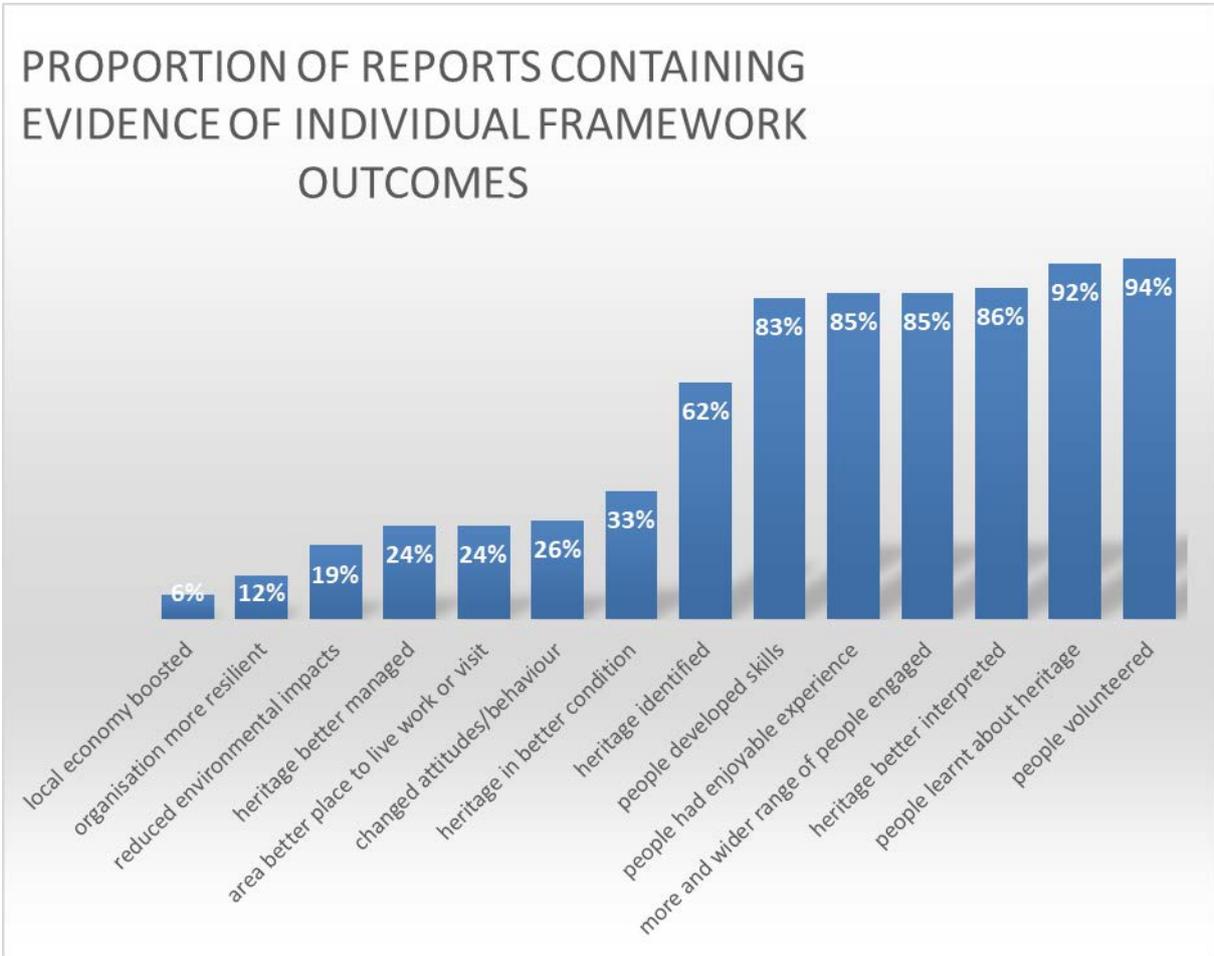
# Outcomes

In this section we set out our findings on mapping the outcomes achieved by the projects (as indicated by the evidence contained in the evaluation reports).

## Projects and the HLF outcomes framework

Our assessment could only cover the extent to which the evaluation reports indicated that each of the elements of the framework had been achieved. Where we were unable to find evidence from the report that an outcome had been achieved, this does not mean that the outcome had not been achieved but only that the report contained no appropriate indication. Figure 15 shows the proportion of evaluation reports that reported each of the elements of the HLF outcome framework had been achieved. All of the projects achieved at least one outcome for heritage and one outcome for people.

Figure 15



The *Our Heritage* programme (as indicated by the evaluation reports of the projects in the review) contributed most to the outcomes: volunteered time; learnt about heritage;

better interpreted and explained; had an enjoyable experience; more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage.

Fewer *Our Heritage* projects were found to contribute to the following elements of the HLF outcomes framework: your local economy will be boosted; your organisation will be more resilient and your local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit.

The *Our Heritage* guidance to applicants notes that the outcome valued most is that “people will have learnt about heritage” which is described as a weighted outcome. 72 of the reports indicated that this outcome had been achieved.

## **Awareness of the HLF outcomes framework**

The guidance for applicants to the *Our Heritage* programme sets out the difference the HLF wants to make as well a description of each of the 14 elements. We assessed the extent to which each of the reports indicated an awareness of the HLF outcomes framework. This could be by explicitly mentioning some of the individual outcomes within the Framework or by acknowledging the broader division of the Framework into outcomes for heritage, for people and for communities.

We found that about one third of the reports reflected an awareness of the outcomes framework with two thirds reflecting no awareness.

## **Outcomes for heritage**

Outcomes for heritage were the key objectives and aims of all of the *Our Heritage* projects we reviewed as stated in the evaluation reports. The most common outcome for heritage indicated by the evaluation reports was that “*heritage would be better interpreted*” and explained. 85% per cent of the reports indicated that this outcome was achieved. This was the top outcome for a number of types of project including the community and intangible heritage projects. But it was also one of several outcomes achieved by a number of other types of project, particularly the museums and historic buildings projects.

**Example of project with strong outcome that “*heritage would be better interpreted*”**

*A South Wales project focused on the conservation of three Grade II listed limekilns sited along the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal. Supporting the conservation was the planning and implementation of improved interpretation. A number of panels were installed showing historic views of the individual structures mounted on plinths with supporting text explaining the history of the individual kilns. The displays were in the same format and complementary to existing interpretation along the canal for historical features such as bridges, locks and wharfs. The evaluation report included photographs of the panels in situ.*

The second most frequently indicated outcome was that “*heritage was better identified*”. Several of the community and intangible heritage projects included the identification of local heritage and made information about it available or recorded people’s memories as oral history. The land and biodiversity projects often included surveying species and making data available. Most of the museum projects included improved cataloguing.

“*Heritage will be in better condition*” was a less common outcome for heritage and was indicated in about one third of the reports. This outcome was particularly achieved by the historic buildings projects many of which included as a main aim restoration or conservation. But it also includes a number of archiving projects. HLF guidance on how a project will know that it has achieved the better condition outcome references individual improvements to the physical state of heritage. However several projects were about development of skills that would bring about increased capacity to improve the condition of heritage generally.

**Example of project with strong outcome that “*heritage will be in a better condition*”**

*The pipe organ at All Saints’ Church Roos had been derelict since the late 1980s. This project set about fully restoring the organ using authentic materials according to best practice heritage conservation. The organ chamber in the south transept of the church was also renovated to provide an ambient environment for the organ.*

The least commonly indicated outcome was “*heritage will be better managed*”. This is perhaps not surprising given the smaller scope of the projects and the size of the grants provided. Few of the projects were of sufficient scale to improve management capacity or increase oversight in a sustainable way. But some projects indicated improved partnership working leading to better management of heritage. There was

an overlap between those projects that indicated “*heritage will be better managed*” outcomes with the community outcome “*your organisation will be more resilient*”.

**Example of project with strong outcome that “*heritage will be better managed*”**

*The aim of the project was to create a highly visual and accessible reconstruction of the roundhouse excavated at the Black Loch of Myrton during 2015 and 2016, where the preservation of woodwork in the waterlogged conditions resulted in the best ever information about Iron Age flooring and constructional timbers. The evaluation report provided evidence that the project had strengthened the Trust responsible for the heritage by reinvigorating its visitor offering, providing new marketing opportunities and exciting activities during the high summer season. An expanded corps of Trust volunteers had also taken ownership of the project and strengthened overall oversight.*

## Outcomes for people

The outcome for people that was most commonly indicated by the *Our Heritage* evaluation reports was “*people will have volunteered time*”. Almost 95% of the reports mentioned volunteers although not all the reports specified numbers. The best reports were able to identify the number of volunteer hours devoted to the project. They also provided qualitative evidence from surveys of volunteers.

The joint second most commonly indicated outcome for people was “*people will have had an enjoyable experience*”. This was indicated in 72 of the 78 reports. Many of the reports did not specifically mention this outcome but it could be inferred from the content of evidence within the report. Surprisingly many of the reports that sought themselves to map their outcomes against elements of the Framework, did not include this element although there was evidence that it had been achieved. This may be because many of the survey designs tended to omit a question on enjoyment, focusing on satisfaction or learning.

**Example of project with strong outcome that “*people will have volunteered time*”**

*The Man Engine project set out to celebrate and interpret the Cornish Mining World Heritage sites. A two-week 130-mile pilgrimage of the largest mechanical puppet ever made in Britain visited all 10 Cornish Mining World Heritage Site areas. 390 volunteer marshals, stewards and team leaders engaged with the project. The project asked all those volunteering to record the hours they spent on the project. This showed the project benefitted from a total of 236.5 volunteer days.*

The other second most commonly indicated outcome for people was “*people will have learned about heritage*”. Although many of the projects did not specifically claim this outcome, it could be inferred by the nature of the project, for example where it involved work with children or involved talks or exhibitions visited by the public. Only three of the reports referenced Generic Learning Outcomes - the Arts Council England framework for measuring the benefits that people gain from interacting with arts and cultural organisations in an informal setting.

**Example of evaluation using Generic Learning Outcomes to provide robust evidence that “*people will have learned about heritage*” and that “*people will have changed their attitudes and/or behaviour*”.**

*Between October 2014 and March 2015 three artists worked with pupils at two primary schools in Northam to produce large scale art works which reflected local marine life and environment along the River Taw. By developing before and after questionnaires based on generic learning outcomes and knowledge of aspects of local heritage, the evaluation was able to demonstrate that 85% of pupils had learned new things about local heritage, 88% had demonstrated creativity in engaging with heritage and 56% had changed their attitudes to heritage as a result of the project.*

Around 83% of the reports indicated that “*people will have developed skills*”. This was closely aligned to the outcome “*people will have volunteered time*”. The main reason this outcome was achieved less was that many of the volunteers were described as helping to deliver the project but there was no formal mention of them being trained or learning something new as a result of volunteering. 42 of the 78 reports specifically mentioned some form of training either of participants or volunteers or those delivering the project.

**Example of project with strong outcome that “*people will have developed skills*”.**

*A project based in Richmond Park aimed to highlight the importance of protecting the park's unique landscape. Over 75 volunteers and staff were trained and developed in the history of deer in the park and their current management so that they were able to engage visitors in the project and answer any questions they might have. Volunteers also gained new skills and experience in researching, cataloguing, digitising and public relations.*

The least commonly indicated outcome for people was “*people will have changed their attitudes and/or behaviour.*” About a quarter of the reports contained some evidence that this outcome had been achieved. This outcome is more difficult to evidence compared to the others since it either required before and after data or it requires a specifically tailored survey question of participants. Many of the oral history and other projects which aimed to make the heritage of particular communities more available to the wider community collected specific evidence on this outcome.

**Example of a project with strong outcome that “*people will have changed their attitude to heritage*”**

*This project was prompted by an organisation realising that they held a wealth of disability heritage in their archives. These archives were not accessible to the public and much of the material had not been viewed for decades. The project set out to catalogue, interpret and display these archives. An exhibition of the archives was also mounted. The project evaluation collected a total of 93 feedback postcards from the exhibition and collated comments about how attitudes to disability and heritage had changed as a result of the exhibition.*

## Outcomes for communities

Compared to outcomes for heritage and outcomes for people, the *Our Heritage* projects examined were far less likely to indicate outcomes for communities, except for more people having engaged with heritage.

Whilst about 85% of the projects indicated that “*more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage*”, this was largely because there was an indication that the first element of the outcome – “*more people*” - had been achieved rather than the latter – “*a wider range of people*” – had been achieved.

Most of the reports were able to provide robust evidence of increased numbers engaging with heritage. But most ignored providing any evidence of having attracted a wider range of people. Some reports acknowledged the challenge their project had experienced in attracting a wider range of people. The difficulty in evidencing this aspect of the outcome is also related to the lack of demographic data collected in general by the evaluations. Many of the projects which were specifically targeted at particular communities made particular efforts to collect this data and were more likely to achieve both elements of this outcome.

**Example of a project able to demonstrate that “a wider range of people”, not just that “more people” had engaged with heritage**

*The Year of Norfolk’s Nature project aimed to provide opportunities for people to learn and feel inspired about Norfolk’s wildlife and engage with audiences that had not previously been involved with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust’s work. The design of a questionnaire at the main project event allowed the Trust to collect participant demographic data. This showed that participants were on average twenty years younger than Trust members. An analysis of participant postcodes showed that the Trust had succeeded in attracting people from more deprived communities.*

Very few of the reports that did not fall into the land and biodiversity category indicated that “*negative environmental impacts will be reduced*”. 15 reports indicated this outcome and 8 of these were land and biodiversity reports. Some of the reports on archaeology projects were also able to demonstrate that positive environmental impacts had been achieved by protecting the landscape from deterioration.

Given the scale of the projects funded by the *Our Heritage* programme it was not surprising that few evaluations felt able to claim that their project had “*boosted the local economy*”. But it was surprising that so few projects contained specific evidence that their “*local area or community will be a better place to live, work or visit*”. Whilst for many projects it could be inferred from the reports that this may have been an outcome, few report writers went beyond describing the benefits to the particular user groups or participants or extrapolating these benefits to the wider community or local area.

## **Appendix A: Basis for selection of a sample of the *Our Heritage* evaluation reports for detailed review**

This Appendix sets out the basis for selection of a sub-sample of *Our Heritage* project evaluation reports for detailed review.

### **Background**

HLF made available a spreadsheet of the data it holds on the 177 projects completed between January 2015 and April 2016. The spreadsheet contained such information as the heritage sector, region, and grant award of the projects. HLF also made the associated evaluation reports submitted by the projects.

### **Establishing the population frame**

We examined the spreadsheet to validate the population of completed evaluation reports from which the sample for detailed review would be selected. The spreadsheet provided contained details for 177 projects. The spreadsheet identified that some 21 of these completed projects did not have evaluation reports available for review. Of the remaining 156 projects which the spreadsheet identified had evaluation reports, some 154 were available. The population frame was therefore 154 projects

### **Establishing characteristics of the population to represent in the sample**

As far as possible we wanted the sub-sample of projects for detailed review to be as representative as possible of the population of the 154 completed projects. We therefore identified appropriate criteria for analysing the characteristics of the population frame and the projects it contained. So we could ensure the sample contained as far as possible similar criteria and characteristics.

The key criteria we established included:

- The heritage type or sector
- The nations and English regions
- The size of the grant to the project

In addition we wanted to ensure the sample included a fair representation of the spread of quality of the evaluation reports in the population. However the quality of the reports could only be assessed as part of the detailed review. So we used a proxy. HLF reviews of other programmes (such as the Heritage Grants Programme) have found there is a high correlation between the number of pages in an evaluation report and the quality of the evaluation undertaken. Of course, the quality of an evaluation report is not entirely defined by its number of pages. A short well-structured report can be of better quality than a lengthy or overly-illustrated report. Nevertheless we found it was the best proxy for the basis of the sampling.

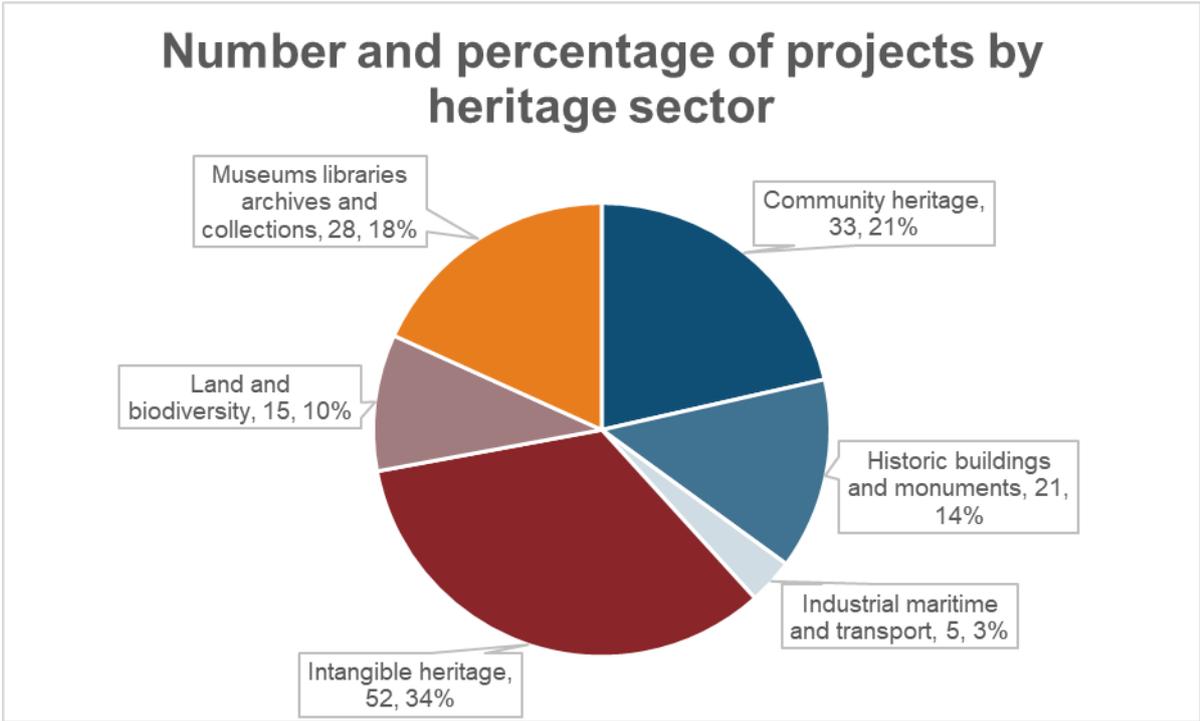
## **Heritage sector**

Each of the projects was ascribed to one of six heritage sector categories:

- Community heritage
- Historic buildings and monuments
- Industrial maritime and transport
- Intangible heritage
- Land and biodiversity
- Museums libraries archives and collections

The number and percentage of projects in the population by heritage sector is shown in Figure 16.

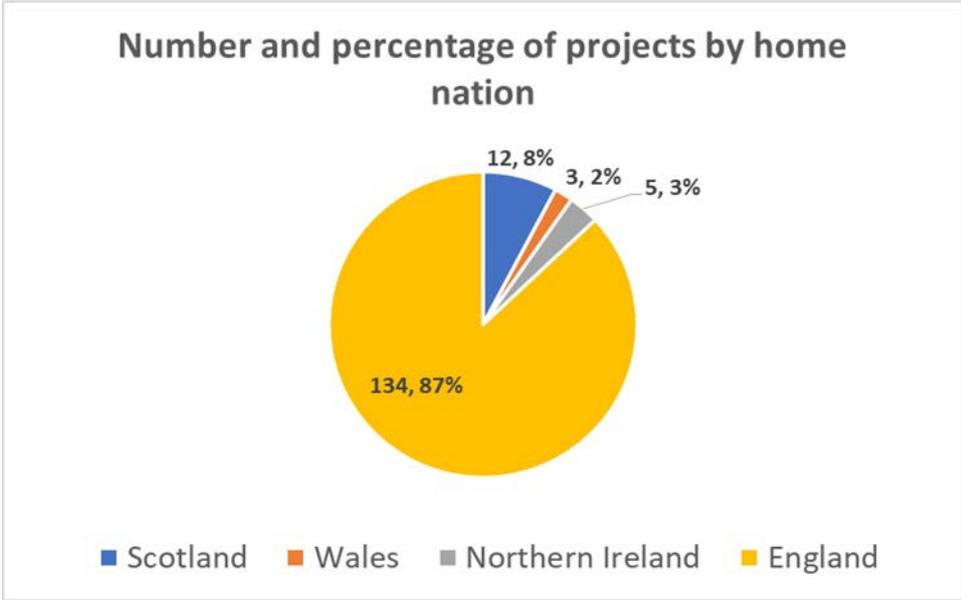
Figure 16



### Nations and Regions

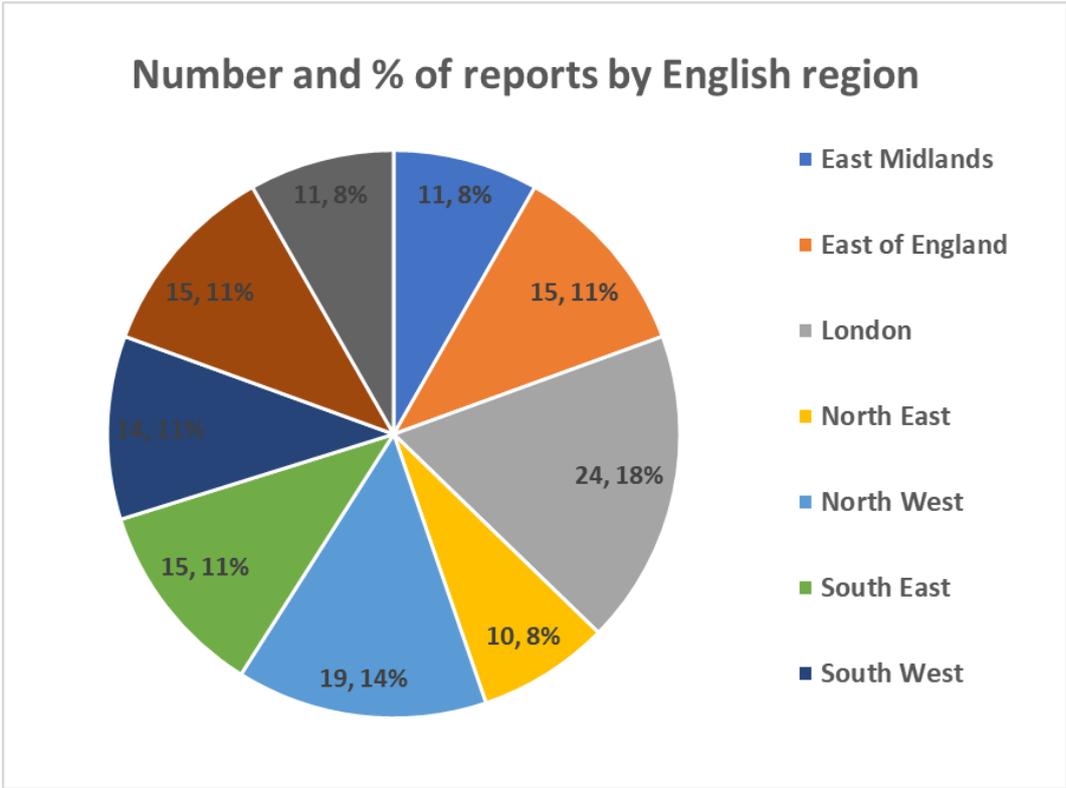
The number and percentage of projects in the population by nation is shown in Figure 17

Figure 17



The number and percentage of projects in the population by English region is shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18



### Size of the grant

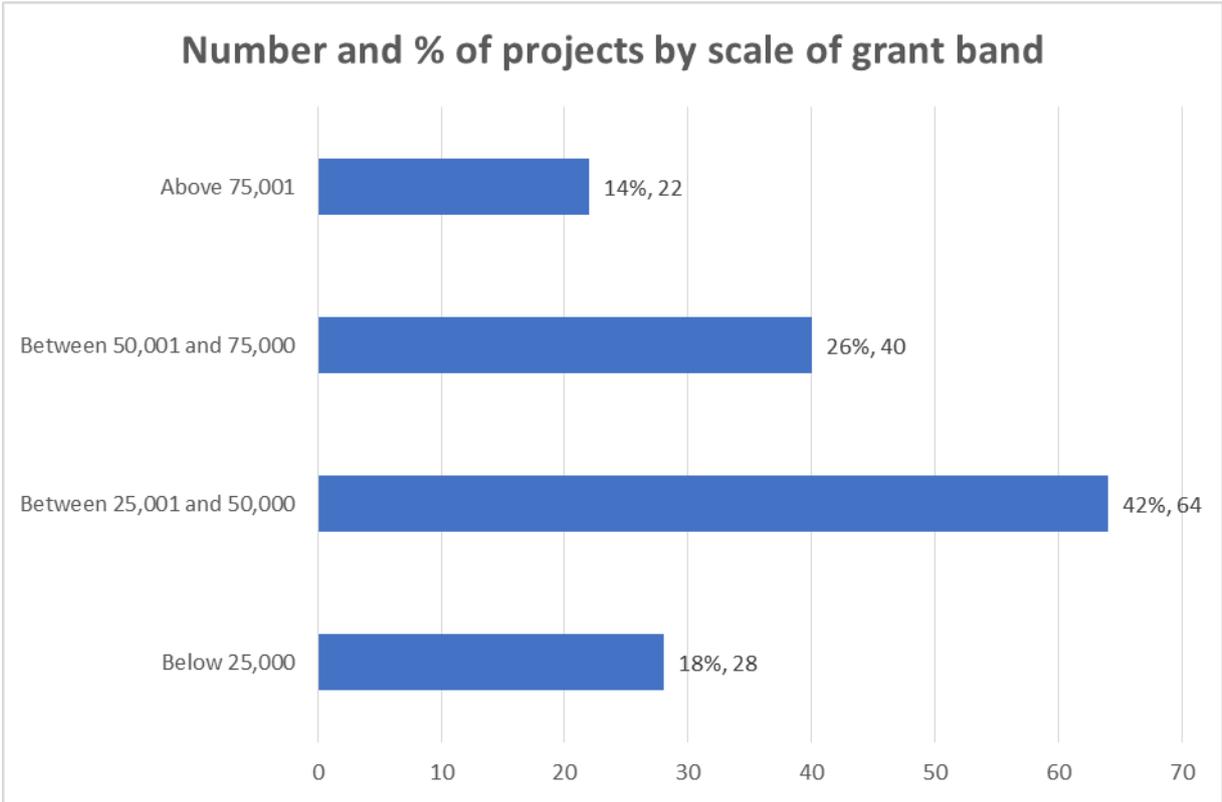
We also examined the scale of the grant provided to each project. The median grant size was £46,250. We ensured the sample contained an appropriate mix of projects below and above the median

We also established strata of grant size and examined the number of reports falling within each strata. The strata were:

- Below £25,000
- Between £25,001 and £50,000
- Between £50,001 and £75,000
- Above £75,001

The number and percentage of projects in the population falling within each strata of grant size is shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19



**Evaluation reports and the number of pages they contain**

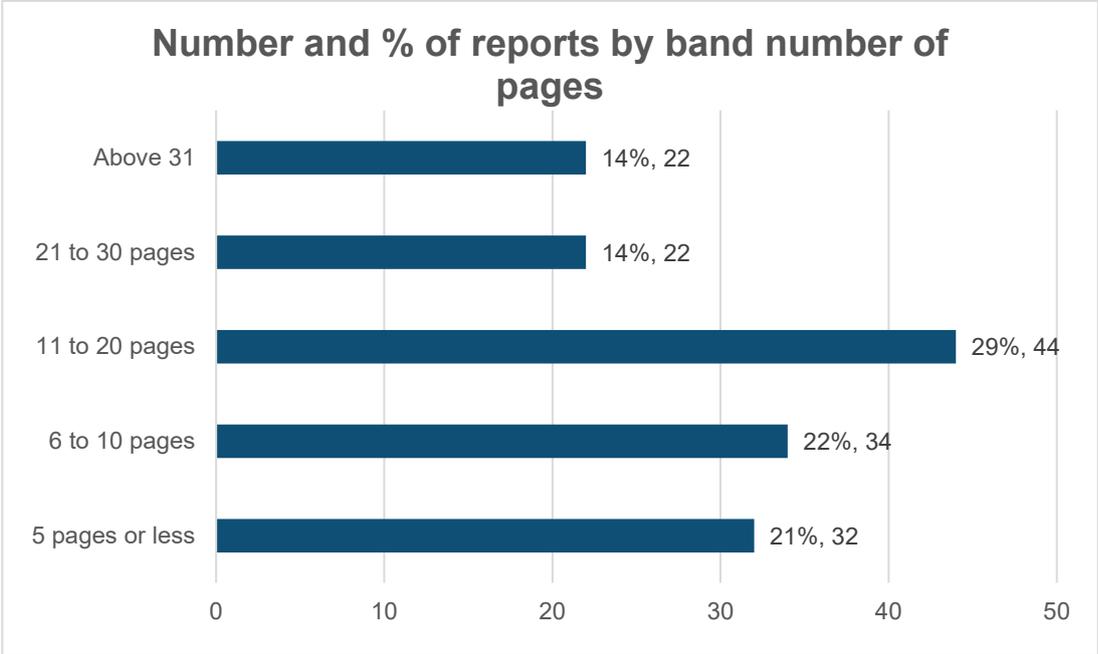
We analysed the number of pages the evaluation reports contained. The average number of pages was 17. The median number of pages was 12. We ensured there were an appropriate number of reports in the sample below and above the median

We also examined the number of reports in strata of number of pages. The strata were:

- 5 pages or less
- 6 to 10 pages
- 11 to 20 pages
- 21 to 30 pages
- Above 31 pages

The number of reports and the percentage of reports under these strata is shown in Figure 20.

**Figure 20**



**Ensuring the sample of evaluation reports share the characteristics of the population of reports as far as possible**

In order to ensure the sample represented the population as accurately as possible, we undertook multiple criteria analysis.

We used a sequential stratified random sampling methodology to identify an appropriate sample of circa half the reports in the population. The table over sets out the fit between the sample and the characteristics of the population.

Characteristic	Population	50% or median of the population	Sample
Total Number of Projects	154	77	78
Number of Projects East Midlands	11	5.5	5

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>50% or median of the population</b>	<b>Sample</b>
Number of Projects East of England	15	7.5	8
Number of Projects London	24	12	10
Number of Projects North East	10	5	6
Number of Projects North West	19	9.5	10
Number of Projects Northern Ireland	5	2.5	3
Number of Projects Scotland	12	6	6
Number of Projects South East	15	7.5	7
Number of Projects South West	14	7	7
Number of Projects Wales	3	1.5	2
Number of Projects West Midlands	15	7.5	8
Number of Projects Yorkshire and the Humber	11	5.5	6
Number of Projects Historic Buildings	20	10	10
Number of Projects Intangible Inheritance	52	26	26
Number of Projects Land and biodiversity	16	8	8
Number of Projects Museums Libraries Archives	28	14	14
Number of Projects Community Inheritance	32	16	16

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>50% or median of the population</b>	<b>Sample</b>
Number of Projects Industrial maritime and transport	6	3	4
Number of Projects with more than the median number of pages (12)	80	40	42
Number of Projects With larger grant than the median of £46,250	80	40	37

# Appendix B: Methodology

## Introduction

We were asked to review the Our Heritage evaluation reports using the method developed for the Heritage Grants programme by Evaluation Expertise Ltd as refined by RF Associates in their subsequent reviews.

## Basis of assessment

It is important to have a clear and fair set of criteria against which to assess the quality of each of the evaluation reports. Drawing on best practice<sup>7</sup>, the characteristics of a strong evaluation include:

- **Trustworthiness:** the data collection and analysis should be rigorous and stand up to scrutiny
- **Objectivity:** personal preferences or loyalties should not 'contaminate' evaluation results.
- **Responsiveness:** an evaluation report should be relevant and useful not only to the funders, but to other stakeholders such as programme staff, participants and local communities.
- **Generalisability:** the results can be used by stakeholders for decision-making in future.

HLF also specified criteria for effective evaluation in the guidance they provided to each grantee. This guidance identifies four key factors:

- **Look beyond the outputs:** To evaluate change means looking at the real differences made by a project – this difference is often referred to as the outcomes of a project, or its impact.
- **Tell the story:** It is important to be clear about the link between activities and actions and the change that they are designed to bring about.
- **Involve people:** A search for a meaningful narrative requires a dialogue, rather than a mere extraction of data from people

- Indicators that matter: they must be chosen based on what people associated or benefiting from the project have identified as important to measure, and not just what is easiest to count

These sources have been synthesized to develop a set of six criteria suitable for use in assessing the evaluation of heritage projects. These are set out below with the relevant matching principles from the HLF's own evaluation guidance shown in brackets.

- ✓ **Criterion 1:** The evaluation provides a logical framework setting out linkages between activities, expected outputs and outcomes for all elements of the project (Telling the project story).
- ✓ **Criterion 2:** Appropriate and methodical ways of asking were used which provide robust evidence including coverage of well-being as well as demographic, economic, social capital and quality of conservation issues where appropriate (Counting, involving, choosing indicators that matter)
- ✓ **Criterion 3:** Data was subject to robust analysis to provide evidence on outcomes (Beyond counting)
- ✓ **Criterion 4:** The evaluation is objective and free from bias (Avoiding bias).
- ✓ **Criterion 5:** The results are clearly and sufficiently presented (Structuring the process of understanding).
- ✓ **Criterion 6:** The conclusions and recommendations are sufficiently clear to enable stakeholders to identify and apply any lessons learned (Improve not just prove).

A set of indicative characteristics under each criterion is used to grade each report. Performance against each criterion could be graded poor, adequate, good or excellent and a similar overall assessment is made of each report. We did not follow an unduly mechanistic approach. The final grade should not be just an average of the scores against each criterion, but an overall view on the report taking into account the strengths and weaknesses demonstrated against all the criteria. The schematic should be used to guide judgements and help ensure consistency. But the report grades remain a judgement.

## Criterion Scoring

**Criterion 1: The evaluation provides a logical framework setting out linkages between activities, expected outputs and outcomes for all elements of the project (Telling the project story)**

### **Poor**

There was no clear rationale explained or the activities undertaken were described but without any explanation of the outputs and outcomes.

### **Adequate**

One of the following three issues was adequately addressed:

- There was an explanation of how each activity contributed to the outputs achieved
- There was a clear explanation of how each output had led to outcomes or wider impacts
- There was some sensitivity analysis or other estimation of the extent of attribution of activities to outputs or outputs to outcomes

### **Good**

Two of the following three issues were adequately addressed:

- There was an explanation of how each activity contributed to the outputs achieved
- There was a clear explanation of how each output had led to outcomes or wider impacts
- There was some sensitivity analysis or other estimation of the extent of attribution of activities to outputs or outputs to outcomes

### **Excellent**

All of the following three issues were adequately addressed:

- There was an explanation of how each activity contributed to the outputs achieved
- There was a clear explanation of how each output had led to outcomes or wider impacts
- There was some sensitivity analysis or other estimation of the extent of attribution of activities to outputs or outputs to outcomes

**Criterion 2: Appropriate and methodical ways of asking were used which provide robust evidence including coverage of well-being as well as demographic, economic, and social capital issues where appropriate (Counting, involving, choosing indicators that matter)**

**Poor**

Ways of asking are limited or not clear

**Adequate**

One of the following four was adequately addressed:

- How people's levels of well-being might have changed as a result of the project
- There was a number of different ways of asking people involved in the project (volunteers, project staff, visitors, participants, focus groups)
- The mix included qualitative and quantitative
- The data collected included external sources (eg community feedback) as well as internal data.
- Where appropriate the analysis included coverage of demographics (gender, ethnicity, socio- economic, disabled) and/or economic impacts and/or social capital issues

**Good**

Two or three of the following issues was adequately addressed:

- How people's levels of well-being might have changed as a result of the project
- There was a number of different ways of asking people involved in the project (volunteers, project staff, visitors, participants, focus groups)
- The mix included qualitative and quantitative
- The data collected included external sources (eg community feedback) as well as internal data.
- Where appropriate the analysis included coverage of demographics (gender, ethnicity, socio- economic, disabled) and/or economic impacts and/or social capital issues

**Excellent**

All of the following issues were adequately addressed:

- How people's levels of well-being might have changed as a result of the project
- There was a number of different ways of asking people involved in the project (volunteers, project staff, visitors, participants, focus groups)

- The mix included qualitative and quantitative
- The data collected included external sources (eg community feedback) as well as internal data.
- Where appropriate the analysis included coverage of demographics (gender, ethnicity, socio- economic, disabled) and/or economic impacts and/or social capital issues

### **Criterion 3: Data was subject to robust analysis to provide evidence on outcomes (Beyond counting)**

#### **Poor**

Data is given but there is limited analysis

#### **Adequate**

One of the following four issues was adequately addressed:

- Comparisons are made with a baseline
- There was evidence that the evaluation considered the robustness and comprehensiveness of the data collected and highlighted any limitations
- The analysis of the quantitative included trends/patterns
- Sample sizes were considered
- The analysis of the qualitative data brought any explanations for the trends/patterns identified.

#### **Good**

Two or Three of the following issues were adequately addressed:

- Comparisons are made with a baseline
- There was evidence that the evaluation considered the robustness and comprehensiveness of the data collected and highlighted any limitations
- The analysis of the quantitative included trends/patterns
- Sample sizes were considered
- The analysis of the qualitative data brought any explanations for the trends/patterns identified.

#### **Excellent**

All of the following issues were adequately addressed:

- Comparisons are made with a baseline
- There was evidence that the evaluation considered the robustness and comprehensiveness of the data collected and highlighted any limitations
- The analysis of the quantitative included trends/patterns
- Sample sizes were considered
- The analysis of the qualitative data brought any explanations for the trends/patterns identified.

## **Criterion 4: The evaluation is objective and free from bias (Avoiding bias)**

### **Poor**

There was no information on how the evaluation was undertaken and no evidence of any controls in place to minimise the risk of bias.

### **Adequate**

There was information on how the evaluation was undertaken but only one of the following four issues had been adequately addressed:

- A clear template for how the evaluation would be undertaken and the conclusions reached
- Evidence of management oversight and/or quality control for the evaluation
- Evidence of external challenge or scrutiny of the approach used and the conclusions reached
- Achievement is referenced to external standards

### **Good**

There was information on how the evaluation was undertaken but only two of the following four issues had been adequately addressed:

- A clear template for how the evaluation would be undertaken and the conclusions reached
- Evidence of management oversight and/or quality control for the evaluation
- Evidence of external challenge or scrutiny of the approach used and the conclusions reached
- Achievement is referenced to external standards

### **Excellent**

There was information on how the evaluation was undertaken and each of the following issues had been adequately addressed:

- A clear template for how the evaluation would be undertaken and the conclusions reached
- Evidence of management oversight and/or quality control for the evaluation
- Evidence of external challenge or scrutiny of the approach used and the conclusions reached
- Achievement is referenced to external standards

## **Criterion 5: The results are clearly presented (Structuring the process of understanding)**

### **Poor**

None of the following issues had been adequately addressed:

- The project background and context were clearly presented
- The report followed the structure recommended in the HLF guidance
- There was appropriate use of tables, graphics etc.
- The conclusions were clearly supported by the data presented

### **Adequate**

Only one of the following issues had been adequately addressed:

- The project background and context were clearly presented
- The report followed the structure recommended in the HLF guidance
- There was appropriate use of tables, graphics etc.
- The conclusions were clearly supported by the data presented

### **Good**

Two of the following issues had been adequately addressed:

- The project background and context were clearly presented
- The report followed the structure recommended in the HLF guidance
- There was appropriate use of tables, graphics etc.
- The conclusions were clearly supported by the data presented

### **Excellent**

Three or four of the following issues had been adequately addressed:

- The project background and context were clearly presented
- The report followed the structure recommended in the HLF guidance
- There was appropriate use of tables, graphics etc.
- The conclusions were clearly supported by the data presented

**Criterion 6: The conclusions and recommendations are sufficiently clear to enable stakeholders to identify and apply any lessons learned (Improve not just prove)**

**Poor**

There was no conclusion, or the conclusion was a simple assurance that all activities had been completed without any analysis of their efficiency or effectiveness

**Fair/Adequate**

One of the following issues was adequately addressed:

- The conclusion offers insights and lessons learned
- The conclusion identifies areas for improvement or issues that could improve effectiveness in future
- There was evidence that the grantees had undertaken some sort of reflective or lessons learned exercise to indicate that the evaluation is likely to lead to improvements on future or similar activities
- The evaluation results had been made available to stakeholders and other interested parties

**Good**

Two of the following issues were adequately addressed:

- The conclusion offers insights and lessons learned
- The conclusion identifies areas for improvement or issues that could improve effectiveness in future
- There was evidence that the grantees had undertaken some sort of reflective or lessons learned exercise to indicate that the evaluation is likely to lead to improvements on future or similar activities
- The evaluation results had been made available to stakeholders and other interested parties

**Very Good/Excellent**

Three or four of the following issues were adequately addressed:

- The conclusion offers insights and lessons learned
- The conclusion identifies areas for improvement or issues that could improve effectiveness in future

- There was evidence that the grantees had undertaken some sort of reflective or lessons
- learned exercise to indicate that the evaluation is likely to lead to improvements on future or similar activities

## Mapping outcomes

HLF currently uses an outcome framework which sets out 14 potential desired outcomes from its investment. The framework has 4 outcomes for heritage, 5 outcomes for people, and 5 outcomes for communities. For each potential outcome the framework describes the outcome and provides examples of how a project will know if it has achieved the outcome. The framework is set out in full at: <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/difference-we-want-your-project-make>

The review sought to identify evidence that a project has achieved an outcome under the current framework, and that this achievement is likely to have resulted: -

- because of the nature of the activity described within the report and/or
- because the quantitative and qualitative evidence presented in the report.

Where an outcome has not been mapped against the Framework, it does not mean that the project did not have that outcome but rather that the evaluation report does not provide clear evidence that can be interpolated.