

## **Sustainable Improvement Fund - Recovery Grants 2021-22**

The Sustainable Improvement Fund (SIF) is a major part of the Museum Development North West Programme (MDNW) and is taken from our core Sector Support Organisation funding from Arts Council England.

Through Museum Development UK's continued partnership with Art Fund, MDNW has secured an additional £12,000 to add to our £50,000 SIF fund and award as Recovery Grants to support North West museums with their recovery over the next 12 months.

This is a single grants programme, with one set of guidance, one application form and one deadline. However, to fulfil the requirements of the two funding sources we will balance the overall portfolio of grants offered so that:

- 19% of funding will be to museums in areas of low cultural community engagement, where the museum is the main cultural offer in a locality<sup>1</sup>, or museums in urban areas that have niche collections and specific cultural offers outside the larger city institutions, responding to the three key areas outlined on page 3
- The remaining 81% of the funding is unrestricted and will be for museums responding to the three key areas outlined on page 3

We will also look to ensure we have a geographical spread across the North West and will prioritise those museums that have not yet received emergency funding or Cultural Recovery Funds from Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund or Historic England.

We have given a longer lead in time to this fund with a deadline of 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021 so that you have time over the summer to adapt to a 'new normal' with a better idea of what your organisation will need going forward. You will also have the opportunity to take into account any other funding streams that may be launched over the summer (ACE's National Lottery Project Grants and Art Fund's Reimagine Grants are already open at time of publication).

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<sup>1</sup> Area of low cultural community engagement as measured by Arts Council England's 'Active People' survey [www.artscouncil.org.uk/document/active-people-survey-list-local-authorities-level-arts-engagement](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/document/active-people-survey-list-local-authorities-level-arts-engagement)

## Who can apply?

- Museums in the North West that are Accredited, hold provisional status or are formally working towards Accreditation can apply
- Museums that are not Accredited, or not formally working towards it, can be part of a project involving a partnership of museums but an Accredited museum must be the lead partner
- National Portfolio Organisations, national museums, English Heritage and National Trust properties are ineligible to apply, although they can be part of partnership bids

## How much can I apply for?

There is £62,000 available to allocate in grants.

- A single Accredited museum or museum working towards Accreditation can apply for up to **£7,500**
- A partnership of museums or a museum service with multiple Accredited sites can apply for up to **£10,000**. Where a partnership of museums or a multi-site organisation is applying, the project must involve a minimum of two Accredited sites

You do not need to contribute any match funding, but additional match funding would demonstrate a commitment to the project. You can add in volunteer time as match calculated in line with national living wage.

Please note that you may not be offered the full amount you apply for.

Grants will be paid upfront in one instalment on receipt of a signed funding agreement.

You must have spent the funding by the end of March 2022 although your project can continue beyond that date.

The deadline for applications is **5pm 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021**. Applications received after this time will not be accepted.

Arts Council England's National Lottery Project Grants<sup>2</sup> (NLPG) are open for applications. You may decide that an application to NLPG is more suitable for you rather than to this fund.

## What can I apply for?

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<sup>2</sup> [www.artscouncil.org.uk/projectgrants](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/projectgrants)

We will support organisational resilience of museums around three key areas:

- 1) Developing new sustainable offers for the future
- 2) Re-engaging with audiences
- 3) Creating and adapting programmes and services

Within these areas, museums can bid for a range of activity that meet the strategic needs of organisations in recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic and those that allow museums to build back better. These could include, but are not limited to:

- Adapt or develop new ways to connect with, and meet the needs of your communities
- Invest in the health and wellbeing and development of your paid and volunteer workforce
- Enhance existing or start new digital activities to increase reach
- Respond to the climate emergency and reduce environmental impact

N.B. Collections are not directly mentioned in the criteria – but they can be indirectly supported where it supports a museum to meet one of the three key areas listed above

### **What costs are eligible?**

This funding can include costs for:

- Materials and equipment
- Consultants and contractors
- Building modifications to implement sector guidance on reopening, accessibility and environmental sustainability
- ICT equipment and digital infrastructure - however please note the case for investment must include a clear explanation of the need and you need to have considered the ongoing costs of development and maintenance
- Training and development for staff and volunteers

N.B. Sustainable Improvement Fund - Recovery Grants can fund a wide range of activity but will not fund capital project costs and revenue costs such as salaries and general running costs.

## What criteria will my application be assessed against?

Your application will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Project is viable, achievable and clearly planned
- There is a demonstrable need – how this project will help your museum recover and develop post Covid-19, including specific challenges your museum is facing
- Project demonstrates value for money – costs are appropriate to the scale and nature of your project
- Outcomes will demonstrate impact of funds

Applicants will also be asked to demonstrate how they have considered:

- Best practice when working with freelancers/consultants
- Environmental responsibility
- Issues around equality, diversity and inclusivity including digital and physical access

N.B. There are links to resources at the end of this guidance to help you with these considerations

## When can I apply?

The fund is a single-stage process with one deadline. You need to allow enough time for funding decisions to be made before you start your project.

5pm 10 <sup>th</sup> September 2021	Deadline for applications
W/b 13 <sup>th</sup> September 2021	Panel considers applications
W/b 27 <sup>th</sup> September 2021	Applicants informed of outcome
4 <sup>th</sup> October 2021	Projects can start, once funding agreements have been signed
By December 2021	Complete MDE Museums' Organisational Health Check (see grant conditions below)
28 <sup>th</sup> February 2022	Submission of claims, proof of expenditure and any required grant documentation
31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	Project funding must have been spent although projects can continue beyond this date
April 2022	Evaluation questionnaire completed

## **Do I need to submit anything with my application?**

Your application does not need to be accompanied with further documentation, other than providing clear evidence of your costs, which may include screenshots or quotes.

## **What are the grant conditions and reporting requirements?**

It is a condition that grant recipients do the following:

- Complete a simple evaluation form which gathers the impact of your project to enable us to report the value of investment through Museum Development including evidence of expenditure (for completion April 2022)
- Complete the Annual Museum Survey for 2020-21 (it will open mid-July and close mid-September 2021)
- Complete a self-assessment return for the Museums' Organisational Health Check Tool 2021-22 by December 2021 (unless your organisation completed one in 2020-21)<sup>3</sup>
- Acknowledge the Recovery Grant funding from MDNW and Art Fund on all print and online marketing materials using the wording and logo we will provide

## **Who can I contact for advice?**

The MDNW team will be happy to respond to queries about this fund and discuss your initial ideas about a project. We have designed this application process to be as straightforward as possible, requesting only the information we need and have included a 'Useful resources' list at the end of this guidance which might help you strengthen your application.

## **Who makes the decisions?**

The grant awards will follow decision-making processes already in place and will be considered remotely by the MDNW Sustainable Improvement Fund panel, chaired by a Director from one of the major National Portfolio Organisation museums in the North West.

## **About Art Fund**

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<sup>3</sup> Information and the link to complete Museum Development England's Museums' Organisational Health Check self-assessment tool can be found here: <https://museumdevelopmentnorthwest.wordpress.com/mdn-organisational-health-check-tool/>. This information will directly support Museum Development North West to develop our programmes and grants for the future.

# Art Fund\_

For over 110 years Art Fund has supported museums and galleries, helping them to buy and display great works of art for everyone to enjoy. It helps museums and galleries by:

- Providing museums and curators with funding for acquisitions, training and development, and the display of art through tours and exhibitions
- Running public appeals when a work of art is under threat
- Promoting hundreds of UK museums and galleries through the National Art Pass
- Providing museums and galleries with the chance to fundraise for individual projects through Art Happens, its crowdfunding platform
- Helping museums share and show collections, by supporting tours and exhibitions
- Campaigning and advocacy work
- Celebrating the very best museums and galleries in the country through the Art Fund Museum of the Year

Through a continued partnership, Art Fund is contributing £175,000 to Museum Development UK's recovery grant programmes. The funding will reach museums across all nations in the UK, fulfilling specific cultural or local need.

For more information on Art Fund, visit:

<https://www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/funding-grants-for-museums>

## **Useful resources to help with your application**

### **Working with freelancers**

South West Museum Development, in partnership with the Museum Freelance network, have recently developed guidance on working with freelancers. The four new guides are available at - <https://southwestmuseums.org.uk/resources/category/working-with-freelancers/>.

### **Website and digital access resources**

Arts Council England's Digital Culture Network provides practical guides, training and support to museums, helping you to explore and harness the benefits of technology to achieve your goals, find new ways to reach and engage audiences, and develop sustainable business models - <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/developing-digital-culture/digital-culture-network>.

South West Museum Development has a number of guides on websites and digital access, including on planning a website, meeting WCAG 2.1 accessibility requirements and a useful checklist when thinking about your online audience communications. The resources are available at - <https://southwestmuseums.org.uk/resources/category/digital/>.

### **Equality, diversity and inclusion resources**

MDNW's Age-Friendly Museums Toolkit helps museums think about their offer to older people. It comprises the Age-Friendly Standards self-assessment checklist from the Family Arts Campaign, with some modifications to make it more bespoke to the museum sector - [https://museumdevelopmentnorthwest.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/mdnw\\_age-friendly-museums-toolkit\\_sept20191-1.pdf](https://museumdevelopmentnorthwest.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/mdnw_age-friendly-museums-toolkit_sept20191-1.pdf). There is a separate Checklist version with additional functionality so it can be completed electronically - [https://museumdevelopmentnorthwest.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/mdnw\\_age-friendly-museums-checklist\\_sept20192-1.pdf](https://museumdevelopmentnorthwest.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/mdnw_age-friendly-museums-checklist_sept20192-1.pdf)

Arts Council England have published some essential reads and resources to support museums to respond to the Investment Principle around Inclusivity and Relevance in the Let's Create Strategy - <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/essential-read-inclusivity-relevance>.

Museum Development West Midlands have a list of resources on their website you may find useful when planning your project -

<https://mdwm.org.uk/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-resources/>

### **Environmental sustainability**

Julie's Bicycle developed a Museums Framework to support museums in developing environmental practice and inspire them to use their unique role to foster environmental values, understanding and action with their audiences and communities -

<https://juliesbicycle.com/resource-museums-framework-2017/>

Curating Tomorrow has resources including Museums and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which helps you map activity against the SDGs - <http://www.curatingtomorrow.co.uk/resources/>

MDNW has a number of resources on our website. See the 'Environmental Sustainability' section of our publications list - <https://museumdevelopmentnorthwest.wordpress.com/publications/>.

### Carbon Literacy resources

MDNW, Manchester Museum and the Carbon Literacy Trust have been awarded NLPG funding for 'Roots and Branches', a project to develop and roll out museum specific Carbon Literacy training in England. There will be opportunities for your organisations to get involved from autumn 2021. More information on Carbon Literacy can be found here -

<https://carbonliteracy.com/organisation/>



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