



NHSF statement in response to the publication of ‘Our plan for growth: science and innovation’

The National Heritage Science Forum (NHSF) welcomes the publication, on 17 December, of the Government’s science and innovation strategy.

The importance placed by the strategy on collaboration resonates strongly with NHSF’s role as a broker for partnerships between organisations engaged in heritage science research, (itself a highly inter-disciplinary field) and the end-users of that research. In particular, we welcome the review of the research councils as an opportunity to remove system blockages to cross-disciplinary research by promoting structural changes that identify synergies and deepen collaboration among research funders as proposed in our response to the consultation.

NHSF supports the strategy’s emphasis on nurturing scientific talent. As an emerging field that develops broad cross-disciplinary skills that deliver research and lead to innovation, heritage science benefits from individuals’ exposure to STEM and arts & humanities disciplines. The advantages of complementing university study with industry-led work placements and internships are well-recognised in our young discipline, as exemplified by the EPSRC-funded SEAHA Centre for Doctoral Training in which three leading academic organisations collaborate with heritage, scientific, engineering and industrial partners to train researchers, develop instruments and tools and engage the public with new ways of presenting and interpreting heritage. We look forward to the potential for the new Higher Apprenticeship model announced for the digital sector to be applied to other sectors and would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the exploration of this initiative.

We note too the recognition of the value of equipment sharing as a vital part of maximizing the value for money of the government’s investment in the scientific infrastructure. We await the outcome of the assessment of work relating to a sector-led national approach to equipment sharing with interest and will continue to develop our existing resource that supports the sharing of equipment, facilities and skills to support heritage science research.

We recognise that many of the decisions relating to the detail of the delivery of the strategy have been deferred until after the General Election but see the significant

commitment to investment in the UK's research infrastructure until 2021 as a positive step towards making the UK the best place in the world for science and business.

Notes:

The National Heritage Science Forum (NHSF) brings together 17 leading organisations in the field of heritage science: Birmingham Museums Trust; Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford; Cardiff University; English Heritage; Historic Royal Palaces; Historic Scotland; Institute of Conservation; National Galleries Scotland; Natural History Museum; National Museum Wales; National Trust; Royal Armouries; Tate; The British Library; The British Museum; The National Archives; University College London.

NHSF members work together to share knowledge, ideas and innovations to maximize the impact and public benefit of heritage science, and to lead the delivery of the National Heritage Science Strategy. See www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk

NHSF's response to the BIS consultation on the Science and Innovation strategy can be found at: <http://heritagescienceforum.org.uk/policy.php>

The EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Science and Engineering in Arts, Heritage and Archaeology (SEAHA) is an 8-year initiative (2014-2022) to establish an infrastructure to meet challenges set by the heritage sector, industry and government. <http://www.seaha-cdt.ac.uk/>.

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