

South East Museum Development Programme: Business Innovation Fund 2016-18

The Business Innovation Fund encourages museums to experiment and take risks to create new business services and products. Seed funding, to test an idea or pilot a new scheme, can be difficult to find when you're having to cut costs and deliver ever-better services for less. But now is the time to innovate – to identify challenges and opportunities, generate ideas, test and refine (or reject) those ideas and develop them into the outcome of positive change.

The Business Innovation Fund is here to help. The Fund has been created as part of the ACE funded South East Museums Development Programme and is open to all museums in the South East area, regardless of size or governance structure.

- The maximum grant available for any single organisation will be £500 per annum
- Museums applying in partnership with others can apply for an amount equivalent to a maximum of £500 each.
- No partnership funding is required.
- All projects should be completed within 6 months of receiving the funds.
- 100% of the grant will be provided on initial approval.
- A condition of the grant is that a case study form must be completed at the end of the project

What we fund

Innovation starts with the generation of ideas in response to opportunities and challenges. These ideas then need to be developed and tested, before the case can be made for them to be adopted, delivered and implemented.

We will pay for your idea to be developed and tested.

We know that ideas don't always work out as intended, and we are not here to judge whether or not your idea is likely to deliver success. We also want our application process to be as simple as possible. Consequently, we will make our decisions based on your answers to the following questions:

- **What is the challenge or opportunity you are addressing?**
 - We want to see that your idea responds to a particular challenge or opportunity, or a number of them
 - It's helpful for us to understand how this fits with your mission

- **What is the outcome you think your idea could produce?**
 - You need to have thought about what the outcome of your idea could be. This might relate to generating (net) income, improving levels of service delivery, increasing visitors and/or other audiences, reducing costs or anything else that could be described as the business of your museum. In this context we would define 'business' as activities that enable the museum to operate successfully and increases its resilience for the future.
- **What is the idea you want to test and how will your proposed testing provide the information you need to refine or reject your idea?**
 - This is an opportunity for you to describe your idea and tell us how you want to test and/or develop it further. We'd like to know what you will do, the timetable, and how you will then decide whether or not to take the idea further.
- **Who has been involved in your idea to date, and how?**
 - Is this an idea you are pursuing on your own, or have others been involved? We'd like to know who else contributed to discussions about the challenges your museum faces and the opportunities available to it, and who has helped to plan the development/testing you want us to fund.

FAQs

Does a museum have to be accredited to apply for a grant?

No.

When should I apply?

This is a rolling programme and you can apply at any time. We expect to let you know the result of your application within 1 month.

Can a museum apply more than once?

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Each museum can only receive one grant. However, if an application is unsuccessful, a different application can be made at any time.

How will payment be made?

By BACS.

