

19<sup>th</sup> February 2016

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Dear Joel Rosen,

Cultural Protection Fund Consultation - Response from Icon, the Institute of Conservation

We welcome the initiative of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to set up a Cultural Protection Fund and we are very glad to hear the Minister's commitment to ratifying the 1954 Hague Convention.

The Institute of Conservation (Icon) is a registered charity and the UK professional body for the conservation of cultural heritage. Icon raises awareness of the cultural, social and economic value of caring for heritage and champions high standards of conservation. We represent nearly 3,000 individuals and organisations. Icon's membership incorporates not only professional conservators and heritage scientists, but also others who share a commitment to improving understanding of and access to our cultural heritage. Most of our members are UK-based but many also work internationally.

Section I

Q1: We do not as an organisation work in other countries or in conflict zones, and therefore are not able to express an opinion on the overall approach being taken or on the priorities of the fund apart from saying that they sound reasonable given the very challenging contexts in which the programmes will be taking place. However, we do want to take this opportunity to signal our support for this fund and our commitment to promoting the fund to our members and networks. Amongst our membership of Accredited Conservator-Restorers and heritage scientists will be experts in delivering the example projects listed under your first outcome, as well as in designing and delivering training programmes in conservation and restoration under your second outcome.

Q2/Q2a: We are in strong agreement with Section 1 but would like to offer the following comments: (i) page 11, Principles, Evidence-based analysis: We suggest that preservation is not a short-term need but requires long-term planning and cost-benefit analysis in line with conservation

and scientific evidence. An investment in preservation should be seen as a sustainable investment in heritage resources delivering cultural, social and economic benefits.

Q3: Table 1, line 2: Training programmes in conservation and restoration are without doubt essential. We suggest that any form of documentation (including digital) should be seen as part of wider conservation skills, and should include the design of documentation processes, as well as the management and interpretation of cultural heritage.

Table 1, line 3: We recommend the addition of projects that involve citizens, i.e. citizen science projects. Such projects go well beyond advocacy and engagement as they involve citizens in the actual delivery.

## Section II

In this section you ask for information about any examples of existing successful cultural heritage protection initiatives operating in conflict zones in ODA eligible countries. We are aware of the activities of the International Committee of the Blue Shield <http://www.ancbs.org/cms/en/about-us/about-icbs> which promotes protection of cultural property against threats of all kinds, including conflict, and ICCROM (part of UNESCO) <http://www.iccrom.org> International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property which researches, develops and runs training courses internationally. We are not aware of whether they are currently working in ODA eligible countries.

Q4: Our members have extensive experience with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which funds conservation and heritage science programmes in ODA eligible countries. Such programmes fund large infrastructural projects (e.g. new museums) as well as targeted short initiatives, such as training courses. The Smithsonian Institution is supporting the Conservation School in Erbil, Iraq, which our members also have experience with.

From our experience priority issues are: (i) security on the ground is a real concern and it is strongly recommended that the British Council hand out communication devices and constantly monitor the movement of staff, particularly when working in the field; (ii) long-term sustainability has always proved to be challenging and a suitable evaluation criterion for projects would be to show how this would be achieved. We recommend that training for both is built into the projects as an integral element and that as a prerequisite, bids show evidence of a significant history of collaboration with the proponents in the ODA country, in order to demonstrate the ability to ensure outputs in the long-term.

Finally, regardless of the nature of the project, we suggest that all project teams demonstrate the involvement of a conservator to ensure that long-term benefits of the heritage in question are preserved and enhanced. In our experience, too many technology-driven projects have resulted in short-term instead of long-term benefits. We recommend that one of the funding requirements be for teams to be cross-disciplinary, as well as significant involvement of local specialists, as only these will lead to desirable long-term benefits.

Q5/5a/5b: Depending on the accepted financial model (e.g. FEC, 80% FEC or directs only), we strongly suggest that the direct costs do not exceed £300k per project per year. We strongly suggest that projects are FEC costed, as this will allow conservation companies, museums/IROs as well academia to compete on an equal footing.

We suggest that any larger grants are either preceded by smaller networking grants or that proponents are able to demonstrate evidence of pre-existing collaboration. This will ensure that any larger investments are properly planned and local political as well as practical support is ensured.

Q7: While academic outputs are a useful output with a potential long-term benefits, we strongly suggest that these are locally co-authored so that the local communities benefit as well. Non-academic outputs should be measured in terms of trainee numbers, public engagement participants, (online) visitors, number of engaged citizen scientists. We would also suggest that projects develop their own KPIs (deliverables) such as objects restored/documented or tools developed.

Q8: The British Council will undoubtedly be very able to support the delivery of the Fund. We advise against the involvement of local evaluators in ODA countries, as in our experience this often does not result in fair evaluation but instead in political favouritism.

Q9: In line with the previous comments, we recommend that the countries that are targeted in the first round are those where UK stakeholders have best existing collaborations. In our experience, this would be Egypt, South Africa, Turkey, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil etc. We would again like to stress the importance of demonstrable pre-existing collaboration.

Q10: The regions where the largest potential long-term benefit could be realised are those where current political unrest is likely to be resolved in the mid-term and thus any conservation/restoration project will result in a sustainable benefit. Examples of these are Egypt or Turkey. The social and economic benefit of conservation in India is yet to be publicly recognised, therefore consideration should be given to engagement in this country.

Q11: Security concerns could be addressed by provision of reliable communication equipment and efficient monitoring. Equally, training of UK participants by the British Council should take place before any action is taken in a particular country.

We are hopeful that the Fund will succeed in due course in leveraging additional funding streams as the current need across the many conflict zones appears to be growing.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if we may be of any assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Siobhan Stevenson, Chair of Icon Board of Trustees

cc. Matija Strlic, Chair, Icon Heritage Science Group

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