



Brief for Interim Evaluation of Strategic Change Fund

1. Background to the organisation

The Scottish Museums Council (SMC) is the membership organisation for over 300 of Scotland's local museums. Our aim is to improve the quality of Scotland's museums and galleries for the public benefit. We develop policy and initiatives at a national level, and provide advice to members on a wide range of subjects from technical issues to information on fundraising and development. Further information on the activities of SMC can be found on our website

<http://www.scottishmuseums.org.uk/>.

A staff of 25 work from our office at 20-22 Torphichen Street in Edinburgh and we also have a small team of 3 conservators based at the conservation laboratories at the National Museum of Scotland on Chambers Street.

We receive 93% of our funding from the Scottish Executive with the remaining 7% coming from membership subscriptions, earned income and other sources. In 2002/2003 our Scottish Office grant was £2,200,850.

2. Background to this brief

In August 2000, as part of the National Cultural Strategy, the Scottish Executive set aside £3 million to assist with the restructuring of the museum sector. Having allocated £420,000 per year to three industrial museums (Scottish Mining Museum, Scottish Fisheries Museum and Scottish Maritime Museum), the Scottish Executive approached SMC to lead on developing criteria for distributing the balance.

SMC held a series of meetings held throughout Scotland to consult its membership of 210 organisations on the development of the criteria. A clear consensus emerged that emphasis should be given to a small number of schemes which could achieve real impact and act as pathfinders for others. Three themes were agreed:

- building museum audiences
- building capacity in museums
- increasing access to collections.

Within these three areas of museum work, applications could then be supported which delivered or tested sustainable approaches.

It was also agreed that all applications should be

- capable of wider application
- capable of evaluation.

As the SCF was aimed at testing genuinely creative proposals, it was agreed that risks could be taken even if some applications later failed.

Following the consultation period, a Steering Group whose membership included both members of SMC's Board and representatives from external organisations agreed Guidelines for applications to the Fund. The Scottish Ministers approved the Guidelines in May 2002 (copy attached).

There have been three rounds of applications and a total of 13 projects have now been approved.

In the Corporate Plan 2001-2004, SMC committed to evaluate the Strategic Change Fund by December 2003. It had been expected that the SCF would have made considerable progress by this date and that some projects would have been completed. As there was a delay in the launch of the programme, no projects will have been completed by that date. However, it is still planned to commission an interim evaluation of the SCF within the same time scale although it will be too early to consider the impact of the Fund.

3. Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will cover both the processes of the fund and the internal administration as well as the individual projects. The first part of the evaluation should look at the individual projects and include:

- where and what were the projects, including the costs of the projects
- the number of new posts created
- the number of partner organisations involved
- the aims of the individual projects
- what is working well
- what difficulties have been encountered
- evidence through case studies that can be used in advocacy for the continuation and development of grants programmes.

The second section should examine the:

- development of the criteria, including the consultation with members
- application process – both internal and external
- role of SMC staff as Project Officers
- use of consultants
- assessment procedures.

As well as a factual account of the processes, the report should investigate:

- the uptake of the grants
 - what worked well
 - what should have been done differently
 - what risks were taken
- and:
- detail processes and models of working that might be of wider application
 - ascertain that the grant awards were in line with the criteria of the SCF
 - identify good practice that might be capable of further development.

The final report will form the basis of a publication.

4. Copyright

Copyright to all information collected by the Consultants during the course of the Project rests exclusively with the Scottish Museums Council. Any decision as to publication lies solely with the Scottish Museums Council.

5. Timetable

- proposals to be submitted by 26 September
- commissioning meeting to be held during week beginning 6 October
- interim report: to be agreed following commissioning meeting
- final report: to be agreed following commissioning meeting – but expected to be end December 2003.

Four copies of the proposal should be submitted together with an electronic copy in Word for Windows 2000 or Rich Text Format (RTF). This can be on an accompanying PC-format floppy disk or sent via email.

6. Project Management

The contract will be managed for SMC by Fiona Wilson, Assistant Director (Finance and Administration), The Scottish Museums Council, County House, 20/22 Torphichen Street, Edinburgh EH3 8JB.

Telephone 0131 476 8461 or e-mail fionaw@scottishmuseums.org.uk for further information.

7. Fee

An upper limit for the budget for this project has been set at £10,000 exclusive of VAT.

The fee will include all expenses but not the publication of the report. Applicants will be expected to include a budget breakdown for their proposal.

Payment

- 50% of the total cost on commissioning
- 20% on receipt of the interim report
- 30% on delivery of the final copy.

All invoices to be submitted to the Scottish Museums Council.