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It is not always possible to finance interpretive projects from annual budgets but alternative sources of funding are available. It is just a matter of targeting your application to the right funding bodies in the right way.

This factsheet will suggest how an application for an interpretive project might be targeted and will help to identify some of the funding opportunities available. It should be used in conjunction with other SMC factsheets, for information on writing an application or proposal and general fundraising issues. These are all available on the SMC website [www.scottishmuseums.org.uk](http://www.scottishmuseums.org.uk)

### **Targeting your application**

Writing a funding application for an interpretive project is very similar to that for any other type of project. It is important to be clear about your **aims and objectives** and to ensure that you meet the **criteria** of your chosen funding body.

It is unlikely that any funding body will expressly invite applications for interpretive projects. Instead, you will need to think in terms of access, inclusion, education and learning, to think beyond the physical *what* you want to do towards what the end **benefit** will be. In particular, with interpretive projects, you might focus attention on

- how your project improves or extends access to your collections, either through physical means or through changes in intellectual approach
- how your project involves members of the community, schools, volunteers or other target groups
- the delivery of learning outcomes to different audiences
- the contribution to specific social agendas such as health, rural regeneration, inclusion etc. . . . and more.

Applications should be targeted towards organisations that fund your type of project. Specify from the outset how your project helps the funding body deliver its stated charitable aims, and remember that any expressed benefits must be to your users, and not just to your organisation.

In expressing the intended benefits of your interpretive project, it will also help to demonstrate that there is a real and clear **need** for the work you wish to undertake. This may require some form of evidence, for example

- formal assessment of your current interpretive provision, to highlight areas requiring improvement
- access audits, to reveal the extent to which you need to upgrade to meet current recommended standards for access and inclusion
- research into your visitors likes and dislikes
- evaluation of how your visitors use and understand your current interpretation, and therefore, gaps in current provision
- evidence from local schools that your interpretation would meet curriculum criteria
- evaluation from pilot projects or mock ups, to show that any changes you intend to make are the right changes and a reasonable investment
- detailed investigation of the needs of a particular visitor group, community, or non visitors
- forward plans, interpretive plans or strategies, to show how your interpretive project fits in with the priorities of the organisation, or with broader planning for your area.

All your information should be clearly stated either in the appropriate application form or in a funding proposal.

### **Key sources of funds to try**

It is not possible to give a definitive list of organisations that will fund interpretive projects, since the criteria for each funding body will change with time. However, there are a few key sources that you may wish to explore in more detail. These include

- **Heritage Lottery Fund - Awards for All**

Grants are available for sums between £500 and £5000, with an emphasis on simple application procedures, a quick turn around of funds, and no limit to the number of successive applications. Awards focus on projects that work in the interests of the local community, increase local involvement in heritage, and improve people's quality of life. Applicants must be constituted not for profit organisations, with an annual income of less than £20,000.

Organisations with a larger annual income, or those considering larger projects could also consider HLF Local Heritage Initiative or Your Heritage grants.

For more information or to discuss specific projects, contact the Heritage Lottery Fund Helpline 020 7591 6042 / 6043 / 6044.

- **Grant Making Trusts**

Grant making trusts in the UK donate over £1 billion to charitable causes each year. Although not a quick or easy route to funding, this represents a considerable potential resource for museums that have charitable recognition. Each grant making trust has different interests and criteria. To be successful against severe competition, projects should display imagination and relevance, and applications should be clearly targeted and well written.

For more information, consult the Directory of Scottish Grant Making Trusts, available through local libraries, local volunteer centres and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) website [www.scvo.org.uk](http://www.scvo.org.uk)

- **Scottish Museums Council – Grants programme**

Information about the SMC Grants programme is available on the SMC website at [www.scottishmuseums.org.uk/areas\\_of\\_work/grants\\_intro.asp](http://www.scottishmuseums.org.uk/areas_of_work/grants_intro.asp)

- **Local business sponsors**

Local companies may be willing to support local projects in return for public acknowledgement and profile. Look for those whose business interests match your project in some way. For example, if you are installing an element of IT, is there a business that can help with hardware, software or free expertise? Is there a local publisher who could reduce costs on the print run of leaflets or guide books? Is there a local business whose product area relates to the subject of your exhibition?

- **Grant awarding businesses**

Members of the business community are increasingly interested in contributing to community development, and investing in quality of life. One way they might do this is by making charitable donations. For more information on businesses looking to donate, consult The UK Company Giving Guide, available through local libraries.

- **Local Enterprise Companies**

Local Enterprise Companies are a possible source of funding for larger projects, or local collaborative projects. For more information on regional grant giving priorities, contact your own regional Local Enterprise Company.

In order to access any of these funding opportunities, you will need to take a planned approach. You will need to research and plan your interpretive project, including setting a realistic timescale for delivery, and will need to plan and direct your fundraising efforts. By targeting a strong application to the most appropriate source from the outset, you will save time and disappointment. More importantly you will open up opportunities to complete interpretive projects that otherwise may not have seemed possible.

SMC has helped many museums to develop successful project plans and is often asked to assess grant applications for funding bodies such as HLF. For more information about fundraising generally, visit the SMC website [www.scottishmuseums.org.uk](http://www.scottishmuseums.org.uk)

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