

Shared Island GLAM Programme Mentorship and Exchanges

■ Call for Expressions of Interest:
Study Visit (Belfast)

Window: 14-30 September 2026



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Shared Island
Initiative



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



IRISH
MUSEUMS
ASSOCIATION

■ The Shared Island GLAM Programme

The Shared Island GLAM Programme is a five-year all-island initiative led by the Heritage Council and delivered in partnership with the Irish Museums Association.

Funded through the Shared Island initiative, the programme aims to strengthen collaboration, visibility and public engagement across not-for-profit collection-focused galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAM) in Ireland and Northern Ireland, while supporting a deeper understanding of shared cultural heritage.

Through collaborative project funding, professional development and networking opportunities, mentorship and exchange programmes, a fellowship programme and an annual GLAM Awards programme from 2027, the initiative will strengthen relationships across the GLAM sector, encourage knowledge-sharing and innovation, recognise excellence, and help build a stronger and more connected cultural heritage sector across the island.

The GLAM Programme forms part of the Heritage Council's wider programme of Shared Island initiatives, which also includes the Shared Island Heritage Networks Programme and an annual all-island conference for heritage professionals.

■ Call for Expressions of Interest

The Irish Museums Association, on behalf of the Heritage Council, is inviting expressions of interest from colleagues working in eligible GLAM organisations in Ireland to take part in the first of a planned series of all-island Study Visits, as part of the Shared Ireland GLAM Programme Mentorship and Exchanges strand, a five-year initiative supported through the Shared Island Fund.

The Mentorship and Exchanges strand is designed to strengthen relationships and knowledge-sharing across the GLAM sector, encouraging participants to step outside their own organisational context and learn directly from the practices and experiences of others. It aims to support stronger all-island and cross-sector connections, encourage greater understanding of common issues and challenges, and help break down organisational, structural and geographical barriers across the GLAM sector in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Under this strand, a series of thematic cross-disciplinary Study Visits will bring together a small group of practitioners to participate in a two-day focused programme of site visits, discussion, and shared learning in the neighbouring jurisdiction.

This call for expressions of interest relates specifically to the **first Study Visit**. Further Study Visits will be announced separately, including opportunities specifically for applicants from eligible organisations in Northern Ireland.

About the opportunity

Participants will be supported to take part in the Study Visit (Belfast), taking place on Tuesday 24 and Wednesday 25 November 2026.

This opportunity is designed as a space for open and practical conversation in relation to the themes of [Shared Home Place: Explore, Connect, Share.](#)

The emphasis is on peer learning: an opportunity to step outside day-to-day work to engage with peers to exchange experience and consider different approaches to:

- Community engagement and co-creation;
- Interpreting shared and contested histories;
- Inclusive and participatory programme design; and
- Cross-border collaboration in practice.

Through a mix of site visits and facilitated exchanges, the Study Visit will explore what works, what remains challenging, and what approaches might be adapted or tested within different institutional and disciplinary contexts.

Belfast Study Visit Itinerary 24-25 November

This Study Visit includes site visits as follows:

- **NI War Memorial** - *Community & Grassroots Practice* - facilitated by Mark Wigton, Outreach Officer
- **The Linen Hall Library** - *Heritage, Identity & Narrative Framing* - facilitated by Samantha McCombe, Librarian
- **Belfast City Murals** - *Interpretation in public space – a facilitated tour of Belfast City Murals* - Professor Dominic Bryan, Fellow of the Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, Queen's University Belfast
- **Golden Thread Gallery** - *Contemporary Arts & Practice, Social Engagement* – facilitated by Sarah McAvera
- **Ulster Museum** - *Shared and Contested Histories* - facilitated by Triona White Hamilton, Curator of Modern History
- **Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI)** - **Working in co-creation and community collaboration** - facilitated by the PRONI team

The visit will also include additional informal networking opportunities.

Who can apply

We welcome applications from professionals working in an eligible organisation in the GLAM sector in Ireland who:

- Are interested in developing or testing new approaches in their work;
- Are curious about how others are navigating similar challenges;
- Are open to sharing their own experience and learning.

Eligible organisations may include:

- **Galleries or art museums** with permanent or heritage collections.
- **Libraries** with special collections, local studies, rare book, photographic, manuscript, or other significant heritage collections.
- **Archives and record-holding bodies**, such as national, local authority, academic, or religious bodies; specialist repositories for subject-specific collections, digital cultural heritage, folklife, community archives, and oral histories.
- **Museums**, including national, regional, local, independent, and specialist museums, such as historic houses, that meet the Heritage Council or IMA definition of museums.

The Study Visits are intended to support cross-border learning by bringing participants into a different jurisdiction. As this visit will take place in **Belfast**, this call is open to applicants based in Ireland. A total of **six participants** will be selected.

Future Study Visits will be announced separately, including opportunities specifically for applicants from eligible organisations in Northern Ireland.

What's included

- Full participation in the two-day programme;
- Travel*, accommodation and subsistence covered;
- Time and space for peer exchange and reflection;
- Opportunity to build connections across the sector.

* Note that, in line with our environmental sustainability policy, public transport is encouraged and expenses benchmarked accordingly.

Participant commitment

Participants will be expected to:

- Engage fully with the Study Visit's itinerary across the two days;
- Contribute to discussions and knowledge exchange;
- Reflect on how learning might be applied in their own context.

Participants will also be expected to provide feedback via a short form or video diary following the Study Visit to inform future visits.

How to apply

To express your interest, please submit a short application outlining:

- Your name, job title, organisation and contact details;
- Short bio (50 words max.);
- Why you are interested in taking part in this Study Visit, including an area of practice that you are interested in exploring and why (250 words max.);
- A brief letter or email of support from your own organisation (1 A4 page max.).

Application Deadline: 30 September 2026.

Apply [HERE](#).

Online Information Session: Tuesday 22 September 3pm.

Register [HERE](#).

Queries can be directed to:

Susan Heffernan, IMA Programme Manager: Projects at projects@irishmuseums.org