

Using Consultants

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Why?

- Pressure to use consultants
- Demands from funders
- Special knowledge and skills needed
- Practicalities such as time, capacity, resources

Do you need consultants?

- Look at the whole project
- Identify what you want to achieve as a whole
- Identify gaps and needs
- Decide on particular skills and knowledge missing
- How are you going to fill the gaps or get the knowledge?
- Risks and opportunities in using or not using consultants
- Timescales, restraints, deadlines
- Money and other resources

What to use consultants for?

- Specialist skills and knowledge
- An external perspective
- Comply with legislative or technical requirements
- Get the evidence

- Advise or solve?
- Do or think?
- Truth telling or sooth saying?

Work consultants might do (and which are eligible for HLF)

- Provide special knowledge and expertise
- Carry out research
- Data and evidence gathering and analysis
- Community and other consultation work
- Help with building relationships and capacity

HLF will pay for consultant work

- Which is to do with your project.
 - Which is only relevant to your application.
 - Where you can demonstrate that you can't do it yourself.
 - Which helps the viability of the project
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- Check with your team at an early stage what consultant work is eligible!

Definitely not

- Feasibility studies
- Business planning
- Market research

Your input

- Your vision
- Your brief
- Your research and evidence
- Your project skills and knowledge
- Your local/specialist knowledge
- Your own resources
- Sharing skills low cost/no cost

When?

- Anytime you like if you are paying!
- When you have a good idea of what you might need to do
- Or where you might need help
- Think about consultant help you might need to develop the initial application
- And the ones you might need at more advanced stages e.g. post stage 1 award
- And the ones you might need during the project itself

Where to find them

- Professional journals
 - Websites
 - Networking
 - Word of mouth
 - Your own contacts
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- Follow up references, projects and claims

What to ask

Ask others about who they used. Ask if the consultants:

- Added value to the project/task
- Provided good value/quality and how this was judged
- Were reliable and flexible
- Communicated well in written and other forms
- Dealt well with seeking and providing evidence
- Provided what was needed
- Advised on what else might be needed

Ask the consultants about:

- Experience
- How they dealt with problems in other projects
- Who will really be doing the work?

Getting the best value

- Brief, brief, brief
- What you already know
- What you really want
- Expectations and boundaries
- Focus
- Top priorities
- Delivery, formats, responsibilities, timescales
- Keep up communication

The work

- How
- When
- How much
- Unexpected events
- Delivery
- Preparing for exit

Apply their work

Key weakness in applications:

- Including all the consultant's work without translating it for HLF officers to show what this means for your project
- What your decisions are
- Impact on the project
- The consultants: deliver the evidence or the task
- You: deliver the project

Success factors for HLF

- The project is needed
- It will do its job
- Its job will benefit heritage and people
- The risks are manageable, including costs
- The benefits will be lasting

Top Tips

- Create the vision
- Look at what's needed
- Decide what can be done yourselves
- Use consultants to add value
- Be honest, clear and direct
- Talk to HLF
- Demonstrate the results of the work and what it means for your project
- Build a relationship
- Pass on your experience

Contacts

- NCA lottery advisory service
- Your HLF team or 0207 591 6000
- Capital Projects Network
sara.hilton@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk
- Archives project network?

Useful summary:

- AIM Focus Paper “Using Museum Consultants”