

AIM Museum Fundamentals Grant 2026: Guidance Notes Stage 2 Full Application/ Project Plan

Completing the Stage 2 Application

Congratulations! You have made it through to the second round of the application process. The next stage is to provide further detail on your project, so that the panel can understand its scope, benefits, potential risks, cost and timeframe. Please use the application form supplied to develop your outline project plan. You may use and edit the answers previously supplied on your Expression of Interest Form.

Project Scope

As part the project planning process, it is important to identify the deliverables of the project. Please use the box on the form to clearly identify what your project will achieve. The deliverables should be measurable outcomes and be listed in the tasks shown in your project action plan. Where relevant, the project scope may also highlight the limitations of your proposed project.

Project Benefits

Projects are change making and should be undertaken with a clear business case. Tell us why you would like to do the project, its purpose, and the benefits it will bring.

Project Action Plan

Tell us about the aims and objectives for the project, and how you expect to deliver and complete them. You may wish to create a table, or a clear bullet point list to show how your goals will be achieved within the 12 month timeframe. Please list which funding pot you have linked to the action, by identifying funder A or B and the project focus. The action plan should be clear to read, include a timeline, and the expected expenditure should correspond with the breakdown shown on your budget template.

Example Project AIM: To conserve, research, document, digitise, interpret and display three oil paintings by LS Lowry (1887-1976) that were recently donated to the museum.

Action/Target	Timeframe	Who?	Funder/Project Focus	Budget
1. Conservator treatment report and quote prepared and agreed.	1 month/ May	ICON Conservator	B: Collections Care	£500.00
2. Remedial conservation undertaken by an ICON accredited conservator.	3 months/ Sept-Nov	ICON Conservator	A: Remedial Conservation	£4,500.00
3. Research on the three painting's significance and the artists oeuvre.	1 month / Oct	Museum Curator	B: Access to Collections	£800.00
4. Collections documentation upgraded for the Lowry collection.	1 week/ Nov	Museum Curator/Volunteers	B: Collections Documentation	£400.00
5. New interpretation labels written, designed and printed in-house.	1 month/ Nov-Dec	Museum Curator/ Designer	B: Access to Collections	£3,000.00
6. Professional hang of the three conserved oil paintings.	1 week/ January 2026	Picture Hangers	B: Access to Collections	£1,000.00

Developing SMART/ SMARTIE Targets

Include timescales and SMART or SMARTIE targets when developing your project action plan. Smartie targets are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant/realistic, time bound, inclusive and equitable.

Specific: What will be done, by whom and when.

Measurable: How will success be tracked and measured? Numerical quantitative data is useful here.

Achievable: Is the goal realistic and achievable for your organisation?

Relevant/Realistic: Does the target support the overall aim of the project?

Time-bound: When will your targets/aims be achieved? This helps you build a timeline for the project.

Inclusive: Are your stakeholders involved throughout the project to ensure it meets their needs?

Equitable: Will your project involve practices that break down barriers to involvement and understanding?

Project Budget Template

On your expression of interest form, you identified the expected project budget. In this stage we would like you to refine the budget, so that guesstimates are turned into expected costs supported by quotes where relevant. The costs shown on the action plan should match those shown on the project budget spreadsheet.

Stage 2: Submission 2026 Dates

Invited applicants will need to submit the completed stage 2 application form, with the relevant supporting documents as PDFs to Fiona Woolley at programmes@aim-museums.co.uk, prior to the spring deadline of Friday 27 March and autumn deadline of Friday 25 September 2026.

Supporting Documents

- Most recent annual report
- Most recent accounts
- Project budget spreadsheet (*Template supplied*)
- Treatment quotations and proposals
- Organisational diagram showing staff and volunteer roles

2026 Deadlines & Panel Dates

- Spring:**
- 6 February 2026 - Expression of Interest Form (EOI) due for Museum Fundamentals
 - 26 February 2026– Grant panel meeting 1 to assess EOI applications
 - 27 March 2026 - Full stage 2 application for Museum Fundamentals due
 - 29 April 2026 – Grant panel meeting 2
 - 6 May 2026 – Grant panel meeting 3/ Applicant interviews 9-12pm

Assessment

Applications will be assessed across two panel meetings. As part of the process, we invite applicants to speak to the panel for up to ten minutes, virtually on screen, about their project. There is no need to prepare for the meeting, it is simply an opportunity to express your passion for the project and ask any questions you may have about the grant making process.

Grant Evaluation and Payment

The Museum Fundamentals grant will be paid in three instalments. One at the beginning of your project, 25% at 8mths on receipt of the progress report and evidence of expenditure, and the balance due at the end alongside your grant claim form, budget, images and any additional evidence of expenditure.