

How collaboration can help deliver better heritage projects

31/01/2023

Our guide will help you learn more about cohort working and when to use it as part of your delivery programme.

Attachment	Size
Cohort Working Best Practice Guide	1.32 MB

Cohort working is a technique that enables grantees to come together, develop a collaborative community and support each other through project delivery.

The funder provides the structure, resources and staff support, and through a range of channels – from apps to in-person events – participants are encouraged to share knowledge, ideas and experiences.

This best practice guide, produced by Miller Research, draws on the experiences of projects who have used cohort working approaches within our own funding programmes and/or programmes from similar funders. You can download the guide as a PDF from this page.

... grantees are increasingly seeking a different kind of relationship with us as a funder – one that feels closer and more collaborative. Cohort working is one avenue that we could explore further to achieve this.

Tom Walters, Head of Research, Data and Insight at the Heritage Fund

The benefits of cohort working

It can provide wider-ranging and more meaningful impact over traditional project management techniques, and benefits for both funders and grantees:

- **Funders benefits** – more effective delivery, stronger relationships and communications, and more efficient projects that have capacity to achieve more than they would do working independently.
- **Grantee benefits** – reliable and regular support and access to more resources, skills and knowledge development opportunities.
- **Mutual benefits** – growing a collective body of knowledge, developing more innovative ideas and approaches, a faster rate of progress, creating change within the cohort and collectively driving systems change across the wider sector.

Tom Walters, Head of Research, Data and Insight at the Heritage Fund said: “We have seen through our recent research that grantees are increasingly seeking a different kind of relationship

with us as a funder – one that feels closer and more collaborative. Cohort working is one avenue that we could explore further to achieve this.”

When it should be used

These benefits can only be achieved with appropriate investment and commitment to the approach. Cohort working can be resource-intensive at set up and requires careful planning and support.

The approach also might not be right for every project. Cohort working is especially effective if you are an organisation that is:

- building capacity and skills
- without your own network
- moving into new areas of work, seeking innovation and transformation

Our best practice guide provides recommendations for each stage of the cohort working process, examining the requirements for design, launch and delivery, as well as recommendations for cohort events.

Find out more

To read more, download our **Cohort Working Best Practice Guide** from this page.

Projects we've funded through our [Heritage Horizon Awards](#) and [Heritage Innovation Fund](#) are currently using cohort working as part of their project delivery.

We regularly conduct research to discover what is happening in the heritage sector, and we evaluate our work to better understand the change we are making. [Read more of our insight.](#)