



Northern Ireland Museums Council

Business Plan

2015 – 16

Foreword – Carál Ní Chuilín, Minister of Culture, Arts & Leisure



DCAL is committed to harnessing culture, arts and leisure to promote equality and tackle poverty and social exclusion. Over the course of the last year DCAL and its arm's length bodies have made good progress transforming delivery so that as much public resource as possible is invested in these key priority areas in a way which will bring about lasting and meaningful change to as many people as possible, but in particular to those who are most disadvantaged.

All DCAL business areas and arm's length bodies have been busy delivering an exciting range of culture, arts and leisure projects and programmes which have benefitted all sections of society and have had considerable impact in promoting equality and tackling poverty and social exclusion, as well as contributing to the economy. Over the coming year, DCAL will be looking for further opportunities to collaborate with others in providing imaginative culture, arts and leisure interventions as an integral part of wider Executive initiatives.

We are having to contend with a difficult budget as a result of the cuts imposed by the British Government. I am not at all comfortable with this budget. All service areas across DCAL and its arm's length bodies have been affected by budget reductions as a direct result of the year on year erosion of the Block grant by a Tory led British Government.

Across the DCAL Family we have had to manage a budget reduction of £10 million or 10% on the opening allocation for 2014-15. This budget does not allow me to deliver the level of services and resources that I want, but despite these financial constraints I will continue work to the best of my ability to protect frontline services and target resources to those most in need.

I was able to reduce the proposed cut in allocations from 10% to 8.0% to help meet additional financial pressures, and I will continue to argue for additional resources. But I simply do not have the resources to do all that I would want to do. Some people view culture, arts and leisure as a luxury; however I see these as a basic right for all.

I am confident each of the organisations funded by the Department is doing all it can to minimise the impact of any budget reductions on jobs and frontline services.

In the year ahead, all of the DCAL Family will continue to offer their excellent services to their many thousands of users in addition to running a varied range of programmes. In all of our activities, promoting equality, and tackling poverty and social exclusion will remain our central objective.

Since taking office, I have worked tirelessly to ensure that culture, arts and Leisure is used to promote equality, tackle poverty and enhance social inclusion. Despite the pressures, I will continue to do so.

Carál Ní Chuilín,
Minister of Culture, Arts & Leisure

Réamhrá



Tá RCEF tiomanta do leas a bhaint as cultúr, na healaíona agus an fhóillíocht leis an chomhionannas a chur chun cinn agus dul i ngleic le bochtaineacht agus an eisiámh sóisialta. I gcaitheamh na bliana seo caite, rinne RCEF agus a cuid foras neamhthuileamaíoch dul chun cinn maith ó thaobh seirbhísí a sholáthar sa dóigh is go n-infheistear a oiread acmhainní poiblí agus is féidir sna croí-réimsí seo le hathrú marthanach fóinteach a chur i gcrích a rachaidh chun sochair d'oiread daoine agus is féidir, go háirithe iad siúd is mó atá faoi mhíbhuntáiste.

Bhí gach brainse gnó de chuid an RCEF, agus a cuid foras neamhthuileamaíoch uilig, gnóthach agus iad ag soláthar raon spreagúil tionscadal agus clár i réimsí an chultúir, na n-ealaíon agus na fóillíochta, obair a raibh tionchar nár bheag aici ar iarrachtaí leis an chomhionannas a chur chun cinn agus dul i ngleic leis an bhochtaineacht agus leis an eisiámh sóisialta, gan trácht ar a leas geilleagrach. I gcaitheamh na bliana seo chugainn beidh an RCEF ag lorg tuilleadh deiseanna le bheith ag obair i bpáirt le dreamanna eile le tabhairt faoi bhearta cruthaitheacha i réimsí an chultúir, na n-ealaíon agus na fóillíochta mar dhlúthchuid de thionscnaimh an Fheidhmeannais.

Tá againn le déileáil le buiséad deacair i mbliana, mar gheall ar na ciorruithe atá á gcur i bhfeidhm ag Rialtas na Breataine. Is cúis imní domsa an buiséad a bheith mar atá. Tá gach réimse seirbhíse de chuid RCEF agus a cuid foras neamhthuileamaíoch thíos le ciorruithe buiséid a tháinig de thoradh díreach ar chreimeadh an Bhlocdheontais ag Rialtas na Breataine, rialtas a bhfuil na Tóraithe i gceannas air.

Bhí ar RCEF ciorrú buiséid de luach £10 milliún a bhainistiú, suim arb ionann agus 10% den leithdháileadh tosaigh don bhliain 2014-15. Coisceann an buiséad sin orm an leibhéal seirbhíse agus na hacmhainní is mian liom a sholáthar ach, in ainneoin na srianta airgeadais seo, leanfaidh mé orm ag obair ar feadh mo chumais, féachaint le seirbhísí líne tosaigh a chosaint agus acmhainní a chur i dtreo na ndaoine is mó a bhfuil siad de dhíth orthu.

D'éirigh liom an ciorrú 10% a bhí beartaithe ar leithdháiltí a laghdú go 8.0% le maolú ar an bhrú airgeadais, agus leanfaidh mé orm ag argóint ar son tuilleadh acmhainní. Ach is é fírinne an scéil nach bhfuil mo sháith hacmhainní agam leis an méid is mian liom a dhéanamh. Dar le daoine áirithe gur pléisiúr neamhriachtanach atá i gcultúr, sna healaíona agus san fhóillíocht; dar liomsa go bhfuil buncheart ag gach uile dhuine orthu.

Tá mé sásta go bhfuil gach ceann de na heagraíochtaí atá á maoiniú ag Roinn ag déanamh a ndíchill le tionchar na gcorruithe buiséid ar phoist agus ar sheirbhísí líne tosaigh a mhaolú.

Sa bhliain amach romhainn, leanfaidh gach dream i Meitheal an RCEF de bheith ag tairiscint seirbhísí den scoth do na mílte úsáideoir agus cláir ilchineálacha a reáchtáil. Beidh chur chun cinn an chomhionannais, agus dul i ngleic leis an bhochtaineacht agus leis an eisiámh sóisialta, ina gcróichuspóirí againn inár gcuid gníomhaíochtaí uilig.

Ó ceapadh i m'Aire mé, shaothraigh mé gan staonadh lena chinntiú go mbainfear leas as cultúr, na healaíona agus cúrsaí fóillíochta leis an chomhionannas a chur chun cinn, le dul i ngleic leis an

bhoctaineacht agus leis an chuimsiú shóisialta a chothú. Leanfaidh mé orm ar an dóigh sin, in ainneoin gach brú.

Carál Ní Chuilín
An tAire Cultúir, Ealaíon & Fóillíochta

1. Introduction

This document sets out what the Northern Ireland Museums Council will do during the 2015 - 16, in support of its remit as agreed by Government, in pursuit of the Statutory and Public Policy Obligations and Departmental Priorities, and in the context of the Northern Ireland Museums Policy.

2. NIMC Remit

In April 1993 the Minister of Education accepted the recommendation of the Northern Ireland Museums Advisory Committee and established an Area Museums Council for Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Museums Council (NIMC) was subsequently established as a non-departmental public body in receipt of grant aid from the Department of Education. With the establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) became the sponsoring department. The Council does not carry out its functions on behalf of the Crown.

The Council was established under the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, is registered as a company limited by guarantee, and operates in compliance with the Companies Act 2006. It is a registered charity. The constitution of the Council is set out in the Articles of Association, which establish that the main functions of the Council are **to promote and advance education by supporting and assisting museums and galleries and to encourage the use and enjoyment by the public of museums and galleries in Northern Ireland.**

The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum established with the Department states that the Council's main aim is **to support local museums (ie non-National museums) in Northern Ireland in maintaining and improving their standards of collections care and service to the public and to promote a coherent framework of museum provision.**

In pursuit of these aims the Council's main objectives are:

- To assist museums in Northern Ireland to improve standards of collections care;
- To assist museums in Northern Ireland to improve the range and quality of services to the public;
- To improve the status and standing of museums;
- To promote a coherent framework of museum provision in Northern Ireland; and
- To operate the Council efficiently, effectively and economically.

And the Council's functions will include the following:

- The development and maintenance of links with interested bodies and agencies;
- The provision of information, advice and training to museums across a range of activities such as curatorial practice, collections management, conservation services, marketing and income-generation etc.;
- Assistance with feasibility studies and carrying out developmental research;
- The disbursement of grants to local museums towards approved projects and specimen purchase;
- The promotion of Museum Accreditation for local museums.

With this remit, and through these aims, NIMC plays a unique and fundamental role in the delivery of the Northern Ireland Museums Policy and the Programme for Government Priorities, including those concerned with Promoting Equality, Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion.

3. Public Policy context of NIMC's work

3.1 Programme for Government

In the absence of a formal Programme for Government (PfG) that would cover the 2015-16 financial year the Executive has agreed that the draft Budget would be predicated on a carry forward of the five key PfG priorities. The priorities are as follows:

1. Growing a Sustainable Economy and Investing in the Future
2. Creating Opportunities, Tackling Disadvantage and Improving Health and Well-being
3. Protecting our People, the Environment and Creating Safer Communities
4. Building a Strong and Shared Community
5. Delivering High Quality and Efficient Public Services

For NIMC, undertaking its work against this background, Priority 4 is the most relevant, including as it does the objectives of:

- Better relations between communities
- Promoting volunteering
- Improving community and personal wellbeing
- Unlocking the potential of the culture, arts and leisure sectors
- Increasing participation in sport and physical recreation
- Collaborative working

Each Priority has a series of 'Building Blocks' through which the objectives are advanced. The Northern Ireland Museums Policy, launched in March 2011, is one of the building blocks of Priority 4.

3.2 Departmental Priorities

The priorities of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure for 2015-16 are:

- Promoting equality and tackling poverty and social exclusion;
- Contributing to the growth of the economy and building a united community.

Important aspects of these objectives are maintaining frontline delivery and contributing to wider Executive priorities.

NIMC's activity in the coming year has been designed to contribute to these priorities.

3.3 Northern Ireland Museums Policy

The vision of the policy is for a co-ordinated and sustainable museum sector that develops, preserves and interprets collections to the highest possible standards; delivers quality services that inspire, educate and engage local, national and international visitors and users; harnesses its strengths and diversity to support economic, social and cultural development in Northern Ireland and a shared and better future.

The policy states that "fulfilling this vision will require a concerted effort, not just by museums, their staff and governing bodies, but also by central and local government", with the associated work set out as a series of goals corralled under four strategic priorities,

- Developing Audiences
- Education and Learning
- Collections Development, Care, Management and Use
- Infrastructure, Investment and Resources.

NIMC works closely with colleagues in National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI) in pursuit of policy vision.

3.4 Local Government Reorganisation

In April 2015 the new local government structure came into force, with 11 Councils operating across Northern Ireland. Their work will be informed by the Community Planning framework within which Councils, Departments, statutory bodies and other relevant agencies and sectors will work together to develop and implement a shared vision for promoting the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area based on effective engagement with the community.

Nine of the new Councils operate a museum service, and NIMC will continue to provide guidance, advice and leadership to assist them to address the challenges and opportunities as they contribute to the cultural, social and economic development across their areas. NIMC will undertake a significant piece of intelligence gathering and research in the coming year to assist with this development.

3.5 Statutory Obligations

In undertaking the actions described below during 2015-16, NIMC will be mindful of its statutory duties in relation to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, together with the legislation concerning Freedom of Information, Data Management and Public Sector Audit.

4. NIMC's Priorities

This section sets out Northern Ireland Museums Council's six priorities for 2015-16 by way of advancing the public policy ambitions.

4.1 Maintaining and developing standards

"Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens which they hold in trust for society."

The agreed definition sets out the 'contract' between people and museums. Museums can only contribute to wider policies and priorities if they are supported in their societal responsibility of caring for and managing their collections, and making them accessible to as many people as possible. Equally, museums have come to recognise the unique and vital contribution they make to our economic, social and cultural well-being, and how they can use their collections to tackle social exclusion and poverty.

The Museum Accreditation Scheme is the internationally recognised sector standard, covering organisational health, collections and the experience of museum visitors and users. NIMC will continue to administer the standard for local museums. In addition the Council will provide advice and guidance on the various other standards connected with the operation of museums.

4.2 Targeting resources to encourage wider participation

The available evidence suggests that local museums could further enhance participation by targeting their services to particular communities as defined by experience and geography. The former includes those defined by age (particularly children and 65 and over) and by disability, and the latter could focus on areas of high deprivation, as revealed by the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures. The outcome of the 2014-15 pilot Museum Engagement Programme (partnership between NIMC and three local museums) programme showed the gains made by focusing resources on education and learning provision in areas of high deprivation. NIMC will consolidate these advances through continuing the Museum Engagement Programme in 2015-16.

4.3 Promoting the activities and events at local museums

The desire for enhanced information on museum activities is a constant across the respondents to recent studies, particularly the Continuous Household Surveys of the last three years. Considerable strides have been taken within the local museum sector of late to improve the availability of timely and detailed material about museums and their programmes. Of late NIMC has enhanced the manner in which it disseminates information for and about museums, and has significantly increased the distribution and take-up of its web site and newsletters. During 2015-16 it will expand its promotional activity.

4.4 Protecting our cultural assets

To enable collections to be used for social and economic advancement, they need to be in a fit state to be made accessible. Through its grant programmes NIMC has provided project assistance towards the care and conservation of artefacts, towards a wide range of programmes at local museums (including exhibitions, outreach and education initiatives), and in support of technical aspects of collections management. The Accredited Museum Grant Programme will continue to provide such assistance to local museums. These museums too will be eligible for assistance in the development of their collections through the NIMC Acquisition Fund.

4.5 Enhancing the capacity of those working in the sector

Experience suggests that capacity within local museums is best developed through strengthening policies and resources, presenting imaginative programmes informed by 'best practice' models and guidance, and by having appropriately trained staff and volunteers. In the coming year NIMC will continue to deliver its training programme, informed by sector requirements and the broader policy agenda; publish more 'case studies' and guidance; complete the training of ten individuals participating in the Community Engagement Initiative, (delivered in partnership with National Museums Northern Ireland, with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund); and, deliver a sector wide research project that will identify various trends which will have a bearing on policy development.

4.6 Running the Council effectively and efficiently

To enable it to fulfil its remit, NIMC works collaboratively with local and national museums, together with a range of other bodies in Northern Ireland and further afield. In the coming year NIMC will maintain and develop these partnerships to ensure that it retains up-to-date information on museum practice, has an awareness of museum needs and aspirations, and continues to serve the NIMC membership.

With reduced funding from government in 2015-16, NIMC will protect its front-line service to local museums by cutting its overhead and administrative costs through relocating its headquarters offices. Additionally, the Council will seek to maximise its income from other sources.

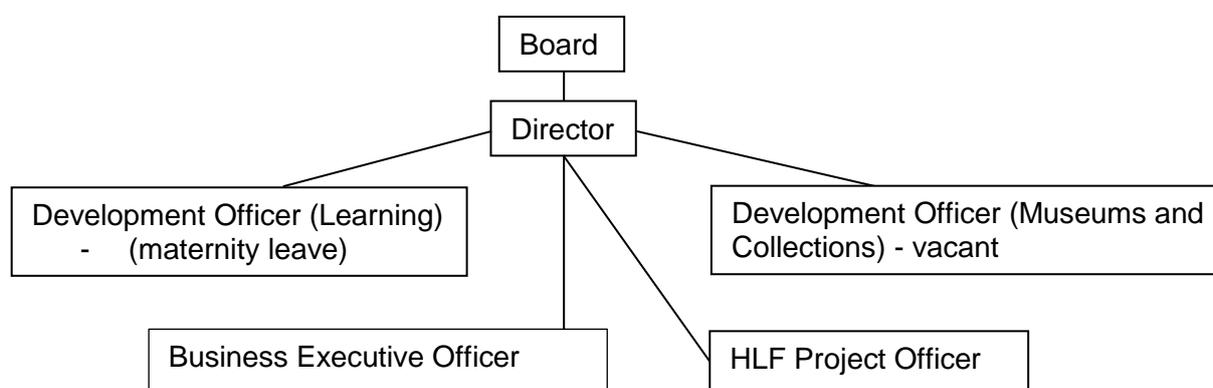
5. Resources

The Department has indicated that the proposed budget for NIMC during 2015-16 will be £236,208. This represents an 11.2% reduction on the funding received in 2014-15.

In light of this cut the NIMC Board has agreed that its services to local museums and the public should be protected as far as possible and that it will seek to further reduce its operating costs before diminishing its spend on programmes or staffing. To this end NIMC will likely relocate its offices during 2015-16, thus reducing rental costs as far as possible.

The Council has a successful track record of fundraising and securing membership income. In 2015-16 NIMC will continue to deliver the Community Engagement Initiative, a two-year programme delivered in partnership with National Museums Northern Ireland, and funded to the tune of £354,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Council anticipates income of £16,000 through membership and training fees. NIMC will seek to maximise its income from sources other than Government.

NIMC's principal resource for fulfilling its remit is its staff. In 2015-16 NIMC's organisational chart at the beginning of 2015-16 is as follows:



The Council anticipates that the Development Officer (Learning) will return after maternity leave and that it will move to recruit a Development Officer (Museums and Collections) early in 2015-16.

6. Budget:

In 2015-16 the operating budget is anticipated at:

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Resource)	£236,208
Heritage Lottery Fund	£175,500
Training Fees	£4,000
Membership	£12,000
Total	£427,708

In 2015-16 it is anticipated that expenditure will comprise:

Business Area	Programme Resource	Administration and office costs	Total
Developing Audiences	£56,000	£11,800	£67,800
Collections Development, Care, Management and Use	£71,000	£11,800	£82,800
Education and Learning	£209,508	£11,800	£221,308
Infrastructure, Investment and Resources	£44,000	£11,800	£55,800
Total	£380,508	£47,200	£427,708

7. Actions

In pursuit of the priorities NIMC will deliver the following actions during 2015-16

Actions	Commentary	Museums Policy references	Target and Outcome
1. Museum Engagement Programme Support	This programme will continue the proactive partnerships with three museums in the top six most deprived Council areas to deliver outreach and learning programmes targeted at people from the ten highest deprivation ranking wards in each area. The implementation, outcomes, evaluation and monitoring processes will be agreed with each partner.	DA1, DA2, EL2, EL3, EL4, EL5, EL6.	By 31 st March 2016, NIMC will have worked with three local museums to deliver engagement projects. People from areas of high multiple deprivation will have a greater knowledge of the heritage of their area and engaged with the education and learning services provided their local museum.
2. Accredited Museum Grant Programme	This programme will provide reactive support through grant assistance to proposals from Accredited museums. Applications to the grant scheme will be assessed in light of the following priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addressing equality of opportunity and/or social exclusion • the protection of cultural assets held • contributing to advancing the goals of the Northern Ireland Museum Policy • assisting the museum to renew or maintain Accredited status 	DA1, DA2, EL2, EL3, EL4, EL5, EL6, CD1.	By 31 st March 2016, NIMC will have grant-aided at least six projects at local museums, benefitting at least 6,000 people. Support will have been provided to allow significant artefacts within local museum collections to be conserved in preparation to making them accessible through exhibitions. And grant aid will have been provided to projects that engage local communities with their heritage by way of increasing knowledge and enhancing their understanding of the value of heritage and museums.
3. What's On in Museums Project	Given that 20% of respondents to the Continuous Household Survey stated that "more information about exhibitions or displays" would encourage	DA1, DA2, DA4, EL3, EL5, EL6, CD5,	By 31 st March 2016 NIMC will have promoted the web site to 200 community and educational groups - a 33% increase

	<p>museum visits, NIMC has built and maintains a 'one-stop shop' web site which covers the events taking place at all museums across Northern Ireland. www.nimc.co.uk</p> <p>This is supplemented through the public having the option to subscribe to a newsletter which highlights and details museum activities and admission policies.</p>		<p>on 2014-15.</p> <p>By 31st March 2016 to have increased the circulation of the NIMC newsletter by 25% to 250.</p> <p>People, particularly those within areas of high deprivation, will have an enhanced awareness of the programmes and services provided by museums across Northern Ireland.</p>
4. Community Engagement Initiative	<p>The Community Engagement Initiative is a two year programme, delivered in partnership with National Museums Northern Ireland and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which will train nine people from diverse backgrounds to use museum collections as a tool to connect communities with their heritage, with a view developing their capacity to follow a career in the sector or using the skills and benefits of using museums in a community context.</p>	DA1, DA3, DA6, EL1, EL4, EL6, EL8, CD5, IIR1.	<p>By 31st March 2016 ten trainees will have completed their participation in the Community Engagement Initiative.</p> <p>Participants will have an enhanced understanding of good practice within museums concerning community engagement and will have delivered associated projects at their host museums</p>
5. Museum Accreditation Scheme	<p>The Museum Accreditation Scheme is the UK-wide sector standard for museums that is co-ordinated centrally by Arts Council England. NIMC is responsible for its administration for local museums in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Through the scheme institutions must meet minimum standards across the three areas,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational Health - governance and management arrangements, business and financial planning, security and emergency planning, workforce and professional capacity. • Collections - ownership of their collections, 	DA3, DA6, EL1, CD1, IIR 2	<p>By 31st March 2016 40 local museums will be recognised under the Museum Accreditation Scheme.</p> <p>Standards of governance, management, collections care and public services at local museums will be maintained and improved.</p>

	<p>collections management policies and procedures relating to the development, documentation, care and conservation of the collection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users and their Experiences - the developing good quality services for visitors and users, providing a welcoming, accessible environment, with appropriate services and facilities, and ensuring that an effective and stimulating learning experience is delivered. <p>The standard requires museums to “<i>offer and develop good-quality, stimulating services for users and potential users, in order to get the best out of its collections, resources and local area</i>”, thus underpinning the equality and social exclusion priorities.</p>		
6. Mapping Trends	In order to be able to better serve visitors and develop their visitor and user base, museums require up-to-date, sector-wide intelligence. Such information also informs policy development, the planning of strategic interventions and resource allocation.	DA1, DA2, DA3,	<p>By 31st March 2016 NIMC will have completed a comprehensive survey of Northern Ireland’s local museums.</p> <p>Central and local government, the museum sector and other heritage bodies will have access to data that will assist with policy and service development.</p>
7. NIMC Acquisition Fund	The Acquisition Fund will focus on channelling resources to local museums to enable their governing bodies to purchase artefacts.	DA1, DA3, DA6, EL6, EL7, CD2, CD3, CD4, CD5, IIR2.	<p>By 31st March 2016, NIMC will have grant-aided at least six projects at local museums.</p> <p>Support will have been provided to allow local museums to acquire artefacts of local, national and international significance in order to preserve aspects of the common heritage; as a means of</p>

			increasing people's knowledge, their enjoyment and understanding of history, and their sense well-being and pride of place.
8. Training	NIMC delivers an annual training programme that supports the continuous professional development of museum staff and volunteers. A focus of the training will be upon matters pertaining to tackling social exclusion, encouraging participation, and developing the capacity in local museums to target and attract diverse usership.	DA1, DA2, DA3, DA6, EL1, EL3, EL4, EL6, EL8, CD1, IIR1, IIR5.	By 31 st March 2016, NIMC will have provided training to 80 museum staff and volunteers. Those working in museums will be more informed, confident and competent in undertaking the services and functions expected of museums.
9. Museum Forum	The Forum aims to keep local museums abreast of policy developments and current thinking on areas having a direct impact upon the services museums deliver. NIMC aims to co-ordinate biannual meetings of personnel from the local museum sector at which salient topics will be examined.	DA1, DA2, DA3, DA6, EL1, EL3, EL4, EL6, EL8, CD1, IIR1, IIR5.	By 31 st March 2016, two forum meetings will have taken place with the deliberations and recommendations for action being published. Those working in museums will be more informed, confident and competent in undertaking the services and functions expected of museums.
10. Advice, Information and Guidance	The Council answers general queries from the public and provides specialist guidance to those working in the museum sector. Such enquiries inform the research NIMC undertakes, and the guidance documents and case studies that it publishes.	DA7, EL3, EL6, CD1, CD3, IIR1, IIR2, IIR4, IIR5	By 31 st March 2016, NIMC will have published two guidance documents for the sector Those working in museums will have access to information that will enhance their knowledge and understanding of good practice within museums, hence improving standards of public service.

11. Professional development and work opportunities.	Through its web site and newsletters NIMC publishes notification of national and international conferences, research and publications, together with job opportunities, volunteer positions and internships, geared towards enhancing the professional development of NIMC members and others.	DA6, DA7, EL6, EL8	By 31 st March 2016, NIMC will have published up-to-date listings and professional development opportunities on a monthly basis, available to at least 1,000 unique visitors per month to the NIMC web site. People will have a better knowledge of the opportunities to work and volunteer in the museum sector, and to engage with developments further afield.
12. Learning Resources	NIMC continues to work with staff at local museums to raise the standard of the learning and education experiences provided, to develop capacity and to increase awareness of the programmes that local museums offer.	DA1, DA2, DA4, EL4, EL5, EL6, CD3, CD5, IIR7	By 31 st March 2016 NIMC will have assisted two local museums to develop their learning programmes. Museums will have clear and well-structured learning programmes enabling them to engage more effectively with visitors and users, and to support curriculum-based education.
13. Office Relocation	In order to protect front-line service delivery while operating on reduced funding from the Department, NIMC will seek to relocate its offices.		By 31 st March 2016 NIMC will occupy offices with minimal overheads. NIMC will have reduced its operating overheads while maintaining its level of investment in museum-focused programmes.

