



Pilot World Heritage Strategic Investment Fund

Circular Handbook

2025

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Abbreviations

APOD	Annual Programme of Outputs and Deliverables
BHIS	Built Heritage Investment Scheme
CMF	Community Monuments Fund
HSF	Historic Structures Fund
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
OG	Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Convention
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
POC	Point of Contact
TLS	Tentative List Site
WHP	World Heritage Property
WHSIF	World Heritage Strategic Investment Fund

Introduction to the Pilot World Heritage Strategic Investment Fund (WHSIF)

The pilot WHSIF has been established to provide capital investment in World Heritage Properties and sites in Ireland, an action identified in the forthcoming World Heritage Strategy for Ireland 2025-2035. Ireland ratified the UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage Convention in 1991 and Ireland's two World Heritage Properties were inscribed on to the World Heritage List in 1993 (Brú na Bóinne – Archaeological Ensemble of the Bend of the Boyne) and 1996 (Sceilg Mhichíl). The Convention identifies cultural World Heritage as falling into three broad groups – monuments, group of buildings and sites – which are the focus of this scheme. The Convention requires States Parties to engage in the management of cultural properties in two different and significant stages which form a continuum:

- A State Party must demonstrate, as part of the inscription process, how it will manage and protect the attributes which attest to the potential Outstanding Universal Value ("OUV") of a Tentative List Site (TLS);
- 2. Post inscription, a State Party must commit to safeguarding the OUV of the World Heritage Property (WHP) through effective long-term management. This includes maintaining both its authenticity and integrity, which are established during the inscription process.

The pilot WHSIF aims to establish the best means of helping Local Authorities, NGOs and private owners fulfil these obligations by providing funding to conserve and protect Ireland's WHPs and TLSs.

Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is defined as 'cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity'.

Core Aims

The core aims of the pilot WHSIF are to enhance, protect and conserve the OUV and the associated attributes and values of WHPs and TLSs. It will provide funding to:

- Improve interpretation and presentation of sites (including virtual and online interpretation and presentation);
- Improve accessibility to sites;
- Enable conservation works to sites in need of urgent support, including building resilience to withstand the effects of climate change; and,
- Enhance the protection of sites.

All projects must follow best practice in maintaining and strengthening the authenticity and integrity of the WHP or TLS. Priority should be given to conservation works identified in a WHP or TLS Management Plan, an impact assessment, climate risk or vulnerability assessment or as identified during the nomination process.

Note this scheme is limited to cultural heritage - monuments, group of buildings and sites. It does not include attributes of intangible heritage or natural sites (unless agreed with the National Monuments Service in advance).

1 Who Can Apply?

Funding may be provided for the following (hereinafter referred to as "sites"):

- Monuments: architectural or archaeological nature, which contribute to or are attributes of OUV from the point of view of history, art or science;
- Buildings: separate or connected buildings, which, because of their
 architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, contribute to or
 are attributes of OUV from the point of view of history, art or science;
- Sites: works of humankind or the combined works of nature and humankind, including archaeological sites/designed landscapes, which contribute to or are attributes of OUV from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.¹

Eligibility

Sites will have to meet one or other of the two following qualifying conditions:

- i. are included within the proposed boundaries of a site on the Irish Tentative
 List as attributes of OUV;
- ii. are included within the boundaries of an Irish World Heritage Property as attributes of OUV.

These may include sites in a proposed or actual Buffer Zone around a WHP or proposed WHP that are considered as protecting or contributing to the OUV.

References to "Attributes of OUV" for the purposes of the pilot WHSIF also includes "Potential Attributes of OUV" in a TLS.

Note this scheme excludes sites in the ownership/custodianship of the Minister or sites in the ownership/custodianship of the OPW.

¹ These definitions are adapted from the OGs. Some projects might satisfy more than one of these definitions (e.g. be both a monument and group of buildings).

Qualifying Conditions

In addition, sites will have to meet **one or more** of the following conditions:

- i. are included in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) under the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended); or
- ii. are identified in the Sites and Monuments Record; or
- iii. are included in the **Record of Protected Structures (RPS)** of each Local Authority; or
- iv. **are eligible for or proposed for inclusion in the RPS** but not yet formally approved for inclusion;² or,
- v. are within Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs).

Categories

Eligible sites may be drawn from the following two categories:

- **A.** Sites in **Local Authority ownership** located in a WHP or within the proposed boundaries of a TLS;
- **B.** Sites in **private ownership** located in a WHP or within the proposed boundaries of a TLS.

Note that all references to Local Authorities in this circular are deemed to be the Local Authority either leading a TLS nomination (solely or on behalf of other Local Authorities) or in whose jurisdiction a WHP is located.

The oversight of projects is the responsibility of the Local Authority and relevant staff as appropriate (Architectural Conservation Officer, Heritage Officer and County Archaeologist or professional staff competent to undertake this role).

² Such sites must meet the criteria for inclusion in the RPS by the Local Authority, i.e. must be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view.

2 Funding

Funding Streams

The WHSIF will provide funding under the following streams:

Stream A

Stream A will provide funding to improve access infrastructure, interpretation projects and the presentation of sites (including virtually and/or online).

Stream B

Stream B will provide funding for the **protection and conservation of sites** including essential repairs and works such as structural stability, weather tightness, resilience to climate change, protection against erosion or damage by livestock, young saplings or invasive problematic plants and other repairs. Funding for conservation advice or for the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan and detailed specifications of works or an Archaeological Impact Assessments are also eligible.³

Stream	What will be funded	Maximum Grant
Stream A	Improved access infrastructure, interpretation projects and presentation of sites (including virtual/online)	Up to a maximum grant of €25,000 and 100% of eligible costs
Stream B	Essential repairs and works to protect and conserve sites	Up to a maximum grant of €100,000 and 100% of eligible costs
	Preparation of Conservation Management Plans, specifications of works or Archaeological Impact Assessments.	Up to a maximum grant of €25,000 and 100% of eligible costs
	Conservation Advice	Up to a maximum grant of €5,000 and 100% of eligible costs

³ This excludes the more comprehensive overarching Conservation Management Plan required as part of a World Heritage nomination dossier.

Qualifying Works (non-exclusive)

- Works to improve general accessibility of a site;
- Works to improve the interpretation and presentation of a site;
- Works to ensure the structural stability (external/internal) and/or works to reduce the risk of collapse or partial collapse;
- Works to ensure the weather tightness;
- Works to repair internal structural elements or significant decorative features;
- Works to reduce potential risks (e.g. from fire, flooding, weather damage, vandalism, unauthorised access, etc.);
- Works to protect a site or reduce erosion or loss of archaeological fabric or architectural significance;
- Works in relation to climate change adaptation measures; and,
- Other works that are deemed to be of exceptional importance to protecting the attributes of OUV of a site.

Ineligible Projects

- Works that negatively impact the attributes of OUV;
- Works that negatively impact the attributes of authenticity;
- Works that negatively impact the integrity of a site;
- Works that have already commenced prior to grant award;
- New builds or extensions;
- Works not in accordance with sound archaeological and/or conservation methodology and practice;
- Reconstruction of a site:
- The purchase of sites;
- Feasibility, tourism and socio-economic studies; and
- Archaeological research excavations

Rules

The following rules apply to the operation of the WHSIF:

- Sites in the ownership of the Minister are not eligible for funding under the WHSIF. Only sites that are privately owned or in the ownership of the Local Authority are eligible.
- Only one grant can be availed of per site.
- In cases where an applicant has been awarded funding under the CMF, BHIS
 or HSF or other heritage grants, the applicant cannot also apply for funding
 under the WHSIF and vice versa.
- In respect of a TLS, any grant funding under the WHSIF is conditional on a MOU being in place between the National Monuments Service and the lead proponent in relation to the nomination of the TLS as a WHP.
- In respect of a TLS, where funding is approved, the proposed works must be included in the APOD put in place under the MOU for each year of the nomination process.
- Applicants shall confirm the source of any necessary additional project funding.
- Works must be completed and paid for before recoupment is sought from the Department.
- Projects shall be carried out in compliance with the Revenue Commissioners tax clearance requirements and relevant approval procedures under the National Monuments Acts.
- Projects shall be carried out in compliance with all statutory provisions (e.g. National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014, Planning and Development Acts and nature conservation legislation) and have the permission of the owner to carry out the works.
- Projects shall comply with best conservation methodology and practice.

3 Selection Criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed under the following criteria:

	ream A Criteria (improved accessibility, erpretation and presentation of site)	Weighting	Qualifying Threshold
1	Does the project contribute to broader accessibility, interpretation and presentation of the site?	40%	10%
2	Does the project enhance Attributes of OUV?	30%	10%
3	The quality of proposed Methodology .	30%	10%

Stream B Criteria (Protection and conservation of sites)		Weighting	Qualifying Threshold
1	Does the project contribute to the protection and conservation of Attributes of OUV ?	40%	10%
2	Does the project enhance Attributes of OUV?	30%	10%
3	The quality of proposed Methodology .	30%	10%

All projects should be able to illustrate tangible benefits to the promotion of World Heritage in Ireland, particularly among the local community and key stakeholders. This may include improved access, physical and virtual, or provision of information to the public in some form.

4 WHSIF Principles

World Heritage Principles

The conservation of cultural and natural heritage is at the core of the World Heritage Convention. Conservation includes effective and active measures that can be taken to ensure the identification, protection, preservation, presentation and transmission of this heritage. The protection and management of WHPs and TLSs should ensure that their attributes of OUV identified during the nomination process or at the time of inscription, are sustained or enhanced over time.

Attributes of OUV

Attributes convey the OUV of a WHP and enable an understanding of that value. These attributes are the focus of conservation, protection and management actions, and institutional arrangements, and their spatial distribution and respective protection requirements inform the boundary of the property. Attributes can be physical qualities or fabric, but can also include processes, associated with a property, that impact on physical qualities such as natural or agricultural processes, social arrangements or cultural practices that have shaped distinctive landscapes.

Identifying the values and attributes of OUV is central to understanding and communicating the authenticity and integrity of a site. The Burra Charter emphasises the need for a values-based approach to conservation and gives a good outline of the steps in planning for and managing a place of cultural significance.

Attributes of Authenticity

Notwithstanding the attributes of OUV outlined above, the OGs also use the term 'attribute' to define the qualities by which the authenticity of the property are evaluated. Authenticity applies only to cultural nominations and to the cultural aspects of 'mixed' nominations. These are displayed through a variety of attributes including: form and design; materials and substance; use and function; traditions, techniques and management systems; location and setting; language, and other forms of intangible heritage; spirit and feeling; and other internal and external factors.

This recognises that OUV can derive from many different factors and that the test of authenticity (the truthful and credible expression a property's cultural values) will depend very much on the character of the site. The OUV of an archaeological site will, for example, derive primarily from its materials and substance, while an architectural masterpiece may rely on its form and design as well as materials and craftsmanship. These attributes of authenticity are used more as a means of testing that the cultural values of the property are expressed truthfully and credibly, rather than for detailed descriptions of a property.

In relation to authenticity, the reconstruction or partial reconstruction of sites is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances and only on the basis of sufficient physical or documentary evidence and not on conjecture.

Conservation works carried out under the WHSIF should follow best practice and procedures as set out in international conservation charters (e.g. The Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites 1964 (ICOMOS); The Burra Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013 (ICOMOS)), the World Heritage Resource Manuals and other relevant guidelines issued by ICOMOS and ICCROM.

Integrity

The concept of Integrity is described in the OGs. Integrity applies to both natural and cultural properties, and is defined as a measure of the completeness or intactness of the attributes that convey OUV. According to the World Heritage Resource Manual 'Managing Cultural Heritage' (UNESCO 2013), the key words to understanding integrity are" 'wholeness', 'intactness' and 'absence of threats'. These can be understood as follows:

- Wholeness: all the necessary attributes are within the property;
- Intactness: all the necessary attributes are still present none are lost or have been significantly damaged or have decayed;
- Absence of threats: none of the attributes are threatened by development,
 deterioration or neglect." Any threats or risks (current and potential) to a WHP

or TLS must be considered through their impact on the values and attributes of the property.

Archaeological Principles

Projects should adhere to best practice in relation to the conservation, protection and preservation of archaeological heritage. Full account shall at all times be taken of the fact that:

- Archaeological heritage is a non-renewable resource;
- The first option in all circumstances shall be non-destructive investigation and study;
- There should always be a presumption in favour of avoiding developmental impacts on archaeological heritage;
- While attributes of OUV may be structural, potential impacts to subsurface stratigraphy should be considered.

An Archaeological Assessment is key to understanding the cultural significance⁴ of a sites and an Archaeological Impact Statement is essential in identifying potential impacts on that significance.

Works at, in relation to, or in proximity to, monuments and places protected under the terms of the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 shall have full regard to the general principles for the protection and management of archaeological heritage as set out in the **Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage** and to all relevant policy and guidelines publications by the National Monuments Service.

Architectural Conservation Principles

All works carried out shall be in accordance with the standards of best practice outlined in the **Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)** and relevant volumes of the Department's **Advice Series**

⁴ Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.

<u>https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/resources/</u> in particular 'Ruins – the conservation and repair of masonry ruins' and 'Guidance on Repointing Rubble Masonry in Historic Structures'.

Conservation works should follow best practice and procedures as set out in international conservation charters. The cultural significance (fabric, character and special interest) of a site should not be compromised and interventions should be minimised.

Conservation works should be based on a proper understanding of the site involving input from the outset of the project from an interdisciplinary project team with relevant expertise and experience in working with heritage structures and sites.

Works to the fabric of a site should, wherever possible, use traditional building materials, skills and techniques. Only skilled and competent building operatives with relevant experience in working with historic buildings, and under appropriate supervision, should be employed to carry out the works.

The contractor appointed should be required to demonstrate experience of working on historic structures of a similar scale and complexity to the project at hand.

All interventions should be recorded as the works progress. Drawings are an appropriate way to document these, along with annotated photographs and written descriptions. On completion of the works, a report should be compiled of the works which have taken place including the location and nature of interventions, specifications of any new materials used on the structure and any other relevant matters. Good conservation practice includes the development of a strategy for maintenance beyond the completion of the works.

Climate Action

The 2023 UNESCO Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage notes that climate change is one of the primary threats to heritage sites globally, including WHPs and TLSs. It emphasises the need for proactive responses and provides high-level guidance on enhancing the conservation of WHP and TLS OUV through climate adaptation and resilience building. The Policy Document encourage states to

consider climate risk in the application stage for TLS. The WHSIF will consider projects that:

- identify vulnerable attributes and threats to OUV arising from Climate Change;
- projects that raise awareness of climate change, highlighting the importance of WHP and TLS as exemplars and inspirers of best practice.

By acting as exemplars of climate action, World Heritage properties may serve as catalysts for change in the wider policy, economic, environment and social sectors for the benefit of present and future generations.

UNESCO Policy Document for Climate Action and World Heritage

5 How to Apply

Streams A and B

Local Authorities who are the owners or custodians of sites within a WHP or TLS should:

- Complete the WHSIF Application Form;
- Attach a comprehensive Method Statement and any other required documentation:
- Submit the WHSIF Application Form to the Department by 25 July 2025.

Private applicants and/or community groups who are the owners or custodians of sites within a WHP or TLS should:

- Complete the WHSIF Application Form;
- Attach a comprehensive Method Statement and any other required documentation;
- Submit the WHSIF Application Form to their respective Local Authority for appraisal;
- Local Authority to submit WHSIF Appraisal Form to the Department by 25
 July 2025.

Eligible Local Authorities may submit up to three applications for funding.

All projects should be submitted to the Department by the World Heritage Coordinator/POC in each respective local authority, in agreement with the Architectural Conservation Officer, Heritage officer, and/or the County Archaeologist or a designated member of the local authority professional staff.

6 Submitting Applications

Please check:

- The amount of funding requested is reasonable and proportionate;
- Details of other exchequer funding have been declared, if relevant;
- A separate email must be submitted in respect of each project. All relevant
 material for that application must be included in the email. The size of the
 email must not exceed 15MB. Fragments or partly completed applications, or
 multiple applications in the same email, will not be considered for funding.
- The email subject should be WHSIF 2025 and include the project name and the name of the WHP or TLS.
- Applications will be accepted by email only from Local Authorities to worldheritage@housing.gov.ie.
- Applications will be acknowledged by return email. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, please contact worldheritage@housing.gov.ie.

Application Checklist

Before submitting an application, please check the following:

- WHSIF Application Form is completed and signed by applicant;
- WHSIF Appraisal Form is completed and signed by Local Authority (if applicable)
- Site location map with location of works clearly marked in red is included;
- Written consent of owner (if applicant is not the owner) is included;
- Method Statement or other documentation is included;
- The Conflict of Interest Form is completed and signed;
- Details of other exchequer funding or Local Authority funding (if applicable)
 have been declared;
- Has the ownership been checked on Property Registration website?

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⁵ Confirmation of ownership should be checked on **Tailte Éireann**.

Project Checklist (for submission following WHSIF award)

- **1.** Section 12(3) Notification or Application for Section 14 Ministerial Consent as appropriate (see Letter of Award for requirements).
- 2. Application for an Archaeological Excavation Licence, if relevant (see Letter of Award for requirements). Applicants should be aware of the timescales required for the processing of archaeological licences and S14 Ministerial Consents and ensure applications are received by the Department in a timely manner.
- **3.** Archaeological Assessment including Archaeological Impact Statement (if not previously submitted as part of application);
- **4.** Submission of revised Method Statement or Archaeological Impact Statement if changes are required;
- 5. Specification of works/ tender document for the project;
- **6.** Name and contact details of Project Coordinator;
- 7. Name and contact details of Project Manager; and,
- **8.** Confirmation of compliance with award conditions and WHSIF Handbook. The conditions of the Letter of Award should be made available to the full project team.

7 Recoupment of Funding

Local Authority

Works must be completed and verified by the Local Authority before payment of grant funding can be sought from the Department. The Local Authority is responsible for payment of the grants to approved projects in advance of seeking recoupment from the Department.

It is a requirement for any conservation works that the building conservation professional shall sign off on completion that the works have been carried out in line with best conservation practice.

Where works are not carried out in accordance with the terms of the award, in particular where the scope of works changes without prior authorisation of the Department and the new works do not conform to the required standards of good archaeological and conservation practice, the Department is under no obligation to award the grant, as this is a material breach of the terms of the grant offer.

Once payment to an applicant has been made, the Local Authority must complete and return Recoupment Form by 14 November 2025 to recoup the grant from the Department. The Recoupment Form must be signed by a member of the local authority professional staff competent to undertake this function with oversight of the project. The officer shall certify that the works have been overseen and carried out in accordance with the terms of the grant award to appropriate standards in terms of conservation/heritage practice.

The Recoupment Form should be countersigned by the relevant Director of Services or Chief Executive.

 The Recoupment Form must be accompanied by proof of payment, e.g. printout showing applicant's name/name of payee, amount paid and date of payment, and WHSIF reference. Invoices or Purchase Orders alone are not acceptable proofs of payment. The Recoupment Form includes a 150-word project summary and visual aids such as photographs or video clips to allow the Department compare 'before' and 'after' images of the completed works (see Project Reporting).

Photographs must be of high quality and submitted in jpeg format, clearly identified with the name of the relevant project.

- All invoices submitted to the Local Authority must contain the unique WHSIF Project Reference Number as assigned to each project by the Department upon award.
- A separate email shall be submitted in respect of each recoupment claim, ensuring all relevant material is included in one email. The subject line should be Recoupment – WHSIF Ref No – Name of project. Zip files are not acceptable.
- Funding cannot be claimed after the deadline date.

8 Project Reporting

The works carried out shall be appropriately recorded during the course of the project and on completion.

Building Conservation Professional

A final report (including a full record of drawings, annotated photographs, specifications, as necessary) shall be submitted to the National Monuments Service by the Building Conservation Professional on behalf of the applicant clearly showing the nature and extent of the interventions. The report shall confirm that works were carried out in accordance with the approved Method Statement and include a detailed record of any part of the site that was newly revealed or removed in the course of any conservation works or other interventions.

Project Archaeologist

Where relevant, a final report on the recording, archaeological monitoring and/or excavation shall be submitted to the National Monuments Service by the Project Archaeologist on project completion in accordance with WHSIF conditions. Where the supervision will have been carried out having obtained an archaeological excavation licence, this can be a copy of the report which shall be submitted (in the formats required) to the Licensing and Planning Unit of the National Monuments Service, as required in the licensing or consent conditions. All archaeological excavation reports shall be in accordance with the Department's published Guidelines for Authors of Reports on Archaeological Excavations.

Other Specialist Reports

Any updates to or additional specialist reports to those within the Conservation Management Plan should be submitted in accordance with grant conditions.

Summary Report for Claim Recoupment

For claim recoupment purposes a summary of the project is also required to be included within Recoupment Form and should include:

WHSIF Ref, RMP Number (s), Site Type, Excavation Licence number (if applicable), two images to illustrate the site, and a description of 150 words.

9 Conservation Professionals in WHSIF Projects

The level of project management required should be proportionate to the scope and nature of the project. This includes the size of the project team and the methodology that is proposed. For instance, projects that contribute to interpretation and presentation of a site may not require the same detailed methodology required for protection or conservation works or improved accessibility to a site.

Protection/conservation works are interdisciplinary in nature and must be designed, specified and overseen on site by a team of appropriately qualified and experienced conservation professionals. This may include an archaeologist, an architect, building surveyor or structural engineer, a landscape architect, an ecologist and heritage building contractors/experts as appropriate. Each member of the project team should have accreditation and/or demonstrable competence in the relevant area of heritage conservation.

Project Manager

Conservation works must be designed, specified, monitored and overseen on site by appropriately qualified and experienced building conservation professional(s) - an architect, building surveyor or structural engineer - who will act as **Project Manager** and will be required to oversee and confirm on completion that protection/conservation works have been carried out in line with good conservation practice and to a satisfactory standard. The Project Manager should have conservation accreditation from a relevant professional body or a demonstrable competence in the relevant area of archaeology or conservation. The Project Manager will ensure that the interdisciplinary team members are co-ordinated in their respective roles. If a project involves masonry works, the project manager should be able to act as Project Supervisor Design Process and assigned certifier if necessary.

⁶ The three building professional institutes operate conservation accreditation schemes, which may assist applicants to find the right expertise, namely, the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland, www.riai.ie; Engineers Ireland, www.engineersireland.ie; and Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland, www.scsi.ie.

The choice of main and/or specialist contractor with craft and managerial skills is also critical to achieving a high quality project. Applicants may wish to consult the Register of Heritage Contractors in this regard or the Construction Industry Register Ireland, which contains a 'heritage works' subcategory.⁷

The project manager is required to produce a comprehensive Method Statement to accompany the application or the project will fail at assessment stage (see Guidance Note on Methodology).

9.1 Project Archaeologist

If the project relates to an archaeological monument or place, the engagement of a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist as Project Archaeologist **is** required as a condition of funding. A key role of the Project Archaeologist is to provide advice on compliance with the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014.

The Project Archaeologist should be appropriately qualified, experienced and competent to undertake the assessment and recording of archaeological monuments and should be included in all discussions from the very earliest stages with the other professionals involved in the projects as part of the interdisciplinary team. The Project Archaeologist may also fulfil the role of Project Manager in relation to an archaeological project.

The Role of the Project Archaeologist in Conservation-led Projects

The Project Archaeologist is required to carry out and submit a comprehensive Archaeological Assessment to include an Archaeological Impact Statement for agreement with the National Monuments Service before work commences. The latter must include details on the impacts of all proposed conservation works and impacts associated with site access, storage of materials and infrastructure (scaffolding, site huts etc.). The Project Archaeologist is also required to carry out archaeological supervision and recording of conservation work, provide input to site presentation and interpretation content (if such forms part of the project) and to submit an archaeological report on completion. The Project Archaeologist shall note the requirement for either an archaeological excavation licence or Ministerial Consent as

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⁷ www.heritageregistration.ie; www.ciri.ie.

set out in the Letter of Award for the project, and shall apply for these in a timely manner.

If archaeological excavations are necessary in advance of conservation works, adequate provision should be made by the Project Archaeologist for any potential costs that may arise including post-excavation reports. This requirement will inform the funding letter required as a condition of an archaeological excavation licence or Ministerial Consent.

(See Section – 'Guidance Note on Archaeological Assessment, etc.')

WHSIF Project Coordinator

The applicant is advised to appoint a member of the project team as Project Coordinator to coordinate and ensure compliance with grant conditions and statutory requirements including relevant aspects of the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 and the Planning and Development Acts.

The Project Coordinator will be responsible for coordinating all reporting requirements and ensuring required reports are submitted to the Department in a timely manner.

10 Guidance Note on Conservation Management Plans

What is a Conservation Management Plan?

A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) is a document that explains why a site is significant. It outlines how that significance will be maintained or enhanced when any change or work including repair and conservation is proposed. It begins with understanding the site, then assesses why it matters and its particular issues and vulnerabilities. It develops policy and actions aimed at retaining its significance and concludes with a plan for implementation and how the site will be managed in the future. It sets out a work programme with actions for conservation, maintenance, management, access, use or other issues particular to the site. The programme is usually five years in duration and not more than ten years.

Why have a Conservation Management Plan?

"Places of cultural significance enrich people's lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection to community and landscape, to the past and lived experiences" (Burra Charter 2013).

It is important that archaeological and built heritage is protected and conserved for present and future generations. Conservation Management Plans are an essential tool in the conservation process. Any conservation management plan carried out under the WHSIF should follow best practice and procedures as set out in international conservation charters. (e.g. The Australia ICOMOS Charter for places of Cultural Significance 2013 https://australia.icomos.org/publications/burra-charter-practice-notes/).

A CMP should encompass a long-term vision where a site can be interpreted based on all available evidence, where there is a clear vision for what is intended in the future and where works can be programmed and costed to achieve that vision in a structured way.

Who to include in the interdisciplinary team?

The CMP process should aim to provide a holistic view of heritage that is interdisciplinary in nature. All persons with an interest in or associations with the site have a role to play.

Project team members in a WHSIF project shall include as appropriate (but not be limited to): an archaeologist, an architect, a building conservation professional, an ecologist and heritage building contractors. It is important that the team interact to inform the process and share their knowledge of the project as it progresses. This interaction should ensure that each aspect of heritage is considered by a suitably qualified and experienced professional. If a site includes is a historic structure, the project manager should ideally be a registered building professional such as an architect, structural engineer or building surveyor with conservation accreditation from the relevant professional body or a demonstrable competence in the relevant area of building conservation.

All project team members should be competent, trained and experienced as appropriate to their role in the proposed project.

What to include in a CMP?

The Conservation Management Plan should include all relevant outputs from the interdisciplinary project team integrated into a **single document with a clear set of recommendations for the site.**

The CMP shall include the following information:

- The names and details of the project team and project lead
- Ownership of the site: For the purposes of the WHSIF, the site may be in local authority or private ownership. Ownership informs the types of permissions that may be required for the future conservation works (see below)
- Statutory protection of a site. These may include:

A monument and place protected under the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014;

A protected structure, or proposed protected structure, within the meaning of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended;

A protected nature conservation site;

A protected species of flora and fauna and their key habitats;

- A consideration of other designations. The site may also lie within:
 An architectural conservation area within the meaning of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended
- The methodology used in the compilation of the CMP
- A description of the site and its setting
- Potential or Actual Statement of OUV
- Identification of attributes of OUV
- Statement of Authenticity
- Statement of Integrity
- A description of associated heritage assets, such as geology, ecology and wildlife
- A synopsis of the history and archaeology of the site
- A written description of the surviving remains
- Maps, annotated photographs and scaled drawings
- An assessment and statement of significance (Why is the site important?)
 using established heritage value criteria: architectural, historical,
 archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, technical and social
- List of current management issues
- List of future management policies
- List of actions (action plan) in the conservation of the site over the life of the CMP

11 Guidance Note on Method Statements

Method Statements shall be submitted for all projects, across both streams. Method Statements where relevant may draw on information gathered in Conservation Management Plans.

Where the project involves conservation works or other physical interventions (e.g. access infrastructure, interpretation signage) a Method Statement shall be submitted with the application.

The Method Statement should describe the condition of the site and give details of the proposed works/project and how it will be carried out. This document does not need to be unduly long but it should be appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposed works/project.

The Method Statement should include:

a) A Concise Description of the Site

This section should describe the site as it currently exists, noting all its salient features and historical evolution, its appearance, setting, form, present function (if any) and the materials of which it is composed. It is also to include a brief architectural/archaeological history, prepared by the project manager, and a statement of potential or actual OUV.

b) Photographs

Relevant annotated photographs of the site are to be provided.

c) A Description of the Proposed Works/Project

This section is to include a description of the works proposed, with their sequence set out. It should describe how each intervention is intended to be carried out and include relevant scaled plans, drawings and supporting visual media such as video clips, annotated photographs or other illustrations.

The following issues are to be addressed:

i. The nature and extent of the works that are required at the site. This may be divided into phases and should include the methodology for the treatment and clearance of vegetation, if required.

- ii. The purpose of these works.
- iii. Whether the works are temporary or permanent, all permitted works should be designed to cause minimal interference to the retained historic structures and/or fabric.
- iv. What replacement materials (if any) will be incorporated and justification for the replacement or the introduction of new materials? Full details of any proposed new element, such as tying-in and repair work that shall be required should be included, with supporting plans and drawings.
- v. A Method Statement for the raking out and re-pointing of the extant stonework and associated repair details shall be provided. Details of the historic stone coursing, sizes of stone as well as mortar colour shall be provided.
- vi. Details of on-site management, and monitoring.
- vii. Estimated project cost(s) broken down into phases to reflect the proposed works/project deliverables (as per WHSIF Application Form;
- viii. List of Project team with qualifications and role detailed (as per WHSIF Application Form);

d) Other mitigation measures

Other mitigation measures may include design, timing and methodology (e.g. repairs timed to avoid interfering with bat colonies or rendering works timed to allow lime mortar to set), reversibility, choice of materials, etc.

e) Supplementary Material

Any material that has a direct bearing on an application (e.g. archaeological and architectural reports, technical research, analytical and three-dimensional drawings, detailed historical research, etc.) should be included.

While the submission of existing Conservation Management Plans as supplementary material is welcomed, these should not be submitted in place of a project specific Method Statement.

f) Changes to the submitted Method Statement

Any changes to the nature and scope of the project as outlined in the Method Statement shall be submitted to worldheritage@housing.gov.ie for approval. Particular attention should be paid to necessary changes following Archaeological Assessment and recording as work progresses.

12 Guidance Note on Archaeological Assessment

Archaeological Assessment

The Archaeological Assessment is generally carried out as part of (or draws from) the Conservation Management Plan with the archaeologist working as part of the interdisciplinary team.

The Archaeological Assessment shall comprise a comprehensive historical and architectural analysis and an analytical record of the archaeological and related structures that includes the following:

- A desk-study that draws on primary and secondary historical, cartographic and photographic sources to describe the site and its historic setting and context.
- b. Archaeological recording (annotated plans, elevations, sections, details of features and interpretative drawings derived from measured surveys, photographic surveys, digital (laser) surveys and opening-up works) that secures an understanding of its development, its phasing (including supporting scientific dating of appropriate samples where relevant), the identification of architectural features (e.g. put-log holes, crenellations, building joints, niches, arrow/gun loops, buttresses, historic repairs, historic plaster etc.), and its condition and vulnerabilities. The recording should be a multi-disciplinary activity and the archaeologist is required to work closely with the building conservation professional in the preparation of this part of the report as they are likely to have additional reports and insights. This recording will require site inspection(s) and interdisciplinary site inspections are advisable.
- c. A written account of its overall form (structure, materials, layout) and of its successive phases of development, together with the evidence supporting this analysis.
- d. An Archaeological Impact Statement which sets out recommendations and mitigation measures to record and protect archaeological remains (buried and above ground) prior to and during the project. This may include further recording or supervision required (in particular for vegetation removal,

rebuilding or following raking out of masonry), details of proposals for the reuse of stonework (including any architectural fragments), treatment of architectural features, preservation in situ of fabric/features and an outline of proposed conservation works (prepared in liaison with the building conservation professional). Impacts such as storage of materials, access, scaffold and any associated infrastructure (site huts, temporary fencing etc.) shall be considered. While minimal impact is the preferred option, in some cases investigation of overburden, collapse or wall footings may be required to inform the project and the archaeologist will set out appropriate archaeological mitigation measures such as archaeological test excavation or monitoring. An archaeological excavation licence or Ministerial Consent will be required for such mitigation.

The outcome of the Archaeological Assessment shall inform the preparation of any scheme of stabilisation, conservation and repair that ensures that significant features are highlighted and not damaged, concealed or lost. The input of the archaeologist will also be required in identifying vulnerable areas of the site and/or buffer zones, which shall then be shared with the project team, including the building contractor and all sub- contractors in a **toolbox talk** (a presentation regarding issues to remember on site & ensure best practice).

Where vegetation removal is proposed the project archaeologist, along with the project manager, should agree access routes and produce an access map for all contractors in advance of undertaking such work. Full consideration is to be given to the protection of all archaeological features, both above and below ground, during the proposed works.

The Archaeological Assessment including an Archaeological Impact Statement shall be forwarded to the National Monuments Service for agreement prior to work commencing.

Archaeological Supervision and Recording of Works

The supervision of works and the recording of newly exposed features following vegetation removal and during conservation is a critical part of the archaeological process for conservation of sites funded under the WHSIF. Many of these sites have

not previously been recorded or revealed in modern times and it is essential that this new information be added to the archaeological archive. It can also lead to a deeper understanding of significance of the site.

The archaeologist shall carry out a visual assessment of the area under conservation, aided by photogrammetry survey or laser scans, where they exist. The results of this survey and a narrative interpretation shall be included in the archaeological report, augmenting and updating the archaeological recording undertaken for the pre- conservation Archaeological Assessment report.

As with the Archaeological Assessment phase, the identification of newly revealed architectural features (e.g. put-log holes, crenellations, building joints, niches, arrow/gun loops, buttresses, cut stone, springing points, belfries, historic repairs, historic plaster, historic graffiti etc.), and their condition and vulnerabilities should be recorded (to include photographs and annotated sketches with measurements as appropriate). Stone by stone recording should take place as appropriate together with recording and cataloguing of any loose ex situ architectural fragments and their location. All proposals for storage or re-use of ex situ architectural fragments shall be discussed in advance with the National Monuments Service and the National Museum of Ireland as appropriate.

It is therefore essential that the Project Archaeologist be facilitated on an ongoing basis to record and investigate fabric that has been raked out and/or otherwise exposed because of opening-up works, removal of renders or vegetation. No removal or taking down of fabric or groundworks are to take place in the absence of the Project Archaeologist. Collapsed masonry should not be moved without prior consultation with the Project Archaeologist. It is essential that any new features identified or new information on the site be communicated to the Building Conservation Professional as changes to the specifications of work may be required. Should previously unknown archaeological material be found during the course of the conservation work the Project Archaeologist shall be prepared to be advised by the National Monuments Service with regard to any necessary mitigating action e.g. redesign to allow for preservation in situ, and/or archaeological investigations.

Where there is potential for the discovery of archaeological objects or features during the conservation process an archaeologist must be engaged to supervise the works and the archaeologist must apply for and obtain an archaeological excavation licence. Adequate time should be given by the project archaeologist to allow for the processing of archaeological licences by the Department.

Archaeological input to site presentation and interpretation content

The Project Archaeologist plays a valuable role in the decisions to be taken regarding site presentation and in the preparation of content for interpretation. The Project Archaeologist shall ensure that any proposals for interpretation shall be authentic, up- to-date and accurate and be in accordance with guidelines of the 2008 ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites. In addition, they shall advise on locations of interpretation which avoid physical and visual impact on the site.

Archaeological Report

A final report on the recording, archaeological monitoring and/or excavation shall be submitted to the National Monuments Service by the Project Archaeologist on project completion in accordance with WHSIF conditions. Where the supervision will have been carried out having obtained an archaeological excavation licence, this can be a copy of the report which shall be submitted (in the formats required) to the Licensing and Planning Unit, as required in the licensing or consent conditions. All archaeological excavation reports shall be in accordance with the Department's published <u>Guidelines for Authors of Reports on Archaeological Excavations</u>.

13 Guidance Note on Conservation Advice

Funding for expert Conservation Advice is available under this scheme up to a maximum grant of €5,000. This will include engaging a conservation expert with proven and appropriate expertise to:

- visit a vacant or derelict site within a WHP or TLS;
- conduct a survey; and,
- compile tailored conservation advice for the property owner.

This expert advice will include a report that outlines the condition of the site and identifies conservation improvements, which would protect and enhance attributes of OUV, restore site to use while enhancing its character, energy efficiency, integrity, and amenity. It is open to owners of Protected Structures and/or an historic structure within an Architectural Conservation Area.

A specific report template for conservation advice is available that will be issued on request to **worldheritage@housing.gov.ie**.

14 Terms and Conditions

All projects shall be carried out in accordance with the WHSIF Handbook 2025 and with any conditions attached to grant award. In addition, the following terms and conditions will apply to all projects.

Statutory Requirements

Grant-approved works shall meet all relevant statutory requirements, including planning permission. Where works are proposed to archaeological sites/monuments protected under the **National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014**, all provisions of the Acts shall be complied with including the statutory requirements for notification or for Ministerial Consent. Where archaeological investigation or mitigation is required, relevant licences or consents shall be in place.

The onus is on the applicant to comply with all other relevant statutory requirements, such as the Wildlife Acts, foreshore licenses (if applicable), Safety, Health and Welfare legislation, and environmental and employment legislation.

The attention of the Local Authority is drawn to: (European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (S.I. No. 293 of 2021) and specifically Regulations 42; (DAHRRGA 2012) Strict Protection of Animal Species: Guidance for local authorities on the application of Articles 12 and 16 of the EU Habitats Directive to development/works by or on behalf of a Local Authority.. The publication Bat Mitigation Guidelines for Ireland (2006) is available online.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material with the application form should be submitted **only** if it has a direct bearing on an application (i.e. dendrochronology reports, archaeological reports, technical research, joinery and material analysis, analytical and three-dimensional drawings, detailed historical research, etc.).

Additional Funding

Applicants shall confirm the source of any necessary additional project funding.

Site Inspection by Local Authorities

Detailed inspections of sites shall be carried out, prior to commencement and following completion of the works by the Architectural Conservation Officer (ACO), Heritage Officer or County Archaeologist and the World Heritage Coordinator (where appropriate). Where an ACO, HO or County Archaeologist is not employed, a member of the LA's professional staff competent to undertake this function or by a specialist appointed by the Local Authority should undertake this role. Applicants/owners and their agents will be required to make any arrangements that may be necessary to provide access to sites.

Project Progress Reports

The National Monuments Service shall be kept up to date at all times of any change in project constraints such as time, scope, and budget, and will periodically throughout the WHSIF project lifecycle, seek project progress reports from the Local Authority.

Site Inspection by the National Monuments Service

As part of the controls that the Department undertakes in relation to the monitoring of expenditure and procedures under this Fund, the National Monuments Service may carry out site inspections on a number of funded projects, including inspections concerning compliance with approved Method Statements. The National Monuments Service will inform the Local Authority of intended visits so as to coordinate efficient and safe access. Applicants/owners and their agents must allow access to the site in such circumstances.

Findings of Site Inspections

In the event that a site inspection uncovers any instance of irregularity or fraud or non-compliance with approved Method Statements and/or Statutory Requirements, steps to be taken may include:

- Irregularity Withdrawal of the wrongly obtained advantage by obligation to pay or repay the amounts due or wrongly received.
- Fraud Referral to appropriate authority.

- Non-compliance with approved Method Statements to be advised by the National Monuments Service.
- Non-compliance with Statutory Requirements will be reported to the relevant authority.

Drawdown of grant

Projects (Streams A and B) must be completed and funds drawn down on or before **14 November 2025**. Grants will only be paid on the basis of vouched expenditure. Grantees are required to certify that:

- i. The invoices used to support their claims relate exclusively to activities and services associated with the grant approved work or project;
- ii. The amounts invoiced have been paid in full; and
- iii. The invoices or related payments have not and will not be used in support of another claim for reimbursement from any other funder(s) (except as provided for in agreed joint- funding arrangements.

Eligible Expenditure

Value Added Tax (VAT) is allowable under the WHSIF only for works being funded where such VAT is not recoverable by any other means.

Reallocation of funding

In cases where a project that has received funding can no longer go ahead, the Department reserves the right to withdraw funding or reallocate that project's funding to other WHSIF project.

Tax Requirements

The applicant and any contractors must be tax compliant. Relevant tax clearance procedures in respect of public sector grant payments as set down by the Revenue Commissioners must be adhered to. Please refer to www.revenue.ie for further details. In line with Section 4(1) of Department of Finance Circular 44/2006: Tax Clearance Procedures: Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments, it will be a matter for each LA to ensure that the proper tax clearance procedures are being

adhered to by applicants, contractors and subcontractors, and in line with LA's own financial control procedures.

Owners who have received a determination under Section 482 of the Taxes

Consolidation Act 1997 (as amended) (formerly Section 19 of the Finance Act 1982)

and/or where the owner/occupier has received tax relief under the Home

Improvement Scheme or the Living City Initiative, should inform the Revenue

Commissioners of any funding received through the WHSIF.

Procurement

Projects in receipt of grant assistance must comply with Public Procurement Guidelines. https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/office-of-government-procurement/

DPER Circular 13/2014

Grantees are reminded of their responsibilities under the Public Spending Code which can be found at https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/public-spending-code/ and will be required to comply with Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 13/2014 - Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds https://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/per/2014/13.pdf.

Inspection of records

All grantees are informed that they have an obligation to make books and accounts available to the Comptroller and Auditor General where 50 per cent or more of their total income is sourced from Exchequer Funds, and the Department and Local Authorities have a right to inspect the grantee's records.

Endangerment Notices

Where the site is in the ownership of a Local Authority, or where a Local Authority is providing financial assistance for works to an endangered structure under Sections 59, 69 and/or 70 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the application may be made by a designated officer of that Local Authority.

Advertising of the WHSIF

Local Authorities should advertise the WHSIF to relevant stakeholders in a WHP or TLS as soon as possible after notification of the WHSIF by the Department.

Indemnity

The Department accepts no liability arising out of any works consented to or approved under the WHSIF and shall be indemnified as a condition of approval.

Transfer of Ownership

If the grant-aided site is sold, or the ownership transferred within a period of 5 years from date of payment of the grant, some or all of the funding awarded may be subject to claw-back. In the event of transfer of ownership prior to grant payment, the Local Authority may make arrangements to transfer the grant to the new owner of the property subject to his/her compliance with all conditions attached to the grant.

World Heritage Agreement

TLS applicants awarded grant funding may be required to agree with the Local Authority or Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, that their site will be included in the nomination dossier that will be submitted to UNESCO for inscription as part of a World Heritage Property. A legal agreement to this effect may be prepared.

Ownership Confirmation

For applications from private landowners or community groups, the Local Authority shall carry out a validation check via the Property Registration Authority, (PRAI). The obligation is on the Local Authority (or State-funded organisation) to verify details. Where there is any doubt over ownership this must be highlighted in the application.

Other Exchequer Funding

Projects may be eligible to receive funding from more than one publicly-funded scheme. Information provided by the applicant in Section 4 of the application form should be crosschecked in respect of possible other grants from exchequer funds.

Where the site in question is being used for economic activity, funding under the WHSIF may be considered to be de minimis funding for State Aid purposes.

World Heritage Reporting

Successful projects in a TLS will form part of the documentation included in the nomination dossier that will be submitted to UNESCO or if in a WHP will be included in annual reports to UNESCO. Local Authorities are encouraged to use social media to highlight the project, acknowledging the support of the Fund. Further information will be issued to successful project applicants on award.

Photography

Good quality digital photographs of the project before works commence shall be included in the Report upon completion of the works, as well as post-works completion photographs. These may be used later for a 'before and after' comparison for reporting purposes. Please note that the Department reserves the right to use any or all images supplied by either the applicant or the Local Authority to advertise or publicise the Fund. Applicants and local authorities are advised to obtain all necessary permission to use images before they submit them to the Department and shall state who owns the copyright of the photos.

Annual Report and Publicity

Each Local Authority should include information on its operation of the fund in its Annual Report. The contribution of the Department should be publicly acknowledged in all advertisements and publicity in relation to the WHSIF and the appropriate logos/devices used in any print material

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of Interest Form supplied shall be submitted by each Local Authority making an application or applications for each project submitted to the Department

Department's decision

In deciding the allocations of funding, the Department may take account of a number of factors including urgency of project and the desirability to fund a variety of World Heritage related projects. The Department will retain the right to reassign the funds

offered to another approved project if the terms of the original approval are not met within a defined period.

GDPR / Privacy Statement

The Department is committed to protecting and respecting privacy and employs appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect your information from unauthorised access. The Department will not process your personal data for any purpose other than that for which they were collected. Personal data may be exchanged with other Government Departments, local authorities, agencies under the aegis of the Department, or other public bodies, in certain circumstances where this is provided for by law.

The Department will only retain your personal data for as long as it is necessary for the purposes for which they were collected and subsequently processed. When the business need to retain this information has expired, it will be examined with a view to destroying the personal data as soon as possible, and in line with Department policy. Further information on Data Protection can be found on our **website**.

Freedom of Information Acts

Applications for funding under the WHSIF may be subject to the Freedom of Information Acts.

Drone Operators

Drone operators must be registered in accordance with the policy of the Irish Aviation Authority. Where drone photography is proposed at sites managed by the Office of Public Works (OPW) then permission from the OPW is required in advance.

Contact Details

For further information regarding this scheme, please email worldheritage@housing.gov.ie.

Appendices

- A. **Application Form WHSIF/A** to be completed by the Applicant [Including Checklist and Summary to be completed by Local Authority
- B. **Appraisal Form WHSIF/B** to be completed by Local Authority when the site/monument is not in Local Authority ownership.
- C. Recoupment Claim Form WHSIF/C to be completed by Local Authority
- D. Conflict of Interest Form D to be completed by Local Authority