

Shared Island GLAM Programme Pilot Project Funding

■ Call for Applications



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 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, 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 Applications

The Irish Museums Association, on behalf of the Heritage Council, is inviting applications from eligible GLAM organisations in Ireland and Northern Ireland to participate in a pilot collaborative project fund. This is the first round of project funding under the Shared Island GLAM Programme, a five-year initiative supported through the Shared Island Fund.

The purpose of this pilot is to support innovative partnership projects that strengthen relationships across the not-for-profit collection-focused GLAM sector, encourage shared learning, and support new ways of engaging communities with shared cultural heritage.

This collaborative project funding strand is designed to support GLAM organisations and practitioners in Ireland and Northern Ireland to develop and test new ideas and approaches to public engagement, co-creation and all-island collaboration, enabling organisations to collaboratively explore ideas and approaches that they may otherwise not have the capacity or resources to undertake.

Projects should be realistic in scope, budget and timeline, taking account of the resources available and the requirement for delivery by June 2027.

Learnings from the 2026 pilot projects will inform the design of a wider all-island funding round from 2027.

■ Who can apply

Projects must involve collaboration between at least one eligible collection-focused GLAM organisation in Ireland and one eligible collection-focused GLAM organisation in Northern Ireland. Additional project partners may also be involved where they add clear value to the proposal.

Project partners must be meaningfully involved in the design and delivery of the project. Applications from one jurisdiction only will not be considered.

There is no requirement for match funding.

For the purposes of this funding strand, eligible GLAM organisations are defined as not-for-profit collection-focused galleries, libraries, archives, museums and related cultural heritage bodies whose primary public value is created through the care, documentation, interpretation and sharing of collections.

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.

Organisations whose main activity is events, programming, production, or general cultural heritage activity are eligible only where the proposed project is clearly connected to a collection that they hold, manage, document, interpret or provide access to (for example, a public library may be eligible where the project uses its cultural heritage collections to explore shared histories, as opposed to general programming).

If you have questions about your eligibility for this funding strand or would like further clarification, please contact:

Susan Heffernan,

IMA Programme Manager: Projects

projects@irishmuseums.org

■ What we are looking for

We are looking for collaborative projects that use collections, archives, records, objects, images, stories or other cultural heritage material to explore shared histories, experiences or connections across the island.

Projects must place a strong emphasis on community participation and public engagement. Communities should not simply be audiences for the finished project; where possible, they should help shape the questions, narratives, methods or outputs from an early stage.

This pilot fund is intended to support practical experimentation. approaches with longer-term value for the wider GLAM sector, including new models of all-island collaboration and public engagement.

Examples of projects that may be supported include:

- Prototype exhibitions;
- Oral history or community collecting projects;
- Digital storytelling initiatives;
- Collaborative curatorial experiments;
- Public testing sessions;
- Participatory interpretation projects;
- Public-facing cultural heritage activities connected to collections.

Projects must evidence:

- A clear cultural heritage and collections focus, using collections, archives, records, objects, images, stories or other cultural heritage material to **explore** what a [Shared Home Place](#) means, past, present and future.
- Meaningful collaboration between organisations in both jurisdictions, **connecting** people across the island through dialogue and engagement on place-based community, culture and heritage.
- Community participation or deep public engagement that supports the **sharing** of experiences, culture and heritage, and reflects on their place in our shared future on this island.

Additionally, they also must:

- Be realistic in scale, budget and timeline;
- Be capable of delivery between October 2026 and June 2027;
- Include a public-facing output, event, sharing session or engagement activity for consideration for a GLAM Award.
- Produce learning that can inform the future development of the Shared Island GLAM Programme.

■ Partnership and Delivery

Both core partners must be meaningfully involved in the design and delivery of the project. Applications should clearly set out:

- the role of each partner organisation;
- which organisation will lead on each element of the work;
- how decisions will be made between partners;
- how communication and meetings will be managed;
- how the project will be delivered across two jurisdictions;
- how risks, delays or changes will be managed.

The partnership should be credible and proportionate to the proposed project. Applications should avoid nominal partnerships, where one organisation appears to be carrying the work alone.

The lead applicant organisation will be responsible for entering into the funding agreement with the Heritage Council and for submitting required reports and financial documentation.

■ What we will fund

It is envisaged that three, or a maximum of four, collaborative projects will receive funding in this initial round, with funding amounts expected to range between €10,000 and €15,000 per project.

The funding is intended to support project delivery, community engagement, outputs and associated costs.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement or Memorandum of Understanding with the Heritage Council, with the named lead applicant organisation as signatory. This will set out delivery responsibilities, reporting requirements, and payment arrangements.

■ Eligible costs include:

- Consultant, contractor and specialist fees where directly related to project delivery;
- Artist, facilitator, designer, researcher or evaluator fees where directly related to project delivery;
- Survey, research and recording work;
- Community engagement activities and events;

- Publication and dissemination costs;
- Travel and subsistence directly related to project delivery;
- Venue hire and event costs;
- Documentation costs;
- Materials directly required for project outputs;
- Access supports directly related to public or community participation.

Applicants should ensure that all costs are proportionate, clearly explained and directly linked to the proposed activities.

Quotes or clear estimates should be provided for individual budget lines over €5,000.

■ What we will not fund

- Projects that are not jointly designed and delivered by organisations in both jurisdictions;
- Staff salary costs, salary replacement or internal staff backfill;
- Overheads, internal recharge or administration fees;
- Ongoing operational or maintenance costs;
- Retrospective funding for activities that have already taken place at the time of application;
- International travel beyond the island of Ireland;
- Merchandise or promotional materials not directly required for project delivery;
- Activity that does not have a clear cultural heritage and collections focus.

■ Child and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding

Where the project involves engagement with under-18s or vulnerable adults, applicants must confirm that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place.

Safeguarding requirements differ in the two jurisdictions; each partner organisation is responsible for compliance with the procedures applicable in its own jurisdiction.

Where relevant, applicants should briefly describe how safeguarding responsibilities will be managed between partners.

■ Inclusion and accessibility

Applicants should consider how the project will be accessible and inclusive for the communities, participants and audiences involved.

This may include consideration of physical access, language, transport, digital access, communication needs, cost barriers, community confidence, or other factors that may affect participation.

Inclusion and accessibility should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the project.

■ Public engagement requirement

Each project must include a public-facing output. The focus should be on testing innovative and participatory approaches that may be transferable to future institutional practice, rather than on the scale of public participation.

This may take the form of a public event, workshop, display, digital output, community sharing session, public testing activity, online resource or other appropriate form of public engagement. Outputs may also be considered for a GLAM Award.

Applicants should explain who the intended participants or audiences are, how they will be engaged, and what benefit the project is expected to have for communities on both sides of the border.

■ Timeline

Stage	Date
Application window	20 July – 3 September 2026
Notification of funding and funding agreements issued	18 September 2026
Applicants' acceptance	28 September 2026
Project start	October 2026
Interim report and initial drawdown of 50% funding	02 December 2026
Project completion, final report and drawdown	26 June 2027

■ How we will assess applications

Applications will be assessed against the criteria below. To be considered for funding, applications must meet all criteria. Criteria will be scored out of 5, with applicants required to achieve a minimum score of 2 in each criterion.

Criterion 1: Cultural Heritage rationale and project quality

Meets criteria: The project has a clear cultural heritage and collections focus, grounded in a specific place, landscape, community, collection, theme or shared history. Activities are well described, logically sequenced and aligned with the aims of the Shared Island GLAM Programme and the themes of Shared Home Place: Explore, Connect, Share.

Does not meet criteria: The heritage or collections focus is unclear or weakly defined. Activities are vague, poorly described or insufficiently connected to the aims and themes of the programme.

Criterion 2: Community benefit and public engagement

Meets criteria: The project demonstrates clear community engagement and benefit on both sides of the border. There is a credible public engagement plan, including a public-facing output, event, sharing session or activity. Inclusion and accessibility have been considered.

Does not meet criteria: Community engagement and benefit are weak, one-sided or unclear. Public engagement is vague, tokenistic or absent.

Criterion 3: Partnership and capacity to deliver

Meets criteria: Both organisations are actively involved in design and delivery. Roles, decision-making processes and meeting arrangements are clear. The timeline is realistic for the October 2026 to June 2027 delivery period. The project can demonstrate sufficient early progress to submit an interim update by 2 December 2026.

Does not meet criteria: The partnership is nominal or one partner appears to be carrying the project alone. Roles are unclear, the timeline is unrealistic, or capacity to deliver is not demonstrated.

Criterion 4: Budget and value for money

Meets criteria: Costs are reasonable, well-evidenced and directly linked to project activities. Quotes or clear estimates are provided for individual budget lines over €5,000. The budget is proportionate to the scale and ambition of the project.

Does not meet criteria: Costs are unclear, unsupported, excessive or include ineligible items.

■ Payment arrangements and reporting

The lead applicant organisation will be responsible for entering into the funding agreement with the Heritage Council and for submitting required reports and financial documentation.

The lead applicant organisation and its partner will both be required to formally accept the terms and conditions of the award when accepting the funding agreement.

An initial payment of 50% of the funding allocation may be drawn down by 2 December 2026, following submission of the signed funding agreement and any required setup documentation.

The remaining 50% will be paid at the end of the project, following submission and approval of the final report, invoices and proof of payment for eligible expenditure.

Successful applicants will be required to submit:

- Drawdown of 50% of the funding allocation and submission of a brief interim update by 2 December 2026, outlining project progress, partnership development, planned activities and any emerging issues;
- Drawdown of 50% of the funding allocation and submission of a final project report by 26 June 2027, following project completion;
- Evidence of public engagement or project delivery, such as photographs, attendance figures, participant feedback or a short description of activity;
- Evidence that Shared Island GLAM Programme funding was acknowledged on all relevant project materials;
- Invoices and proof of payment for all expenditure claimed.

The interim update will inform programme learning during the pilot phase. Final reports will inform the development of future Shared Island GLAM funding rounds.

■ Acknowledgement of funding

Successful applicants must acknowledge the IMA, the Heritage Council and the Shared Island GLAM Programme funding on all relevant project materials, using the wording:

“Funded by the Government of Ireland through the Shared Island GLAM Programme.”

IMA, Heritage Council and Shared Island logos and full acknowledgement requirements will be issued with the offer of funding.

■ Conditions of funding and reporting requirements

Successful applicants will need to provide the following with their final report:

- Evidence that the public-facing output, event, sharing session or engagement activity was delivered;
- Photographs, video, attendance figures, participant feedback or a short description of activity, where appropriate;
- Evidence that Shared Island GLAM Programme funding was acknowledged on all relevant project materials;
- A final project report using the supplied template, including feedback from both partner organisations;
- Invoices and proof of payment for all expenditure claimed.

■ How to apply

Full details of the application process and related Information Booklet are available via the Heritage Council's grant management system [HERE](#).

The deadline for applications is 17:00, 3 September 2026.

Queries can be directed to:

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

A series of Information Webinars will take place on the following dates during the application window:

Wednesday 22 July / Register [HERE](#)

Tuesday 11 August / Register [HERE](#)

Thursday 20 August / Register [HERE](#)



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