



Our Heritage, Our Stories

*Linking and searching Community-Generated Digital Content
to develop the people's national collection*

Community Fund Information Pack



Project overview

Our Heritage, Our Stories (OHOS) represents a change in how we approach digital content that is created and managed by communities, powered by new AI tools and new ways of thinking. By developing a collective public Observatory of community-generated digital content (CGDC) that connects and enriches these materials, *OHOS* is enabling new avenues of exploration and collaboration and revealing new insights into our shared histories.

Community-Generated Digital Content (CGDC)

CGDC refers to any digital content created by members of the general public, rather than by official archival institutions or heritage organisations. Examples of this material include ‘born digital’ content produced by community groups, such as digital photographs, videos, music, and recorded oral histories. CGDC can also include digital versions of documents and archival material converted by community groups, including transcriptions and scans.

Such content presents important, diverse perspectives on our national history that have traditionally been overlooked by official archives. Our project is working to ensure these uniquely significant stories receive their rightful place within our national collection.

Our goals

Making it easier to explore, generate, and maintain digital content, our project aims to ensure community archives are widely represented and accessible to a national audience, as well as helping to ensure the survival of many resources and histories that might otherwise be vulnerable. By empowering community archives to connect and showcase their stories more efficiently, sustainably, and extensively, the project will help to bring under-represented voices and communities to the forefront of our shared national collection.

- + Uncovering and connecting previously hidden community content, development of the *OHOS* Observatory is opening up a wealth of community-generated materials to the nation for the first time.
- + Through developing new methods to process and analyse community content, our project is also helping to advance how such content can be used and connected to similar resources and communities across the UK.
- + Combining the best practices currently used by community groups, we’re also developing a new model for creating and managing community-generated digital content.

For more information on the project, visit our website at www.ohos.ac.uk. Our social media channels (@OHOS_NatColl) on Twitter and Instagram also offer regular project updates.

OHOS Community Fund

The *Our Heritage, Our Stories* Community Fund is intended to support community groups in developing new CGDC resources, extending or enhancing existing materials, generating new approaches to managing CGDC, and representing community voices to wider audiences.

The Community Fund is designed to ensure that input and participation in *OHOS* truly represents the diversity and richness of community heritage across the UK, allowing the project to develop in a genuinely collaborative manner with community groups. Such funding will be used to enable invaluable community input into the project's technical development, research priorities, and outreach activities, to showcase and enhance the richness of UK CGDC, and to foster innovative grassroots public engagement.

Fund calls & eligibility

The *OHOS* community fund is distributed through a series of calls for submissions. During each call, we invite submissions of proposals for work that will contribute to the development of CGDC and/or groups producing such content.

There are no set eligibility criteria that exclude individuals or groups from submitting proposals: **anyone who works with CGDC, community groups, or who has an idea related to the development of CGDC is welcome to submit a proposal.**

However, we anticipate that the calls will be particularly relevant to:

- + Community archives
- + Community groups
- + Local historians
- + Independent curators

Full details of the assessment criteria and submission process for the *OHOS* Community Fund are detailed in the following pages.

Assessment criteria

OHOS Community Fund submissions are assessed according to four key criteria. The most suitable proposals received are then funded. The exact number of proposals funded is variable between calls.

Criterion 1

Community empowerment

Benefit to applicants: submissions will be assessed on the degree to which they will empower community groups in the creation, management, and exploration of their content.

This may relate to helping to produce new resources with strong community significance, or to extending/enhancing such existing content. It may also relate to developing innovative methods of managing content that will substantially benefit community groups (individually or more broadly), or to developing community skills in archival approaches.

Criterion 2

Representation

Outreach: submissions will be assessed on the extent to which they will expand the diversity of materials, peoples, and stories represented within the UK national collection and showcase the diversity and complexity of our cultural heritage.

This may include work which foregrounds historically under-represented communities and histories, challenges existing narratives or practices, and/or serves to connect diverse sets of people and stories.

Criterion 3

Project contribution

Alignment to project aims: submissions will be assessed by their predicted contribution to the overall aims of the *Our Heritage, Our Stories* research project.

This may relate to any area of the project, including data contributions, technical development, research priorities, and/or outreach activities.

Criterion 4

Feasibility

Value for money: submissions will be assessed on how likely it is that the proposed work will be completed with the timescale and funding specified. Submissions should show due consideration to possible challenges that might hinder progress and should also indicate their ethical restraints and policies.

Submission process

Submissions to the *OHOS* Community Fund will go through several stages.

Stage 1 - Initial proposal submission

Initial proposal submission takes place via a short form that can be found on our website, www.ohos.ac.uk. Alternative versions of this form are available upon request.

This initial proposal should include:

- + Names of the individuals and the community they represent who are proposing to conduct the work;
- + A short outline of the proposed work (250–500 words), with reference to each of the assessment criteria for the *OHOS* Community Fund described above;
- + Estimated cost of the work, i.e. the amount of funding being requested.

Stage 2 – Review & refinement

When proposals have been received, the *OHOS* team will review them to identify suitable prospective projects. We may provide feedback to some projects to allow them to refine their initial proposals into fuller submissions. This will include agreement of funding amount to be provided.

Stage 3 – Assessment

Following any feedback and refinement, suitable projects will then be assessed by the project Co-Investigators according to the *OHOS* Community Fund assessment criteria defined above. The proposals assessed as most appropriate will be funded.