

# Guidance Notes

**The Strategic Intervention Fund is part of the West Midlands Museum Development Programme (WMMD), funded by Arts Council England (ACE).**

### **The aims of the Strategic Intervention Fund:**

The aim of the Strategic Intervention Fund (SIF) is to support museums to find strategic solutions and a sustainable way forward in difficult times.

For some museums this may mean seeking external expertise; to explore new ways of working or new opportunities; review practices that are no longer fit for purpose; explore alternative business or governance models; or advise on the best way for an organisation to respond to an emerging challenge.

The SIF cannot be used for capital expenditure, normal running costs or revenue costs such as staff salaries.

The SIF is a limited small grants scheme. It is aimed at supporting museums that are experiencing significant challenges. We strongly encourage museums to consider if this is the correct funding for their circumstances and to contact a member of the WMMD team to discuss their application.

The SIF will support Accredited museums or those formally Working Towards Accreditation in the West Midlands.

National Portfolio Organisations and National museums are not eligible to apply.

### **Please Note:**

- The grant fund will be considered on a rolling basis, with monthly panels scheduled, to enable museums to make requests when need arises
- Museums will receive a decision within a maximum of six weeks from the point of application
- The total budget of the grant fund is finite. Funds will be awarded to applications that demonstrate sufficient evidence of need on a first come first served basis
- Your application will be presented to the first available grant panel after its receipt
- Museums can apply for any amount up to £2,500. However, WMMD will consider applications up to a maximum value of £5,000 in exceptional circumstances. This must be discussed with a member of the WMMD team prior to application.
- We strongly recommend that you discuss your application with a member of the WMMD team before you submit it

## KEY DATES

Panel meetings	Second Wednesday of each calendar month
To be included in the next panel you must submit your application form no later than	9am, first Thursday of each calendar month
We will tell you if you have succeeded	Within 3 working days of the panel meeting
You must complete your activity expenditure	Within 3 months of receiving your grant payment
You must submit your final paid invoices	Within 4 months of receiving your grant payment
We expect your Final Report	Within 4 months of receiving your grant payment
If successful, you must complete and submit an Organisation Health Check and any other information requested	Within 6 months of receiving your grant payment

## Information for Applicants

### 1. Is your museum eligible?

Your museum must hold Accreditation (including Provisional Accreditation) or be formally Working Towards Accreditation. To check your status, please see the list of Accredited Museums at <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/uk-museum-accreditation-scheme/about-accreditation>

National Portfolio Organisations and National museums are not eligible to apply.

### 2. How long have I to spend the grant?

The grant must be spent within three months of receiving your grant payment.

### 3. How much can I apply for?

You can apply for any amount up to £2,500. WMMD will consider applications up to a maximum value of £5,000 in exceptional circumstances, this must be discussed with a member of the WMMD team prior to application.

#### **4. What will we fund?**

**We WILL provide funding for strategic interventions that will support long-term organisational change and/ or long-term sustainability. Note the following is not an exhaustive list:**

- Training and development for staff and volunteers
- ‘Small value’ ICT equipment where there is evidence this will support long-term sustainability (the case for investment must include a clear explanation of the need for this)\*
- Consultancy and contractors to support activity such as;
  - business remodeling
  - finance
  - governance
  - crisis communications
  - energy auditing
  - health and safety

\*Please refer to capital expenditure guidance in ‘What won’t we fund?’.

If you are unsure whether a cost could be covered by the grant funding please contact the WMMD team for clarification before making an application.

We will only provide funding for costs and activity once WMMD has received your signed copy of the Grant Offer Letter. All expenditure must be completed within three months of receiving your grant.

#### **5. What won’t we fund?**

**We will not consider activity/ expenditure that is a short-term solution and/ or does not strategically address significant organisational or financial challenges.**

**For example we will NOT fund:**

- revenue costs such as salaries and general running costs
- building (capital) work
- travel costs for staff or volunteers
- contingency

**In addition, you cannot use the Strategic Intervention Fund money for:**

- any costs you have to pay before a decision is made on your application by West Midlands Museum Development
- any costs that are already covered by other funding/ income
- any goods and services, including consultants and contractors, that have not been appointed in accordance with the Strategic Intervention Fund requirements

#### **6. Will the grant cover VAT?**

**The grant will cover VAT that you cannot recover from HM Revenue and Customs.**

VAT registered museums should show all costs and claims exclusive of VAT.

Museums not registered for VAT should show all costs and claims inclusive of VAT.

You must send us all appropriate invoices (with VAT or without VAT) when submitting your final accounts.

## 7. How will the money be paid?

We will pay you 100% of the grant via BACS payment once we have received your signed acceptance of the Strategic Intervention Fund terms and conditions.

## 8. What do we expect you to agree when we offer a grant?

- You must **complete and invoice for all activity expenditure** within three months of receiving your grant payment
- You must **forward all copy invoices** for expenditure to WMMD within four months of receiving your grant payment
- On completion of the project, you must **submit a final report** (using our reporting template) within four months of receiving your grant payment
- You must **complete and submit an Organisation Health Check** and any other information requested by WMMD within six months of receiving your grant
- To **take part in the National Annual Museum Survey 2023** (date tbc) which helps us establish benchmarking for the museum sector regionally and nationally

## 9. What is the Organisational Health Check?

The Organisational Health Check is a self-assessment tool for museums which will take around an hour to complete.

It is designed as an indicator to help you highlight your museum's current best practice, understand where the museum has areas of development and to feed into your forward planning.

This will enable you to prioritise areas of working over the next 12 months and provide you with a benchmark for future work.

The organisational health check asks an overarching question about your museum's Forward Plan and then addresses six themes:

- governance and leadership
- financial planning and resources
- people development and management
- working practices
- audiences
- collections

By completing the organisational health check you will receive a bespoke advisory report with a summary of your results and suggestions of where to access support in your highlighted areas of need.

The information gathered via the Organisational Health Check will be used by Museum Development regionally and nationally to understand current trends and create targeted support for museums.

We will use the information gathered to inform programming and development support. Your museum will be invited to join programmes if you have indicated that they are a priority for your organisation.

As we repeat the Museums' Organisational Health Check every two years it will allow you to see how your museum has evolved, highlighting where you've developed and potential areas for growth in the future.

## How to Apply

Please speak to the WMMD team about your planned activity before applying.

Please complete the Application Form which can be downloaded from our website [www.mdwm.org.uk](http://www.mdwm.org.uk) or requested by emailing [wwmd@ironbridge.org.uk](mailto:wwmd@ironbridge.org.uk)

### 10. How will grant applications be assessed?

This is a competitive application process. Each application will be assessed by a Grants Panel comprised of team members from Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust and West Midlands Museum Development.

The panel will assess your application against the following criteria:

- The grant fulfils a demonstrable need, i.e. make sure you tell us why the funded activity is needed
- You provide a clear outline of how the grant will support your museum in the long-term and how the activity will be implemented
- Your proposed costs are appropriate to scale and nature of your application

Applications will be assessed at the first monthly panel after they are received. Museums will be contacted regarding the decision within three working days of the grant panel.

The panel's decision is final.

### 11. Completed Applications

We will only accept applications submitted using our grant application form.

Please send your completed application forms by email to [wwmd@ironbridge.org.uk](mailto:wwmd@ironbridge.org.uk)

**The final closing date for applications is 9am on the first Thursday of every calendar month. Applications received by 9am, first Thursday of the month will be assessed on the second Wednesday of that month. Applications received after this date will be assessed at the following month's panel.**

### 12. Sending applications by email

- Ensure that your subject line does not contain any full stops or commas
- Ensure that attachments do not contain any full stops or commas within their name for example in a date (file extensions are acceptable for example .docx)
- We can accept Word, Excel and PDF files
- If your email contains over 10MB of attachments, please send all the documents to us via We Transfer
- We will acknowledge receipt of your application within one working day. If you haven't heard from us after this time, please contact us immediately.

## Notes on completing the APPLICATION FORM

### 13. APPLICANT DETAILS

Please ensure that you complete this section thoroughly and provide up to date details for the named person who will be the primary contact for any queries about the application. We will hold this information on our database to help us process and monitor your application and, if successful, your grant.

Tell us here how much grant funding you wish to apply for.

Remember to stick to the word count

### 14. SECTION ONE: What is the grant for? How will you use the money?

Section one is designed to inform the Award Panel about the need and the impact that a Strategic Intervention Fund will have on your organisation.

#### a) Please outline the nature of the challenge your museum is facing (max 200 words)

Tell us what your need is in 200 words

- Keep it simple, keep it clear
- Would someone who knows nothing about your situation clearly understand what you want to achieve if they read this section? If they don't, the grants panel won't either!

#### b) What evidence is this based on? (max 200 words)

We want to understand how you know you need an intervention. Use this answer to explain. You are welcome to provide supporting evidence or additional documents too.

#### c) What steps are you already taking to address the challenge identified above? (max 200 words)

You may have already started work to address the challenge. Let us know what you're already doing and what plans are already in place.

#### d) Outline what activity you are applying for (max 200 words)

Tell us what activity you want the Strategic Intervention Fund to cover. We want to know what you'll use the funding for. Make sure it's clear how your activity will link to the challenge you're facing.

#### e) How will this activity address the challenge in the short-term? (max 200 words)

Tell us how the activity funded by the Strategic Intervention Fund will support you and your museum to address the challenge in the short-term.

**f) How will this activity address the challenge in the long-term? (max 200 words)**

Tell us how the activity funded by the Strategic Intervention Fund will support you and your museum to address the challenge in the long-term.

**g) What would happen without this activity? (max 200 words)**

The Strategic Intervention Fund is designed to support museums to deal with a significant challenge. By telling us what you believe would happen without the intervention, you help us understand the scale and impact of the activity.

**h) Please outline the key milestones for the activity and how it will be managed (max 200 words)**

We want to ensure all our funding is well managed. Please let us know who will manage the activity and who will support delivery. The named individual that will manage the funding must be part of your museum, for example a member of staff or Trustee, but you can use the grant to fund freelancers or consultants.

Delivery of activity may be supported by people within your museum, or external freelancers, consultants or partners. You may not be able to name who will provide external support yet because you plan to go out to tender. If so, let us know here.

Provide the key milestones for the activity so we can see your timescales.

**i) We want to see that your costs are appropriate. Have you provided supporting evidence for costs, such as quotes for freelance/ consultant support?**

This is a yes or no question. Where relevant we want to see quotes so we know that the costs in your application are appropriate.

If you are not providing quotes there is space to provide further detail, such as why quotes aren't needed for your activity or alternative ways you've calculated costs.

**Art Council England is working with the Museum Development Network (MDUK) and fifteen other sector partners to provide a coordinated approach to supporting sector colleagues who have concerns about the future of their museums or collections.**

*Sharing your information will help the partnership provide timely and appropriate advice, identify trends, and lobby for support on behalf of the UK museum sector. More information can be found in the July 2021 joint statement on protecting museums and collections at risk:*

[https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Statement%20on%20heritage%20museums%20and%20collections%20at%20risk\\_1.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Statement%20on%20heritage%20museums%20and%20collections%20at%20risk_1.pdf)

**j) Do you believe you are at risk of closure in the next 12-months?**

This is a yes or no question. If you believe you are at risk of closure within the next 12-months, the form will link you to our Concerned About Closure survey.

**k) Would you consent to WMMD sharing your information with ACE?**

This is a yes or no question. You do not have to consent to having your information shared with ACE. However, by consenting to share your information, it will help the partnership provide timely and appropriate advice, identify trends, and lobby for support on behalf of the UK museum sector.

**15. SECTION TWO: Grant funding breakdown**

**a. Grant Applied For. How much funding are you seeking from the Strategic Intervention Fund?**

**b. Is the museum VAT registered?**

Tell us the total amount of grant funding you need from us.

- VAT registered museums should show all costs and claims exclusive of VAT
- Museums not registered for VAT should show all costs and claims inclusive of VAT

If this statement causes you confusion, check your status with the WMMD team.

At the end of the project, you should submit the appropriate invoices (with VAT or without VAT).

**c. Project Costs: Provide an indicative list of all the project costs including the specialist services/ materials/ or equipment required to deliver the project.**

This is where you describe and list the costs of the various items or services you need to pay for. This includes the total of any match funding; you will provide the breakdown of the match funding in section d.

We expect you to include evidence of the costs, like quotations or price sheets, as email attachments.

Make sure that you are only asking for funding for things that the Strategic Intervention Fund will pay for (check sections 4-6 to be sure). Do not include a contingency cost as this will not be considered by the panel.

Finally, make sure that the costs quoted in here exclude or include VAT as appropriate. Again, if in doubt, check with the WMMD team.

**d. Match Funding**

Tell us here about the resources you will contribute to this project.

This can be either cash or in kind. For example, this could be volunteer time, match funding partner contributions like free use of their resources etc. Please indicate whether this contribution includes or excludes VAT.

Volunteer time should be costed at National Living Wage.

**Make sure that when you add up (a) the Grant Applied for and (d) the Match Funding that they equal (c) the overall costs of the project**

**16. SECTION THREE: Agreement**

Ensure that you have read and accept the terms of the agreement. The declaration must be signed and dated by the CEO, Chair, Director or Head of Museum Service.

**Good luck with your application!**