



Special Collections
and Archives
Casgliadau Arbennig
ac Archifau



#CrowdCymru

Options for future project expansion

Background

The #CrowdCymru project has been funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the first phase of the project. This phase was always intended to be a 'proof-of-concept' as well as a project in its own right. The project has proved that the methodology it has employed can be successful – remote volunteers working on archival collections through a crowdsourcing platform.

Using a crowdsourcing platform developed by The National Library of Wales, collections from each of the archive services were transferred via IIF to the platform, where they were transcribed, summarised or tagged by a team of volunteers to improve the information about the collections. The improved information then transferred back to the archive services' catalogues, making the collections more discoverable to researchers.

The project was very successful, and demonstrated that:

- Transfer of information and images from service catalogues to the crowdsourcing platform – and vice versa - is possible, though not without some difficulty with some collections
- That there is an appetite in the community for digital volunteering opportunities, and this is a useful offer for heritage organisations
- The collections uploaded need to be carefully considered as some were more popular than others. Transcription of letters and diaries was very popular, but the tagging of photographs less so.

The partners involved in this first phase of the project (Gwent Archives, Cardiff University Special Collections and Archives and Glamorgan Archives) wish to continue the work, expanding the project to other archive service and communities across Wales and to make the project self-sustaining and part of business as usual for the #CrowdCymru partners and archive services in the future.

Future projects would be open for all archive services in Wales, but in the first instance the partners are looking for participation from services in the north and west in order to expand the geographical spread of the project and to reach different communities.

The services lack the resource to run such projects currently and this report outlines the future project costs as well as potential funding opportunities.

1. Estimated costs

Lessons learned during the first phase have shown that further funding will be required for the following:

1. A member of staff (part time) to manage the contact with the volunteers (Project Officer)
2. Development funds for the platform to help to enable further functionality.
3. Travel budget for the Project Officer to go out and meet with partners and to promote the project
4. IT hardware and software for the Project Officer
5. Translation costs for all publicity and communications to be available in Welsh and in English
6. A small digitisation budget to support partners who do not have access to in-house digitisation facilities.

It is estimated that the annual costs for the project would be:

Project Officer (2 days – 15 hours per week, including on-costs)	£14,300
Development funding for National Library of Wales	£5,000
Travel budget	£1,000
IT hardware and software	£1,000
Translation costs for bi-lingual materials	£1,000
Digitisation costs for partners with digitisation facilities?	£3,000
TOTAL	£25,300

2. Options for funding

External funding will be sought to allow the project to continue. The National Lottery Heritage Fund has not been considered for a future funding application as it has already supported #CrowdCymru and no funding is available for an extension.

Organisation	Eligibility	Description	#CrowdCymru outcome
Economic and Social Research Council	Universities & Charities	Several funding streams in place supporting social science disciplines, including economic and social history	Could be eligible through a University-led application, but no appropriate funding programmes currently advertised
Arts & Humanities Research Council	Higher education providers, research institutes,	Funds for outstanding original research across the arts and humanities	Not eligible for this funding
The National Archives: Resilience Grant	Archive services in England	Provides grants up to £20,000 to empower the archive sector to find and develop sustainable solutions that enable change and develop organisational resilience	Not eligible for this funding
The National Archives: Research and Innovation Grants	Archive services in England and Wales	2 grants of up to £15,000 and smaller grants of up to £5,000 focussed on addressing digital transformation, environmental sustainability and inclusive practice in the archive sector	Eligible, but as the digital transformation has already taken place and the next project is embedding the partnership is unlikely to be successful.
Welsh Government, though Archives and Records Council Wales	Archive services in Wales	Archives and Records Council Wales receives an annual grant from Welsh Government (Culture and Sport) to support archive services.	Eligible
Archives and Records Council Wales: Accreditation Support Grants	Archive services in Wales	Archives and Records Council Wales offer opportunities to apply for smaller pots of money through their Accreditation Support Grants scheme	Eligible, although these are smaller pots of money (£12,000) so would require additional funding from partner services
Self-funded project between the partners		The existing partners contribute funding to continue the project, extending the opportunity for other services in Wales to join	

3. Funding #CrowdCymru

The most likely options for the #CrowdCymru project are an application to Welsh Government via Archives and Records Council Wales (ARCW), apply for an Accreditation Support Grant through ARCW and a self-funded model.

	Application to Welsh Government	Accreditation Support Grant	Self-funded model
Description	Approach ARCW with a proposal to extend the project to archive services and communities across Wales and embed as 'Business as Usual' volunteer activity	Apply for a smaller Accreditation Support Grant, as a partnership project, through ARCW, to extend the project to archive services and communities across Wales and embed as 'Business as Usual' volunteer activity	Extend the opportunity to take part in the project to services across Wales, with each contributing to the cost of the project
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project would not be reliant on the financial circumstances of each service • Services across Wales could take part, regardless of ability to contribute financially • Clear project structures, aims and reporting mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project would be less reliant on the financial circumstances of each service as a large proportion of the cost would be funded • Clear project structures, aims and reporting mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would allow project to continue regardless of availability of grant funding
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application may not be successful • Application may be successful, but does not cover entire cost of project, though this could be mitigate through (smaller) partner contributions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application may not be successful • This model still relies on some financial contribution from services, which may still be a barrier for some • Scope or length or project may have to be altered as a result of lower funding levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of taking part would not be feasible for some services • As a result geographical spread of services may not be possible, perhaps continuing to concentrate on the larger services in the south • Project management responsibilities are less clear in this model, though a strong project agreement and plan would mitigate this risk • The number of services taking part – and their financial contribution – would influence the length and scope of the project

Conclusion

It is recommended that, in the first instance, external funding of £25,000 will be sought from Welsh Government Culture and Sport fund through the Archives and Records Council Wales process of funding.

If this funding is not successful, funding may be sought direct from ARCW via the Accreditation Support Grant scheme. Once these avenues have been exhausted, other options will be pursued including a self-funded model.