

## Invitation to Tender

## Independent Evaluation Partner

## Pathways to the Future

Museums and Heritage Highland (MHH)



### 1. Overview

Museums and Heritage Highland (MHH) invites tenders from suitably qualified individuals or organisations to deliver an independent evaluation of *Pathways to the Future*, a two-year pilot project running from June 2026 to June 2028.

**Contract value:** Up to £10,000 (inclusive of VAT and all expenses)

**Contract period:** July 2026 – June 2028

**Location:** Primarily remote (online delivery expected)

This is a proportionate evaluation designed to balance rigour with the capacity realities of small rural museums.

### 2. About Museums and Heritage Highland

Museums and Heritage Highland (MHH) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) established in 2019. We support collaboration, capacity building and sustainable development across independent museums in the Highlands.

MHH operates with a lean core income and works strategically to strengthen the long-term resilience of small rural museums.

### 3. About Pathways to the Future

*Pathways to the Future* is a two-year pilot testing a shared-services model across eight independent rural museums in the Highlands.

The project embeds:

- Two shared Administrative Managers (4 museum clusters)
- One Commercial & Sustainable Growth Manager (working across all eight museums)
- A Strategic Leadership Group
- Board development and wellbeing workshops

The pilot aims to:

- Increase earned income and income diversification
- Reduce administrative burden and inefficiencies
- Strengthen financial planning and governance
- Build leadership capacity
- Develop a financially viable continuation model post-2028

The evaluation must assess not only outcomes, but the viability and scalability of the shared-services model.

#### **4. Purpose of the Evaluation**

The evaluation will:

1. Assess the impact of the pilot on financial resilience and organisational capacity
2. Analyse the effectiveness of the shared-services model
3. Assess the feasibility of continuation beyond the grant period
4. Generate learning for wider sector dissemination

The evaluation will be grounded in a Theory of Change framework developed at project inception.

#### **5. Scope of Work**

This is a strategic, proportionate commission. MHH will coordinate routine monitoring and data collection; the evaluator will provide independent analysis, insight and validation.

##### **The evaluator will:**

- Co-develop a Theory of Change and evaluation framework (inception phase)
- Review baseline financial and organisational data (collected by MHH)
- Conduct a limited number of qualitative interviews (approx. 10–12 across project duration)
- Provide a midpoint review (light-touch)
- Conduct final summative analysis
- Provide sustainability and viability assessment
- Produce 2–3 in-depth case studies
- Produce a final evaluation report and executive summary

##### **MHH will:**

- Coordinate data collection and financial tracking
- Provide structured quarterly monitoring reports
- Facilitate access to partner museums
- Support scheduling and logistics

#### **6. Key Evaluation Questions**

The evaluation should address:

##### **Financial Resilience**

- Has earned income increased or diversified?
- Have financial planning and forecasting improved?

- Are there identifiable efficiency gains?

### **Organisational Capacity**

- Has administrative burden reduced?
- Has leadership capacity strengthened?
- Have governance practices improved?

### **Model Effectiveness**

- How well has the shared-services approach functioned?
- What adaptations were required?
- What are the strengths and limitations of the model?

### **Sustainability**

- Is the model financially viable post-pilot?
- What level of partner contribution would be realistic?
- What risks or conditions affect continuation?

## **7. Deliverables**

The evaluator will provide:

1. Inception meeting & evaluation framework (Summer 2026)
2. Baseline summary report (Autumn 2026)
3. Midpoint review report or presentation (Summer 2027)
4. Final evaluation report (25–30 pages, June 2028)
5. Sustainability viability assessment
6. 2–3 case studies
7. Executive summary (6–8 pages) suitable for dissemination

All outputs should be clear, accessible and suitable for sector sharing.

## **8. Budget & Payment**

**Total contract value:** Up to £10,000 inclusive of VAT.

Indicative payment schedule:

- 40% on contract commencement
- 30% on midpoint review
- 30% on final report submission

Applicants should provide a breakdown of proposed days and rates.

## 9. Required Skills & Experience

Applicants should demonstrate:

- Experience evaluating complex, multi-partner projects
- Experience analysing financial sustainability and organisational change
- Strong qualitative and quantitative analysis skills
- Ability to work proportionately with small organisations
- Clear and accessible report writing

Experience within the heritage or third sector is desirable but not essential.

## 10. Application Requirements

Applicants should submit:

- A proposal (max 10 pages) outlining methodology, timeline and approach
- Relevant experience and examples of similar work
- Breakdown of days and costs
- CV(s) of key personnel

Shortlisted applicants may be invited to online interview.

DEADLINE: 1st July 5pm

INTERVIEW DATES: 7th or 8th July

## 11. Assessment Criteria

Understanding of brief and methodology	35%
Relevant experience	25%
Financial and sustainability analysis capability	20%
Value for money	20%

## 12. Equal Opportunities

MHH welcomes applications from individuals and organisations of all backgrounds and is committed to inclusive procurement practice.