

# **Skills for the Future: Review of likely capacity building, networking and evaluation outcomes**

## **Summary Report**

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R E S E A R C H

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## **1. Introduction**

Qa Research, a social research agency, was asked by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to make recommendations based on a review of a set of 54 Training Plans, produced by organisations in order to secure 'Skills for the Future' programme grant funding.

Skills for the Future (SftF) is a UK-wide programme which funds work-based training in a range of skills that are needed to look after buildings, landscapes, habitats, species, and museum and archive collections, as well as equipping people to deliver learning and outreach programmes, manage volunteers and use new technology in heritage settings.

The aims of SftF are to:

- fund high quality work based training opportunities to equip people with the skills to pursue a career in heritage;
- enhance the capacity of the heritage sector to deliver sustainable training and share good practice; and
- demonstrate the value of heritage skills to modern life.

To receive a grant, applicants had to deliver against all of the following four outcomes:

- increase the range and quality of work-based training to develop skills in the heritage sector;
- meet identified skills gaps or shortages in the heritage sector;
- increase the capacity of the sector to deliver training and share good practice; and
- increase the diversity of the heritage workforce.

SftF is a strategic programme and HLF Trustees have expressed a strong interest in its outcomes, both for individual trainees and the sector as a whole. All applicants were expected to include a budget for evaluating their projects.

## **2. Aims and objectives**

The research aim of Qa was to extract and analyse key information from the 54 Skills for the Future Training Plans in order to help HLF:

- shape its approach to the evaluation of the programme as a whole;
- establish what its role should be helping to bring grantees together;
- encourage a strategic approach to sharing the benefits and lessons of the projects across the UK, helping to encourage a deeper engagement in the heritage sector with vocational learning.

More specifically, the report sets out the range of activity to be undertaken by the grantees, highlighting best practice and also gaps where HLF can usefully provide further guidance.

### 3. Key findings

This section provides a detailed summary of the various methods grantees indicated they anticipated using to contribute to the, dissemination, capacity building and evaluation aspects of their projects. The report includes attributed quotes taken from the proposals where they provide an example of the methods being used.

Where these quotes have been shortened for improved clarity, the underlying meaning has not been changed in any way. Comments have been presented to be anonymous.

#### 3.1 Capacity building

Exploring the extent to which organisations are planning to utilise their SftF programmes to build capacity within their organisation, there were six main themes. These are displayed in the following table:

Capacity Building	Number of bids	Overall percentage
NET (if any)	46	85%
Increased Training Activities	25	46%
Development of New Training Materials	30	56%
New Equipment	4	7%
Ongoing Support to Trainees	23	43%
Increasing Partnership Working	20	37%
<b>Base: All Bids (54)</b>		

The following sub-sections provide a more detailed insight into each of these capacity building themes, and further breaks down the variety of capacity building activity it was anticipated would be undertaken.

##### 3.1.1 Increased training activities

Such is the nature of the SftF programme that all of the organisations involved will be increasing their training activities: all of the Plans set out details of how new trainees would be up-skilled. However, when exploring the potential impacts on the capacity of each organisation, it was important to explore how the SftF would affect each organisation's ability to provide training beyond that given solely to the trainees. This provides an indication of how well placed the organisations will be to provide increased training in the future, beyond the life of the SftF programme.

Within training activities, four main themes were identified, these are displayed in the following table:

Increased Training Activity	Number of bids	Overall percentage
Training of those not directly employed as a result of the programme - internal staff	26	48%
Utilising externally provided training	14	26%
Training staff to become assessors	6	11%
Training of those not directly benefiting from the programme, eg volunteers*	4	7%
<b>Base: All Bids (54)</b>		

[\*volunteers were not a focus of Skills for the Future, though HLF does fund training for volunteers through its mainstream grant funding.]

Primarily, increased training activities relate to organisations providing training to staff not employed specifically as a result of the programme, just under half (26) of submitted bids specifically mentioned plans to increase the skills of their staff.

In some cases this training was specifically related to enabling staff to be effective mentors and training deliverers for the trainees:

“Staff involved in the project will have access to the workforce development programme 'Achieve' delivered by the culture and adult education team at ['X'] C[ountry] C[ouncil].”

“Those staff involved with training and mentoring of trainees will be provided with suitable training.”

Other training involved opening up the training sessions being run primarily for trainees to other individuals within the organisation:

“Where possible, training sessions will be made available to all trainees, volunteers and Skills Bank members.”

Just over a quarter of bids (14) specifically mentioned the intention of utilising externally provided training for the training of staff, often this related to use of a 'Train the Trainer' programme:

“All staff required to deliver training will participate in either City & Guilds 7303 or 7300 "Train the Trainer" courses.”

“Will use the "Training the Trainer" course successfully delivered previously through HGBGS [an HLF-funded Training Bursaries project].”

Of particular significance in terms of capacity building was the number of bids that were looking to train staff to become accredited assessors. Only six bids explicitly mentioned this and hence have the ability to deliver accredited training themselves. For example:

“Over the medium term, staff will be supported in becoming assessors in conjunction with the training organisation and the potential licensing by the awarding body.”

“We plan to develop accredited assessors....”

Although only mentioned in a minority of bids and not a priority for the programme, some organisations mentioned how they intended to use the SftF funding to deliver training to volunteers within the organisation (4):

“[As part of the training project] we will recruit, train and co-ordinate volunteers to help carry out field work ....”

### 3.1.2 New Training programmes and frameworks

The development of new training materials is of particular importance to capacity building as they can provide a blueprint for organisations of how to provide training activities in the future, beyond the life of the SftF programme. The following table breaks down the differing types of training materials developed.

Developing New Training Materials	Number of bids	Overall percentage
NET (If Any)	30	56%
Accredited programmes	19	35%
New training guidelines/ frameworks/general training capacity	9	17%
<b>Base: All Bids (54)</b>		

Around a third of all bids (19) indicated an intention to develop a new accredited training programme. Some of these bids used very definitive language about the likelihood of developing a bespoke, accredited qualification:

“The... programme will be accredited by a new ['X'] Museum Curatorial Diploma, equivalent to NVQ 4 or QCF 6.”

“The programme will be used to tailor a post-graduate course that will subsequently be made available through the University of Worcestershire's course programme.”

Among other bids, although there was an anticipation of developing an accredited qualification, there was less certainty about this taking place:

“... seek to gain agreement in principle from a suitable Awarding Organisation by the end of January 2011 to develop bespoke accredited training.”

“... will explore the feasibility of working with ['X'] University to set up MA course as a result of the programme.”

These examples also highlight how there is a broad spread in the levels of qualifications being offered, from Level 2 qualifications to MA level.

Nine bids made specific mention of how they intend to use the SftF programme to develop new training guidelines, frameworks and understanding of training delivery. From a capacity perspective, this meant developing practices and processes that will help in the delivering of future training. Specific examples are highlighted below:

“[We will] modernise practices, our training resources and skills... Create grids and frameworks to enable people to manage and record learner experiences... [We will also] create a training toolkit for others to use.”

“The [‘X’] will ensure that the ... model has the opportunity to become embedded within the organisation’s training offer.”

“The programme will contribute to an improved understanding of National Occupational Standards within [‘X’], leading to an enhanced training capacity of the organisation in the future.”

Eight bids mentioned the development of non-accredited training programmes that can nevertheless be utilised in the future:

“There is no formal qualification so the accreditation will be in the form of a certificate and progress form.”

“[We will be] building conservation training into short and medium term work placements within new conservation projects as a result of Skills for the Future.”

### **3.1.3 New equipment**

A selection of bids indicated they would be using the SftF funds to make equipment purchases. In many instances these purchases were primarily for only the trainees themselves to use and benefit from (such as protective equipment), and therefore would not be contributing to the increased capacity of the organisation in any significant way. However four bids specifically mentioned how SftF funding would be used to purchase equipment which would enable an increase in the activities undertaken by the organisation after the project was complete. This included:

“Trainees will be provided with a tool set, which they will retain for the duration of the training programme, and will then hand on to new trainees when the programme has finished.”

“Computers, photographic equipment and geographical mapping systems will be purchased for the graduates to use.”

“[SftF funds will be used to purchase] digital cameras, storage equipment, conservation equipment.”

“[SftF funds will be used to purchase] a stone bench cutter and the blades...”

Although the application process for SftF funding did not seek to capture the inevitable heritage benefits (as opposed to training benefits) of the projects, in nine cases it was spelled out that the work would also have wider impacts on capacity in areas such as the environment and archives:

“Graduates will be involved in capturing ecological survey data, which will contribute to a wider knowledge base and inform future management strategies for the areas concerned... [Graduates will also be involved with] collection of visitor data and undertaking impact studies, again this will inform the management of the areas concerned after the programme has expired.”

“This work is a crucial part of particular conservation projects that deliver increased biodiversity ...”

“[The] outputs of the projects undertaken by trainees should contribute to the greater understanding of ... collections in the sector.”

“Trainees may be directly involved in improving the structure, appearance and integrity of listed and heritage buildings.”

Although not central to the programme, many bids mentioned how the programme would enable trainees to be involved directly in the activities of the organisation, leading to a direct increase in the work the organisation is able to undertake. In total 14 organisations specifically mentioned increased activities as a result of SftF, contributing to an increase in their capacity to deliver.

Thirteen of these organisations mentioned how the trainees would directly lead to an increase in the work the organisation ordinarily undertakes:

“Through the input of the trainees, it will be possible to extend the services offered by the Museum for a diverse audience. The Museum will have increased capacity to deliver learning and interpretation programmes including outreach.”

### 3.1.4 Ongoing support to trainees after their placement

Just under half of all the bids (24) provided specific information regarding the level of ongoing support they would provide to individuals after the formal training ends.

In terms of capacity this was perhaps important, as it gave an insight into the focus of organisations on moving individuals into further training or employment within the sector once their training programme is complete; these 24 organisations represent best practice.

Ongoing support also had implications in areas other than capacity building. It was anticipated among some bids that continuing contact with trainees would feed into a continued evaluation of the destinations of trainees once they had left the programme. Other bids mentioned how trainees would be encouraged to act as ambassadors of the training programme once their training was complete, with trainees involved in disseminating the lessons learned across the sector. The variety of the support provided varied, as the table below shows:

Ongoing Support to Trainees	Number of bids	Percentage
NET (If Any)	24	44%
Continued contact with trainees	21	39%
Commitment to provide further training/employment	8	15%
Formative effect on next cohorts	7	13%
Continued access to materials / support	5	9%
<b>Base: All Bids (54)</b>		

Twenty one bids described how they intended to maintain contact with trainees after the training period has ended. As discussed, this has the potential to lead to capacity building in the wider sector as trainees are provided with ongoing support to find work or further training opportunities:

“At the end of their placement individuals will be supported to find their next career or learning step through a well-developed network of support for ... heritage professionals.”

“The two further years of CPD are supported by a mentor from within the M[useum] A[ssociation] scheme; the mentor from this scheme will continue to be available to provide advice and assistance.”

A minority of bids mentioned the use of social media to facilitate this ongoing contact:

“Trainees will be encouraged to stay in touch with host partners and [X] through social networking sites, for example linked in and through [X's] e-newsletter.”

As mentioned, often this ongoing contact went beyond capacity building and formed part of the evaluation of the programmes and dissemination of best practice:

“Successful trainees will maintain contact with the programme as Heritage Skills Ambassadors... They will be encouraged to network with other organisations within the sector.”

“The project officer will make a point of contacting each trainee 6 months and 12 months after the project to see how they are progressing.”

“Individuals who excel throughout the project will be encouraged to act as industry champions and use them and case studies to maintain the impact of the project.”

“[Our ongoing contact] will be in the form of 6 monthly questionnaires from the project administration following completion of the trainee period, for the duration of the current scheme.”

On seven occasions this ongoing support was linked into enabling “graduating” trainees to have a formative effect on the next cohort of trainees.

“We believe that it is important that the trainee retains links with the project, and indeed with the... Museum. From Year 2, we would like to appoint the previous year's trainee as a trainer.”

“The National Communities Coordinator will set up opportunities for completed Trainees to attend showcase events, act as advisors, provide training and possibly, act as Placement Providers or Mentors.”

“Where possible [previous trainees] could also be invited to share their experiences with the current trainees by joining one of the open days or trainee meetings.”

Another seven bids mentioned the opportunity for successful trainees to be offered further employment/ training opportunities within the organisation. Encouragingly, one grantee goes further, although there was no requirement to create jobs as a part of the programme:

“There is a target to offer a permanent employment position to two of the candidates successfully completing the course... [There is also] a target of establishing a long term training placement programme a year beyond the end of the project.”

“[The] intention is that mentors will keep in touch with trainees on a quarterly basis after project ends. Where possible trainees will be offered the opportunity to take part in the apprenticeship and/ or internship programme.”

“[We] will guarantee a volunteering work placement for each bursary holder at the end of their year-long programme.”

Five bids mentioned how they would provide access to training materials and further support after the training programme has ended:

“[We provide] the Training Online Resource Centre, which provides information on academic, voluntary and professional training opportunities across the sector, linked to an on-line CPD system... This will be available to trainees throughout their training programme and after they have completed their course.”

“If more support is judged to be required, the project coordinator will implement a system of support e.g. organizing for the candidate to visit the centre and get more support with job search and applications.”

“The [‘X’] e-mail network will retain trainee details and keep them informed of job, training and educational opportunities.”

### 3.1.5 Partnership working

Just under four in ten bids (20) discussed how the work being undertaken as part of SftF would lead to an increase in partnership working between themselves and other organisations. In many cases bids themselves involved a partnership arrangement, in other cases organisations planned to develop relationships with other organisations as the programme developed. In terms of capacity building, only those areas of partnership working that are enhanced by the SftF programme are captured, where it is anticipated that partnership arrangements will lead to an increase in the organisations capabilities. Partnership working has been broken into three areas, shown in the table below:

Partnership Working	Number of bids	Percentage
NET (If Any)	20	37%
New partners	11	20%
Increased working with familiar partners	9	17%
Partnership between SftF orgs	3	6%
<b>Base: All Bids (54)</b>		

Around one in five (11) of organisations were developing new partnership arrangements as a result of the SftF bid:

“It is anticipated that the programme will enhanced partnership relationships with formal education institutions, specialist organisations working to support a more diverse workforce, and other heritage organisations.”

In some cases partnership arrangements were developed in order to access specialist skills:

“The ... Centre had already identified and contacted a group of highly skilled craftsmen and women currently working in the heritage building sector ..., many of whom are running small companies.”

In others it was anticipated that by developing links with other organisations, training and support might be delivered which could increase the capacity of the wider sector:

“This programme will enable a number of smaller organisations, who normally cannot afford the services... to access conservation support.”

However, often bids stated that partnership working would take place, but lacked any definitive indications as to how these partnerships would be sustained beyond the life of the programme:

“There are five organisations working in partnership for the same time... This should help develop links and access to resources that will continue after the project has ended.”

Nine organisations were planning to build on pre-existing links with organisations, but again the long term impacts of this were often not discussed, and grantees could be vague:

“Skills for the Future has helped strengthen the relationships between the partners involved in this project, e.g. [‘X’] and [‘Y’] Association. [We plan to] strengthen relationships between [‘X’] and [‘Z’] Wildlife Group and between [‘X’] and the [‘A’] Trust and the [‘B’] Trust.”

“Steering group involves individuals from [‘X’] and [‘Y’], will encourage the sharing of training resources between organisations. This to possibly continue after programme ends.”

“Effort will be made through this project to develop and improve upon existing partnership working between [‘X’] and the various members of the ... Building Skills Working Group.”

Interestingly, four bidders mentioned how they would be attempting to develop partnership relationships with other organisations with SftF bids. This was in addition to those who indicated a willingness to engage with celebratory events with other SftF grantees at the end of the programme(s). Again, organisations could be vague when detailing how these partnership arrangements could work:

“[We] will network with other Skills for the Future providers to explore opportunities for joint training, trainee-exchanges and shared learning.”

“This project aims to establish a self-managed support network for trainees in conjunction with other North West HLF Skills for the Future projects.”

“It will also be possible to generate networking opportunities with other Skills for the Future interns, in particular those working on projects with a cultural heritage slant, such as the National Trust, Tate and Maritime Museum projects.”

## 3.2 Dissemination and sharing of best practice

The majority of bids (51) made at least one reference to how they intended to disseminate learning from the SftF programme and share lessons learned internally and across the sector. Broadly dissemination fell into three main categories, as demonstrated in the table below. The table also highlights the number of bids proposing to use evaluation reports (18) or case studies (12) as part of their dissemination effort.

Broad Dissemination Methods	Number of bids	Percentage
NET (If Any)	51	94%
On-line dissemination	44	81%
Face-to-face dissemination	38	70%
Use of traditional media	30	56%
Dissemination of evaluation reports	18	33%
Dissemination of case studies	12	22%
<b>Base: All Bids (54)</b>		

### 3.2.1 Online dissemination

Perhaps unsurprisingly given its capacity for reaching wide audiences for relatively little resource, the use of online materials for the dissemination of information was popular among grantees. Over four fifths (43) of bids indicated their intention to use an online resource in some way. The following table breaks down the various forms of online dissemination that grantees indicated they would use:

On-line Dissemination	Number of bids	Percentage
NET (if any)	43	80%
Use of organisations' websites	38	70%
Use of websites for promotion / providing information/ updates etc (specifically mentioned)	24	44%
Blogs/ video logs	16	30%
Use of websites for sharing materials developed, inc evaluation outcomes (specifically mentioned)	11	20%
Social Media for networking	8	15%
Direct input to website from trainees	7	13%
Use of external websites	6	11%
Social Media for providing information	6	11%
Use of bespoke online communicative resources	6	11%
E-bulletins	5	9%
<b>Base: All Bids (54)</b>		

Just under three quarters (38) of bids indicated they would be using their website to share lessons learned with a wider audience. In addition, five bids indicated they would look to place information about the programme on the websites of external organisations. The use of external websites was often a form of promotion:

“We will ask the University press office to write a story for the front of the University website.”

“Web-sites, [both] locally and regionally of a Heritage and Cultural aspect will be informed of the training programme.”

Looking at website usage in more detail, it was apparent that many bids (24) intended to place information on their website primarily as a method of promoting the project, providing broad information about the project and updates on project progress, often this involved a commitment to have a dedicated section or page of the website devoted to the programme:

“We plan to have a ... website page especially devoted to the project, throughout its duration.”

“Case studies will be available on a separate page especially designed on the ... website.”

“Conservation Skills Programme project page will be established on [our] website.”

A smaller number of bids indicated the intention to create a new website as a result of the SftF project:

“[We are planning the] development of a [project] website - to disseminate the outcomes of the project.”

“[We plan to develop our] own website that will include features on intern projects.”

Around a fifth of organisations (11) are anticipating the websites will allow interested parties to access the materials and resources developed as a result of the project (as opposed to just providing information about what the project involves):

“[We intend to use the website for] publishing a toolkit for hosting internships to mainstream the learning.”

“[We will be] documenting and sharing materials through a dedicated area on [our] website.”

“A good practice guide will be made available on the ... website and promoted through land-based sector organisations.”

“Resources produced throughout the project, i.e. learning assessments, etc. will also be shared on the website.”

Seven bids indicated an intention to have trainees contribute directly to the website, however specific detail on what material the trainees would be providing was often lacking:

“Trainees will be actively encouraged to lodge updated information about their training on the ... website during and after their period on the scheme.”

“The trainees will be directly involved in updating this site themselves.”

Fifteen bids indicated their intention to use blogs or video logs to promote the programme, some indicated their intention that these would be undertaken by trainees and displayed on the organisations website:

“The interns are also expected to write a quarterly blog for the Museum’s website.”

“Trainees encouraged to input into a weekly blog.

Although in many cases specifics on where the blogs would be displayed was not provided:

“There is the potential for trainees to contribute to video logs and blogs as part of a wider publicity programme.

“The trainees and trainers will be asked to contribute to a blog.

“Blogs/website/Dippity/videos (all online material) created during the traineeships will continue to be accessible and interactive, providing a growing and ongoing resource.”

The use of Social Media was mentioned for both networking purposes (8) and also as a potential method for providing information to a wider audience and sharing best practice (6). In terms of networking, LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter were often mentioned:

“Potential for social media networking tools to be developed to maintain a long-term relationship with trainees on Facebook and Linked-In.

“All trainees will be invited to share on social networking sites on Facebook and Twitter, encouraged to leave comments and engage with industry specific updates.”

It was anticipated the sharing of resources and dissemination of information via social media will take place through a variety of sites. It was seen as particularly important for internal information dissemination:

“Facebook site to allow sharing of best practice between various project participants internal best-practice sharing.”

“Setting up a Facebook page and/or Twitter account providing links to other projects, best practice, articles of interest and other suitable information.

A minority of bids referred to the use and implementation of more bespoke online information sharing resources (6). For example:

“[We have] researched using the [‘X’] Network site as an exchange site for trainers and trainees.”

“Trainees will have access to an online forum created specifically, where they can stay in touch, share experiences and exchange ideas.”

A minority of bids also mentioned the intended use of e-Bulletins or e-Newsletters as a method of raising awareness of the programme and sharing best practice (5). In most cases this was through inclusion in a pre-existing publication:

“[We] produce an ezine every quarter - this may be used for dissemination purposes.”

“Project information will be displayed on the LANTRA eBulletins.”

“The Project will feature in [our] magazine and e-bulletins.”

### 3.2.2 Face-to-face dissemination

Face-to-face dissemination includes attending events, running workshops and training exercises and generally relying on personal contact to promote the project and its activities. Just under three quarters (38) of bids indicated a commitment to undertake some form of face-to-face contact with a specific aim of disseminating information about the project. A breakdown of the different activities mentioned is displayed in the table below:

Face-to-Face Dissemination	Number of bids	Percentage
NET (if any)	38	70%
Organise at least one Celebration event/ conference	22	41%
Attendance at sector conferences/ events	21	39%
Open training, workshops or seminars	9	17%
Outreach activities / open days	5	9%
<b>Base: All Bids (54)</b>		

Under half of all bids (22) specifically mentioned how they intended to organise at least one celebration event or conference specific to their project. Some of these events appeared to be primarily internal (albeit sometimes in large organisations), with a view to sharing best practice among those organisations directly involved in the project:

“The Project Manager will work with the project steering group to organise a celebration event at the end of each year.”

“During the training period and afterwards there will be opportunities to showcase trainee achievements. There will be dissemination events and a graduation ceremony.”

Positively, many of these events are aimed at a larger sector or public audience:

“A one-day workshop for all trainees to share experiences, give feedback and have presentations/training will take place. On completion of the whole project, a full presentation to national land based training providers and related industry sectors will take place to summarise the outcomes of the project, provide case studies from the traineeships and aim to be the pilot for similar schemes.”

“A celebration event will be undertaken at the end of the project. All placement providers will be invited to attend, also be opened up to the Heritage Education Forum in Scotland ....”

“The closing celebratory event is the final key milestone of the Interns Programme. It is scheduled to take place in October 2012, as soon as possible after the interns

have completed the programme. Its audience will be the wider ['X'] museums and galleries community.”

“[We] will each year organise a national event for all those involved in the project and will be around another sector/industry event, e.g. Skills London, Regional Heritage Skills Group annual conference, ['X'] wider membership meetings.”

A similar number of bids (21) mentioned how they intended to disseminate information about the projects through sector wide conferences and networking events (rather than organising something bespoke). Sometimes this involved speaking at events; other bids mentioned the potential for trainees to showcase their work:

“There will be opportunities for trainees to showcase their work in the public areas of the Heritage Skills Centre..., and at other relevant events in the county.”

“[We intend to] present sessions at conferences – these will give the CATPs an opportunity to not only present to peers, but also potential future employers.”

“Individuals would have an understanding of traditional building skills and attend selected promotional events as keynote speakers.”

Other bids were less specific about the form that dissemination would take at these events:

“We will use Consortium's E+E meetings & ['X's] annual Communicate conference to disseminate learning.”

“Graduates to attend relevant conferences and workshops. ['X'] Week, World ['Y'] Day and International [ 'Z'] Festival will also provide opportunities each year for dissemination.”

As well as potentially being able to build capacity within the sector, the use of open seminars and training programmes for the wider sector were also mentioned by a proportion of bids (9) as a method for disseminating learning. Some bids intended this to be delivered within conferences and wider events:

“Slots will be sought at relevant conferences and training days where video diaries will be displayed with Q & A sessions built in.”

While others intended stand alone delivery:

“Group sessions for either trainees or HP supervisors or both including biannual seminars will capture and document learning outcomes with a seminar in 2012 open to the sector as a whole.”

“Anticipated that the SHARE workforce development training programme will be used to enable seminars and case study based evidence to support wider engagement in the traditional skills market across the heritage sector....”

A small number of bids (5) indicated how Open days and Outreach programmes would be used to promote the project to the public at specific events. One grantee mentioned the use of a museum open day:

“Trainees will have the opportunity to showcase their skills at the Museum Open Day which they will both attend and organise.”

### 3.2.3 Use of traditional media in dissemination

Traditional media refers to promotion via the medium of print, radio and television. When categorising the various types of traditional media that bids were anticipating using, there was a clear distinction between promotion within sector specific publications and media and promotion via more broadly accessible media channels. This breakdown is displayed in the following table, together with the numbers of organisations indicating their anticipated usage of each media type:

Use of Traditional Media	Number of bids	Percentage
NET (if any)	29	54%
Use of general media	21	39%
Use of sector specific media	21	39%
Use of print media	24	44%
Use of radio	7	13%
Use of TV	4	7%
<b>Base: All Bids (54)</b>		

Twenty one bids indicated their intention of to promote their programme through the general media. Unsurprisingly promotion through TV (4) and radio (7) was exclusively associated with promotion through general media, due to the lack of sector specific TV and radio channels. More often the general media channels it was anticipated that programmes would use were locally focused:

“The key areas of promotion will be through local press (e.g. ‘X’ Evening Telegraph), radio (e.g. Radio ‘Y’) and events (e.g. ‘Z’ s Green Festival).”

“Both [‘X’] and [‘Y’] will build on existing print, TV and radio media contacts to engage effectively as a means of promoting the project to local communities.”

“The press team for [the local authority] will be made aware of the project and will issue a press release to all key local media outlets and to specialist publications.”

The twenty one bids which indicated the use of sector specific media were much more informative about the publications in which information would feature:

“Where possible information would be disseminated through [our] partner publications such as National Trust ‘Land Matters’ and RBST ‘The Ark’ and other external publications...”

“Details of the scheme will be included in various publications, including, [‘X’] News, [‘Y’] Coastal Views, [‘Z’] Pocket Guide, national publications.”

“Information about the project will be promoted through related trade publications. It is also anticipated that best practice lessons emanating from the project will be disseminated via articles in Museum’s Journal, AIM Bulletin.”

“Short reports on progress will be published through ARC magazine [‘X’] and [‘Y’] ...The completion of the project will be an opportunity to record formally the outcomes of the programme through ... article[s] in [sector journals].”

### 3.3 Evaluation

#### 3.3.1 Evaluation activities

In terms of the evaluation of the SftF programme, the quality and range of approaches varied. The vast majority of received bids indicated at least some form of activity has been planned to feed into an evaluation (52), but consistency across all bids was lacking. The following table displays a broad summary of the various activities organisations are intending to undertake to feed into the evaluation of their programmes. These broad responses are then explored in more detail throughout this section.

Evaluation	Number of bids	Percentage
NET - Any mention	52	96%
Scheduled Interviews/Meetings	29	54%
Data Collection	26	48%
Reporting	25	46%
Learner Plans/Diaries	20	37%
Forms & KPIs	16	30%
Internal/External Evaluation	17	31%
Best Practice Logging	13	24%
Surveys	11	20%
Framework	8	15%
Qualitative Analysis	5	9%
Public Input	1	2%
<b>Base: All Bids (54)</b>		

#### 3.3.2 Interviews

29 mentioned interviews with the trainees, ranging from regular interviews throughout the training to exit interviews:

“Detailed exit interview with each graduate to enable a qualitative assessment of the scheme and provide feedback to HLF.”

“The Director will meet with the trainee every six weeks for an internal verification meeting.”

“1-to-1 mentoring will be used to assess progress and feed into final evaluation.”

“Generic learning outcomes such as individual progress over the year of the project, changes in attitudes to the work programme, developments in self confidence and self esteem will all be evaluated through interviews with participants.”

“Telephone interviews with trainees.”

“Monthly supervision and support meetings with their line manager.”

7 mentioned interviews with trainers/others who have had contact with the trainees:

“Where the graduates work with people or organisations on a one-off basis this third party will be requested to give formal feedback.”

“Interviews with members of staff at intervals in order to assess the impact of the programme on workload, staff development, and organisational development.”

“Communication and consultation with all stakeholders.”

### **3.2.3 Data collection**

26 mentioned some form of data collection and many of these detailed the type of information that would be collected:

“Scheme evaluation report, which will include statistical analysis and follow up reports of the programme, and an identification of where graduates have found subsequent employment.”

“Number expressing an interest, applications received, suitable for interview, age, gender, ethnicity etc.”

“Collection of a variety of output data for both walling and conservation trainees (miles of wall completes, LANTRA standards met, qualifications gained, conservation projects involved with, etc).”

### **3.2.4 Reporting**

25 mentioned some form of reporting and 17 of these stipulated the frequency of the report:

“The Steering Group will receive quarterly updates as to trainee progress at their regular meetings.”

“Upon completion of the project, evaluation will take place ....”

“Regular project evaluation report.”

“Project Coordinator, who will be responsible for producing an annual report in year’s one and two and a final evaluation report at the end of the project.”

“Quarterly reports submitted to the project management group.”

### **3.2.5 Learner plans**

20 mentioned Learner Plans or Learner Diaries:

“Individual learning plans and contributions to the individual learner records will be used to inform an evaluation.”

“Each trainee will keep a learning diary to provide feedback on the programme.”

“Trainees will also be asked to produce a report on their experiences and the skills and knowledge they have gained throughout the placement.”

“Each trainee will build a works diary based on a variety of evidence including, Photographs, Press coverage, Individual learning diaries, Evidence from 1:1 discussions.”

### **3.2.6 Forms and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

16 mentioned specific Evaluation Forms or KPIs:

“Existing quarterly review form has been adapted for use.” [Grimshay Boatshed Trust]

“Written quantitative and qualitative evaluation form at the start, middle and end of the programme.”

“Use of an evaluation matrix after all training programmes.”

“Training feedback forms – filled in by trainees after each formal training session, to inform the programme team’s planning of future session.”

### **3.2.7 External evaluation**

12 mentioned using some form of external evaluation:

“Evaluation will be conducted by a specialist external party.”

“Budget specifically allocated for promotion and evaluation....”

“Freelance consultant was appointed to develop an evaluation plan.”

### **3.2.8 Best practice logging**

13 mentioned some form of logging experiences and best practice:

“Workshop involving as many as possible of those involved in the project will be organised to review the project.”

“A follow up workshop at the end of their placement will assess the progress of the trainees against their own identified measures of success.”

“Copies of the trainees log records and assessments will be used to create case studies on the effectiveness of the training provided and to evaluate the success of the Programme.”

### **3.2.9 Surveys**

11 mentioned some form of survey:

“Post-completion forms will be sent to Trainees 6 months after completing the training programme to assess their ongoing involvement in the sector.”

“Conducting a telephone monitoring report with trainees three months after they have completed the programme in order to determine their eventual occupation and whereabouts.”

“Short online survey sent to trainees six months and twelve months after completion of their placements.”

### **3.2.10 Frameworks**

8 mentioned a specific form of evaluation framework:

“Inspiring Learning for All (ILFA) framework.”

“Evaluate the scheme by using ‘The Access to Evaluation’ methodology developed by Icarus Collective Ltd and Natural England.”

“We’ll utilise the Developing Audiences Programme (DAP) – a monitoring and evaluation tool specifically designed for [our organisation].”

“Project will use the Pebblepad to apply SMART metrics to evaluate experiences of the programme.”

### **3.2.11 Qualitative analysis**

5 mentioned some form of qualitative analysis:

“Focus group will be organised to capture data to inform the final evaluation report with those individuals involved in the delivery of the project.”

“Volunteering Programme Manager will run quarterly focus groups with the trainees and line managers to evaluate the project.”

“Online network may provide an additional mechanism for captivating qualitative data.”

### **3.2.12 Public Input**

One mentioned collecting data from the public:

“Visitors to the museum will be provided with an opportunity to inform the evaluation via comment cards.”

### **3.2.13 Budgets**

Of the 54 bids, 12 (22%) had not allocated any budget to evaluation activity. However, lack of budget allocated to evaluation does not always correlate with the quality of plans for evaluation, since some organisations plan to use existing evaluation mechanisms at little or no additional cost. Only one of the 12 grantees did not mention evaluation at all;

the other 11 had all considered evaluation in their Training Plan. In the case of three similar organisations, their lack of budget allocation to evaluation may be due to their use of an established internal evaluation framework.

Based on the content of the Plans, the following checklist gives an indication of the basic key components of a SftF project evaluation:

### **Component 1**

Evaluation of learner achievements/benefits/outcomes

#### **Relevance**

Ideally an effective evaluation should address this objective

#### **Potential issues/questions for HLF to raise with grantees**

Where this is the only stated objective, data may be limited to learner assessment

### **Component 2**

Evaluation of wider impacts/ benefits (e.g. organisation)

#### **Relevance**

Ideally an effective evaluation should address this objective

### **Component 3**

Evaluation of project delivery/ processes (In some cases it is planned that data will inform current project delivery)

#### **Relevance**

Ideally an effective evaluation should address this objective

### **Component 4**

Feedback from partners/ staff/ customers

#### **Relevance**

This may provide data on wider impacts and contribute to an overall more rounded evaluation

### **Component 5**

Data collected through learner's plans/ records (completed by learner)

#### **Relevance**

Provides data on learner achievements/ benefits/outcomes

#### **Potential issues/questions for HLF to raise with grantees**

Data may be limited to learner assessment

### **Component 6**

Outputs – mention of evaluation reporting (Includes ongoing internal reporting as well as specific evaluation reports)

#### **Potential issues/questions for HLF to raise with grantees**

Grantees may not have considered how to analyse or present the data they plan to collect

### **Component 7**

Longitudinal aspect to evaluation

### **Component 8**

Use of an evaluation framework

### **Component 9**

Use of an external consultant

### **Potential issues/questions for HLF to raise with grantees**

Grantees may not have given consideration to collecting/ recording data throughout the project, thus affecting the quality of an external evaluation

## **4. Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **4.1 Capacity building**

Many of the projects are addressing a lack of practical skills among sector entrants (typically graduates), often in very niche areas.

As one would expect there is a variety of approaches to building capacity contained within the bids. What is lacking is the means to share best practice and good ideas among grantees and beyond.

Although a number of organisations will include a section on their own website about the programme, very few are doing anything with social media. (Two exceptions are ['X'] which will create a wiki on the programme and ['Y'] which will include a blog).

#### **Recommendation one**

**HLF might consider setting up a social media page – on Facebook or LinkedIn - where grantees can post their achievement for others to see or comment on those of other organisations. This virtual forum would also serve as a place for the 54 grantees to share concerns or queries. Regular physical meetings would likely prove problematic to organise and would naturally favour larger organisations at the expense of smaller grantees. Using LinkedIn would enable sub-groups to form organically around grantees in similar locations or areas.**

**A forum would require a moderator to periodically check comments for suitability and to pose questions. This forum could be extended to include a space for the trainees.**

Grantees are generally planning to build capacity in their organisations by developing their training capacity (by developing in-house assessors or writing new material), or through additional 'train the trainer' type activity around mentoring or diversity. To a lesser extent, grantees are opening up their training to other partners.

A few are ostensibly doing nothing beyond recruiting trainees, using their own staff to deliver training, then hoping to secure more funding at a later date. These are in the minority, but would still benefit by best practice examples from other grantees.

Learners' achievements are being recorded through conventional means, as required to achieve accreditation, although one organisation was developing 'a learner dashboard' which could be a visual component of future case studies.

## **4.2 Dissemination**

According to the bids, knowledge will be shared with the wider sector using traditional means – particularly conferences or events. There was reference to regional events that would be co-hosted by SftF grantee organisations. Although the sub-sector audiences may have different interests, there is a strong case for a programme wide conference where best practice could be showcased and key issues discussed and agreed. This would considerably reduce duplication of effort. One grantee is producing a toolkit on managing interns, and once again, to prevent wheels being re-invented, it would make sense for this organisation to collaborate with others attempting similar tasks.

### **Recommendation two**

**We recommend that HLF consider organising and hosting SftF conferences – organised along either sector or geographic lines, to remove the likely duplication of effort among grantees to organise smaller variants on the same theme.**

A large number will author articles – mainly for the sector press. Very few of these articles would appear to be written by the trainees themselves, and again there is an opportunity to promote this kind of activity if it is seen by HLF as beneficial to the programme.

### **Recommendation three**

**In order to produce stimulating case study material, we recommend that HLF produces guidelines and good practice guides for grantees. The better bids will be producing such material, which should be used to inspire the others.**

## **4.3 Evaluation**

A large number of grantees are planning to include interviews, to varying degrees – sometimes within appraisals, or as part of regular review meetings.

### **Recommendation four**

**As with the initial baseline survey, we would recommend that evaluation surveys are reviewed to ensure consistency.**

What is unclear from many of the bids is the extent to which evaluation will be an additional activity, or somehow subsumed within normal activity. In particular, learner assessment is frequently conflated with evaluation, or at best the lines between the two are blurred. This raises questions about what form the evaluation report(s) will take – or if indeed there will be any.

### **Recommendation five**

**We recommend that the timing and reporting format of evaluation is agreed with grantees in advance, taking into account the different project start times.**

The approach to evaluation can best be described as unimaginative, but competent. [X] is a good example of a thorough, well-rounded approach to data capture – with both quantitative and qualitative data captured by an external consultant.

HLF could help to standardise the evaluation outputs and increase quality across the programme with the request that a set of core questions is used.

Situating the evaluation within an existing evaluation framework, such as the MLA's Inspiring Learning For All or the DAP tool devised by Wildlife Trusts would mean results could be benchmarked. Such tools also capture softer, more qualitative outcomes or enable the wider impact of the programme to be captured.

Best practice can be found in those organisations that are including a longitudinal tracking element to their evaluations, such as [X] or [Y], and feedback from visitors – as exemplified by [Z], could also be taken up by other comparable organisations. Only one organisation overtly mentions using a social return on investment methodology.<sup>1</sup>

None of the grantees will train their recruits in evaluation techniques (in order to interview their peers). Very few will survey partner organisations or customers for feedback. This function could be fulfilled very cost effectively using online surveys – distributed by either grantees, HLF or an external evaluator.

#### **Recommendation six**

**We recommend that a set of core evaluation questions is produced – either directly from one of the existing frameworks or by combining the best elements from a selection.**

In this way, HLF can standardise the evaluation outputs and reduce the amount of budget spent in developing bespoke approaches.

With or without a set of core questions, there is a useful role in synthesising the evaluation data being generated to produce a summary report for the programme overall.

#### **Recommendation seven**

**We recommend that data being generated by the projects is independently reviewed and collated into a summary report.**

As mentioned above, a small proportion of organisations are capturing their activity in a format that would lend itself to engaging case study material. The main barrier is that few of the learners will actually be writing such submissions, so the immediacy of a firsthand account will be lost.

#### **Recommendation eight**

**We recommend that a best practice evaluation guide is produced, drawing on outputs from more innovative Skills for The Future grantees such as [X] or [Y] to include social media outputs. The guide could also set out the minimum requirements expected.**

**Ends**

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<sup>1</sup> [Wikipedia entry: social return on investment](#)