



NI
Museums
Council

Museum Trends

Impact Statement
Guidance

20
23

Context

NIMC plans to launch the Museum Trends Survey 2022-23 in September 2023, to review the 2022-23 financial year (April 2022 – March 2023). Most of the survey will occur through Citizen Space, which is an online survey platform used by Government for public consultations. There will however be aspects of the survey that must be compiled and submitted independent of the online survey, including the 'Museum Impact Statement'.

We are providing information about the Museum Impact Statement now, so that museum managers and senior leaders can begin to consult internally and collate this aspect of the Museum Trends Survey submission.

The impact that each museum delivers will vary widely as a factor of location, collection and mission. It is therefore impossible to assess the impact of all local museums through the analysis of simple metrics and numbers (though these may also be used to evidence some impacts).



The impact that each museum delivers will vary widely as a factor of location, collection and mission

The Museum Impact Statement requires that each museum provides an overview of their outcomes and impact in narrative form. You may include numbers, metrics, figures, stories, accounts, testimonials and analyses in your Museum Impact Statement; this is a free-form submission, without word count or formatting restrictions, and can be submitted in Word, OpenOffice document file (ODT) or PDF format to info@nimc.co.uk on or before Friday 29th September 2023.

We want you to frame the outcomes and impact that you deliver for your communities and audiences, in your own words. We are keen to understand which aspects of your outcomes and impact are well supported by evidence, and if there are areas of suspected or anecdotal impact that require more evaluation and research. We are keen to read about examples at both ends of the evidence spectrum. Perceived impact that does not have strong supporting evidence is potentially as valuable as impacts that are well evidenced in the context of the Museum Trends Survey. It is important that each submission is an honest reflection and does not attempt to oversell outcomes or impacts.

Submissions will be analysed to draw out common themes and trends. NIMC will use this as a baseline to help develop a sectoral impact strategy and toolkit, and to inform the developing NIMC Research Strategy. The Museum Impact Statements will also be used to inform aspects of the final Museum Trends Report, which will underpin NIMC service provision, research and advocacy.

We recommend that museum managers take the time to consult early and widely within their organisations before compiling and submitting their Museum Impact Statement

Outcomes & Impact

Every event, project, exhibition or programme of work that your museum delivers will have an associated set of 'outputs'. Outputs relate to what has been delivered or produced and can include statistics (number of events, attendees, demographics of attendees etc), stories or testimony, visuals, resources etc.

The 'outcome' of an event, project, exhibition or programme of work relates to the specific difference that your work has had on your audience / community. E.g. if one of your outputs for 2022-23 was the delivery of an exhibition, the measurable outcome could relate to the positive effect of that exhibition on (for example):

- Defined learning outcomes for school pupils
- Sense of civic pride within your local community
- Engagement with traditionally marginalised or under-represented groups
- Any number of other planned or unplanned outcomes

The outcome of an event or project could be evidenced by stories, testimony, survey data, research projects etc.

Impact is a measure of how your outcomes influence communities and society over longer time-frames. Impact can include, but is not limited to, an effect on, change or benefit to an audience, beneficiary, community, organisation or individuals. The effect, change or benefit can be cultural, societal, economic, or can relate to new / improved policy, services, or health & wellbeing and quality of life benefits.

This exercise asks you to consider how the outputs that you have delivered over 2022-23 have individually and collectively affected your audiences / local communities over 2022-23 (your outcomes), and how this has contributed to your broader and longer-term goals (your impact, which for the purposes of this exercise we will define as relating to a five year timeframe).

The 'Pathway to Impact' detailed below will help you to understand the terminology that we have employed, and how this relates to your museum planning cycle.

Pathway to Impact



01 — Strategy

The activities and programmes that a museum delivers should be framed within an overarching strategy that details intended outputs, outcomes & impact.



02 — Plan

SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant & Time-bound) plans should translate the strategic goals of the museum into programmes of work that will fully deliver the defined outputs, outcomes & impact.



03 — Inputs

Plans should fully account for the resources required to deliver the museums' strategic goals e.g. staff, budget, delivery partners etc.



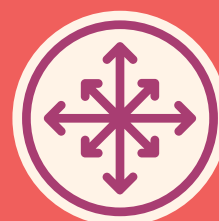
04 — Outputs

Fully resourced plans will deliver a range of outputs e.g. a new exhibition, an event, workshop etc.



05 — Outcomes

The outcome of an exhibition, event or programme of work (an output), relates to the specific difference that the output had on your audience / community.



06 — Impact

The long-term & cumulative difference made to individuals / communities / society as a result of your outputs & outcomes. To clarify the distinction between outcomes and impact, we will define impact as relating to a five-year timescale.

Planning your Impact Statement

Museums should begin the process of planning, consulting and compiling their Museum Impact Statement from now.

In preparation for completing your Museum Impact Statement, you will want to map out the services and programmes that your museum delivered over the course of 2022–23 (your outputs), and consider which aspects of your overall programme have been evaluated, and what that evaluation tells you about the immediate outcomes and impacts of your work. It is also valid to map previous evaluation / research outcomes onto contemporary programmes. In all instances we ask that you justify the outcomes and impacts that you are reporting as fully as possible. Where you have no objective data to support a claim, please indicate this.

Your Museum Impact Statement should detail the linkage between outputs, outcomes & longer-term impacts. Please also include details of the museum staff, volunteers and stakeholders that have contributed to the preparation of your Museum Impact Statement within your submission.

Why is the Museum Trends Survey needed?

As an advocacy body for the museum sector, NIMC needs up-to-date information on how its member museums across Northern Ireland operate. The purpose of the survey is to provide focused quantitative and qualitative data about both local authority and independent museums so that NIMC can argue effectively for their social, cultural and economic value and help to secure the resources they need. NIMC needs data that can point to the strategic challenges for the sector, challenges which require strategic planning to be dealt with collectively rather than individually.

The Museum Trends Survey offers NIMC an opportunity to discover what museums are doing well, and to celebrate that. It also offers an opportunity to discover what is not being done, or done well, and why that might be, which is key to advocating for increased provision of all kinds.

What is being surveyed?

The survey questions have been devised with the goal of ensuring that every response can support NIMC's advocacy and strategic planning for the local museum sector. Broadly, questions will ask for quantitative (numbers, percentages etc.) or qualitative (narrative) responses that pertain to the work of museums during the last financial year (1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023).

The questionnaire has been reviewed and redeveloped following extensive consultation and independent assessment. The Museum Trends Survey 2022–23 will ask a range of questions that are grouped across three themes that map to the UK Museum Accreditation standard:

- 1.Organisational Health (workforce, finance, infrastructure, strategic outlook)
- 2.Managing Collections (collection scope, development and management)
- 3.Users and their Experiences (audience / digital engagement and impact)

Whilst the Museum Trends Survey maps to the UK Museum Accreditation framework, unaccredited museums are also encouraged to participate.

How will the survey be completed?

The Museum Trends Survey will be delivered largely through Citizen Space, which is the online survey software used by Government for all public consultations. Components of the survey response will be delivered independent of Citizen Space for respondent convenience.

If you have any immediate questions about the Museum Trends Survey, please do feel free to contact us on 02890 550215 or via e-mail to info@nimc.co.uk.

How will the Museum Trends data be used?

Data collected through the Museum Trends Survey will be used to populate a final Museum Trends Survey Report that speaks to the state of the sector as a whole, and will inform NIMC research, planning and advocacy work.

The Survey will incorporate an element of statistical analysis that will allow NIMC to make conclusive and persuasive statements about sectoral trends over time. This will involve comparing annual averages to determine statistically significant changes using Analysis of Variance and assessing data trends through regression analysis. This will support NIMC's data-driven advocacy strategy for the local museum sector, ensuring that we are more agile and able to respond quickly and coherently to needs as they arise.

Data will not be used to rank or compare individual museums, nor will data (or the absence of data) be used in a punitive fashion. The Museum Trends Survey seeks to form a data baseline from which NIMC can act in the sector's best interests.



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