

*Q: Please can you provide further detail on the available funding?*

A: AHRC will provide funding of up to £953,000 for the initial award, excluding indexation.

Indexation should not be requested; rather, it will be applied quarterly across the three-year duration which will bring the AHRC contribution up to £1 million.

It is important to note that the full economic cost of your project may exceed this as it does not include the 20% contribution required for all non-Exceptions costs.

*Q: To what extent should applicants balance HEI and cultural organisation involvement in their consortium?*

A: Applicants are advised to consider this as part of the project development in view of what will allow them to deliver the aims and objectives of the hub.

*Q: Can you clarify the distinction between partners, spokes, and projects? Are they essentially interchangeable, or does each term signify a specific role or function?*

A: The hub consortium should be led by an IRO or HEI and be inclusive of non-HEI partners and people across the third sector, community groups, and the public sector, to allow them to bring heritage research and skills together and build capacity in a strategic area.

The hub will oversee the spoke projects, which should be led by smaller regional GLAM/Heritage organisations and specific community and interest partners. These projects will aim to conduct collections and heritage research, as well as interpretation and engagement efforts.

*Q: Are spokes essentially projects, or do they represent a broader collaboration involving multiple partners?*

A: The hub will distribute funding to spoke partner organisations to complete smaller research projects as part of a broader collaboration effort.

*Q: Would you hope to see national coverage in the hub leadership team itself, as well as the spoke projects?*

A: Ideally, there should be as much coverage of the UK as possible, however we recognise this may be challenging within the funds available. It is therefore an ambition to strive for, not an essential requirement.

*Q: How many spoke projects is the hub expected to support? Is there a set target or expectation?*

A: That will be for the applicants to determine. We do not have a set number that will be required.

*Q: What is the expectation for spokes to be determined at the point of application or after funding?*

A: You can name spoke organisations at the application phase or recruit them once the award has begun. AHRC would like to see an indication of the themes you wish to explore within the application, but these can then be further refined once the spokes are in place.

*Q: Can the hub partners also provide or deliver spoke projects or do these need to be from separate organisations?*

A: The hub itself is not expected to deliver the projects; rather, its role is to provide support and structure to the spokes and work with the partners to develop a sustainable legacy and network for collections and heritage research.

*Q: If we have collaborators for the spoke projects at the point of application, would we explicitly cost this, or would this be expected to come from a central allocation for the spoke projects?*

A: This is up to the discretion of the applicant. AHRC expect around 40-60% of the funding to be allocated to the spoke projects and ask that you separate your budget for the 'hub funding strand' and the 'spoke projects (devolved) funding strand'. It is however, up to you how each of these budgets are structured.

*Q: Could you explain the relationship between the hub and spokes in the funding allocation process?*

A: This opportunity employs a devolved funding model; this means AHRC will fund the hub (via the applying organisation) who will then allocate a portion of the funding to identify, and award spoke projects.

*Q: Is it possible for applicants to include potential spoke organisations in bids i.e., where prospective hubs already have relationships with these partners?*

A: Yes, if you already have relationships in place, please include these in the proposal.

*Q: What financial validation will be required for spokes offered funding, and will these organisations need to be formally constituted with audited accounts?*

A: As the hub will operate on a devolved funding model, the applying organisation will assume responsibility for administering funds in accordance with institutional best practice.

*Q: Does the Jan 2025 start date refer to the Hub or the start dates for the spoke projects?*

A: The hub is expected to start Jan 2025 whereas the start dates for spoke projects will be up to the discretion of the hub. Applicants should determine a timeline for recruiting potential spoke projects, which could involve cohorts or a staggered recruitment process.

*Q: Is it likely the call will be repeated in future years?*

A: AHRC currently has no intentions to repeat this call or fund any additional hubs, so we would advise that you approach this as a stand-alone opportunity.

*Q: Is it possible to build upon existing projects or pilots for this funding opportunity?*

A: Yes, you can build upon existing initiatives, such as successful tests or pilots, where there is scope to significantly upscale.

*Q: Can you provide guidance on the breadth or specificity of the thematic focus? Is it acceptable to narrow the theme to a specific type of organisation, such as local archives?*

A: The scope and thematic focus of the hub has deliberately been left open, however it should be community-driven and developed within the sector. It is the responsibility of the applicant to define the needs of the community and outline why this will enable you to drive research capacity across the consortium.

*Q: Can you say more about the kinds of digital skills that AHRC wish to support?*

A: It has deliberately been left open; however, we advise that applicants consider the needs of their audience and how they can accommodate a greater level of inclusivity through digitisation. Additionally, applicants are encouraged to consider how free-to-access digital resources can be embedded within basic research activities.

*Q: How much of the emphasis is on collections and tangible cultural heritage? Can most of the projects involve intangible cultural heritage?*

A: AHRC takes a broad view of cultural heritage, incorporating tangible, intangible, digital heritage and practices (whilst recognising that there are important research and practice issues surrounding the conceptualisation and use of the term 'heritage'). It is up to you to decide on the focus of your proposal.

*Q: Will there be any networking activities to alert potential hubs to the interest from potential spoke projects?*

A: No, AHRC does not plan to organise networking activities for potential hubs and spokes. However, individuals interested in spokes can express their interest to AHRC and we will share their details with the hub award holder. It is advised that applicants focus on building connections with potential spoke organisations as part of their community engagement efforts.

*Q: If the project Lead is from an HEI, is it then required that the Co-lead is from an IRO, and vice versa?*

A: No, AHRC have not imposed any set requirements around the composition of the leadership team. AHRC does however, expect the team to be adequately structured to include the relevant expertise and coverage.

*Q: What are the requisites for the Hub Manager?*

A: There are no requisites, and this will be left up to the discretion of the applying institution. However, the manager could be a researcher, possibly an early career researcher, or someone with experience in community engagement projects, or from within the GLAM/Heritage sector.

*Q: Is there potential for a PDRA or academic colleague to hold a dual role as Hub Manager or Coordinator, splitting responsibilities between professional/administrative duties and hub research activities, considering varied career paths and skill transferability?*

A: It will ultimately sit with the applying organisation to determine the structure of the delivery team. Whilst we have stated that you must have a Hub Manager in place, AHRC are deliberately non-prescriptive as to how this can be represented in the application.

*Q: Are researchers who work as associate lecturers in higher education part-time eligible to apply as the project lead?*

A: Yes, as long as they meet standard UKRI individual and institutional eligibility requirements.

*Q: Can the hub/grant manager be named in the application?*

A: Yes, if you have already identified this individual at the point of submission.

*Q: Is a PDRA an eligible role for the hub, provided it fits within the funding?*

A: Yes, PDRA's can be included in the delivery team, however given this is not a research project, we advise that applicants consider the meaningful inclusion of these individuals and how they will be adequately supported.

*Q: How do you envision the role of the Project Lead since no traditional academic outputs required. How does the Project Lead role differ from that of Hub Manager?*

A: The distinction between the leadership and governance team lies in their respective roles and responsibilities. As a leader, you need to define the direction of the hub and lead activity on the ground. The leadership team should manage the governance team who are expected to translate the vision of the hub into actions.