

National Museum Directors' Conference

UK Partnerships Compendium

Mapping Exercise

Kathy Gee FMA

VolitionAssociates
confident capable creative people

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1 Introduction

National / regional partnership has been the flavour of the decade even before the recent economic turmoil. ^{1,2} Today, in a world of shrinking resources, increasing demand, and higher expectations, the pressure to share resources will inevitably increase.

Government is interested in collaboration across departments, the home countries, local government and NDPBs. In England, DCMS and MLA have issued numerous guidance notes, as have Scotland and Wales.

Representing the nationally funded museums and their major regional partners, the National Museums Directors Conference (NMDC) and their partners across the UK have commissioned several studies to establish barriers and key success factors in partnership working. This mapping exercise was not commissioned to replicate that evidence but to bring evidence together in one place and assist NMDC in presenting their case in a compelling way – to tell the story. This “map” is not a formal report but a resource to be mined for a wide range of purposes in the future. It aims to contribute an evidence base to the success story that is national / regional partnerships. It is, therefore, a compendium of:

- Extracts from previous reports referenced by footnotes for further exploration
- Results of a quick, high level survey conducted in August of 2009
- Quotations from respondents to the Volition survey

The author has also added some personal observations.

Since NMDC and MLA began studying partnership working, much has changed. “As a result of Renaissance funding, regional museums are now better positioned to work with national museums to deliver outcomes for users and really add value to services. At the same time we have observed a growing disposition among national museums to work with regional partners on a more equal footing, recognising the benefits that can accrue from a working relationship that values mutuality and reciprocity”.³

“Collaborative advantage” – what organisations can gain by working together⁴ is better understood than ever before. The complex mix of parity alongside leadership; individual goals alongside mutual benefit; differing priorities alongside compatible incentives; these are well known among those institutions which have a history of preferring partnership models. They are still, however, a deterrent to those museums which are joining the party late. With the aim of helping NMDC to identify cost effective opportunities, each section also includes a SWOT analysis.

¹ Worthwhile Partnerships, a regional perspective, 2006

² The Value of Partnerships, Discussion Paper, Kingshurst Consulting, July 2006, page 2

³ The Value of Partnerships, Discussion Paper, Kingshurst Consulting, July 2006, page 2

⁴ The Value of Partnerships, Discussion Paper, Kingshurst Consulting, July 2006, page 3

2 Process

Kathy Gee of Volition Associates was briefed by Suzie Tucker of NMDC. It was agreed that no further statistical data gathering would be needed as this has been done several times before. However, a high level “qualitative” survey would establish the pattern of relationships, their relative success and the opportunities that arise from them.

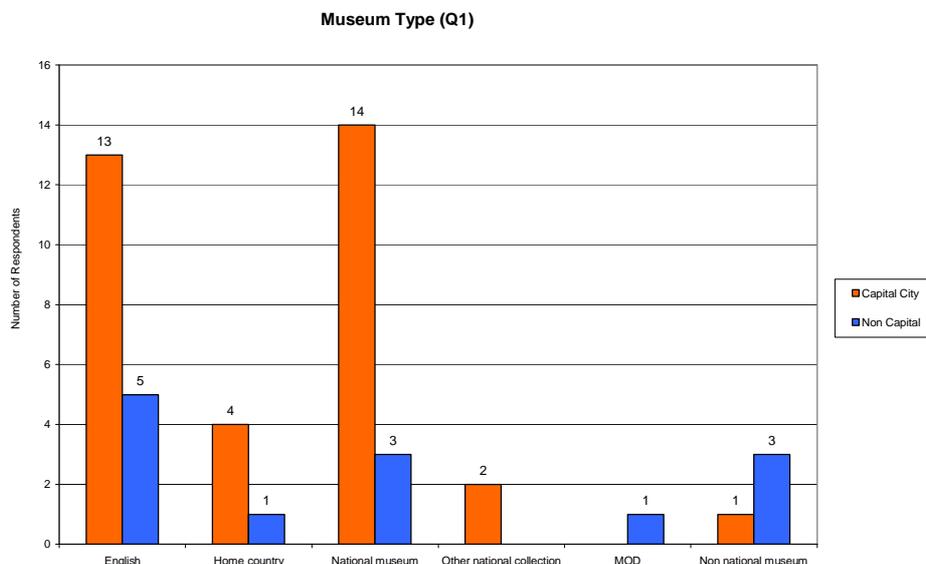
A high level online questionnaire was agreed by the Advisory Board and sent to 28 museums (Appendix 1). These included non-national NMDC members to get a wider cross match with non-NMDC (usually regional) partners. The data gathering was managed by Suzanne McDermid of Croner Reward (sub-contracted to Volition Associates) who also did the statistical analysis producing the tables and charts in this report.

A trawl of relevant publications in a desk research exercise (see Appendix 2 for bibliography) provided a context for the survey findings and further comparative data from earlier years. Footnotes in the text refer to these resources.

3 Sample

Q1	Percentage of Respondents (Number of Respondents)		Number of Respondents
	Capital City	Non Capital	
English	72.2% (13)	27.8% (5)	18
Home country	80.0% (4)	20.0% (1)	5
National museum	82.4% (14)	17.6% (3)	17
Other national collection	100% (2)	0.0% (0)	2
MOD	0.0% (0)	100% (1)	1
Non national museum	25.0% (1)	75.0% (3)	4

Answered question: 23 (one museum ticked more than two boxes)



28 institutions were invited to participate of which 23 responded. 10 institutions completed all the questions but only 3 missed more than 3 questions. There were no responses from Northern Ireland.

The mapping exercise has focussed largely upon museums, but two national libraries also contributed data. Unless it is specifically made clear, tables and graphs include these libraries.

Much has already been done to bring national and non-national museums closer together, as these pages will show, but we still need a table like this in answer to the question “what sort of museum do you represent”? There are fundamental differences in geography and structure across the UK which underpin the identity of national and regional museums and these differences enrich the relationships rather than weaken them. It may be time to discard “them and us” thinking and replace it with a more “familial” model.

4 Public services

This section relates to those partnerships in 2008-9 which were primarily about supporting partners in delivering specific public programmes, for example exhibitions, loans, digital access to collections.

4.1 Introduction

In 2004 NMDC proposed:

Extending our loan activity for temporary exhibitions and for long-term display (with all the consequent additional access, outreach and educational programmes this leads to); Enhancing digital access to our collections on the internet and through other electronic media ⁵

Over the intervening years it is apparent from our survey that the boundaries have become even more blurred. Exhibitions or loans rarely stand alone.

Our partnership programmes focus on sharing objects and expertise - but these collaborations almost always link to public services and programming. Increasingly, our partnership programmes are structured around maximising impact from activity - so a joined up approach to everything from fundraising to public programme to engaging stakeholders is linked to object loans, exhibitions etc.

London national (16)

In many of our partnerships, resources are developed together rather than 'provided'. However, we have partners with different levels of partnership and so help can range from access to a specialist and to offering resources for sale to much greater level of support with free resources.

London national (4)

It is actually very important for us to provide and develop resources WITH partners, and we frequently build this in to partnership working - egs : working with partners developing display and exhibition projects to create learning and audience development resources, publicity and catalogue/publications etc working with

⁵ National Dimensions, 2004

providers of specialist learning resources to use the museum sites and collections as materials for their learning resources working with other providers of digital material to share links, uploadable and downloadable resources

Home country national (21)

In addition, the nationals are not the sole provider of these services. The major non-national museums have adopted a wider remit. In England this is an inevitable consequence of the Renaissance Hub structure, but it is also happening in Scotland

As a non - national museum service, we don't operate within the partnership programme in the same way as the Nationals - as we have different funding stream and performance indicators. We lead on regional development in west of Scotland and support contiguous authorities largely through free access to specialists and partnerships to acquire additional funding.

Home country, non national (6)

Q3	Not applicable	Good and sustainable	Good, but could be at risk	Could do better	We have plans to improve this	Potential target for cuts	No. of replies
Loans	13.0% (3)	78.3% (18)	13.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	8.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	23
Exhibitions	8.7% (2)	17.4% (4)	30.4% (7)	21.7% (5)	30.4% (7)	13.0% (3)	23
Digital access	13.6% (3)	13.6% (3)	18.2% (4)	22.7% (5)	31.8% (7)	0.0% (0)	22
Audience development	8.7% (2)	30.4% (7)	13.0% (3)	26.1% (6)	26.1% (6)	0.0% (0)	23
Support for learning	8.7% (2)	47.8% (11)	21.7% (5)	17.4% (4)	13.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	23

Answered question: 23

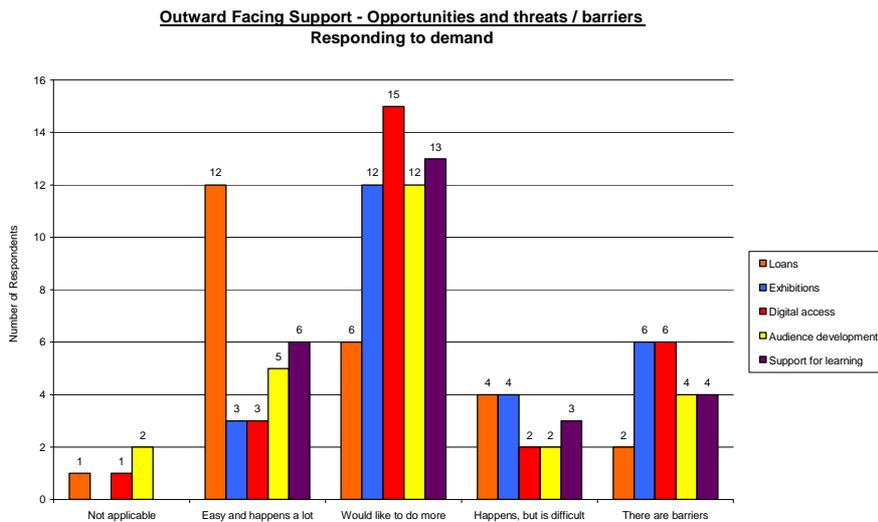
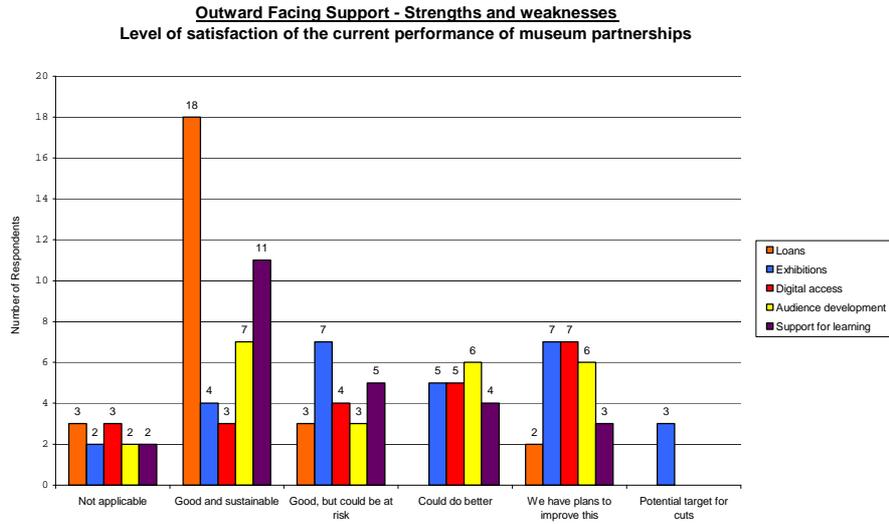
The Volition survey indicates that the respondents overall saw their loans services as good and sustainable while exhibitions were either at risk or planned for improvement. Digital access is most widely seen as requiring and having plans for improvement. Only half of respondents saw the learning support to partnerships as good and sustainable, but there are fewer plans to improve / add to them.

Q4	Not applicable	Easy and happens a lot	Would like to do more	Happens, but is difficult	*There are barriers	No of replies
Loans	4.3 % (1)	52.2% (12)	26.1% (6)	17.4% (4)	8.7% (2)	23
Exhibitions	0.0% (0)	13.6% (3)	54.5% (12)	18.2% (4)	27.3% (6)	22
Digital access	4.3% (1)	13.0% (3)	65.2% (15)	8.7% (2)	26.1% (6)	23
Audience development	8.7% (2)	21.7% (5)	52.2% (12)	8.7% (2)	17.4% (4)	23
Support for learning	0.0% (0)	26.1% (6)	56.5% (13)	13.0% (3)	17.4% (4)	23

Answered question: 23

Half of our respondents saw the provision of loans services as "easy and happens a lot". However, over half of our respondents "would like to do more" of all other public services support to their partnerships. 29% of

nationals said that these things happen but they are difficult while 47% said there were barriers.

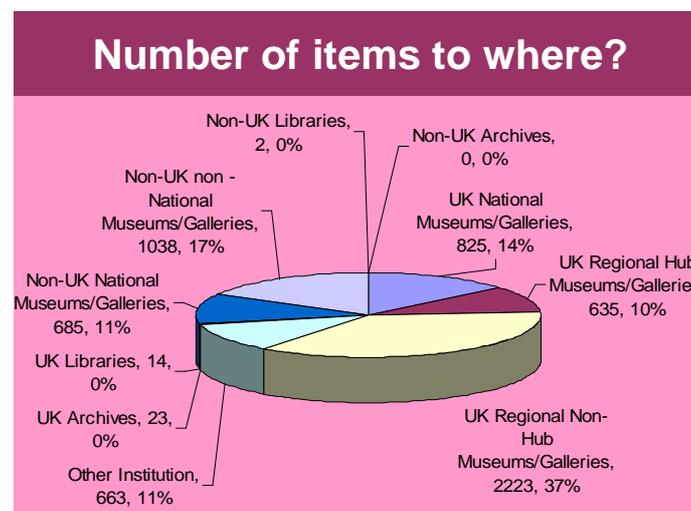
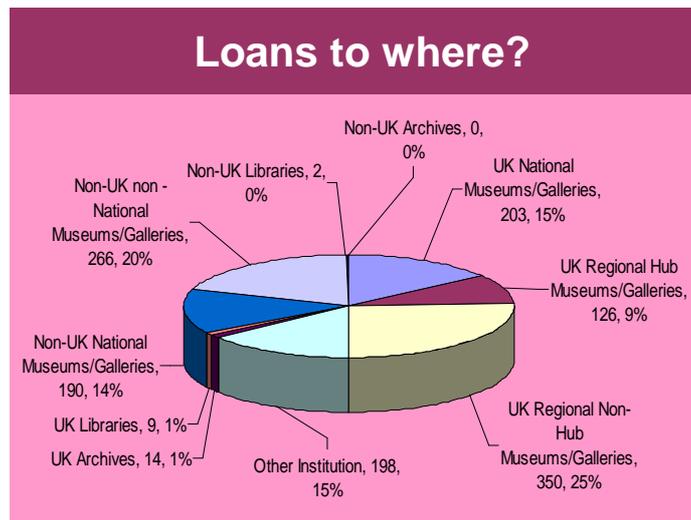


4.2 Exhibitions and loans

4.2.1 Generic

In October 2006, Alec Coles (Tyne and Wear) conducted a review of loans over “the past three years” to 18 museum and library respondents, for a Museums Association Conference speech:⁶

⁶ Ease and cost of loans between UL Museums, Alec Coles, speech to MA conference Oct 06



In Volition's 2009 survey, there is considerable variation in the types of exhibitions offered. The most comprehensive was described thus:

Touring exhibitions go out as a ready made package to regional museums, with access to specialists, and marketing and PR graphics pack. Curatorial specialist advice is regularly shared, particularly around object loans, and research partnerships. We see our loans programme as mechanisms for skills sharing, sharing of expertise as well as mechanism of getting collections out across the country.

London national (7)

Imaginative and successful solutions have been found to individual barriers:

The Wallace Collection is not permitted, by the terms of Lady Wallace's will, to make loans from its collection. However, it can receive loans. The Wallace Collection is part of the Museum Network Partnership with the Bowes Museum, Compton Verney, the Holburne Museum and Waddesdon Manor:

www.museumnetworkuk.org

However, a strategic approach is sometimes compromised by financial considerations.

Loans to individual museums is run on a demand basis - it is not run as a 'partnership'. Exhibitions are sold commercially, so again, distribution is demand based.

London national (18)

One home country national noted that 2008/2009 was not a main year for touring exhibitions (in comparison to 2007/2008 and 2010/2011) (5). A London national listed several initiatives which were under planning in 2008/9 but did not result in public programmes until 2009/10. "The year was therefore transitional for (1) and its partnerships and the volume of public programme through partnerships has vastly increased in 2009/10".

4.2.2 Exhibitions and loans – strengths

Our loans service operates well. It could be improved, in that we could offer better information/targeting for loans out to receive even more requests. As it stands we can cope with current quite high demand and have collections on long and short-term loan in Scotland within the UK and worldwide.

Home country national (5)

"Amgueddfa Cymru has a long tradition of working in partnership with other museums in Wales. It does so on an individual basis and also through two flagship programmes - Sharing Treasures and Art Share Wales. Over one third of local museums in Wales have objects on loan from Amgueddfa Cymru and over half use services provided by Amgueddfa Cymru"⁷

	Audience development	Learning	Digital links to other collections
Loans			
Free access to specialist	max 71.5%	max 73.6%	26.3%
Exhibitions			
Free access to specialist	max 66.6%	max 78.9%	10.5%

Our survey showed that around three quarters of loans and exhibitions were routinely supported by access to specialists in learning in 2008/9. There was less support by audience development specialists for exhibitions, and hardly any IT support for either (5-15%). Only a quarter of loans are supported by digital packages of any sort, and only 10% of exhibitions.

For exhibitions I would have ticked a box that said: Happens, and has been good. We have already had an exhibition each from our partners (plus other institutions) and they have all worked well. We do not have a lot of them, mainly because we do not have the capacity. The network website has been a considerable success.

London national (3)

We believe, of course, that we should always strive to do better and the measures put in place in 2008/09 are intended to help us to change and improve. Although we lend extensively in the UK, we are becoming more strategic in this area and are improving our planning and delivery processes. We are committed to collaboration and exchange with other galleries in the UK, for the benefit of the widest public, and the programme has expanded considerably with effect from 2009/10

London national (1)

The expansion of the UK partnership programme is partly about impact and we have attracted a diversity of funding sources, from the HLF, The Art Fund, the Scottish Government, Arts Council England, strategic commissioning, the Cultural Leadership Programme and from partners. We believe this does provide a sustainable model for collaborative programmes, not dependent on one short term

⁷ A Museums Strategy for Wales, consultation, CyMAL, 2009

'project' fund and harnessed to long term strategic objectives rather than responding to funding initiatives.

London national (1)

Loans activity is strong. Current work is essentially reactive although work is underway to shift towards a proactive approach. The Collections team are planning to develop themed/concept loan boxes to underpin this change in working practice. National exhibition activity is limited although international links are strong. This is in part dictated by a lack of obvious partners in the UK.

London national (19)

Although a regional strategy has not been fully articulated, our discussions so far have focussed on capacity building i.e. enabling other natural history curators to a) take better care of their collections b) learn more from their own collections and share that knowledge c) widen access to their own collections and develop engaging public programmes around them. How we do this could be through some initiatives around digitisation, loans or and/or support for learning.

London national (18)

4.2.3 Exhibitions and loans – weaknesses

At times of organisational growth or stress, loans and exhibitions are vulnerable.

Due to our capital development programme and the delivery of the [major capital project] over the next couple of years, we have decided on a moratorium on loans from 2009 until 2011 but have exempted our regional and some of our national partners.

English national (11)

We can't really tick any box as 'good and sustainable' since all areas of funding, either internal or partnership based, feel insecure at present. It is important also to note that given that a wide range of our partnership work and projects depends on additionality and external funding, it is particularly vulnerable due to the requirement to demonstrate innovation - making it hard to 'bring in' as core business work which is shared or delivered collaboratively.

Home country national

The findings from the Effective Collections proposal in 2008 showed that many museums support increased lending in theory, but struggle to put this into practice.

In other words, museums agree that loans are a good thing, but they do not necessarily see them as core. The full phase of Effective Collections includes work to approach this more philosophical barrier to lending and borrowing.⁸

See (5.1) for more detailed discussion.

Although loans are a traditional and much loved service, they are expensive.

Almost half of the Effective Collections funding for the [National Portrait Gallery] project was spent on transporting and installing the loan items [six items to six English regional venues] even though transport for these items was shared with other NPG and hub activities. Costs for transport

⁸ <http://www.museumsassociation.org/18404>

add weight to the argument that this is the biggest practical barrier to stimulating loan activity.⁹

Our Loans programme is very active and successful. It will be hampered by our [major capital project] delivery 2010/2011 in terms of numbers but should go back to normal service following this.

Home country national (5)

Similarly, it is clear that touring exhibitions are at risk in circumstances of restricted grant in aid.

- Infrastructure of regional museums isn't of a standard that can receive touring works from national museums and galleries
- National gallery / museum touring can be seen as a duty not an aspiration so there are still many issues with getting access to key works, trust in regional staff's abilities, interpretation, and financial expectations¹⁰

We offer touring exhibitions as external resources are made available. Exhibitions are basically project lead rather than a specific service.

Home country national (5)

Our partnership programmes are well established, and remain a priority. However, we are currently re-assessing the structure of our partnership work - and plan to improve impact across the board. Touring exhibitions are the programme element most at risk in the current financial climate - because our model is to minimise cost for regional partners in borrowing exhibitions and so we rely heavily on external funding from corporate partners or other sources. We are responding to this threat through an attempt to be more strategic in our working, and to develop structures for our partnership working that are less reliant on external funding.

London national (16)

High costs and conservation/display challenges make touring exhibition difficult.

National Library (14)

4.2.4 Exhibitions & loans – opportunities

"The most common recurring priority explicitly listed for major stakeholders and funders for audiences is working with education and learning (explicitly listed as a key aim by 13 out of 20 main stakeholders / funders mapped), followed (in order) by young people, communities, access and disability, participation, and cultural diversity".¹¹

In 2006, in his survey of 18 museums, libraries and archives¹², Alec Coles asked:

"If there was a way of accrediting conservation or curatorial staff, through appropriate training and assessment, probably provided by a recognised institution, or institutions, would you be prepared to consider the following arrangements, in principle?"

- Couriering of loans by trained and accredited staff from receiving institutions, or by appropriate regional or national representatives.

⁹ Effective Collections, programme prospectus 2009-12, MA, p9

¹⁰ Mapping the Touring Landscape, TEG, 2004.

¹¹ Mapping the Touring Landscape, TEG, 2004.

¹² Ease and Cost of Loans between UK museums, Alec Coles, speech to MA Conference, Oct 2006

- Condition checking of loans to partner institutions to be provided by trained, trusted and accredited staff in receiving institutions.
- Installation of loan exhibits into exhibitions by trained, trusted and accredited staff in receiving institutions.
- Mounting of exhibits/objects by trained, trusted and accredited staff in receiving institutions.
- Transport organised and provided by receiving institutions according to parameters agreed with the lender

And the answer was: nearly everyone would be prepared to consider such arrangements for every type of activity within the UK with some reservations over mounting exhibits and sensitive material.

4.2.5 Exhibitions & loans – threats /barriers

Relative differences in planning cycle timeframes between National and Non-National partners can present challenges. Differing skills sets and levels of expertise can also present challenges, as can a lack of mutual understanding of processes. Renaissance in the Regions has certainly successfully built capacity however.

London national (19)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art will present fewer major loan exhibitions in future, says the museum's director Thomas Campbell. In his first major interview since taking on the post (published in *The Art Newspaper*, September 2009), Campbell said that economic pressures require a reduction in the number of marquee exhibitions and lavish publications. Annually, the Metropolitan has been mounting 30 to 35 exhibitions, including 10-12 major loan shows, 10 medium-sized shows, and various smaller installations. He estimates there will now be 20-25% fewer large, expensive loan shows. The reductions will not be apparent for some time because the museum makes public its schedule no more than a year in advance.¹³

Not all funders are interested in supporting touring exhibitions.

London national (7)

We are aware of the difficulties some non nationals have when borrowing and the ongoing work of Effective Collections asking for a simplification of the loans process. We adopt a flexible and "can-do" approach where practicably possible, working within the remits of both the Government Indemnity and Accreditation standards; we also have no control over some of the costs governing loans, e.g. packing and transport, particularly where professional transport agents are required.

London national (7)

Exhibitions we operate on a project basis when funds are available. They are not a core service.

Home country national (5)

Problem of resources, both staff and financial. Likely to become more of an issue going forward.

Home country library (17)

The risks are largely associated with the possible loss of Renaissance funding, which would impact on many areas of partnership with the borough museums. The 'would like to do more' answers largely reflect the lack of capacity / resources to service things which are seen as 'extras' to our core work. This could be seen as a fundamental barrier....

English non national (22)

¹³ The Art Newspaper, 3.9.09

In 2004 it was claimed there was a “lack of widespread expertise of touring exhibitions in Scotland.”¹⁴

4.3 Digital Access

4.3.1 Generic

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, in its response to the recession, stated:

“We want the people of this country to be at the forefront of the digital economy, ready to take advantage of the opportunities it presents. Investing in digital skills will not only mean people are better equipped to access the public services they need when times are hard, but also means they will be better qualified for jobs in the digital age.”¹⁵

NMDC and its partners are well placed to respond to this.

“Digital technologies enhance access to collections, support research and learning, and stimulate and renew interest in original objects. Public use of digital resources is extending rapidly, with new opportunities being presented continually in a highly competitive commercial market”.¹⁶

Digital access is now about far more than just websites. But let us not forget that the UK Nationals and major English regional museums lead the way in providing public websites. The website visits to the major museums and galleries (and archives) covered by Travers report totalled over 100 million in 2006. Several individual institutions had over ten million website visits and the National Archives achieved over 11 million. Among the major regional museums included in that study, Birmingham Museums & Galleries had 1.36 million website visits and Tyne & Wear museums 679,000.¹⁷

We produced a number of digital resources in 2008/2009. The main resources linked to local museum services were 'Celts and Romans at Birnie' and the digital resources as part of the 'Museum on the Move' project, including 5 learning resources (handling boxes and activities) hosted by 5 local museums with online content linked to our collections.

Home country national (5)

¹⁴ Mapping the Touring Landscape, TEG, 2004.

¹⁵ Lifting People, Lifting Places, DCMS, May 2009. p12

¹⁶ Leading Museums, MLA, July 09, page 13

¹⁷ Museums and Galleries in Britain, Tony Travers, 2006, p38

Tony Travers, 2006: Extract: Table 15 Website visits, p 40

1.	N	National Museum of Science & Industry	12,634,572
2.	N	V&A	11,580,600
3.	N	Natural History Museum	11,002,569
4.	N	British Museum	8,755,000
5.	N	Tate	8,000,000
6.	N	Imperial War Museum	7,787,302
7.	N	National Maritime Museum	7,427,214
8.	N	National Portrait Gallery	7,440,000
9.	N	National Gallery	6,754,100
10.	N	National Museums Liverpool	4,338,588
11.	N	National Museums of Scotland	3,900,000
12.	N	Museum of London	1,637,486
13.	R	Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery	1,359,047
14.	N	Amgueddfa Cymru	1,292,733
15.	R	Tyne & Wear Museums	678,897
16.	R	Hampshire County Council	240,429
17.	N	Royal Armouries	233,652
18.	R	Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service	208,020
19.	R	Bristol's Museums, Galleries & Archives	152,491
20.	R	Sheffield Galleries and Museums Trust	135,520
21.	R	Leicester City Museums Service	102,692

“In the analogue world, the public was able to engage with culture on terms set by the experts and professionals: content, pricing, format and timing were all decided by the producer. In a world of infinitely replicable and manipulable digital content, this no longer applies”.¹⁸ In 2007, DEMOS made a cogent argument that “Online cultural engagement opens new avenues for the democratisation of culture in terms of engaging the public in shaping the nature of cultural provision and allowing people to contribute to and shape culture for themselves (eg by uploading as well as accessing information and responding to the contributions of others)”¹⁹

Never the less, at its closure in March 2007, of the 23 projects supported by Culture Online, only two of them had partners from the National Museums (Every Object Tells a Story – V&A, and Plant Cultures, National Museums Liverpool).²⁰

In 2009, the MLA wants to see national museums work in active partnerships with regional museums, and collections shared, not only in how the stories are told, but also in practical ways through mobile exhibitions, loans and effective exploitation of digital technology.²¹ Beyond the museums sector, the report Digital Britain (June 2009) refers five times to museums:

- As some of those contributing to media literacy,
- As potential partners in a Consortium of Stakeholders, led by Ofcom, to drive Digital Participation noting that several museums including Tate and the British Library have already expressed an interest in joining the Consortium.

¹⁸ Logging On, DEMOS, 2007.

¹⁹ Logging On, DEMOS, 2007, p54

²⁰ Logging On, DEMOS, 2007,

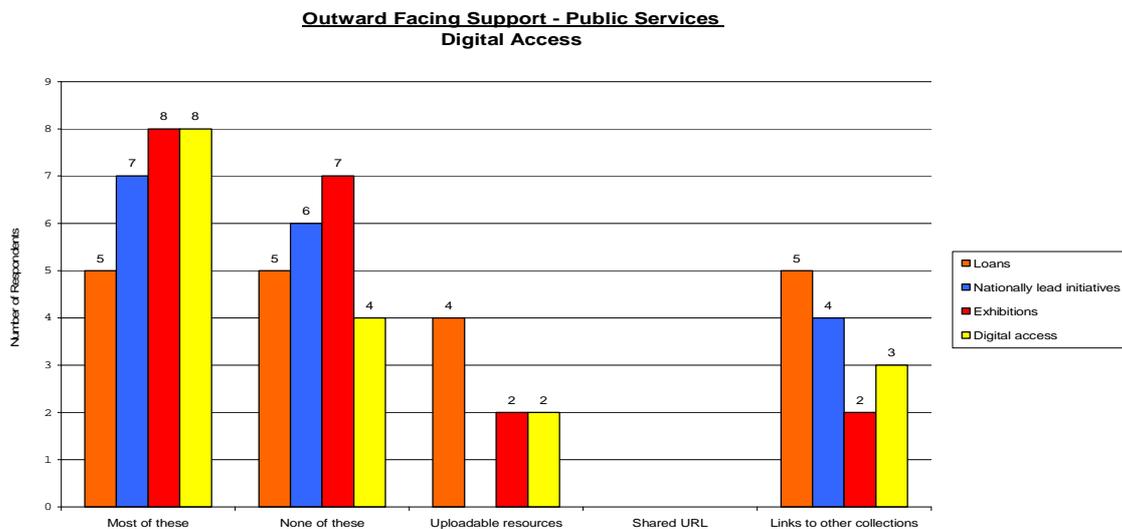
²¹ Leading Museums, MLA, July 09, page 3

- As among those strongly placed to provide content and thrive in a Digital Age.
- As providers of public service content
- And in a quote from Stephen Fry.

This is a remarkable presence in such a major government review.²²

NMDC has stated that it is fully committed to examining the opportunities offered by digital technology in improving access to and experience of museum collections. “Extending the museums’ experience is particularly important to improve access for educational use, Research & Development, and for international audiences. We support joined up initiatives across the sector, including the National Collections Online project and support the Invest to Save Online Learning Project, led by the V&A with partners from across the national museums. We would like to see:

- Government support and leadership for this work to enable the museums to keep pace with global developments and extend the museum experience, including the support and interest of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.
- A strategy and resources to develop online creative cultural infrastructure and content, possibly using some of the BBC licence fee as the Digital Britain report has suggested”.²³



4.3.2 Digital access - strengths

General wish to improve and planning of several projects for 2010.

4.3.3 Digital access - weaknesses

Digital access projects ... tend to be on project basis.

Home country national (5)

Digital access is driven by funds, but the greatest difficulty is in identifying which of our collections has priority for digitisation, from over 70m specimens. Where we can

²² Digital Britain, DCMS / DBIS, June 2009

²³ NMDC Manifesto

respond it is with reference to the need of the scientific community as a whole, perhaps in partnership with an international peer organisation

London national (18)

4.3.4 Digital access – opportunities

There are significant opportunities to support national developments, not just as individual institutions, as referenced by Digital Britain, but through working with MLA:

The MLA will work closely with others to develop sector-specific responses. Priority will be given to harnessing innovation, using the very best expertise, and avoiding waste and duplication. Regional capacity and skills development will be maximised.²⁴

DCMS, 2006

"Museums need to look more strategically at their approaches to documentation and collections management, look more holistically at the challenges posed by acquisition and disposal; at the opportunities and issues raised by digitisation, including the need for greater co-ordination and synergy across the whole sector ...

This era, with digital opportunities, provides museums with perhaps the best opportunity they have ever had to be recognised for their vital role in stimulating the spread of knowledge, developing conversations across ages and cultures and adding to the enjoyment of those who learn."²⁵

We are satisfied that our support is sustainable but we would very much like to do more with our partners, especially relating to the ARTIST ROOMS projects. This would require a significant increase in learning resources for national activity, including online resources.

London national (10)

In terms of digital access, web redevelopment plans will include major improvements in the digital strategy delivery of the Museum.

London national (19)

"Following the publication of the Digital Britain report we have to think about what the implications are for museums. It is not explicit in the report, but public organisations are increasingly being expected to share information, and a big challenge is how to get value from sharing, for instance, with the BBC, Google, and other partners. There are a lot of issues still to be ironed out, but I think the debate is less about copyright and more about how to manage content and how to manage those relationships. My own view is that data wants to be out and shared about and the big challenge for museums will be to change their customary practice and their way of doing things to enable this.

Nick Poole, Collections Link: MA website, 16th Sept 2009

4.3.5 Digital access – threats / barriers

Home countries:

National Digital Access, Audience Development and Support for Learning projects are not funded to be delivered by us, project funding between the national/local sectors is also not available. We are arguing that [we] could have a role in all these

²⁴ Leading Museums, MLA, July 09, page 13

²⁵ Understanding the Future, DCMS, Oct 2006, p15

areas to deliver more at local level and in partnership with local service if resources made available to us.

Home country national (5)

Legal:

For reasons of IPR and copyright issues, digital access can prove difficult with our photography collections. In other areas of collections digital access is more straightforward.

London national (7)

4.4 Learning (for SWOT see 4.5)

With regard to learning support, the Renaissance Review recommends that DCMS:

Integrates the partnership working between national and non-national museums, supported through Strategic Commissioning, with Renaissance, in order to rationalise and reinforce the government's support for national-regional partnerships; and re-examines Renaissance's focus on education in light of wider programmes to engage children and young people across the whole cultural sector – namely, Creative Partnerships and Find your Talent ²⁶

It is worth reminding ourselves how far the museums sector as a whole has come in seeing themselves as providers of formal and informal learning.

	1994	2006
Work with formal education groups	37%	86%
Facilities used primarily or solely for educational purposes	36%	77%
Education policy	23%	69%

Understanding the Future, DCMS, 2006

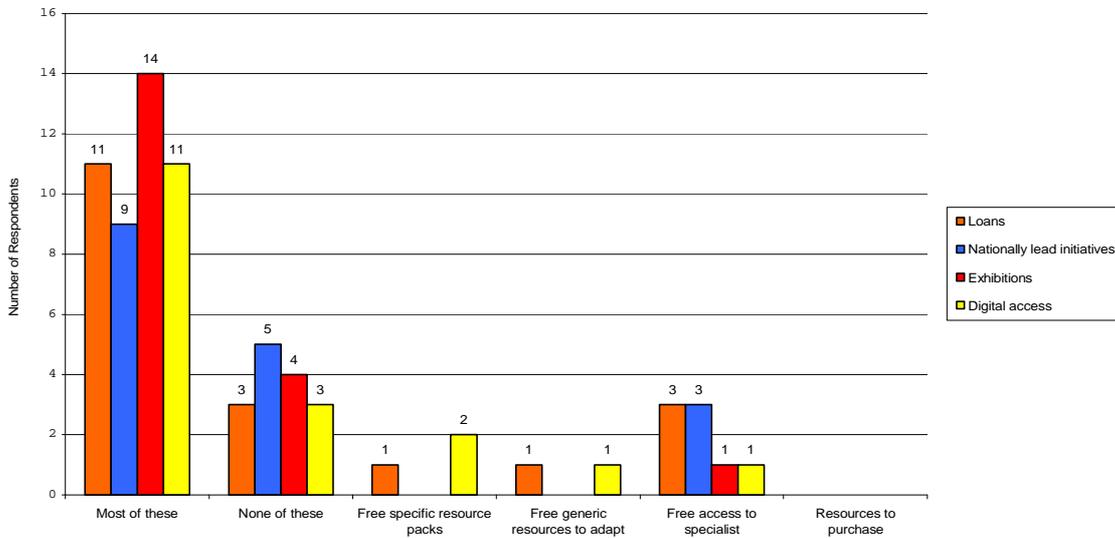
In 2006, one of DCMS's priorities over the next decade was that "Museums will fulfil their potential as learning resources." ²⁷ The nationals are responding to this in various ways but our results indicate that a lack of consistency is still apparent. Learning resources are not accompanying every touring exhibition, and access to specialists is not universal.

While tailor-made solutions do reflect their individual strengths, it is possible that a more consistent approach could be explored in some areas, providing a national "offer" to non-nationals.

²⁶ Renaissance Review, page 15

²⁷ Understanding the Future, DCMS, 2006

**Outward Facing Support - Public Services
Support for Learning**



The learning support we give to partners is project specific and varies according to those projects. It usually involves access to specialist advice. Whether we provide resources to adapt or specific ones depends on the budget available. We do not have a set policy on this but we try to help our partners in any way possible. We do not have the resources to assist partners in audience development or digital access matters.

Home country national (10)

Educational projects form by far the most important part of the partnership activities, but each museum has sent an exhibition to [us], it is hoped to institute occasional staff exchanges, plus there is much sharing of information and advice.

London national, (3)

We do not have a formal regional museum partnership programme however we deliver a number of partnership projects including those with regional museums. Support for regional museums focuses around access to specialist advice and delivery of programmes themselves such as learning workshops to audiences, enabling us to deliver outreach at partner museums whilst sharing skills and knowledge. These aim to be sustainable with resource packs provided for the organisation to continue in future.

London national, (7)

The learning support we give to partners is project specific and varies according to those projects. It usually involves access to specialist advice. Whether we provide resources to adapt or specific ones depends on the budget available. We do not have a set policy on this but we try to help our partners in any way possible.

London national (10)

Loans - yes Real World Science - a partnership supporting secondary science programme delivery across 4 museums Jurassic Coast Festival of Fossils - supporting regeneration and learning in the SW Wildlife Photographer of the Year - sold commercially nationwide.

London national (18)

4.5 Audience development

4.5.1 Generic

“At their best museums provide space and intellectual support to extract the sometimes very different meanings different communities can bring to their collections. But the challenges are very different for different kinds of museums. For our grandest national institutions, their very stature and authority can be a barrier to reaching people who feel that institutions are ‘not for them’. Equally, there are museums that are so closely rooted in their own community, whether of place or of interest, that they find it difficult to look beyond it and to set their own specific expertise within a broader context. Enabling museums to understand the true challenges of inclusiveness is thus a major museum development activity, and is a priority for the next decade. At its simplest, it is about better, more engaging museums across the whole sector, learning from one another and from other agencies.”²⁸

“Another aspect of civic activity and partnership is the extent to which museums and galleries can reach out to audiences who, traditionally, have been under-represented within attendances. Museums and galleries are increasingly expected to improve their appeal to newer groups within society, to younger people and to the least advantaged”²⁹

Inspiration, Identity and Learning

“Community work is relatively new in many of the museums in this study, but this evidence suggests that museums have the potential to appeal to community users as well as to school-based users. However, the achievement of outcomes such as those in the research are very resource-heavy, demanding staff with specialist skills and experience, and a commitment to opening up the museum to new ideas and new ways of working. Not all museums in the programme seemed able or ready to cope with that. While the potential is there, it may not be realised”.³⁰

This has been an area where, traditionally, the non-national museums, particularly those run by local authorities, have been perceived to have taken the lead and existing partnerships are often building upon the recipient’s strengths and contributions. In future, it is likely that those partners will seek to respond even more strongly to these community-focussed drivers.

“An emphasis on social inclusion and other policy drivers influences the role and provision of cultural heritage. Legislative changes ... have also had an impact on the sector. In England, the local government improvement agenda as detailed in *A Passion for Excellence*” will have a particular impact on local authority cultural heritage services.³¹

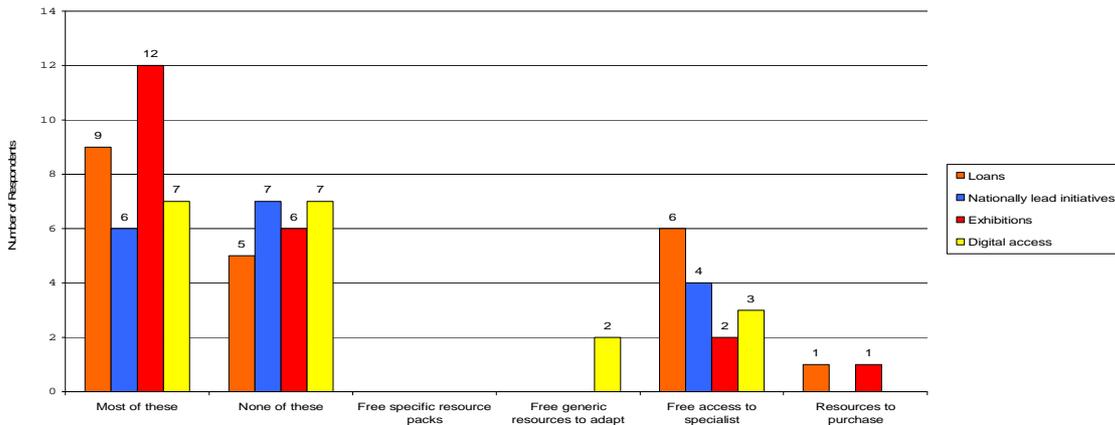
²⁸ DCMS, *Understanding the Future*, July 2006

²⁹ *Museums and Galleries in Britain*, Tony Travers, 2006, p 72

³⁰ *Inspiration, Identity and Learning*, page 43

³¹ *The Cultural Heritage Blueprint*, Dec 2008, page 16

**Outward Facing Support - Public Services
Audience Development**



Audience development resources are less likely to be made available by the national “suppliers” than those for learning, but see above for comparative strengths.

4.5.2 Learning and audience development – strengths

Those partnerships we do have which support learning within partner organisations and help them to develop their audiences have developed in response to demand and evolved through good evaluation.

London national (18)

We particularly support audience development plans and learning initiatives on the local and regional level with specific initiatives and networks. For example, we are the lead partner for the pilot of Find your talent within the Arts and Regeneration Consortium. We are also running the Creative Apprenticeships scheme. Nationally, we are the lead partners in the Strategic Commissioning funded programme, Engaging with Refugees and Asylum seekers. We are the co-ordinating the area museums participation in the History of the World BBC project.

English national (11)

We are satisfied that our support for learning is sustainable but we would very much like to do more with our partners, especially relating to the ARTIST ROOMS projects. This would require a significant increase in learning resources for national activity, including online resources. We have strong programmes of loans out and touring exhibitions, both of which are supported by our Registrars team particularly in relation to art handling. We are in the process of developing a more comprehensive partnership policy which will encompass the concept of a Gallery Without Walls.

Home country national (10)

Audiences - Focus on developing youth engagement strategies within aspects of the national programme to develop informed and responsive use of the collection by young people outside London.

Support for learning - This takes different forms across our partnerships and is always factored into the planning of new partnerships. Most recently we have provided sustained financial and staff support for portraiture related learning within our two National Trust partnerships.

London national (4)

Their Past Your Future (TPYF) provides another example of sustainable national partnership activity, with plans for an innovative, Olympic-themed educational project *Build the Truce* (BTT) in train. The BTT learning project, working in strategic partnership, will include intergenerational learning to tackle issues. Touring events will be mounted through existing networks and organisations. BTT schools projects and museum-based schools programming will be integrated and sustained through existing schools programming.

London national (19)

Support for learning, for example through CPD programmes (TPYF, Holocaust Education programme) has been very successful but external funds have resourced this activity. Strategic commissioning projects across the branches of the Museum have engaged many regional partners, building sustainable links and facilitating skills sharing and exchange of best practice.

London national (19)

4.5.3 Learning and audience development – weaknesses

We don't have a formal role to provide these services nationally. We do what we can. In most areas we require additional resources to be able to offer a service at all i.e. Support for Learning to local museum staff, also Audience Development

Home country national (5)

Looking to share more in skills and knowledge re contemporary science interpretation. We will be working with 7 regional museums 09-10 to draw out science in collections as part of partnerships, and are looking to provide training sessions for museum learning teams on how to lead contemporary science discussions (currently delivering these to teachers). Looking to develop advice sheets on website for range of areas e.g. how to run specific events, etc. along with contacts for further advice. Due to current climate most activity is a potential target for cuts.

London national (7)

4.5.4 Learning and audience development – opportunities

We lend to between 150-200 UK museums every year - this is an extremely important part of our partnership working. Barriers are around capacity within individual departments to service loans - but we nevertheless want to increase our activity in this area. In particular, we are keen to increase the number of long-term loans to partner museums - and see Effective Collections as one means to facilitate this. There are also perceived barriers. Many smaller regional museums don't consider requesting our loans - and we need to do more to be transparent about the processes and to encourage applications.

London national (16)

We are able to respond to requests for support and ideas when made. In addition, through our priority regional partnerships we are proactive in seeking needs, requests and offering greater support on all areas. This includes regular travel to meet colleagues in order to shape relevant activity together.

London national (4)

4.5.5 Learning and audience development – threats / barriers

Barriers to a partnership approach to exhibitions include current internal processes - future plans will ensure that, as part of a coordinated public programme, exhibitions will be transferable between branches of the Museum. In terms of responding to loan demand, plans are in train to facilitate onsite research and reduce the onus on the Museum, transferring more responsibility to the lending organisation

London national (19)

4.6 Other

There are strategic opportunities to develop these services, but also some threats. Scotland and Wales are strong in these areas.

In a sense we can't honestly tick 'easy and happens a lot' since we know from our extensive work in all five areas, there is a greater level of demand than we can fulfil. That is partly as we are such an important player in [home country] there will almost by definition be a capacity gap between us and partner that we will seek to address; but also because we work flexibly and collaboratively across many areas of work, which increasingly benefit from cross-resourcing - eg working in support for learning initiatives that generate digitally based resources which can be used for new audiences.

Home country national (21)

The nationals in the home countries frequently administer other public-facing services. For example,

The National Museum of Scotland also administers the Treasure Trove Scheme on behalf of the Crown and the National Fund for Acquisitions on behalf of the Scottish Government, both of which have direct public benefit. In addition to the administration of the Fund our specialist curators also advise on applications and review of submissions. 94 payments were made in 2008/2009 to 34 organisations. The total purchase value to which the fund contributed was £632,734.00

This is less common in England but two purchase funds are administered by the Science Museum and V&A.

The most regularly raised threat was that of resources – finance, grants and the internal capacity to participate as frequently as the museums would wish.

Recent results of the Arts Council England (national) recession research with Regularly Funded Organisations (RFOs) show that in March 2009, more respondents had seen a reduction in money available from sponsorship deals and local authorities (compared to December 2008). There were also reports of growing pressure on staff costs - around a quarter of respondents had already made redundancies or taken measures to freeze staff pay. There had been some improvement in terms of how much money respondents had spent on utilities due to the decrease in energy prices, although this was one of the few areas where reports were more positive than in December.³²

Clearly, demand exceeds supply. Therefore we need to be strategic in the way we use resources, whether money, loans, expertise, time, brand and, through collaborating, to make resources go further and have more impact. This is why we have linked our partnership working to organisational objectives that can be evaluated, beyond number of partnerships, number of activities and so on. We are interested in the impact of partnerships, and in finding out what difference working in partnership has made, in terms of specific aims. One of our aims is to be known as a good collaborator. Collaboration is demanding, needs dialogue and takes time.

London national (1)

³² West Midlands Cultural Sector Economic Snapshot, July 2009

Many of our partners expect a national institution to be resource rich and that we can supply what their local authorities etc do not. Managing expectations is difficult. There is very little national funding for initiatives linking national institutions with partners, like the MLA initiatives in England. Limited staff resources account for the lack of support offered to partners in some areas.

Home country national (10)

Capacity issues within regional museums as well as with our allocated resources and time required for building partnerships may affect our willingness to generate more regional and collaborative exhibitions. Environmental and security issues as well as adherence to the National Indemnity Scheme may affect lending out national collections to non traditional borrowers and making better use of collections.

English national (11)

Core and external funding streams are the key barriers for expansion and/or capacity to respond to requests/demand for regional support. As we are not funded nationally we do not have a secure funding stream to support this - but we deliver regional support as far as possible on existing core revenue

Home country non-national (6)

5 Collections

This section focuses upon partnerships which are primarily about collections and collections management

5.1 Generic

A great deal of [all] this activity takes place - both formally and informally - but we'd like to emphasise this area of activity even more in the coming years.

London national (16)

Collections are both the process and the product of all museums and there are many opportunities for national-regional partnerships. Traditionally, these were first expressed through informal relationships around scholarship, and loans of material. Over the past two decades specialist posts in many regional museums have declined in preference to more overtly public-facing roles, leaving the heart of serious collections-based scholarship largely focussed in major services such as those explored in this study. The knowledge of those specialists is now even more a national resource which must be shared.

In 2007, the government acknowledged the “excellent work that is already taking place to create stronger links between the national museums and regional museums” recognising that this brings “benefits in developing specialist skills of local curators and in giving local people increased access to excellence in collections, exhibitions and interpretation”³³

The Renaissance Review, 2009, noted that:

Regional museums are noticeably 'more confident in the management and presentation of their collections than they were 5-6 years ago'. Research and evaluation have become an increasingly

³³ Government Response to the Culture, Media and Sport select committee report on Caring for our collections, 2006-7

standard part of their work; they are becoming increasingly modernised and rationalised; have introduced greater cultural diversity and are reaching more audiences through learning projects with children, young people and adults. ³⁴

And MLA, in its “Leading Museums” of the same year stated:

The quality of all museums needs to grow and the very best museums must be seen to compete with comparator institutions across Europe and beyond. Results on this scale can only be achieved through stronger relationships between all kinds of collections. National museums have to be conscious both of their role as leaders – derived from the scale and quality of their collections – and of their need to exchange expertise, without unreasonable charges ³⁵

Effective Collections has been quoted by several national museums as a good vehicle for improving collections work across the country. During the first phase of 2006-9, out of nine partnership projects, four included a national museum. The new 2009-12 programme is rather different but in theory includes significant opportunities for national engagement. There are three national representatives (out of 20 invitees) on the Collections Strategy Group and forward plans propose to “use existing research such as the NMDC’s 2003 report *Loans Between Nationals and Non-National Museums*”³⁶

In particular:

“There has been a huge demand for collections reviews from museums, showing that there is a need for specialist expertise to unlock underused collections in the UK”³⁷

NPG case study ³⁸

In this pilot project six paintings and sculptures are on long-term loan (three year renewable agreements) to six venues in the south west and north east of England.

Lessons learned included:

The NPG reported a significant workload in preparing the loans and relationships with new borrowers that has an impact on the programme of work the NPG was already committed to [but] it was clear about their objectives for the pilot project.

Other museums ... will also need to match their project to their own strategic objectives (why they want to use a particular collection more) and therefore invest in the process as an organisation.

³⁴ Renaissance Review.

³⁵ Leading Museums, MLA, July 09, page 5

³⁶ Effective Collections, programme prospectus 2009-12, MA, 2009, p14

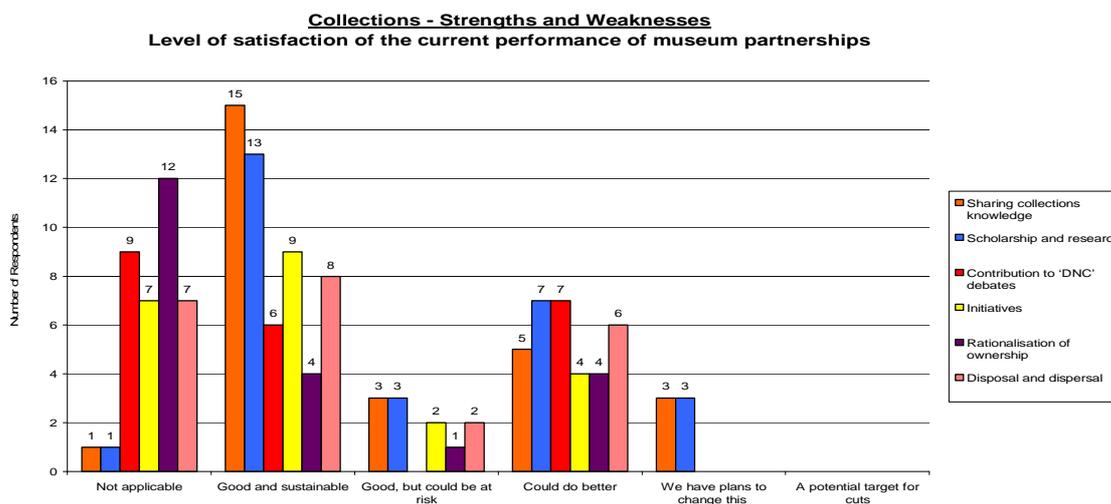
³⁷ Effective Collections, programme prospectus 2009-12, MA, 2009, p16

³⁸ Effective Collections, programme prospectus 2009-12, MA, 2009, p9

Q6	Not applicable	Good and sustainable	Good, but could be at risk	Could do better	We have plans to change this	A potential target for cuts	No of replies
Sharing collections knowledge	4.3% (1)	65.2% (15)	13.0% (3)	21.7% (5)	13.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	23
Scholarship and research	4.3% (1)	56.5% (13)	13.0% (3)	30.4% (7)	13.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	23
Contribution to 'DNC' debates	42.9% (9)	28.6% (6)	0.0% (0)	33.3% (7)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	21
Initiatives	31.8% (7)	40.9% (9)	9.1% (2)	18.2% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	22
Rationalisation of ownership	60.0% (12)	20.0% (4)	5.0% (1)	20.0% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	20
Disposal and dispersal	33.3% (7)	38.1% (8)	9.5% (2)	28.6% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	21

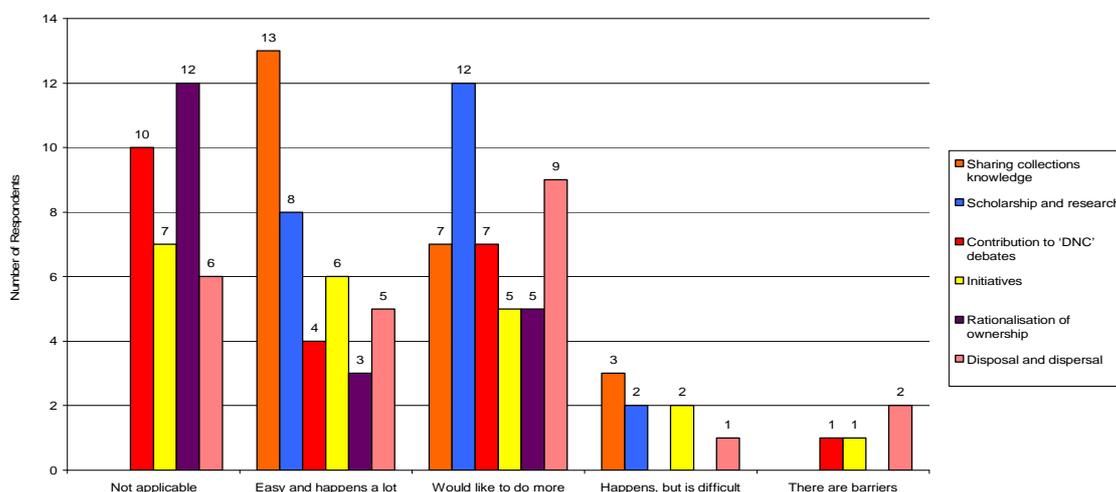
DNC – Distributed national collections

43% of our respondents thought that discussions around Distributed National Collections (ie knowing, across the nation, where related collections are held) was “not applicable” to them; and 75% of the institutions marking “not applicable” were national museums. 60% thought that “rationalisation of ownership” (ie transferring collections to the most appropriate institution across the nation) was “not applicable”. While this demonstrates commendable sensitivity towards the ownership rights of partners, it is perhaps an indication of a less outward focus than might be useful. The contrast between the proportion of respondents who thought that collections-focused work “could be at risk” (average of 10%) and those who thought public-services work “could be at risk” (average of 19%) is striking.



Q7	Not applicable	Easy and happens a lot	Would like to do more	Happens, but is difficult	*There are barriers	No. of replies
Sharing collections knowledge	0.0% (0)	59.1% (13)	31.8% (7)	13.6% (3)	0.0% (0)	22
Scholarship and research	0.0% (0)	36.4% (8)	54.5% (12)	9.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	22
Contribution to 'DNC' debates	47.6% (10)	19.0% (4)	33.3% (7)	0.0% (0)	4.8% (1)	21
Initiatives	35.0% (7)	30.0% (6)	25.0% (5)	10.0% (2)	5.0% (1)	20
Rationalisation of ownership	60.0% (12)	15.0% (3)	25.0% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	20
Disposal and dispersal	28.6% (6)	23.8% (5)	42.9% (9)	4.8% (1)	9.5% (2)	21

Collections - Opportunities and threats / barriers
Responding to demand



5.2 Scholarship and sharing knowledge

MLA sees the opportunities for developing collections as critical in:

- Supporting excellence – encouraging and rewarding museums nationally and especially regionally to develop and use their collections to deliver the very best cultural experiences for the public, and particularly to create narratives for new and wider audiences.³⁹
- Building capacity – investing in leadership and professional development, in scholarship and collections care, in new finance and governance models, and in digital technology, to ensure effectiveness and sustainability for the long term⁴⁰

5.2.1 Scholarship and sharing knowledge – strengths

Unsurprisingly, our survey showed extensive comfort with sharing collections knowledge, scholarship and research. But it is not still recorded in a

³⁹ Leading Museums, MLA, July 09, page 8

⁴⁰ Leading Museums, MLA, July 09, page 8

consistent way and cannot really be used for advocacy purposes across the sector.

We run a programme called 'Knowledge Exchange' for local museums in Scotland. This comprises a free training programme, an advice service and involvement in many different support networks

Home country national (5)

Again, doubtless more could be done. In particular future plans aim to increase sharing and exchange of knowledge and ideas. However, we are actively engaged in all these issues. Our research programmes and research networks are by nature founded on knowledge transfer and have been successful in attracting funding from AHRC and other sources. We are participating in Effective Collections (pilot taking place in 2009) and contributing to the initiative led by the Arts Council for the sector on collections of contemporary art. We organise or facilitate a number of seminars and other activities intended to stimulate sharing of knowledge and expertise.

London national (1)

5.2.2 Scholarship and sharing knowledge - weaknesses

In 2004, NMDC said "The level of collaborative research and scholarship activity across all national museums is more difficult to quantify, certainly in aggregate form, with much activity taking place 'behind the scenes' and unrecorded. The emphasis, time and resources devoted to research and scholarship-related activity within national museums contrasts greatly with that found in most other museums across the country. Museum professionals from across the sector frequently comment on the long-term decline in scholarship outside national and university museums – in particular in local authority museums where the priority on education and access has been at the expense of traditional curatorial work for some decades".⁴¹

5.2.3 Scholarship and sharing knowledge – opportunities

Sharing collections knowledge, scholarship and research is a key goal for the BM - and will feature increasingly in our partnership working in the UK over the coming years. We aim to support the development of curatorial capacity in UK museums, and are beginning to establish new structures to facilitate this - in collaboration with MLA and other major partners.

London national (6)

We are keen to extend our research activity among a range of partners, including other museums. We are currently awaiting the outcome of an application for Independent Research Organisation status, which we hope will facilitate this.

London national (7)

Our specialist staff have good relationships with most colleagues in smaller London museums and we currently share knowledge / research / collections information at that individual level. However we hope to make a great leap forward in putting our collections on line over the next few years - with obvious benefits for knowledge-sharing. We are tackling collections rationalisation and disposal, which is carried out in a best-practice way, including seeking alternative homes for material we no longer want.

English non national (23)

⁴¹ National Dimensions, NMDC, 2004, p27

5.2.4 Scholarship and sharing knowledge – threats / barriers

Provision of scholarship and research is juxtaposed with other aspects of our curators' roles. Our Research and Publications Committee has been discussing the desirability of research sabbaticals to develop this aspect of our activity as part of a new research strategy. On disposal and dispersal, this happens very infrequently but can be easily accommodated if required.

Cited as a barrier by: Home country national (10)

5.3 Distributed national collections

As already noted, a high proportion of respondents felt that rationalisation and contributing to DNC debates were “not applicable” to their museum. However, 43% ARE apparently interested in disposal and dispersal (though it is not clear in which direction).

5.3.1 Distributed national collections - strengths

In terms of DNC debates, the Museum has links to Army Museums and is developing collecting strategies that consider the selection and retention of material

London national (19)

5.3.2 Distributed national collections – weaknesses

We seek to develop a sense of a 'broader national collection' in our collection/disposal planning, in an effort to minimise waste and focus resources. We have worked in partnership with the Transport Trust, the Heritage Railways Association and the Vintage Carriages Trust to produce national registers of types of rail object which form a basis for our and others collecting and disposal policies. As with previously in the current climate much activity has the potential for cuts.

London national (7)

No National/Regional funds for DNC projects which would allow this. In addition DNC project (in the UK sense) tend to have requirement for funds to focus on English museums and not allow full Scottish involvement (as funded by DCMS).

Home country national (5)

NMS does not have a formal role in relation to work with local museums in Scotland, or indeed work across the UK. 1. We can't lead on DNC funds to work across national/local museums in Scotland through Recognition. 2. We can't lead or be in direct receipt of funds for DCMS funded initiatives like SSNs etc

Home country national (5)

We are not aware of DNC debates occurring for natural history collections, although we have dialogue with many museums in UK with natural history collections.

Unsure what rationalisation means, hence no answer

London national (18)

5.3.3 Distributed national collections – opportunities

Our participation in DNC debates is strong with regard the National Railway Collections however, we are looking to do more in relation to our other collections.

London national (7)

The HLF funded project, the Great British Art Debate, led by Tyne and Wear Museums (we are not always the 'leading' partner) is intended to explore the

concept of the DNC and ARTIST ROOMS acts this out: the collection is collaborative in ownership and use.

London national (1)

Ongoing discussions in library sector in Scotland re distributed national collections, no major progress as yet.

Home country library (17)

5.4 Initiatives

We have a Scheme called 'Recognition' rather than Designation in Scotland which is administered by Museums Galleries Scotland. There is no formal link between the Recognised collections and the National Collections (i.e. NMS and the National Galleries, National Library of Scotland etc).

Home country national (5)

In Scotland, the Recognition scheme has a £40k funding limit for collections management development and has only been in place for 2 years.

Home country non-national (6)

5.5 Rationalisation

In 2004, the NMDC stated:

There are relatively few examples of transfers of collections to national museums, although this has occurred where the long-term future of small, independent collections could not be protected adequately by existing arrangements. ...

It is becoming more common for national museums to transfer discrete parts of their collections to new sites, to create a new museum or branch in partnership with a non-national institution. ⁴²

In 2006, the West Midlands report, *Worthwhile Partnerships*, focussed upon regional acquisitions:

A more strategic approach could be extended to acquisitions.

Pooled funds would help to overcome resource constraints through shared ownership arrangements. Partnership agreements about collecting activity and joint acquisitions could also avoid duplication where it is unhelpful.⁴³

5.5.1 Rationalisation - strengths

Perhaps best summarised by two London nationals

I am not sure that it's possible to say any of this is easy as these are complex issues but we are actively engaged in them. (1)

Happens and is successful – we don't do it a lot, but, when we do, it works well. (3)

5.5.2 Rationalisation – weaknesses

⁴² National Dimensions, NMDC, 2004, p18

⁴³ *Worthwhile Partnerships*, a Regional Perspective, 2006

We are not as involved as some partners in conversations about rationalisation of collections, disposal etc.

London national (16)

We do a lot in terms of communication with colleagues on rationalisation and disposal. This limited by our staff resources to review collections though and no direct funds for any museums local or national to bid to support this activity.

Home country national (5)

Good but can be improved as we improve the quality of our collections management - key barrier is sustained core revenue for basic museum collections management functions within a service that has seen minimal/frozen revenue growth in the last 7 years. We are now facing new potential budget freeze/efficiency savings. Lack of access to external funding for core or retrospective collections management functions is problematic.

Home country non national (6)

5.5.3 Rationalisation – opportunities

Our collections development plans are due for review and this would lead to better understanding of the potential of our collections, especially for long term loans and disposals.

English national (11)

Disposal and dispersal will be facilitated through detailed collections reviews (linked to proposed changes to acquisitions and disposal policies which are subject to Board approval) and the delivery of an Estates master plan.

London national (19)

5.5.4 Rationalisation - barriers

In “Leading Museums”, MLA perhaps implies criticism when it says that:
Collections can be used in new ways if they are introduced beyond the walls of the institutions that over-protect them ⁴⁴

This seems to be echoed by the regional perspective in the West Midlands:
The standards currently demanded by different institutions vary and are sometimes higher than the standards met by the lending institutions themselves. Lenders need to make it known that they may offer flexibility if that is the case and borrowing institutions need to make it known that they are willing to raise their own standards when they are able to do so.

Specifically:

A set of clear and sensible standards relating to the care of borrowed objects would facilitate work between partners. It has been suggested that environmental standards advisors be established. ⁴⁵

However:

Objects that may be overlooked in large museums due to an embarrassment of riches can shine in a different context ⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Leading Museums, MLA, July 09, page 6

⁴⁵ Worthwhile Partnerships, a Regional Perspective

⁴⁶ Worthwhile Partnerships, a Regional Perspective

6 Non-museum partnerships

This mapping exercise was conceived to map museum partnerships. However, we did give respondents an opportunity to flag up important relationships with non-museum organisations (Q5).

UK partnership work encompasses loans to a variety of partners. Where practicable, objects have been loaned to venues ranging from schools to prisons to cathedrals on a short-term basis.

London national (16)

As the national library, we share collections and expertise with other libraries, archives and museums.

Library (14)

Work with Higher Education

Should be noted we also have a number of research projects in collaboration with HE organisations.

London national (7)

We share our collections with non-museums, because demand is mainly through individual scientists working on research programmes primarily in universities. We have Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with several international and national academic institutions which can involve loans of our collections. We also share collections management knowledge but again not through any formal partnership.

London national (18)

We regularly use our collections for teaching purposes within higher education institutions and universities and have a number of partnerships with community organisations and the voluntary sector for using our collections, expertise and buildings.

English national (11)

Loan boxes are available to a wide variety of users. Specific collections are regularly used for University teaching.

English non national (8)

We are in the process of applying for IRO status in order to allow us to take the lead in research processes. The appointment of an academic trustee and the development of a Research Strategy, supported by a Research Board, will support the shift to a more proactive approach.

London national (19)

We also run and participate in a series of research networks and major funded research programmes.

London national (1)

Subject related organisations

At the National Railway museum we have a large, growing and very active programme of sharing collections with heritage institutions including both museums and non-museums (ie not Registered and not registrable) e.g. significant loans programme to preserved railways. The programme often involves the borrower providing resources and expertise in collections care to the benefit of both institutions. We also have a number of partnerships with coordinating bodies, rather than individual museums e.g. are discussing DNC with SSN, Heritage Railways Association and the Railway Heritage Committee.

English national (7)

We share our collection with Ministry of Defence locations including regimental organisations/military messes. During 2008-09, 34 loans were made and this represents 33% of all national loan activity. The TPFYF project involved a touring exhibition to shopping centres. The Some Other Way Forward Project 'Street Genius' in London also delivered significant community outreach activity that also involved sharing collections with non museum venues.

London national (19)

The Gallery has 3 long term partnerships with Country Houses and long term loans in a variety of venues. We also work directly with local cultural institutions and community organisations to shape programmes and facilitate off-site displays.

London national (4)

The majority of the national bagpiping collection is on display at the National Piping Centre in Glasgow. This is an independent enterprise comprising the School of Piping, a hotel, conference facility, bar and restaurant.

Home country national (5)

Please note that our partners on public programmes across the UK are not exclusively museums (with collections) but also galleries without collections, whose programmes we support through giving them access to the national collection and to a network. The aim of our partnership network is not just to export expertise but to cross fertilise through the network from partners to each other and from partners to us. Export from one (national) organisation to partners isn't the spirit in which our partnerships are developed.

London national (1)

Long-term loans to historic houses. Touring exhibitions to non-traditional venues e.g. in 2008-09 three of the Theatre and Performance touring exhibitions toured to six theatres/performance spaces where they were seen by over 100k people

London national (20)

Geographical focus

Dedicated outreach team support community-led museums across [city] and take collections to non – museum venues for display. Loans Section support display of collections in other civic buildings such as City Hall, Concert hall etc.

Home country non-national (6)

Barriers

[A problem is] the 'gap' in the bureaucracy due to the requirement for CyMAL's funding to be routed through registered museums, when many of our actual and potential partners are not - eg ACW funded exhibition venues and arts centres; interpretation centres in national parks; schools, colleges and HEIs; community centres. This is always there even when we have successful relationship-building projects to address other issues, eg staff expertise, security and environment

Home country national (21)

7 Professionalism

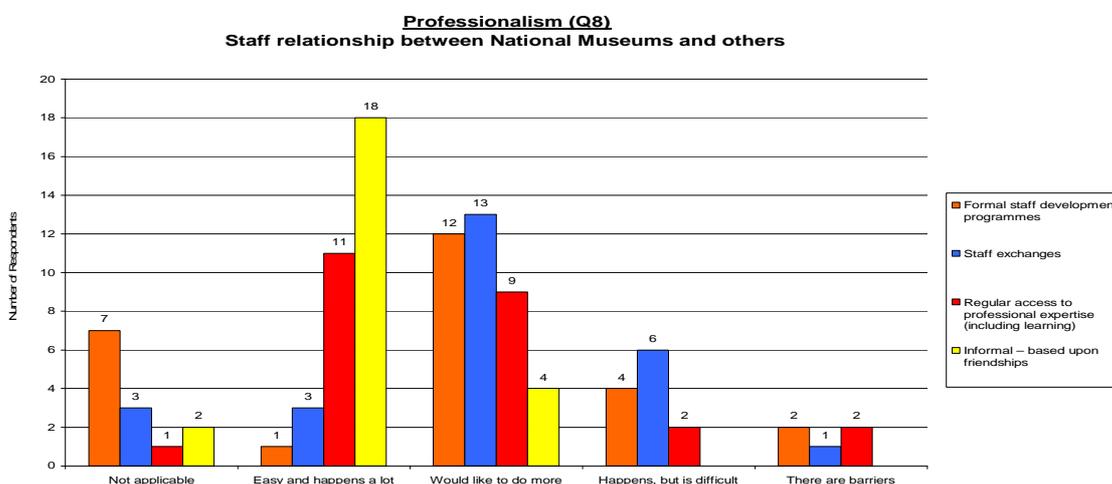
This section looks at how staff in the major museums interact across the country, both examining visible, formal programmes, informal networks and the potential of Subject Specialist Networks – SSNs.

7.1 Staff issues

Q8	Not applicable	Easy and happens a lot	Would like to do more	Happens, but is difficult	*There are barriers	No. of replies
Formal staff development programmes	26.1% (7)	4.3% (1)	52.2% (12)	17.4% (4)	8.7% (2)	23
Staff exchanges	13.0% (3)	13.0% (3)	56.5% (13)	26.1% (6)	4.3% (1)	23
Regular access to professional expertise (including learning)	4.3% (1)	47.8% (11)	39.1% (9)	8.7% (2)	8.7% (2)	23
Informal – based upon friendships	8.7% (2)	78.3% (18)	17.4% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	23

Answered question: 23

Almost 80% of respondents still highlighted informal staff relationships “based upon friendships” as their primary way of building relationships. However, there is an increasing awareness of the limitations of this approach (see below) and over half would like to see more formal staff development programmes and exchanges taking place.



The traditional forms of informal knowledge exchange based upon professional friendships or groups, has had a mixed press in the literature. They were seen as a strength in 2004:

Historically, a lot of collaborative activity has originated as a result of professional contacts from within these traditional networks, forged by individuals early on in their careers – former fellow students and colleagues. In many cases, they do not get registered at institutional level and therefore remain beneath the surface, rarely publicised internally, let alone externally. ...

There is every reason to support the ongoing existence of this informal, network-based collaboration, acknowledging the personal initiative on which it depends.

National museums provide advice on conservation issues to institutions with similar collections. This form of collaboration is common and frequently originates informally through professional networks of curators and conservators.⁴⁷

However:

To be set against this is the risk of relying too much on personal networks as a source of more formal collaborative activities. The self-perpetuating nature of partnerships between groups of institutions who have tended to work together historically has been recognised as an issue for future consideration.⁴⁸

In 2006, Kingshurst Consulting believed that:

Much activity is curator led, based on known relationships and contacts, rather than starting with the needs of users or communities ... activity tends to be based on opportunity and circumstance, rather than being driven from a strategic standpoint - this is changing in a few national and regional museums now and the impact of partnerships in supporting organisational change is being welcomed.⁴⁹

In this survey, one national said that

Informal and regular access to professional expertise and supportive networks tends to happen more often and is considered to be very valuable for the sector.

While another said:

Informal - based upon friendships - perhaps not a good description.

London national (4)

It would seem that there is increasing formality between the nationals and non-nationals which should enable relationships to be better mapped and evaluated in future.

Structures are set for partnership which are managed through regular meetings, agreed contacts etc. Within this there is room for more informal contact but within the context of a broader project management system. New Partnerships are considered carefully and adopted for strategic reasons taking into account factors for each partner.

London national (4)

In terms of informal relationships, many of the active networking groups (eg NMDC founded groups) have been invaluable in cementing working relationships. Emphasis is placed on sustainability of partnership working. The legacy of the TPHYF project will be in sustaining links with partner organisations (in part, through BTT).

London national (19)

7.2 Staff issues – strengths

⁴⁷ National Dimensions, NMDC, 2004, p15

⁴⁸ National Dimensions, NMDC, 2004

⁴⁹ The value of Partnerships, Discussion paper, Kingshurst Consulting, 2006, page 6

A study describing the process of creating a Designated National Collection for agricultural heritage, expressed what is felt by many museum workers in the regions:

It was recognised that whilst many curators do have a detailed knowledge of their collections, they cannot be experts in every aspect whilst for younger curators there are few learning opportunities to help with their understanding of the material they look after.⁵⁰

Meanwhile, “national museums are perceived within the museums sector as being able to offer a depth of specialism and accumulated research. Regional museums staff generally have a broader range of skills to offer. They are perceived as possessing expertise in linking collections and activities to local audiences and engaging communities”.⁵¹

We feel that our relationships with partners throughout the UK are positive. Institutional relationships are generally - although not universally - strong. And these are supported by hundreds of individual relationships.

London national (16)

We receive numerous enquiries from learning staff in non-national museums locally and across Scotland and also offer possibilities to shadow our learning activities, eg to the learning officer of the Pier Art Centre in Orkney. We have no formal staff development programmes in place, but encourage the exchange of professional expertise on a more informal basis.

Home country national (10)

The Gallery supports the development of learning staff at the two National Trust properties through 6 sessions year in which we review performance, plan development needs to be supported by the Gallery's Learning team. Placements: The Subject Specialist Network supports 2-3 placements a year through input from the Gallery's Curatorial, Learning, Library and Archive and National Programmes staff Evaluation of partnership projects consider staff relationships

London national (4)

As well as some museum professional training, we do a lot of library, archive and conservation training.

Library (14)

We do have a formal advice policy for provision of collections advice. That happens a lot. We are not funded to advise in the other areas of activity (including learning, marketing etc). Museums Galleries Scotland is funded to advise local museums in these areas.

Home country national (5)

The InSite programme (continuing professional development) led to the Challenging History seminar series organised by MLA and attended by representatives from a wide range of museums and cultural organisations.

London national (19)

We are working with HEI's on how to use postgraduate courses and research programmes as vehicles for staff development and so on. Important to note that

⁵⁰ Sorting the Wheat from the Chaff – DNC agricultural heritage collections, David Viner & Catherine Wilson, submitted to Folk Life, July 2008

⁵¹ Worthwhile Partnerships, a regional perspective

staff development and exchanges don't just include curator-to-curator work. We have successful partnership relationships with teacher training and development organisations; community organisation development; artists and other specialists; and in diversity work through projects, eg short and medium term placements and projects for individuals from community development backgrounds to provide awareness raising and specialist knowledge eg an advisor to a programme with Muslim communities.

Home country national (21)

7.3 Staff issues - weaknesses

In most areas, the major museums described in this mapping exercise will reflect the pattern of the cultural sector as a whole:

- Wide range of job roles across the organisation
- Majority working in public sector organisations or charities
- Increasing proportion of freelance or seasonal workers
- Predominantly white and female.
- Highly qualified
- Turn over low ⁵²

The issue of low levels of pay may not be seen as quite so true in nationals as across the sector as a whole, and a less significant proportion of the workforce is voluntary.

Key job roles in the cultural heritage sector.

Front of house staff; those working in exhibitions, interpretation, display and design; curatorial and collections staff; conservators; artisans; craftspeople; marketing and communication; site management; planning and surveying; education; audience development; researchers; field archaeologists; archaeological resource managers; ICT; management and administrative roles. ⁵³

In 2004, NMDC acknowledged that:

“In terms of collaborative activities between individual national museums and regional counterparts, relatively few are currently focussed on staff development and related issues, although informal training and staff exchanges form part of many of the more established partnerships ⁵⁴

Outside of this scheme, secondments between national and non-national museums are largely organised on an ad hoc basis in response to specific requirements and requests.

Examples where secondments have been offered in the more structured context of a programme have experienced a relatively poor take-up. ... Secondments seem to work best when they are part of longer-term partnerships where specific professional skills are contributed by national museums in the context of a specific project. This activity tends to take place on a pro bono basis and can only feasibly be contemplated by the larger national museums.”⁵⁵

⁵² The Cultural Heritage Blueprint, Dec 2008. p18

⁵³ The Cultural Heritage Blueprint, Dec 2008, p18

⁵⁴ National Dimensions, NMDC, 2004, p56

⁵⁵ National Dimensions, NMDC, 2004, p57

In 2006, Kingshurst Consulting believed this was an area of weakness because “Partnership goals are focussed on outputs (“product” or “supply”), rather than outcomes (the impact on users and organisations themselves)”.⁵⁶

One key area is geographical dispersal of locations of staff - we haven't cracked how to fund accommodation etc if staff work in different institutions or settings.

Home country national (21)

Formal staff training programmes happen but may not be a top priority within strategic priorities. They also require central co-ordination and resource allocation which the sector lacks at the moment. Informal and regular access to professional expertise and supportive networks tends to happen more often and is considered to be very valuable for the sector.

English national (11)

7.4 Staff issues - opportunities

The picture seems to be that opportunities for staff to experience “other” museums and their collections, particularly between national-regional-national, are still patchy.

In 2004, NMDC proposed:

Actively promoting career development opportunities through secondments, staff exchanges and other professional development opportunities, which build capacity and strengthen the profession nationwide.⁵⁷

In 2006, one region described the “wide range of existing initiatives and development ideas that can enhance the sector's skills. These include staff secondments and visits to other museums, mentoring programmes, accreditation programmes, courses run for staff from several museums, guest curation, curatorial and other specialist advice services”.⁵⁸

In 2008, Creative and Cultural Skills launched a workforce development plan for cultural heritage in the UK. It challenged the sector to address six key issues:

1. Remove restrictive entry barriers into the sector
2. Diversify the workforce
3. Develop the work force
4. Improve leadership and management
5. Develop business, enterprise and entrepreneurial skills
6. Develop sector specific skills.⁵⁹

The Volition high level mapping exercise seems to indicate that existing national/non-national partnerships are focussing primarily upon (6) and contributing to (4) and (5).

⁵⁶ The value of Partnerships, Discussion paper, Kingshurst Consulting, 2006, page 6

⁵⁷ National Dimensions, NMDC, 2004

⁵⁸ Worthwhile Partnerships, a regional perspective

⁵⁹ The Cultural Heritage Blueprint, CCS, Dec 2008. p22

We have succeeded in attracting significant funds from the Cultural Leadership Programme, run by the Arts Council, to an organisational and individual development programme for 11 organisations, with Tate as the eleventh partner. We are also investigating opening up Tate training programmes to partners - and more widely to other organisations on a fee paying basis.

London national (1)

We are planning to extend opportunities for exchanges and internships.

London national (1)

In 2006, Kingshurst Consulting recommended:

A more coordinated programme of staff development and skills sharing between national and regional museums to open up access to expertise and best practice which supports each museum's development and the strategic development needs within the sector. And to ensure that the collaborative advantage of partnership activity permeates all levels of a participating organisation. This approach would link with the proposed framework from Creative and Cultural Skills, as well as building on a number of emerging initiatives taking place within the sector. It could encompass staff exchanges and placements, shared development programmes and mentoring.⁶⁰

The Renaissance Review recommends improved performance management data for Hubs. If this matched NMDC practices, and accommodated DCMS and DCLG requirements, it would produce more robust England-wide data that is

- dovetailed into an agreed national framework, the quality of which is set by adoption of a set of statistical standards;
- translated into intelligence which is disseminated to contributors and others; is formally published; and is put to constructive and strategic use in Renaissance's development.⁶¹

Formal staff development could be linked to Museum plans to develop an internal university (once established, this could be opened up). In principle, mechanisms to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and sharing of best practice will be strongly supported.

London national (19)

Formal staff development programmes have proven a challenge - in terms of resource - but again this is an area we hope to emphasise more in the future including looking at how partnership programmes fit with BM's own staff development processes. Regular access to professional learning needs to be signposted more clearly.

London national (16)

7.5 Staff – threats / barriers

However, the vast drop in advertising in the Museums Journal over the past few months indicates a dramatic reduction in professional recruitment. Whether this is down to recruitment freezes, reductions in posts or the

⁶⁰ The value of Partnerships, Discussion paper, Kingshurst Consulting, 2006, page 13

⁶¹ Renaissance Review, page 19

housing market would need further research. However, it is also reflected, in one region at least, in the type of posts that are advertised locally.

The number of advertised cultural sector vacancies has dropped again in recent months to nearly half what it was during the same period last year.... In common with previous months, the drop in cultural vacancies advertised through *JobCentre Plus* [in the West Midlands] in June 2009 compared to June 2008 (-46%) exceeded the average for all sectors (-38%).⁶²

If continued, these will be significant in terms of the capacity of museums to manage relationships and exhibitions, or projects involving external partners.

Resources in terms of both funding and time away from the desk are still issues for both national and non-national respondents.

We can answer this as a recipient body rather than as the 'national' body. Key difficulty is that the 'national body' can fund their staff to participate in an exchange programme but partner organisation cannot access this fund. It happens but is difficult as we do not have dedicated funding streams to allow for staff exchanges etc and have to compete for minimal staff development and training budgets within the corporate body.

Home country non-national (6)

Resourcing of staff exchanges is an issue. There are widespread good links between us and range of other organisations, but not all are museums and not all UK. Relationships include with professional and amateur interest groups, trusts, commercial organisations, universities etc.

London national (7)

[We have] no formal national/regional staff development programmes. All recent Scottish government funds have gone through local museums with national as partner – [which is] not a sustainable structure. Through our Partnership programme we have done some staff exchange. This is difficult though because very resource intensive and without funds the time spent is short and not very well targeted.

Home country national (5)

8 Subject Specialist Networks

Subject Specialist Networks (SSNs), often funded by MLA, are relative newcomers on the museum scene in England. They are, essentially federations of like minded curators who learn from each other. In theory, at least, they are a ready made way for the nationals to share collections knowledge with the rest of the country. MLA is seeking the "reinvigoration of Subject Specialist Networks"⁶³. However, we found it difficult to establish how deeply national museums are currently engaged with SSNs.

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Totals</i>	<i>National Museums (x17)</i>	<i>Non nationals (x4)</i>
<i>Archive awareness:</i>	12	12	
<i>Archives in museums:</i>	18	16	2
<i>Children's literature (oracle):</i>	2 (?)	2	
Archives		32	2
<i>British archaeology:</i>	13+	3+	10

⁶² West Midlands Cultural Sector Economic Snapshot, July 2009

⁶³ Leading Museums, MLA, July 09, page 5

Subject	Totals	National Museums (x17)	Non nationals (x4)
<i>Dress and textiles specialists (DATS):</i>	16	9	7
<i>Egyptian and Sudanese collections:</i>	4	4	
<i>Chinese collection:</i>	4	4	
<i>Tibetan and Himalayan collections:</i>	3	3	
<i>Japanese art collections:</i>	2	2	
<i>Museum ethnography:</i>	6	5	1
<i>Musical instrument collections:</i>	2	2	
<i>Natural sciences:</i>	4	3	1
<i>Numismatics:</i>	2	1	1
<i>Performing arts:</i>	1	1	
<i>Photography:</i>	8	8	
Specific collections		45	20
<i>Contemporary art:</i>	10	5	5
<i>British portraits:</i>	8	7	1
<i>Folk art:</i>	4	3	1
<i>Design 1900 – 2000</i>	7 (?)	7	
<i>British cartoons, comics and caricatures:</i>	3	3	
<i>Ceramics network:</i>	8	7	2
Fine and applied arts		32	9
<i>Science, technology and industry:</i>	4	3	1
<i>Screen heritage:</i>	4	4	
<i>Plastics:</i>	3	3	
<i>Motoring collections:</i>	2	2	
<i>Maritime:</i>	25	24	1
<i>Medicine and healthcare:</i>	3	2	1
<i>Textile industry:</i>	4	4	
<i>Inland transport:</i>	5	5	
<i>Inland waterways:</i>	3	3	
Science and technology		50	3
<i>Social history:</i>	14	6	8
<i>Urban social history contemporary collecting:</i>	9	5	4
<i>Rural museums:</i>	4	4	
<i>Histories of the home:</i>	4	3	1
Social / agricultural		18	13
<i>Fraternal and friendly societies and associations:</i>	2	2	
<i>Human remains:</i>	12	9	3
<i>Jewish history, culture and religious life:</i>	1	1	
<i>Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender heritage:</i>	3 (?)	3 (?)	
<i>Sports heritage:</i>	3	3	

This table only records those respondents who were able to reply, and most said that they were unaware of the full extent of involvement in their institution. It is likely to be a considerable underestimate and should only be used as a general indication of good will. Never the less, given the total staff complement in the national museums, these numbers look low.

8.1 SSNs strengths

This is a concept already accepted in principle.

2004: NMDC said

A number of important collections-based initiatives, linking museums of all sizes across the UK for greater co-ordination in collecting and collections management, in which national museums tend to play a leading role. ⁶⁴

⁶⁴ National Dimensions, NMDC, 2004

2006, DCMS

Some collection types have set up arrangements which seek to co-ordinate collecting policies between a wide range of institutions. This has a range of benefits for the interpretation of collections, curation, storage and most of all for the public ⁶⁵

8.2 SSNs – weaknesses

There is no accepted methodology to record the input of national museum staff into SSNs, which must be considerable. This is an opportunity missed.

This information is not held centrally - an indication of the need to be more strategic in our approach to sharing expertise.

London national (16)

Archive Awareness - With 2000 staff it is too difficult for us to answer this accurately, but many of our staff are members of Specialist Networks.

Library (14)

However, the SSN system is not comprehensive and several nationals refer to others which are more important to them.

Our staff contribute to many specialist networks, but not I think to those designated and funded by the MLA, to date.

London national (1)

International Task Force for Holocaust Education, ICON, Care of Collections Group, Film Archivists Forum

London national (19)

British Cartoons, Comics & Caricatures
Discussion with, but not formal membership of: Fraternal & Friendly Societies & Assns, Histories of the Home, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Heritage, Photography

London national (4)

They are also not UK wide.

We also have specific Scottish SSNs in Scotland. See http://www.nms.ac.uk/national_connections/services_to_museums/sharing_knowledge_support.aspx

Home country national (5)

All the above were set up by MLA with no remit in Scotland. There are separate Scottish equivalents but they do not have funding and do not necessarily link with those above. Too disjointed - should look at UK as well as home country/England specific.

Home country non national (6)

8.3 SSNs – opportunities

In 2004, Kingshurst gave “encouragement for national museums to work more closely with Subject Specialist Networks on partnership initiatives, with possible funding support through Renaissance, so as to draw on their

⁶⁵ Understanding The Future, DCMS, 2006, p 17

particular areas of expertise and to address issues concerning collections acquisition in a more strategic way. Clearly, any funding support would need to be based on a strong audience focus".⁶⁶

In 2006, DCMS echoed this:

Museums need to look more strategically at their approaches to documentation and collections management, look more holistically at the challenges posed by acquisition and disposal; at the opportunities and issues raised by digitisation, including the need for greater co-ordination and synergy across the whole sector ⁶⁷

8.4 SSNs – threats / barriers

As with all NDPBs, MLA funding in the next government funding round is potentially vulnerable. This is, however, a cost effective way of building the wider UK museum "family".

9 Profile

Q10	Not applicable	Easy and happens a lot	Would like to do more	Happens, but is difficult	*There are barriers	No. of replies
Raising the profile/brand	8.7% (2)	21.7% (5)	60.9% (14)	4.3% (1)	4.3% (1)	23
Advocacy for the work of all museums	13.6% (3)	18.2% (4)	59.1% (13)	0.0% (0)	9.1% (2)	22
Supporting the local/national political case	13.0% (3)	26.1% (6)	43.5% (10)	8.7% (2)	8.7% (2)	23
Fostering international exchange	19.0% (4)	14.3% (3)	52.4% (11)	9.5% (2)	9.5% (2)	21

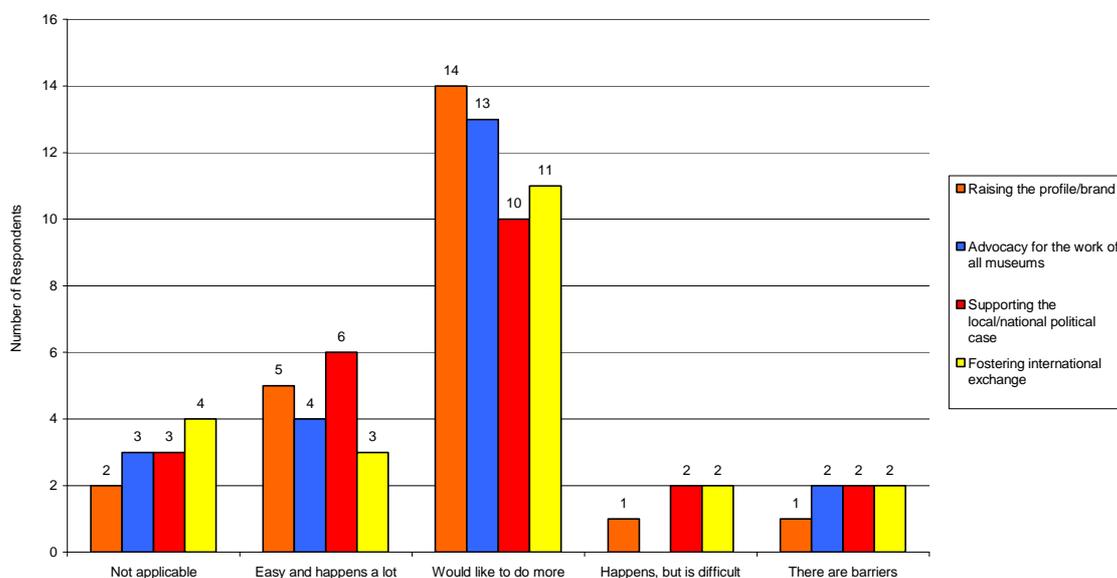
Answered question: 23

This table seems to depict a subconscious "them and us" paradigm. The "not applicable" responses here were ALL national museums and one national library. Given that there are apparently few barriers to joint advocacy and many benefits to the sector, (but see their comments below) it seems curious that joint advocacy is not more common. However, the respondents would "like to do more".

⁶⁶ The value of Partnerships, Discussion paper, Kingshurst Consulting, 2006, page 13

⁶⁷ Understanding The Future, DCMS, 2006, p 17

Leadership (Q10)
How well national/non national museum partnerships work together to raise the profile of the sector



9.1 Advocacy

9.1.1 Advocacy – strengths

The strongest response in terms of advocacy for the sector as a whole came, perhaps unsurprisingly, from one of the home countries – Wales.

In the first two, many of our audiences and stakeholders do not necessarily understand the distinction or relationship between 'local' and 'national' - this is something we have explored in evaluation in variety of settings. With particular specialist stakeholders it has been a very important area of success for us within Wales. The relationships we have with partners beyond Wales works well when it is national-to-national, though more could be done to profile the specific dimensions offered by and in Wales in England. Advocacy in the political context for partnerships across borders is complex. We have benefited from two national-to-national partnerships that have crossed borders; and from support from trusts and foundations which operate across borders. Sometimes organisations, trusts and foundations have had difficulty in understanding that something they thought was going to be 'national' turns out to be 'England only'.

For England, MLA states that:

DCMS will take the messages into Whitehall, championing the work of museums and ensuring that national policies reflect the full potential of museums. ⁶⁸

Although it is not the primary focus of this mapping exercise, the literature repeatedly focuses upon the international economic impact of museum partnerships. In purely numeric terms, Tony Travers listed, in 2006:

⁶⁸ Leading Museums, MLA, July 09, page 12

Museums and galleries have delivered 'soft diplomacy' (by subtly promoting Britain overseas and to foreign visitors) as well as providing the domestic economy with creative input.⁶⁹

... total of 10 to 11 million overseas visitors per year at the major institutions covered by this study. Although these numbers are predominantly generated by a small number of national institutions (for example, the British Museum, Tate, National Gallery and Natural History Museum) there is clear evidence that the number of overseas visitors to major cities outside Britain is increasing. National Museums Liverpool has seen its international visitor total rise from 49,000 to 112,000 within seven years...

It seems realistic to assume that at least £350 million a year is now generated overseas visitors attracted by major museums⁷⁰

Promoting the role of museums as international ambassadors is a strong desire of NMDC, led by British Museum.

Many of our museums already operate internationally. The British Museum's World Collections programme is demonstrating how museums have a geopolitical role in encouraging international cooperation and integration.

Culture can make a vital contribution to international relations and museums play a unique role in fostering international cultural exchange. Many of the national museums already do a great deal of impressive work in this area, for example the British Museum's partnerships in Africa and the Middle East, (including for instance the recent Shah Abbas 'Remaking Iran' exhibition), Tate's work with China (including the recent loan of 80 Turners to Beijing) and the V&A's work with India and Russia (the recent Magnificence of the Tsars exhibition for instance was curated by the Moscow Kremlin Museums). The Natural History Museum has 350 scientists working in partnership in over 70 countries on research projects that range from measuring biodiversity loss due to climate change to the origins of man and the planet.

Museums' work also means cultural relations can be sustained in areas of the world where traditional diplomacy faces challenges. For example The British Museum's Forgotten Empire exhibition provided an opportunity for the Foreign Secretary to meet with the Iranian Vice-President at a sensitive time.

The World Collections programme has provided the over-arching strategy and high-level cross-departmental government support necessary to capture and build on all this valuable work⁷¹

⁶⁹ Museums and Galleries in Britain, Tony Travers, 2006, p13.

⁷⁰ Museums and Galleries in Britain, Tony Travers, 2006, p38.

⁷¹ NMDC Manifesto

Working in conjunction with MLA, further consideration will be given to encouraging and supporting regional museums to participate in international activity and collaborations.⁷²

However,

Fostering international exchange: the main barrier is financial. We would like to work more closely with Nationals in fostering international exchange but as a non-national museum we are often limited by our budgets.

English non-national (12)

9.1.2 Advocacy - weaknesses

Short term commercial drivers

We do not tend to enter into partnerships to distribute largesse where we feel we can afford to, but because we believe that these partnerships enable us to achieve strategic objectives. Resources are always limited. This is why activity needs to be strategic. It is true however that a default position may tend to place immediate 'selfish' interests before long term goals and there is in reality always a balance between immediate and commercial interests and the longer view.

London national (1)

Absence of UK wide strategy

The key barrier is the differences in funding patterns in the different home countries to support partnership working (e.g. England has superior funding through DCMS and renaissance in the regions. There is not an equivalent in Scotland which dilutes/prevents effective partnership and regional growth). The lack of cohesion between non - governmental bodies and sector 'champions' such as MLA, MGS, MA, Arts Councils etc compounds the inequalities and lack of consistency in approach across the UK. We are often expected to (and want to) participate in so - called national initiatives only to find the funding or the agency support stops at the border - or is applied differently in the different home countries.

Home country non-national (6)

We would like to see more of the London nationals networking outside London, fostering international exchange with non London nationals as well as advocate better for the sector on a national level. We perceive the development of a national strategy for museums as an urgent priority for the sector.

English National (11)

In Scotland there is no strategy for national/local museums. There is also no proper framework across the UK. There are examples of local/national working together but in practical terms this is one of the main weaknesses we come up against. We have no formal role in order to drive forward all these areas either within Scotland or to ensure inclusivity across the UK.

Home country national (5)

9.1.3 Advocacy - opportunities

“Scholarship and curatorship remain vital professional foundations, but engagement with the public makes all the difference. Stories become more vivid when people see their own history through the materials and when

⁷² Worthwhile Partnerships, a regional perspective, 2006.

narratives are strengthened through dialogue with people from diverse backgrounds, age groups and social perspectives".⁷³

"Partnerships offer mutual opportunities to raise the media profile of both partners and the sector as a whole".⁷⁴

"The role of museums is even more important in an economic downturn, and in the face of growing unemployment, when individuals and communities need, more than ever, the combination of solace and stimulus that they provide".⁷⁵

Co-ordination is the key here. We're all good at making the most of our partnerships - advocating to visitors, stakeholders etc. - but doing so in a joined up way is less common. Strategic Commissioning has provided one forum, but we need to work harder here.

London national (16)

9.1.4 Advocacy – threats / barriers

The Renaissance Review believed that

Without support for Renaissance, the proposed National Museums Strategy is unworkable. The Review's recommendations have been deliberately conceived in terms of enhancing and delivering that strategy, and embrace DCMS-sponsored museums, museums with designated collections, and the wider museums sector.⁷⁶

Although the Volition survey asked about

- Raising the brand / profile
- Advocacy for the work of all museums
- Supporting the local / national case politically

These activities were virtually never mentioned in the literature studied as part of the desk research and rarely by respondents.

We do have staff representatives on bodies such as the Collections Trust and MA Council, which are concerned with wider sectoral issues, but we tend to focus on the profile of the national museums as a sector, funded by govt.

London national (18)

9.2 Raising finance

The picture with regard to jointly raising finance or entrepreneurship is one of contrasts. At least 44% of respondents have experience of applying for public grants together with partners, although less than 10% have examples of a shared approach to philanthropy. They are least likely to have attempted working together on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) or procurement / joint purchasing. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority cite the priority of institutional and corporate needs as a barrier.

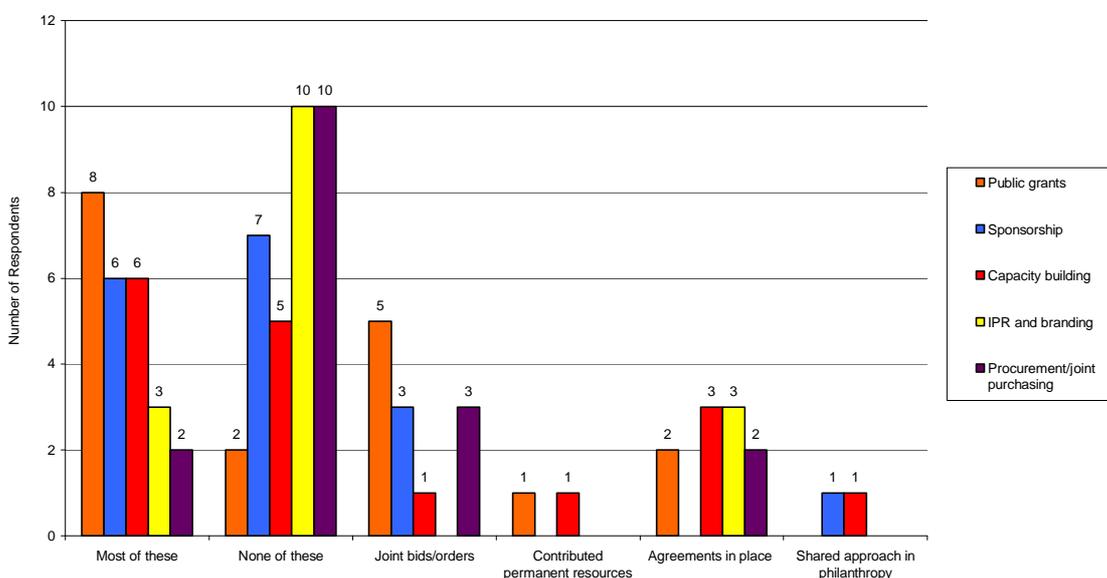
⁷³ Leading Museums, MLA, July 09, page 6

⁷⁴ Worthwhile Partnerships, a regional perspective, 2006.

⁷⁵ Renaissance Review, page 13

⁷⁶ Renaissance Review p13

Raising Finance (Q11)
We have examples of shared enterprise



9.2.1 Sponsorship and grants:

Where possible we work together with museums on gaining financial resources for partnership activity.

London national (4)

In summary, key opportunities between national/local would be joint grants, sponsorship and capacity building.

Home country national (5)

Examples of public grant funded activity include TPYF and Strategic Commissioning projects. However, we must prioritise organisational priorities and resource is limited. Capacity building agreements include the partnership with Chatham Historic Dockyard and National Maritime Museum and the Public Sector Research Exploitation project to shift from analogue to digital technology and drive commercial activity within Collections.

London national (19)

Almost all partnership activities are largely funded by [this museum], normally through commercial sponsorship and support from Trusts and Foundations. Every effort is made to cover as much of a partner's costs as possible. Where possible, for example, touring exhibition sponsorship includes a significant contribution towards partners' marketing and programming costs. The [16] does not, however, fundraise directly for partners - and as a publicly funded charitable body would find it difficult to do so.

London national (16)

9.2.2 Raising finance - strengths

Developments in museums in the past decade have been positive and far-reaching. The professional community deserves credit for driving forward

effectively in many areas.⁷⁷ Museums needed to change from introspective institutions – preoccupied with their resource problems (genuine though these were) – to outward looking organisations: confident, ambitious and articulate about the values they create for society.⁷⁸

NMDC suggests that the strengths of their system are that it:

- Operates with a mixed model of funding – public funding underpinning and supporting earned income, entrepreneurialism and philanthropy
- Shapes the UK reputation abroad – projects powerful messages about the UK as a place to live, visit and do business
- Attracting business to the UK
- Big employer.⁷⁹

This is born out by Tony Travers' report in Dec 2006:

Britain's major museums and galleries constitute a major sub-sector of the country's cultural industries. This report estimates that the annual turnover of the whole sector – including all museums and galleries, from the largest national institutions to the smallest local ones – will exceed £900 million.

If even very modest assumptions are made about the related economic activity (international visitors, regeneration expenditure and so on) are added to this total, the figure would exceed £1 billion. This suggests that broadly £1 in every £1,000 in the UK economy can be directly related to the museums and galleries sector.⁸⁰

The overall economic impact of the institutions covered by this report is likely, therefore, to be in the range £1.5 to £2 billion. That is, the ancillary effects of visitor spending and indirect/induced impacts are likely to be slightly more than double the turnover of the sub-sector.⁸¹

9.2.3 Raising finance - weaknesses

Learning comments: Sponsorship is usually place specific, although we have recently had a touring show sponsored which sat non-national alongside national. This is unusual. As sponsorship becomes more difficult to find, it would be unlikely that we would put resources into joint applications with another body. We don't have the resources to sustain a major national partnership programme although we recognise our responsibility as a national institution and endeavour to provide support where possible. The majority of partnership activity takes place through our Education Department and extensive exhibitions/loans programme.

Home country national (10)

Re public grants: barrier is that funding is purely on basis of short term projects based on specific funding streams - therefore, prioritisation is inevitably linked to

⁷⁷ Leading Museums, MLA, July 09, page 4

⁷⁸ Renaissance Review, page 13

⁷⁹ NMDC Key Messages

⁸⁰ Museums & Galleries in Britain, impacts, Tony Travers, LSE, Dec 2006, p15

⁸¹ Museums & Galleries in Britain, impacts, Tony Travers, LSE, Dec 2006, p47

what will fit funding criteria - not what is best for either our museum or regional partners.

London national (6)

Sponsorship - a joint bid for sponsorship would not be out of the question given the right project and the right partner. We don't have the resources to fund the scoping of a project like this, so museum projects take priority.

London national (18)

Much, though not all, collaborative activity began in response to funding opportunities and not within the context of a clear strategic framework, and has been serendipitous in terms of choice of partners and programme development. The report highlights the reliance of most collaborative projects on external funding (often project-based and short-term in nature) and the difficulties of sustaining partnerships once the money runs out.⁸²

In 2006, Tony Travers emphasised the inherent weakness of a situation where

- Up to a third of museum displays and facilities are in need of significant renovation;
- Income has not been rising as fast as staff and other inflationary costs in the economy;
- Without proper resources it is unlikely that the complex objectives now set for museums and galleries can continue to be delivered – *additional income sources will be required*.⁸³

Never the less, considerable efforts have been made:

There are limited resources (staff + funding) but much work is done in day to day work without it being an official 'partnership' In general sponsorship is increasingly scarce with much competition. Usually organisations would seek sponsorship for a touring exhibition themselves. Occasionally there have been instances of joint sponsorship e.g. Palace and Mosque exhibition. A major barrier for capacity building is sustaining partnerships beyond the end of specific projects

London national (20)

The Volition survey doesn't seem to suggest that, in reality, this can be supplemented by shared branding and procurement. Given the genuine complexities in terms of process, serious thought would have to be given as to whether partnership income generation by these means is an effective option to pursue at this stage.

Procurement - this refers to back office partnership working with South Kensington museums to reduce costs.

London national (7)

In terms of procurement, the model is very complicated and a more sharing-oriented museum culture would be useful to support this.

London national (19)

There could be some work done in IPR, branding and procurement but this more problematic.

Home country national (5)

⁸² National Dimensions, NMDC, 2004

⁸³ Museums & Galleries in Britain, impacts, Tony Travers, LSE, Dec 2006

Image sharing on the National Inventory Research Project - some museums were concerned about protecting their IPR and did not want to contribute digital images to the project website

London national (13)

Our capacity building agreements tend to be with universities, not regional museums. Re procurement, we are members of the London Universities Purchasing Consortium

London national (18)

One reason for picking procurement out as different is because that is the one area where we have found it difficult to develop common practices and joint working, because of the nature of our own internal systems and financial memoranda.

Home country national (21)

9.2.4 Raising finance - opportunities

MLA states:

Government has a responsibility to maintain its commitment to supporting and advancing the continuing revolution in museums. Sponsorship of national institutions, including university museums, partnerships with local authorities and funding for learning programmes and strategic commissioning will continue to be among top priorities, nationally and locally, even in the now much tighter spending environment ⁸⁴

There are significant moves from NMDC to promote a culture of philanthropy.

The NMDC, in partnership with the arts and heritage sectors via the Private Giving for the Public Good campaign, is firmly committed to promoting a culture of philanthropy. Support for museums to attract private donations is ever more important in the current economic climate. We feel strongly that, to support a change in the giving culture, all signals for promoting philanthropy should point in the same direction. Such an approach would include an unabashed celebration of philanthropy, public recognition of the contribution made by philanthropists, and fiscal incentives to encourage a culture of giving.⁸⁵

Although not explicitly mentioned by the NMDC, this would inevitably support MLA's vision of extending this to museums in the regions:

Building on *Private Giving for the Public Good*, MLA will work with NMDC and others to develop ways in which charitable giving to museums can be promoted and supported and new partnership models can be developed to generate income and share resources and services, especially in the regions.⁸⁶

9.2.5 Raising finance – threats / barriers

⁸⁴ Leading Museums, MLA, July 09, page 4

⁸⁵ NMDC Manifesto

⁸⁶ Leading Museums, MLA, July 09, page 13

Of course, both of these documents (footnotes 84 and 85) reflect the situation before the current economic situation really hit home. It is possible that a more selfish gene may have to power NMDC priorities in the immediate future.

We are entering unknown territory:

In common with previous quarters, evidence suggests that the recession may create favourable conditions for some types of cultural organisations (e.g. historic houses, museums, leisure centres, cinemas) and less favourable conditions for others (e.g. some performing arts organisations and arts centres)... Levels of revenue reported by respondents of our cultural facilities survey this quarter have held up better than audiences. This could suggest an emerging trend for people to reduce the frequency of visits to cultural attractions, while increasing the quality of the visits they do make.⁸⁷

The [museum 2] received a harsh cut in its CAPEX budget from £900k to £500k in the last three year funding round. This has had a marked effect on our ability to run our three sites. We had a significant HLF bid in at the time based on the higher figure. We are now struggling with the match funding issue for our build at [x]. It is essential that we deliver this wonderful project on time and on budget. Our scant resources are concentrating on this task and refreshing the exhibitions at [x] and in the [x].

English national (2)

Q11	We don't have time to arrange this	Joint agreements are too complex	Internal systems get in the way	Internal targets get in the way	We don't have enough staff	Number of Respondents
Public grants	33.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	66.7% (2)	3
Sponsorship	20.0% (1)	20.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	20.0% (1)	40.0% (2)	5
Capacity building	25.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	75.0% (3)	4
IPR and branding	14.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	28.6% (2)	14.3% (1)	42.9% (3)	7

By far the greatest barrier cited is lack of staff .

Meanwhile, regionally:

Local authorities from across the region have made cuts to arts, culture and tourism budgets and/or small grants programmes. This coincides with a reduced Advantage West Midlands budget (down by £48 million) and reduced funding from private investment.⁸⁸ According to a recent Birmingham Post article, following the £48 million reduction to the Advantage West Midlands (AWM) budget, funding to the Advantage Creative Fund has been withdrawn. In addition, the next phase of a £7.1 million Creative Industries Centre in Wolverhampton now looks uncertain after the withdrawal of AWM

⁸⁷ West Midlands Cultural Observatory Economic Snapshot, July 2009

⁸⁸ West Midlands Cultural Observatory Economic Snapshot, July 2009

funds, as does the proposed 1930s high street development at Black Country Living Museum which was also reliant on AWM funding.⁸⁹

Internal audit, risk management and procurement systems present a barrier to collaborative working which involves finances

English non national (23)

Development of greater funding partnerships with reduced staff numbers will be challenging:

The success of leading museums and galleries in achieving the many good government or civil society objectives expected of them will depend, to some extent, on the resources available. In common with all cultural institutions heavily dependent on Whitehall or local authority funding, there is a risk that expectations for new initiatives or to reach new audience groups will exceed what can plausibly be achieved.⁹⁰

10 Patterns of partnership

Our quick, high level survey produced so many caveats and different ways of calculating / defining partnerships that it has proved impossible to deliver a sensible analysis. All that can be said for certain is that the number of examples of partnership working in the 16 national institutions which attempted to answer the question is well over 1,600, and that at least 20% of those are with UK local authorities and 10% with other national museums.

This is not a complete picture - figures are provided only for those partnerships we received information on. We do not have a formal partnership programme and data on partnerships is not systematically collected. Whilst a trawl for information was carried out for the purpose of this survey it is not a complete picture as was dependent on availability of respondents.

London national (7)

Partnerships are hardly a new idea and NMDC has been an enthusiastic proponent for some years. In 2004 they wrote:

[There are] an increasing number of more deeply integrated and formalised partnerships between national museums and (one or more) regional institutions. 15 NMDC members currently have strategic partnerships with more than 30 regional institutions across the UK, of which 15 are members of the recently created Hubs in England.⁹¹

Much work has already been done on the characteristics of effective partnerships and so the Volition survey sought instead to explore what kinds of partnerships were taking place and to gain some idea of their impact.

⁸⁹ West Midlands Cultural Observatory Economic Snapshot, July 2009,59

⁹⁰ Museums & Galleries in Britain, impacts, Tony Travers, LSE, Dec 2006, p73

⁹¹ National Dimensions 2004, NMDC, 2004

10.1 Patterns of partnership – strengths

Travers' example of the Natural History Museum (p75) showed that out of 80 "other civil society links"

- 20 non national museums ranging in size from Abergavenny and Charmouth to Leeds and Hampshire.
- 10 government departments, NGOs, sector NDPBs or national Trusts.
- 37 partnerships with overseas museums, universities or governments.
- 11 national museums were listed under this heading
- 2 were the host local authorities.

This is an impressively wide ranging list.

There is increasing understanding of the principles of partnership, perhaps exemplified by Tate in 2006:

Tate will set priorities for the use of resources, underpinned by democratic values and the principle of sharing: a two way exchange, beyond imperialism. Its national strategy will be founded not on short term, immediately 'selfish' interests but on the greater advantages to be gained from entering into carefully considered partnerships and activities, from a particular perspective, with clearly expressed, shared objectives, for the common good.⁹²

Tate specifically aimed its strategy at

Working with all nine of the regional hubs of museums by linking the various Tate relationships already established in most regions and developing activities over time in the regions where there are no current visible Tate relationships⁹³

In terms of breadth of partnerships, national museums are doing considerably better than some other areas of government. In its survey across the whole of government the COI found that:

When considering collaboration with stakeholders and organisations in the private sector and the Third Sector [only] 35% of respondents in each case described this as very important. This increased to 49% when thinking about collaboration between Central and Local Government and then up to 69% when the context was across Central Government. When this was further narrowed to collaboration across their own Department or organisation, 77% described this as very important. ...

When looking at collaboration between Central Government and Local Government/other parts of the public sector, 44% of respondents felt collaboration was working 'not very well', with a further 21% answering 'not at all well'.⁹⁴

There are now even more examples of strategic approaches to partnerships with a country-wide impact:

⁹² Tate National. The Principle of Sharing. Report 9. May 2006.

⁹³ Tate National. The Principle of Sharing. Report 9. May 2006.

⁹⁴ Collaboration: Working across government, COI, May 2008

In the 2008/09 year, we set up formal agreements with ten new partners through our partnership network, Tate Connects and, with National Galleries of Scotland, set up arrangements with thirteen galleries to collaborate with us on the initial phase of the new initiative ARTIST ROOMS.

London national (1)

“Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales is the major museum service in Wales. It has a long tradition of partnership working and works with other museums by sharing collections through loans, exhibitions and a host of informal contacts. The familial relationship that many museums in Wales feel they have with Amgueddfa Cymru is a great strength of museum provision in Wales. Amgueddfa Cymru should take a lead role in developing partnerships and sharing skills across Wales”⁹⁵

We provided 125 individual collections loans out in 2008/2009 (ranging from one object to a few hundred) to 28 of Scotland's 32 local authority areas. We provided support identifying objects for loan, completed all object conservation in-house, couriered and installed in all cases.

Home country (5)

10.2 Patterns of partnership - weaknesses

In 2004, NMDC recognised that :

Non-national museums have raised the issue over the criteria applied by national museums in selecting their 'strategic partners' and the extent to which these privileged relationships, necessarily limited in number, naturally favour a relatively small number of prominent regional institutions.⁹⁶

10.3 Patterns of partnership - opportunities

Tony Travers, in his 2006 study of the economic social and creative impacts of museums drew attention to broader responsibilities:

To fulfil this wider civil society role, institutions have had to look outwards. Of course, many individual employees of museums and galleries have long played a full role in professional and expert bodies. But in recent years, there has been an increasing corporate willingness to take part in partnerships, networks, regeneration programmes, local promotional initiatives and an array of other activities. Importantly, museums and galleries have increasingly opened their doors to become 'civic space' where people can meet and develop ideas⁹⁷.

Also in 2006, Kingshurst Consulting were finding that:

“In large measure, national museums tend to “own” partnerships and regional museums are the beneficiaries. As a result, accountability tends to rest at a national level – national museums perceive themselves in a 'teacher/parent/benefactor' role and regional

⁹⁵ A Museums Strategy for Wales, 2009 p 26

⁹⁶ National Dimensions, NMDC, 2004, p78

⁹⁷ Museums & Galleries in Britain, p71, Tony Travers. 2006

museums are largely regarded as junior players and perceived to be the main beneficiaries.

But:

There is however some evidence to suggest that the balance of these relationships has started to change as several national/regional museum partnerships are now evaluating the impact at organisational level of their partnership working⁹⁸

The Renaissance Review (2009) recommends that

R5: DCMS integrates the partnership working between national and non-national museums, supported through Strategic Commissioning, with Renaissance, in order to rationalise and reinforce the government's support for national-regional partnerships⁹⁹

MLA's 2009 national action plan for museums specifically refers to national regional partnerships:

The NMDC will review the basis on which the national museums work in partnership with regional museums.

- Fresh approaches will enable more national and regional museums to work together to ensure that collections, expertise and resources are used to maximise public benefit, nationally and regionally.
- Emphasis will be placed on sharing and enhancing scholarship, knowledge and expertise, and on extending existing patterns of loans and touring exhibitions¹⁰⁰

10.4 Patterns of partnership – threats / barriers

In 2004, the NMDC gave honest reasons for not engaging with some very specific partners:

Discussions have for instance revealed the need to address the requirements of regional institutions closer to London, which are not natural candidates for the more traditional forms of partnership such as exhibitions, as they fall within many national museums' own catchment area.¹⁰¹

In an increasingly competitive environment, partnerships such as these will inevitably be more difficult.

From a regional perspective:

- Regional museums need to take more responsibility for generating ideas and plans for partnership working. All museums should recognise that partnerships require adequate resourcing beyond the funds allocated to specific partnership projects.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ The Value of Partnerships, Discussion Paper, Kingshurst Consulting, 2006, page 6

⁹⁹ Renaissance Review, page 14

¹⁰⁰ Leading Museums, MLA, July 09, page 11

¹⁰¹ National Dimensions, NMDC, 2004 p 88

¹⁰² Worthwhile Partnerships, a Regional Perspective from the WM

- Partnerships flourish with appropriate timeframes. Effective partnerships take time to develop. Organisations need to prepare for partnership working in order for it to yield lasting benefits. Aspirations for partnership work frequently outstrip capacity. Large programmes of activity can reduce the long term impact of specific partnership or development projects.¹⁰³
- Organisational culture change creates stronger partnerships. Museums need to commit their own resources to underpin partnerships. Individuals who can build up expertise in partnership working and associated skills can enhance organisational ability to engage in partnership. These staff are not project staff but have a more general role and can lead the culture change needed for organisations to commit to partnership working.¹⁰⁴
- Regional groups of museums could also collaborate to support each other to take advantage of partnerships – for example, by sharing specific resources that are only required occasionally such as climate controlled cases.¹⁰⁵

The Volition mapping exercise was directed specifically at partnerships with UK museums. But almost all respondents also described other partnerships.

11 Partnership - formats

Q13. Percentage of each of these types of agreement that was represented in 2008/09

Organisation Code	Legally binding partnerships	Service level agreements	Loan agreement	Formal (other)	Informal
2	1%	-	99%	-	-
4	10%	68%	20%	2%	
5	-	-	50%	5%	45%
16	-	-	68%	12%	20%
7	3%	-	89%	5%	3%
11	5	-	50	5	40
20	1%	-	16%	83%	
1	-	-	79%	21%	-
19	1%	4%	86%	6%	3%
Averages	3.5%		61.8%	17.4%	

National museums only, the 9 institutions which completed the question in the same way.

Excluding those respondents which only partially completed this question – we are left with a picture which, although still unreliable because most of these figures were “best guesses” on the part of the respondents, is still quite clear. The vast majority of partnerships are or include loan agreements.

It is probably still useful to use the Kingshurst 2004 methodology to describe the types of partnership which are taking place:

- *consortium* : likely to be a partnership of equals which may be brokered or facilitated by a third party

¹⁰³ Worthwhile Partnerships, a Regional Perspective from the WM

¹⁰⁴ Worthwhile Partnerships, a Regional Perspective from the WM

¹⁰⁵ Worthwhile Partnerships, a Regional Perspective from the WM

- *nationally led partnerships* : involving a national museum and others leading a specific activity (for example an exhibition or loan). In many cases, regional museums have perceived only a limited opportunity to influence what is taking place. We would consider such activity to be transactions rather than partnership working, in the terms we have defined above
- *ad hoc partnerships* : often involving a single activity or project driven. Education and outreach projects are particularly likely to be ad hoc partnerships. However, these ad hoc partnerships are often the starting point for deeper and longer term strategic partnerships.
- *strategic or developmental partnerships* : these are fewer in number but involve long term, overarching relationships, often with a high penetration into the core activity of at least one partner – these may be for an agreed and limited time, or longer term. There is usually a formal agreement which underpins the partnership.¹⁰⁶

In 2004, NMDC described the number of strategic initiatives that had taken place so far as “relatively limited”. They included:

- Large, national initiatives have been formed in several subject fields, focusing on collecting strategies, collections documentation and research (for example the UK Maritime Collections Strategy or the National Inventory of European Paintings 1200-1900)
- More focused initiatives have been created in specific sectors or regions to address training requirements and perceived shortages of skills (for example the National Aviation Skills Initiative and the Somerset Museum Training Consortium);
- A range of relatively small-scale, localised marketing initiatives perform a simple but valuable role of pooling restricted budgets to attract visitors to a given region.¹⁰⁷

11.1 Partnership formats – strengths

“A growing number of national museums now [2004] operate partnership programmes which are strategic in their remit and represent a different depth of institutional engagement compared to other forms of collaboration. These partnerships are characterised by the following:

- A ‘top down’ initiation process, with aims and objectives often defined by the national museum
- Long-term agreements (often for a period of three to five years but with the intention on both sides to renew on a ‘rolling basis’), formalised through the exchange of letters or a memorandum of understanding;
- Senior management involvement at the point of initiation and right through implementation, in terms of membership of steering groups etc.;

¹⁰⁶ The Value of Partnerships, Discussion Paper, Kingshurst Consulting, 2006, page 5

¹⁰⁷ National Dimensions 2004, NMDC, 2004, p72

- Strong bilateral contact across the departments of organisations involved, often encouraged by secondments or informal ongoing sharing of expertise;
 - Multiple funding sources, often including a substantial commitment of core staff resources from the partners.
- Seventeen such partnerships have been identified"¹⁰⁸

11.2 Partnership formats – weaknesses

If loan agreements are the main way that non-national museums encounter partnerships with nationals, this will be a significant factor in the formation of their perceptions. Excessive difficulties will be seen as a general reflection on the difficulty of building partnerships with nationals in general.

11.3 Partnership formats – opportunities

Kingshurst recommended the following steps:

- creating a strategic framework for partnership working across projects and within projects
- planning partnership projects with a clear focus on outcomes for users and organisations
- fostering a culture which encourages people to reflect and build on their learning.¹⁰⁹

And recommended jointly agreed shared principles and priorities for national-regional working, and identify key themes/programmes

- based on outcomes, for users and organisations
- linked to organisational change and modernisation agenda.
- National museum directors provide leadership for strategic partnership working
- Negotiate with Renaissance partners so that partnership working is part of core purpose, built into targets and Business Plans¹¹⁰

12 Partnerships – quantity

In terms of sheer quantity, how many of these activities took place?

Q14	Advocacy	Audience development	Collaborative exhibitions	Commercial activities	Digital access	Funding
National Museums (12)	51	60	49	8	79	24
Non nationals (3)	22	52	8	5	5	10
Nat. Libraries (2)	26	16	4	12	32	15

Total number of partnership activities - This is very hard to define. Including loans to partners, around 250 (of which c. 170 were loans) With National museums - Around 20% of our partnership activity is with other nationals in London, Wales, Scotland or

¹⁰⁸ National Dimensions 2004, NMDC, 2004, p77

¹⁰⁹ Added Value of Partnerships, Kingshurst, summary report, Nov 06

¹¹⁰ Added Value of Partnerships, Kingshurst, summary report, Nov 06

NI. Other museums - Around 20% of our partnership activity is with other non-national museums.

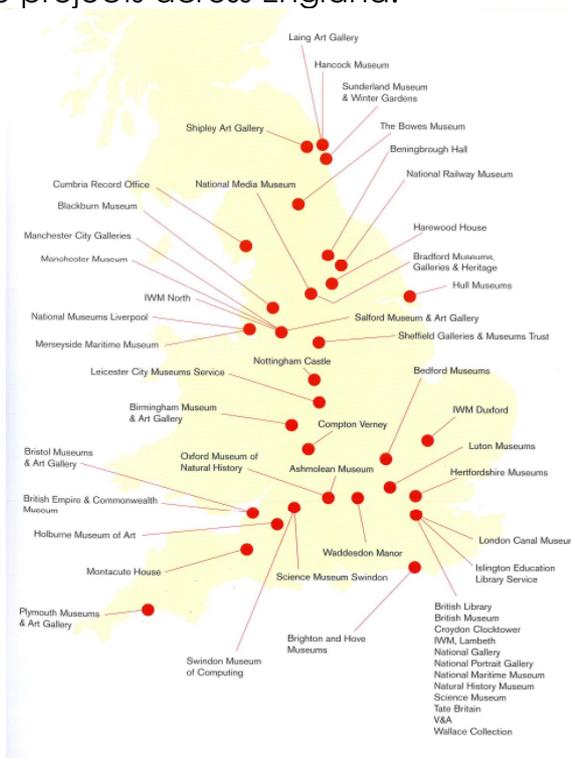
London national (16)

In 2002/03 NMDC jointly claimed that:

Close to 30,000 objects from our collections were out on short and long-term loan across the country. This activity, which represents the most visible form of national collaboration, has mostly benefited regions outside the catchment areas of London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast and other metropolitan locations with national museum presence ¹¹¹

Since 2002/3, when loans were the “most visible form of national collaboration” much has changed.

Since 2003 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), now Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), have jointly sponsored a partnership between national and regional museums in England that is designed to increase and deepen relationships between museums and schools and to strengthen relationships between museums and communities. Twelve national museums with over 50 regional museum partners were together involved in seventeen discrete projects across England.¹¹²



Inspiration, Identity and Learning, page 1 Fig. 1: Map showing National/Regional Museum Partnerships provision across England DCMS/DFES (DCSF) scheme¹¹³

¹¹¹ National Dimensions 2004, NMDC, 2004

¹¹² Inspiration, Identity and Learning, page 1

¹¹³ Inspiration, Identity and Learning, page 1

Loans from NMDC members to non-national UK institutions (2003)¹¹⁴	
	Total no of objects loan 2003
Amgueddfa Cymru (National Museums & Galleries of Wales)	5,085
British Museum	1010
Fleet Air Arm Museum	32
Imperial War Museum	428
Museum of London	1722
National Army Museum	233
National Gallery	88
National Galleries of Scotland	726
National Library of Scotland	38
National Library of Wales	782
National Maritime Museum	11,273
Museums & Galleries of Northern Ireland	1074
National Museums Liverpool	730
National Museum of Science & Industry	2381
National Museums of Scotland	1957
National Portrait Gallery	656
Natural History Museum	
Royal Air Force Museum	365
Royal Armouries	1420
Royal Marines Museum	46
Royal Naval Museum	100
Royal Navy Submarine Museum	5
Sir John Soane's Museum	2
Tate	405
Victoria & Albert Museum	2231
TOTAL	32,789

Loans 2005/06 ¹¹⁵	
Objects loaned in UK	Objects loaned internat.
26,175	13,661
1,868	1,692
380	81
106	170
215	43
605*	29*
105	23
2540	70
23,080	47,403
393*	723*
2587	400
349,978	64,295

* 2004/5 figures

This table is brought together from two sources listed in the footnotes. The second, the Tony Travers 2006 report, commented that:

A key element in allowing a wider population to access the collections held in major institutions is the possibility of sending exhibits to be viewed elsewhere. The incomplete data suggests that at least 180,000 exhibits were loaned in 2004-05. Many of these loans were small items from the Natural History Museum whose prodigious loan activities, albeit often to individual researchers, are extraordinary. But many other regional and national institutions are sending artefacts to locations locally, nationally and overseas. The maps on the following pages show a full list of the locations visited by museum and gallery exhibits during 2004-05. ¹¹⁶

If you look only at those museums which provided data for BOTH surveys, (see next table) the number of loans in the UK has more than doubled, but this is largely made up by a huge rise in loans from Amgueddfa Cymru.

¹¹⁴ National Dimensions, pa36

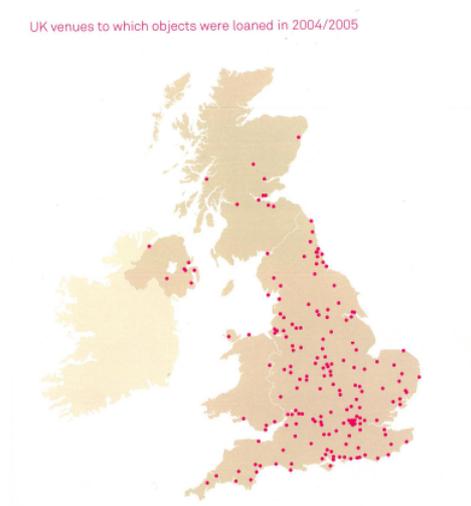
¹¹⁵ Museums and Galleries in Britain, Tony Travers, 2006 page 42

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Loans from NMDC members to non-national UK institutions (2003) ¹¹⁷ Total no of objects loan 2003	
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National Gallery	88
National Museums Liverpool	730
National Museum of Science & Industry	2381
National Museums of Scotland	1957
Tate	405
Victoria & Albert Museum	2231
TOTAL	16,037

Loans 2005/06 ¹¹⁸ Objects loaned in UK
26,175
1,868
380
106
215
605*
105
2540
393*
2587
34,974

Our own mapping exercise produced such “incomplete data” (to quote Travers) as to be useless. It is interesting that it is apparently still extremely difficult to count these interactions.



UK venues to which objects were loaned in 2004/2006



Towns and cities where objects from collections were loaned in 2004/2006

¹¹⁷ National Dimensions, pa36

¹¹⁸ Museums and Galleries in Britain, Tony Travers, 2006 page 42



Further data was provided in "Ease and cost of loans between UK Museums" by Alec Coles¹¹⁹

Level of Loans out Activity	
Number of Loans out	
• British Museum	595
• Wallace Collection	0
• TWM	84
• Sheffield	35
Number of objects	
• British Museum	7736
• Wallace Collection	0
• Norwich	391
• Sheffield	70

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National and International Activity			
Number of Loans out			
	UK	NON-UK	
• National Gallery	26%	74%	
• National Army Museum	86%	14%	
• Average for Nationals	61%	39%	
• Average for Regionals	87%	13%	
Number of Objects out			
	UK	NON-UK	LOANS IN
			UK NON-UK
• National Gallery	39%	61%	35% 61%
• National Portrait Gallery	96%	4%	80% 20%
• Average for Nationals	56%	44%	
• Average for Regionals	92%	8%	

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TYNE & WEAR
museums

¹¹⁹ Ease and cost of loans between UK Museums, Alec Coles, speech to MA conference Oct 06

Another way of looking at it was used by NMDC in 2008 – the number of venues in England to which objects from the collection are loaned:

Institution	2006-07 Outturn
British Museum	172
Geffrye Museum	7
Horniman Museum	17
Imperial War Museum	115
Museum of London	94
National Gallery	33
National Maritime Museum	83
National Museums English national (11)	72
National Museum of Science and Industry	163
National Portrait Gallery	82
Natural History Museum	74
Royal Armouries	96
Sir John Soanes Museum	5
Tate Gallery	130
Tyne and Wear Museums Service	42
Victoria and Albert Museum	267
Wallace Collection ¹	n/a
Total	1,322

¹ Under the terms of its bequest, the Wallace Collection cannot make loans.¹²⁰

Of course, many venues will be receiving loans from more than one National Museum, so multiple counting is taking place in this table.

13 Partnerships – value for money

Issues of value for money are always complex, and in our sector tends to get conflated with “entrenched misunderstandings between economists and arts policymakers, leaders and funders. These misunderstandings, which have long dogged discussion on arts funding in the UK, are most evident in the long-running debate about ‘instrumental’ and ‘intrinsic’ approaches to public expenditure on culture and the arts. [Our] argument here is simple: bad economic decisions are the outcome of bad economics. If, economic decisions have therefore failed to take account of the intrinsic benefits of the arts, the solution is not to exempt arts spending from economic criteria, but to improve the economic practice used to judge such spending”.¹²¹

In 2003, the British Library used CV [cultural value] techniques to estimate that it provides over £363 million in value each year, the bulk of which is value enjoyed by non-users. This is around 4.4 times the level of its annual public funding (Pung, Clarke and Patten, 2004). In 2005, a CV study of museum, library and archive services in Bolton found that users and non-users valued the services at £10.4 million, 1.6 times the value of their public funding (Jura Consultants, 2005).¹²²

¹²⁰ National Museums: working in Partnership, NMDC Briefing, 2008, page 1

¹²¹ Measuring Intrinsic Value, Hasan Bakhshi, Alan Freeman and Graham Hitchen, p3

¹²² Measuring Intrinsic Value, Hasan Bakhshi, Alan Freeman and Graham Hitchen, p12

13.1 Partnerships – value for money – public benefit

Organisation Code	Q15 Total visitor numbers/users resulting from partnerships
2	500,000
3	50,000
4	472,923
13	167,000
16	>5,000,000
11	About 1,000,000 visitors may have benefited from partnerships activities and there are also benefits to the professionals in the sector
20	350,000
1	3,000,000
18	More than 1,000
19	750,000
Nat. Mus (10)	11,290,923
12	63,000 (approx)
8	2,500,000
Non-Nats (2)	2,563,000

Only 10 national museums were able to estimate how many people had benefited from the partnerships they had been describing. Of these, few had convincingly precise figures, hardly surprising when they have to rely upon the partners to gather the data, but more accuracy would give the NMDC's advocacy more weight.

The majority of these beneficiaries will actually have been seeing objects on loan. This does not help to emphasise the story of national museums' involvement across the country.

Overall, there are over 42 million visits each year to major museums and galleries in England.¹²³ The DCMS Taking Part survey in 2008-9 showed strong baseline results:

- 44% of adults had attended a museum, gallery or archive at least once in the past 12 months.
- Of those respondents having taken part in two or more different activities at the required frequency over the past 12 months:
 - 64.9% of respondents had visited a museum, gallery or archive
- For those people who visited a museum in the past 12 months, the most common other sector the participated in was the arts (78.5%)

Of course, there is no way of knowing what proportion of these visits is made in response to an NMDC partnership initiative.

However, twelve national museums with over 50 regional museum partners took part in this phase of the DCMS/DCSF museum partnership programme. These organisations were together involved in seventeen discrete projects across England. During 2006-07, museums worked with 1,577 schools and a total of 71,297 contacts with pupils and community participants were

¹²³ Museums and Galleries in Britain, Tony Travers, 2006

reported across all the participating museums. A total of 450,357 people attended events and exhibitions that were connected with the projects.¹²⁴

Since 2001, in London, visits to former charging museums were up by over 94%, with visits to the V&A up 151%, the Natural History Museum by 117% and the Science Museum by 105%.¹²⁵ In the regions, visits to national museums increased by 109% with visits to National Museums up by 188%. Since the introduction of free admission, the number of visits by children under 16 has increased by 80%, the number of visits by ethnic minorities increased 81.6% and the number of visits from people aged 60 and over has increased by 65.5%¹²⁶. Between 2002/03 and 2004/05 alone, the number of people from lower socio-economic groups visiting government-sponsored museums increased by almost 30%¹²⁷.¹²⁸

Major museums also feature strongly in the top ten attractions for England – 6 out of ten top free attractions are NMDC members.

Top 10 Free Attractions 2007	Top 10 Paid Attractions 2007
Name of Attraction	Name of Attraction
Xscape Milton Keynes 6,863,733	Tower of London 2,064,126
Blackpool Pleasure Beach 5,500,000	St Paul's Cathedral 1,623,881
*British Museum 5,400,062	Kew Gardens 1,319,917
*Tate Modern 5,200,000	Flamingo Land Theme Park / Zoo 1,310,285
River Lee Country Park 4,515,258	Windermere Lake Cruises 1,274,976
*National Gallery 4,159,485	Chester Zoo 1,233,044
Xscape Castleford 3,742,081	Eden Project 1,128,107
*Natural History Museum 3,652,003	London Zoo 1,108,541
*Victoria & Albert Museum 2,809,900	Canterbury Cathedral 1,068,244
*Science Museum 2,712,824	Westminster Abbey 1,058,362

In 2007*, 5735 Visitor Attractions were invited to take part in the annual survey, and 2010 responded. *2008 Results available in August 2009¹²⁹

From a regional perspective, it would be interesting to know whether the most visited museum sites in each region regularly participate in national partnerships. For example:

West Midlands. Most Visited Museum Sites 2008¹³⁰

Museum	Visit Figures 2008
Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery # LA	585,738
Coventry Transport Museum * IND	346,062
The Birthplace & The Shakespeare Centre IND	330,262
RAF Museum Cosford NAT	313,730
Black Country Living Museum IND	294,380
New Art Gallery, Walsall LA	176,812
Blists Hill Victorian Town (Ironbridge) # * IND	166,552
Wolverhampton Art Gallery # LA	158,796
Heritage Motor Centre IND	151,420
Herbert Art Gallery & Museum # IND	149,403
Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Stratford	141,419
Potteries Museum & Art Gallery # LA	132,094
Staffs County Museum LA	131,086
Charlecote Park NT	103,500.

¹²⁴ Inspiration, Identity and Learning, page 8

¹²⁵ http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/museums_and_galleries/3380.aspx.

¹²⁶ All numbers have been calculated based on DCMS performance indicators

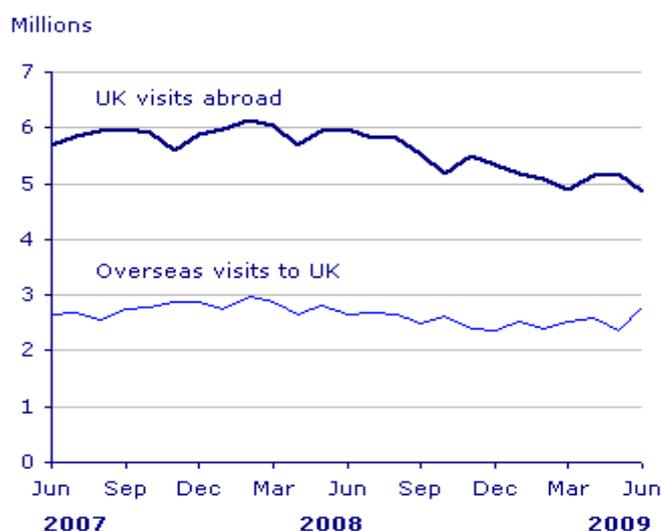
¹²⁷ Tony Blair's culture speech at Tate Modern, 6 March 2007.

¹²⁸ NMDC Manifesto

¹²⁹ Tourism Trade, Visit Britain. England Factsheet -August 2009

¹³⁰ Fast Forward 2008 Update. Renaissance West Midlands, to be published Dec 2009.

Hub Museum
* Museum with a designated collection



Overseas residents' visits to the UK and UK residents' visits abroad (seasonally adjusted) ¹³¹

According to DCMS (2009), in 2008/09, visits to 18 DCMS sponsored museums had increased 1% on the same period in the previous year. As the authors note, the fact that these museums are free may be a "major factor" in this trend – borne out by the fact that 4 museum branches which charge people to enter have seen a 12% drop in visits. ¹³²

13.2 Partnerships – value for money – costs

Organisation Code	Total visitor numbers/users	Total cost of participating in these partnerships
2	500,000	£365,000 (excluding staff costs)
3	50,000	£30,000 (approx)
13	167,000	£160,000 (DCMS/DCSF Strategic Commissioning grant) per year
16	>5,000,000	>£500,000
11	About 1,000,000	Around £500,000
1	3,000,000	£650,000
18	More than 1,000	Less than £250,000
Nat. Mus. (7)	9,781,000	£2,455,000
12	63,000 (approx)	£160,000 (approx)
8	2,500,000	£14 million
Non-nats (2)	2,563,000	£14,160,000

Only those respondents which supplied both numbers AND costs.

As noted earlier, respondents presented their figures in a very broad brush way. Never the less, it is clear that the 10 nationals which attempted to

¹³¹ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?id=352>

¹³² West Midlands Cultural Sector Economic Snapshot, July 2009

answer the question were spending at least £2.5 million, and this, in most cases, excludes staff time and in-house resources.

In terms of loans, we have introduced cost recovery tariffs for national loans and charging for international loans this financial year. The Collections Department is currently developing resources on objects and loan materials and a charge will be attached to provision of these packs. The pilot is being conducted with regional museums. External funding will be an important factor in contributing to and supporting loan activity in the future.

London national (19)

Total cost of participating in these partnerships to your museum - around half a million

English national (11)

We passed on costs of travel and any additional packing requirements (i.e. if we did not have in-house materials that could be recycled), courier expenses and any insurance if not with government indemnity.

Home country national (5)

The actual cost of partnership activity would be £38,000 (staff costs for my post and my budget for 08-9). However the hidden cost of all partnership activity across the organisations is probably much higher.

The figures for our touring exhibitions (from our venues and our venues) are about 862,000 people. That does not include a count of the number of people who may have seen loans from our collections, nor does it include how audience development collaborations may have benefited our partners. It is difficult to estimate how staff informal networking and research initiatives may have contributed to audience development plans within our institution, our partners and the overall sector. The actual cost of partnership activity would be £38,000 (staff costs for my post and my budget for 08-9). However the hidden cost of all partnership activity across the organisations is probably much higher.

English national (11)

13.2.1 Partnerships – value for money - weaknesses

Supply side

In 2004, NMDC acknowledged that

We rarely quantify the contribution of core staff time and other organisational resources, which can be substantial, and this provides insufficient guidance for our corporate planning purposes.¹³³

Again, Kingshurst commented in 2006 that

There appears to be very little information or work undertaken on what these cost. The main exception to this is the V & A who are undertaking a “National Working Audit” to estimate how much of the museum’s staff resource is being expended on “national working”, the type of activity involved and where in the UK. In addition, Tyne and Wear Museums are undertaking a survey on the cost of loans to and from UK museums. We believe the work by the V & A and Tyne and Wear could be of real benefit in articulating the cost of partnership activity. Further work on a cost benefit analysis of such

¹³³ National Dimensions 2004, NMDC, 2004

activity across the sector and its real value to participating organisations would appear to be useful.¹³⁴

Never the less, 44% of the national museum respondents to this survey have no quick way of calculating their partnership costs, and a good proportion of the rest were quoting “round £100Ks”.

Total visitor numbers/users - We don't have a figure
Total cost of participating in these partnerships to your museum - We don't have a figure

Home country national (5)

Unfortunately this data cannot be provided in any way which would be meaningful.

Home country national (10)

Several respondents said that their organisation did not prioritise this kind of measurement. Is this an issue of internal corporate culture? Does this require organisational change?

The Kingshurst report mentioned a similar issue:

How partnerships are perceived strategically by museums in terms of organisational change. How do we ensure that learning from partnership work extends beyond those directly involved in the project and begins to influence directly the way in which the organisation as a whole operates? This question of the real long term value of partnership working – and the collaborative advantage which flows from it – is at the core of our findings.

Non-national side

In 2006 Alec Coles still said that there were commonly held beliefs about the cost of loans which were not entirely true. His survey was of 18 museums, libraries and archives.

Myths or Facts?

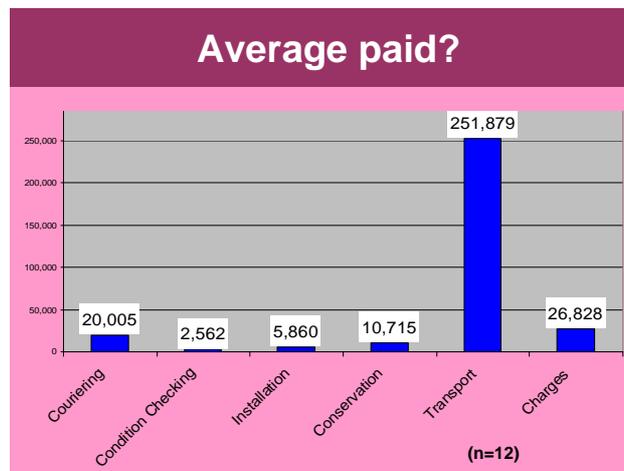
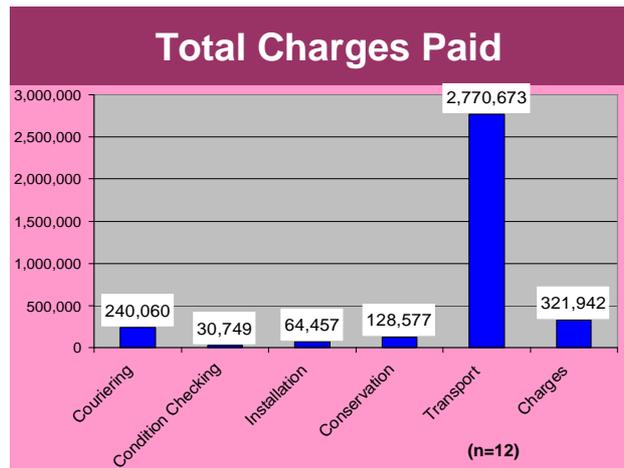
- Loans are problematical
- Only large museums lend
- Only large museums borrow
- Many museums cannot afford to borrow
- Enormous costs are levied on borrowers, especially by national museums
- Couriering, is a licence to print money...
- There are consistent approaches

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Costs were still seen as a deterrent even though 50% of his survey claimed not to charge anything at all:

¹³⁴ The Value of Partnerships, Discussion Paper, Kingshurst Consulting, 2006, page 10



13.2.2 Partnerships – value for money - opportunities

The government's interest in education has been successfully supported by the major museums, particularly through Strategic Commissioning which, as it has progressed, has attracted a very much increased number of secondary schools: 38% of the sample were secondary schools compared with 18% in the first round.¹³⁵

However, there are opportunities to put equal weight behind other government agendas, in particular civil society issues.

Older boys are uncharacteristically enthusiastic:

89% agreeing that they had enjoyed their museum experience

60% saying they had been inspired by the museum

90% agreeing that they had discovered some interesting new things

DCMS/DFES/DCSF programme ¹³⁶

In individual cases the recession has proved to be an unexpected good news story, demonstrating the economic impact of museums and heritage upon the country's important tourism economy.

¹³⁵ Inspiration, Identity and Learning, page 17

¹³⁶ Inspiration, Identity and Learning, page 27

Nationally, over half (59%) of attractions expected visiting for quarter 2 (Apr-Jun) to be higher than last year (up from 14% for Jan-Mar), with confidence in the West Midlands particularly high (62%). This sea change in business confidence was found to be associated with various factors, including a belief that domestic tourism will increase during the coming year.¹³⁷

The results of wave 3 (June 2009) of the VisitEngland/VisitLondon research into the impact of the economic downturn on domestic tourism show an increase in UK residents planning to take short breaks in areas of the UK (not including London) (+8%) and an increase in respondents planning day trips to areas in the UK (not including London) (+6%) compared to Oct/Dec 2008.¹³⁸

NMDC might wish to explore "Social Return on Investment" which provides a way to reflect the added value of the work that third sector organisations undertake. The Office of the Third Sector (OTS) in the Cabinet Office is running a major project to develop and support the further development of the methodology.

The six stages of an SROI can be summarised as follows:

1. Establishing scope and identifying key stakeholders
2. Mapping outcomes.
3. Evidencing outcomes and giving them a value.
4. Establishing impact.
5. Calculating the SROI.
6. Reporting, using, and embedding. ¹³⁹

13.2.3 Partnerships – value for money – threats / barriers

Financial forecasts

The greatest threat is a potential reduction in transferable spend within both national and regional museum budgets. Even in 2006 Kingshurst were saying:

Collaboration-based work depends on the availability of external sources of additional funding. Funding rarely covers the full project cost, with the result that all partnerships, to a greater or lesser extent, consume core organisational resources, in particular staff time. This input is rarely budgeted or indeed properly evaluated, thereby understating the true cost of collaborative work. Only in very few instances have national museums made specific allowances for it in their annual budgets.

This situation is unlikely to be sustainable in the context of ever tighter core budgets and the increasing accountability requirements for resources spent. It raises even bigger questions in terms of the feasibility of growing national activity in the future.

¹³⁷ West Midlands Cultural Sector Economic Snapshot (July 2009)

¹³⁸ West Midlands Cultural Sector Economic Snapshot (July 2009)

¹³⁹ Providing Value and Improving Practice: SROI, nef consulting, May 2009.

Local authorities are under huge pressure too.

The same applies, perhaps to an even higher degree, to partner institutions in the regions which tend to be even more constrained by tight resources...¹⁴⁰

Earned income from ticket admission and sales will be affected by domestic and foreign tourism markets. Published in tandem with the Visit England/Visit London research, Olive Insight (2009) suggests that greater volumes of overseas tourists are being discouraged from visiting the UK than are being encouraged.¹⁴¹ This affects both capital city and regional venues:

UK Tourism Survey (Jan-Mar 09) saw a decrease in levels of overnight domestic tourism visits and related expenditure during the Jan-Mar quarter. Most adversely affected were London, South West and South East regions. The increasing trend for people to holiday at home may also be benefiting the regions ¹⁴²

International Passenger Survey (Jan – Mar 2009) – provisional results for the Jan-Mar 2009 quarter suggest that the number of visits to the West Midlands made by overseas visitors is down compared to the same period last year by a margin that is in line with the England average (-15%). The number of nights spent in the West Midlands was down -37%, compared to the England average of -15). ¹⁴³

NMDC recommends that:

Funders, public and private, should be encouraged to review their eligibility criteria for project funding and allow a greater proportion to be directed towards supporting organisational capacity, rather than solely direct project costs. ¹⁴⁴

It is interesting to note that a model for Full Cost Recovery already works very well in the Heritage Lottery Fund's programmes.

National museum accounting systems

We may regret the sordid intrusion of numbers into a domain we desire to be free of limitation, but in a society without limitless resources, this is impossible¹⁴⁵

NMDC will never be able to make the case that national museums' budgets deliver projects to people across the country until there is agreement (and, ideally, consistency) that numbers are collected and shared at all levels and throughout each organisation, including all of those informal but powerful traditional arrangements.

¹⁴⁰ The Value of Partnerships, Discussion Paper, Kingshurst Consulting, 2006, page 10

¹⁴¹ West Midlands Cultural Sector Economic Snapshot (July 2009)

¹⁴² VisitBritain (2009) UK Tourism Survey, Jan-Mar 2009 regional data

¹⁴³ West Midlands Cultural Sector Economic Snapshot (July 2009)

¹⁴⁴ National Dimensions 2004, NMDC, 2004, p90

¹⁴⁵ Measuring Intrinsic Value, Hasan Bakhshi, Alan Freeman and Graham Hitchen, p17

The problem of public choice arises most acutely in precisely those spheres where the market fails to establish a valid measure of the intrinsic value of an activity which is of public merit. In this case, the decision-makers themselves need to establish such measures if they are to make valid choices.¹⁴⁶

Two thirds of national museums were unable easily to provide either the number of beneficiaries or the cost of partnership working, or both. While in some cases a more in-depth statistical survey would certainly produce reliable figures, in others the counting simply does not seem to be taking place. The barriers identified included:

Information not collated at present

Home country Library (17)

Not possible to calculate, varies from 6,500 young people from learning outreach delivered in partnership, to millions benefiting from loans at museums and other institutions across the country. Cost varies, learning partnership projects dependent on external funding approx £100k per project, whilst access to specialist advice, loans programme etc dependent on internal staff budgets.

Home country, national (7)

We don't quantify our activity in the way detailed above. While also trying to collect data on figures this is patchy as we have no formal requirement for it to be provided. We also haven't done a full survey of what it costs our museum to participate in these activities. We could give snapshot of different examples if requested i.e. what a loan costs, what a learning resource in local community costs, what touring exhibition costs us, how much to run a free training event etc

Home country national (5)

This requires detailed financial study and definitions that do not exist. It is possible to provide annual reports for the projects, which would give some idea of cost and impact. I can't confirm that our response is accurate; at best it is an instinctive idea.

London national (18)

The figures for our touring exhibitions (from our venues and our venues) are about 862,000 people. That does not include a count of the number of people who may have seen loans from our collections, nor does it include how audience development collaborations may have benefited our partners.

English national (11)

Note that it's very difficult to give accurate answers to many of these questions. A proportion of our activities, of course, are informal. Number of users depends on how you define a user. Major loans to Kelvingrove, Great North Museum etc. - of large numbers of objects that are integral to the displays - could be included. Touring exhibitions attract anything from 30,000-200,000 visitors. Cost - the figure above includes external sponsorship and grants as well as GIA costs. It does not include the real costs of the programme in staff time etc.

London national (16)

Not possible to calculate, varies from 6,500 young people from learning outreach delivered in partnership, to millions benefiting from loans at museums and other institutions across the country. Cost varies, learning partnership projects dependent

¹⁴⁶ Measuring Intrinsic Value, Hasan Bakhshi, Alan Freeman and Graham Hitchen, p18

on external funding approx £100k per project, whilst access to specialist advice, loans programme etc dependent on internal staff budgets.

Home country, national (7)

But some respondents could be specific in some areas

The total visitor numbers relate specifically to the 7 partnership projects between Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery and National Museums during 2008/09. The total costs relate specifically to these same 7 partnership projects and include total costs for hiring in and hosting touring exhibitions from national museums.

English non-national (12)

Take One Picture Primary ITE Cultural Placement Programme. This involves 4 regional museums, 5 regional universities, 5,280 pupil contacts, 176 teachers, 176 participating schools. The "Take One Picture" exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford attracted 167,000 visitors. (2008/9)

English national (13)

Impossible to detail for all areas (particularly loans). Each loan costs £4.5k for the museum to process. In addition we run a dedicated outreach team that supports accessioned collections going to community venues and Glasgow Museum supported /volunteer led community museums in Glasgow. This is approximately £50k in staff time and expertise to support and maintain. As we don't have dedicated funding stream to develop partnerships we do not measure impact of this work in that way.

Home country non national (6)

Some aspects of our UK work are easy to cost e.g. touring exhibitions. However, the more informal but equally valuable activity e.g. advice is absorbed in day to day work and therefore difficult to quantify in cost.

London national (20)

Partnerships and diversification will be suggested as financial safety nets:

The impact [of the recession] on DCMS' subsidised sectors may largely depend on how much of their income is self-generated. At the same time that difficult decisions are having to be made about public funding, bodies which have done most to diversify their funding sources are facing reductions in the self-generated income on which they have come to rely.

This can vary greatly, even amongst a similar group of institutions such as the national museums. [From the Natural History Museum 9% and National Museums English national (11) 10%, through the Horniman Museum 18% and Victoria & Albert 19%, to Tate 34%, Imperial War Museum c45% and National Portrait Gallery 50%. *All figures approx and are still at draft stage.* Definitions of self generated income vary between bodies, with some income streams reported net of direct costs and others gross, and some institutions reporting the value of donated heritage assets, as well as donations of money towards the purchase of heritage assets.

Latest data shows that in the first 11 months of 2008/09, the number of visits to 18 DCMS-sponsored museums had increased 1 per cent on the same period in 2007/08. The fact that these museums are free may be a major factor in this trend as people substitute from paid

activities. This is also borne out by the fact that the four museum branches which charge for entrance have seen a 12 per cent drop in visits compared to last year. However, although visitor numbers may remain strong, spend per visitor (on food, gifts, etc.) is more vulnerable and any decline will have a more pronounced affect on those that rely on self-generated income more. ¹⁴⁷

14 Priorities

Q17

Local government	Central government	Treasury	Other
Local/national economy	Economic productivity	Value for money	Our corporate objectives
Children and young people	Children and young people	Efficiency	HEFCE
Adult health and well being	Health and well being	Governance and risk management	MOD
Stronger and safer communities	Addressing disadvantage	Public sector performance	
	Active communities		
	Cultural Olympiad		
	Active participation		
Number of Respondents 11	Number of Respondents 17	Number of Respondents 17	Number of Respondents 12

We asked what priorities drove partnerships. Given the sample, it is unsurprising that more respondents acknowledged central government and Treasury drivers than local government priorities. However, as the chart above demonstrates, these are fairly closely aligned and a national museum seeking to meet Treasury priorities could do so by consciously working with partners to deliver the local government agendas that often drive *them*.

There is proportionately slightly higher focus from respondents in supporting the local / national economy, the Cultural Olympiad and active participation, but most of the drivers listed above are being addressed in at least three quarters of instances, with slightly lower focus in the health and well being agendas.

The focus upon “our corporate objectives” is particularly strong in terms of professionalism and finance (both 100%).

Government agendas inform Museum planning and activity. In terms of learning, higher and further education drivers are also important. ... Our organisational strategic objectives and corporate priorities, as described in our business plan, are critical to the delivery of the mission.

London national (19)

Our key drivers are the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework and then how this relates to local authority planning frameworks, and community

¹⁴⁷ Lifting People, Lifting Places, DCMS, May 2009. p30

planning through local museums. Our priorities are very much linked to Learning, National Identity and Care of Collections.

Home country national (5)

14.1 Priorities - generic

In 2004, in their "National Dimensions", NMDC acknowledged that
There is a requirement for each of us to articulate more precisely the nature of our national role and obligations – in terms of nationwide access to our collections, a notion of national stewardship for our respective fields of collecting etc – and the importance that collaborations and partnerships play in meeting these as well as our own core institutional objectives.

Our central objectives for the coming years must be to continue developing genuinely nationwide access to our national collections and the knowledge and expertise that comes with this – thereby supporting cultural provision across the nation; contributing to the advancement of education and learning, social and economic regeneration, and not least, providing people nationwide with enjoyment and inspiration.¹⁴⁸

This was picked up and reinforced by DCMS in 2006

As the predominant funder, DCMS must ensure that its funding not only meets its responsibilities to its directly sponsored institutions but also that, in doing so, the maximum benefit accrues to the museum sector as a whole and to the public it collectively serves.¹⁴⁹

... we need to maximise the potential of partnership with the national museums, which are the best resourced in the museum community.

... The national museums have enthusiastically taken up the challenge of increasing their regional partnerships, but we believe it is possible to extend significantly the range of regional museums reached".¹⁵⁰

Regional museums 2006:

Regional as well as national museums should recognise the desirability of partnership working within their forward plans, and be able to underpin local planning with clear guidance from the centre. Funding for partnerships should help drive existing objectives and strategic directions in the regions as well as contributing to national aims and targets. Individual partnership ideas should be based on benefits for visitors within a longer term strategic context¹⁵¹

And in 2009 the Renaissance Review recommended:

It is envisaged that core museums work in flexible partnerships with other museums and agencies to deliver programmes based on the

¹⁴⁸ National Dimensions, NMDC, 2004

¹⁴⁹ Understanding the Future, DCMS, 2006, p23, 25

¹⁵⁰ Understanding the Future, DCMS, 2006, p23, 25

¹⁵¹ Worthwhile Partnerships, A Regional Perspective, W Midlands

achievement of three to five agreed outcomes. These partnerships should embrace DCMS-sponsored museums and galleries, and other regional and local museums¹⁵²

So, five exciting years have passed and much has happened. But are partnerships fully embedded in NMDC's organisational culture to the extent that they no longer need special support? The evidence would appear to say "not yet".

Respondents were encouraged to tick multiple priorities from a wide range of categories relating to both national and local government priorities. Never the less, most respondents only used the boxes relating to their specific type of institution or their own institution.

There are possibly two issues at play here:

- 1 What level of personal engagement did the respondents have with the national/non-national partnerships? While some were completed by Directors or Partnership Managers, others were delegated to senior curators who may simply not put these partnerships high on their priorities. Is partnership working fully integrated into corporate culture across the whole organisation? Or only as a high level policy?
- 2 Do the nationals actually recognise how closely their priorities mesh with those of their local authority partners? It is extremely important, however, to also acknowledge the wide variety of successful partnerships with museums and institutions beyond central and local government structures.

14.2 Goals and priorities - strengths

Again, Wales is notably different:

We are in a unique position in Wales when partnerships are considered for the following reasons : a) we are the only museums/gallery services funded by the Assembly, in a sector in which we are the largest provider; therefore a 'national' strategy must by definition require us to reach out to other regions and types of organisation. Partnership working therefore cuts across many of the headings offered in the section above. b) we are the only organisation within Wales that many larger local authority organisations, trusts and foundations and 'national museums and galleries' correspond to as peers, and therefore 'networks of networks' are crucial, sharing partnerships via relationships is fundamental to our work - for example, facilitating loans from English nationals to non-national venues; bringing together local partners around our venues in wider projects.

NMDC says that, across the UK, their museums contribute to:

- Things to do and places to go: Culture gives people affordable, inspiring, fun and uplifting things to do and places to go with their families.
- Thriving communities: Culture can bring people together and improve understanding of identities and heritage
- International Reputation: Culture makes Britain a great place to live, work, visit and do business.
- Faith in the Future: 2012 and beyond.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Renaissance Review, page 17

Opportunities to address wider government agendas

Britain's museums and galleries have been increasingly successful in achieving a number of outcomes desired by government. Increasing overall attendances (over time) and the observation that 43 per cent of all adults visit a museum or gallery at least once a year (DCMS, 2006) suggests the sector has become a major element in the delivery of an improved quality of life. New museums and galleries have contributed to the economic and social regeneration of industrial cities.¹⁵⁴

Museums and galleries, in common with other central and local government-funded bodies, are expected to deliver efficiencies. In the 2005-2008 *Efficiency Target Technical Note* published by DCMS, one of the targets set is to increase the numbers accessing museums' and galleries' collections by two per cent by 2008....

The evidence of recent years ... is that the number of visits to institutions has risen faster than grants. Over the period 1998-99 to 2005-06 (with full sets of data for both years), the number of visits to national museums was up 52 per cent, while direct government funding rose by 41 per cent (in cash) ...

There is no doubt that recent evidence suggests museums and galleries have been effective at delivering productivity improvements. Past investment allowed such improvements to occur and could, presumably do so again in the future.¹⁵⁵

"The evaluation research shows clearly how museums can contribute in powerful ways to a number of important government agendas, especially:

- Community cohesion and social inclusion
- Every Child Matters i.e. Be healthy, Stay safe, Enjoy and achieve, Make a positive contribution and Achieve economic well-being
- The review of the KS3 curriculum
- The implementation of Excellence and Enjoyment in primary schools
- The professional development of teachers
- The development of schools and the curriculum
- Personalised learning ¹⁵⁶

14.3 Goals and priorities - weaknesses

Current national / non-national partnerships may not be meeting local government's community-centred priorities sufficiently clearly.

An emphasis on social inclusion and other policy drivers influences the role and provision of cultural heritage. Legislative changes ... have

¹⁵³ NMDC Key messages

¹⁵⁴ Museums and Galleries in Britain, Tony Travers, 2006, page 12

¹⁵⁵ Museums and Galleries in Britain, Tony Travers, 2006, page 47

¹⁵⁶ Inspiration, Identity and Learning, page 3

also had an impact on the sector. In England, the local government improvement agenda as detailed in *A Passion for Excellence*” will have a particular impact on local authority cultural heritage services.¹⁵⁷ Cultural Heritage and the creative industries are increasingly being called upon to play a significant role in contributing to the development of sustainable and cohesive communities and other government priorities and strategies. This will continue to be a challenge and an opportunity for the sector. ¹⁵⁸

MLA’s relationships with hub museums’ primary funding partners, the majority of which are local authorities, appears to be more theoretical than actual. It has largely ignored the realities of working within local government structures. Indeed, MLA’s accounts of Renaissance’s effectiveness exclude the local-national funding partnerships that it represents. Its priority has been to demonstrate the effectiveness of Renaissance per se, rather than to highlight its integration with other government-funded bodies.¹⁵⁹

Core museums and partnerships programme good practice points to the importance of museums’ creating specific partnerships in order to achieve carefully defined and shared objectives, and questions the value of partnerships prescribed from the centre. ¹⁶⁰

Although in 2006, DCMS said that “DCMS and MLA will be making the improvement of national and regional partnerships a core expectation of the national museums and the Renaissance Hubs, through our funding relationships with them” ¹⁶¹ Renaissance funding agreements did not appear to include this.

14.4 Goals and priorities - opportunities

“For many of the national museum partners, the DCMS/DCSF programme enabled the beginning of work with the community, and where it was more familiar, strategies of engagement with communities could be further developed. National museums learnt a good deal from their regional partners about how to work with communities, but the approach taken was not always as open to the values of community groups as is necessary.

The most effective approaches involved openness on the part of museum staff to the perspectives of community participants and willingness and ability to shape projects around these perspectives. The least effective approaches involved the transmission of museum-based themes and values to community groups, with very little reflection on the part of the museum staff as to why groups would benefit from this. ¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ The Cultural Heritage Blueprint, Dec 2008, p16

¹⁵⁸ The Cultural Heritage Blueprint, Dec 2008, p17

¹⁵⁹ Renaissance Review, page 11

¹⁶⁰ Renaissance Review, page 15

¹⁶¹ Understanding the Future, DCMS, 2006, p23, 25

¹⁶² Inspiration, Identity and Learning, page 38

It is interesting to compare the results of the community questionnaire with the results of the school questionnaire. Although in some cases the questions have been modified slightly, it is generally the case that the young people found their museum experience much more positive when it was in the community rather than the school context. The table below gives a flavour of this phenomenon, which would be useful to explore in further research. ¹⁶³

Summary of Table 15: Form B KS3 and above and Form Bc Young people and adults. What older participants said about their learning. Comparing three questions from RR1:2003, DCMS/DfES1:2004, RR2: 2005, and DCMS/DCSF2:2007¹⁶⁴

		A museum/gallery visit makes school work more inspiring	I would come again	I've left the museum more interested in the subject than when I came
2003	KS3 and above	58%	55%	59%
2004	KS3 and above	64%	55%	63%
2005	KS3 and above	68%	54%	58%
2007	KS3.4.5	61%	68%	58%
2007	Community, young people and adults	82%	80%	78%

About one third (30.3%) of the schools that museums worked with in the programme were schools with the highest percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals ¹⁶⁵

14.5 Goals and priorities – threats / barriers

Museum provision is not at the top of local government's agenda

- Only 2 Local Authorities have National Indicator 10 as one of their 35 key indicators
- Although an additional 5 authorities explicitly include NI10 within their LAA but not as one of the 35 key indicators.
- Therefore, a total of only 7 (4.7%) of LAAs explicitly refer to NI10 in their LAA.

However,

Beyond the inclusion of indicators, 18 areas (12%) make reference in their LAA and/or SCS to activities and/or delivery of museums services, whilst 30 areas (20%) have an aim, strategic objective or priority that is about, or encompasses museums. ...

In terms of MLA sector contribution to LAA priorities, three quarters of survey respondents felt the sector is recognised as contributing towards local priorities and/or outcomes, with Children & Young

¹⁶³ Inspiration, Identity and Learning, page 41

¹⁶⁴ Inspiration, Identity and Learning, page 41

¹⁶⁵ Inspiration, Identity and Learning, page 11

People and Stronger Communities being the themes with the greatest recognised sector contribution. (LAAs 2009) ¹⁶⁶

The Renaissance Review thought that Changes in central government's Public Service Agreements, alongside an ongoing debate about the value of instrumentalism and targets, contributed to DCMS shifting its emphasis from 'measurement to judgement'.¹⁶⁷

However, the government is currently under pressure from recession and imminent electoral debate and it may default back to the apparently simpler emphasis on measurement. If it does, the absence of figures in some of NMDC's arguments will be a challenge.

At regional level, anecdotal evidence suggests that cuts to local authority culture budgets have already begun to have adverse effects on the sector:

- Cuts to the Community Services budgets at one city council have directly affected maintenance payments to some of the regions key museums (one of which houses one of the regions 12 collections of national importance).
- One unitary authority based in Coventry & Warwickshire has cut its arts budget by 82%. ¹⁶⁸

In his recent essay, National Advisor at IDeA, Martyn Allison (2009), argues that a presenting a coherent, *clear and evidenced set of justifications and arguments demonstrating the contribution the [cultural] sector can make to delivering council[s] longer term priorities* will be the most effective way of protecting local authority culture budgets. Allison calls for the sector to *come together* to present its case.

At a professional level, there is a recognition that there may be "a tension between the impulse to lead and working in partnership. A focused competitiveness is a strong force; but if it sets clear objectives and resists the urge to do too much, ---can also set the pace, by example, in promoting a collegiate spirit in the visual arts in Britain". ¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Role of M,L,A in LAAS, DC Research Ltd, MLA, 2009

¹⁶⁷ Renaissance Review, page 12

¹⁶⁸ West Midlands Cultural Sector Economic Snapshot, July 2009

¹⁶⁹ Tate National. The Principle of Sharing. Report 9. May 2006.



NI 10: Visits to museums and galleries - District and Unitary Authorities, 2008/09

Percentage of adults (16+) who have visited a museum or gallery in the past 12 months

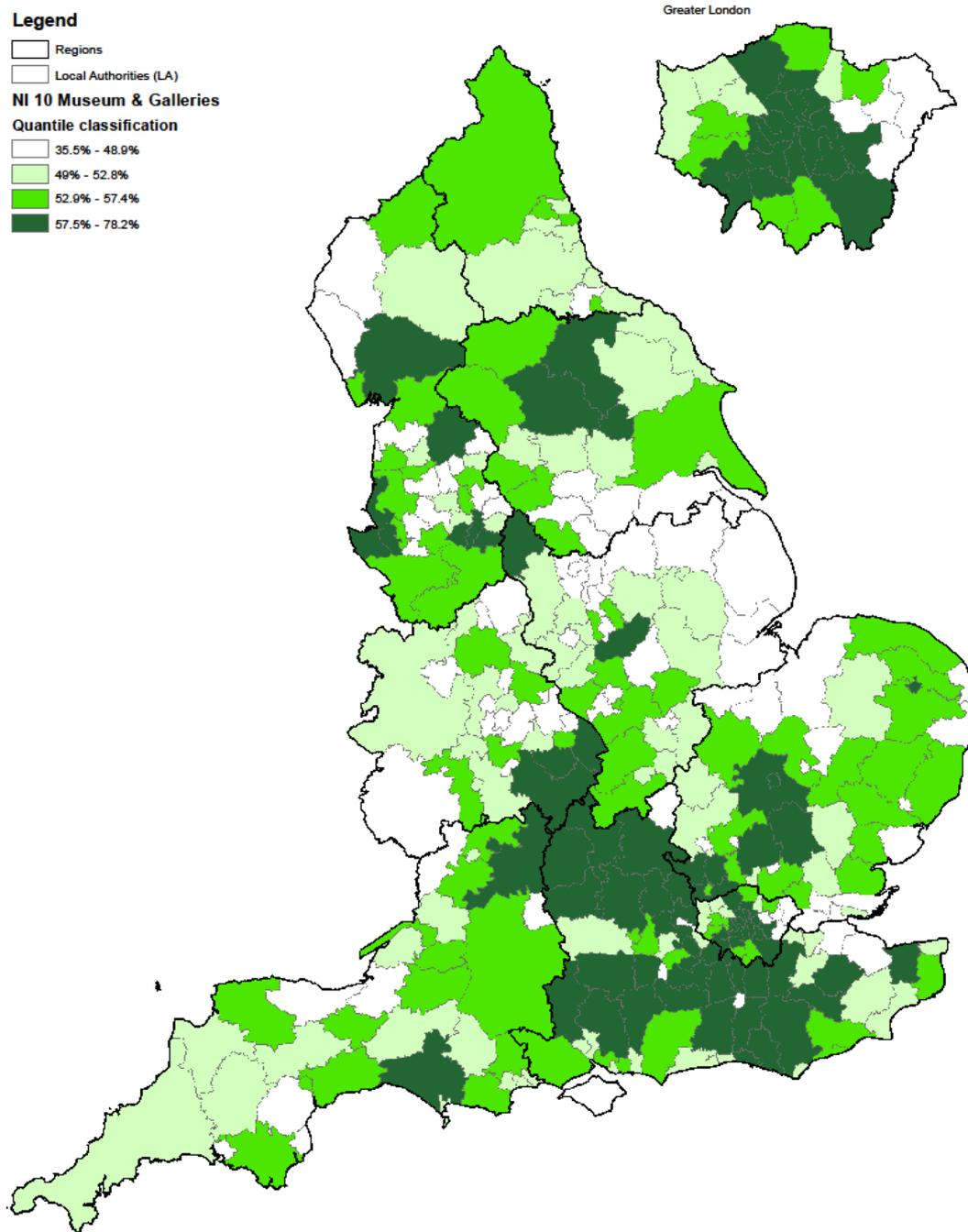
Legend

- Regions
- Local Authorities (LA)

NI 10 Museum & Galleries

Quantile classification

- 35.5% - 48.9%
- 49% - 52.8%
- 52.9% - 57.4%
- 57.5% - 78.2%



Source: The Active People Survey, April 2008-April 2009.

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Sport England 100033111 2009.

Sport England, Victoria House,
Bloomsbury Square, London, WC1B 4ET

Tel: 020 7273 1814
Email: mark.cottahay@sportengland.org

Drawn by: Mark Cottahay
Reference: 009180

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15 Personal views

Some excellent work is being done between national and regional museums. It isn't always high profile and recognised by Government. It seems official partnerships or regional 'branches' are more high profile than all of the other links national and regional museums have.

We asked (Q18) those who were completing the survey for their personal views on how partnership between national and non-national museums was flourishing in 2009. The respondents varied from Chief Executives through Partnership Managers to members of the senior management team.

Respondents have been very generous with their considered views with one Director of a London national (1) giving a comprehensive and powerful assessment, extracts from which are quoted here:

The role of the National Museum is changing as attitudes to partnership shift from a model of delivery of product from National to Regional to a more collaborative and reciprocal model of shared projects, an exchange of knowledge and expertise and a sense of the value of national networks and UK wide cultural change. There are still 'hot spots' of partnership based on the development of long term relationships and a quality of exchange (South West and North East). In recent years there has been the emergence of a greater 'regional focus' in some Nationals. As governmental policies have focused on diversity and widening audiences and access this has encouraged the Nationals to explore different (more collegiate) working with regional colleagues.

Generally, in the sector, the positive achievements are:

- o Sharing of resources and skills
- o National collections seen in the regions
- o New/special projects and programmes
- o Profile raising through national initiatives, with complementary national and local campaigns
- o All leading to public benefit

Where are the gaps/weaknesses?

- There is still an over reliance on the short term loan of works from and between collections, and the touring of exhibition product between National and Regional venues without necessarily the transfer of knowledge and skills, across regionals, to nationals and from nationals, that would lead to transformed practices and sustained relationships and activity.
- The role of membership organisations in the sector needs to be more strategic and there is a significant gap in CPD and training on the job opportunities - internships, placements, research posts - that could give a career opportunity to an emergent professional, enhance and develop existing staff and develop future and current leaders. There is a reliance on costly informal placements and often these can be exploitative or unfocused. Proper training and certification both on the job and through professional bodies needs to be enhanced and opened up to regional professionals who are not aligned to or working

in organisations and institutions. Any such initiative would require significant financial investment and benefit from the expertise and systems of any of the Nationals, whilst also enjoying the flexibility and economic modelling that takes place in the range of regional organisations and businesses. Artists and practitioners need to be encouraged to participate in these programmes.

- Also a need for:
 - More shared standards and practices between museums and galleries,
 - More equal collaboration between nationals regionals,
 - Long term relationships rather than short term schemes dependent on fixed term funding,
 - More recognition of resources devoted by nationals to regional partnerships (and funding to support this),
 - Better evaluation and strategic approach to partnerships.
 - More dynamism and change as a result of partnership working for example more diverse workforce, stronger curatorial programmes, more public benefit, stronger regional collections of art.

This echoes comments in 2007 that the vast majority of partnerships between national and regional museums were working well, with mutual learning occurring, but that some partnerships were developed in a more strategic manner than others.¹⁷⁰

Kingshurst summarised the potential benefits of partnership working as:

- Reaching more and new types of museum users, particularly those from priority groups who are not traditional visitors to museums.
- Engaging those users with collections and material from national museums that would not be available to them otherwise and, as a result, enriching their museum experience.
- Building on the complementary strengths of organisations to share and extend resources, knowledge and expertise and to maximise the benefits and impact for users
- Learning from partnerships to develop the skills and capacity of organisations and their individuals so as to increase the benefits to users in the future
- Bending main programmes, as the key partner organisations adjust their own programmes to reflect the learning from partnership working; and capitalise on the potential to influence wider programmes and policy.¹⁷¹

15.1 Views – generic

The overall impression is that partnerships are more flourishing than we sometimes believe, thanks to grassroots personal initiatives and the nature of the sector. We should look at developing digital partnerships, which surely offer the best opportunity for building links where no links were before. We perhaps should be looking at new models for partnership,

¹⁷⁰ Inspiration, Identity and Learning, page 3

¹⁷¹ The Value of Partnerships, Discussion Paper, Kingshurst Consulting, 2006, page 4

based on data sharing and digital exchange, rather than the old model of moving objects physically around the country.

English non national (23)

Some excellent work is being done between national and regional museums. It isn't always high profile and recognised by Government. It seems official partnerships or regional 'branches' are more high profile than all of the other links national and regional museums have. We should be proud of sustaining/developing/building formal partnerships AND the high level of non-formal links and relationships we have. Also how much UK work is integrated in the day to day work that the Museum does rather than as an add on e.g. much work is done in Learning, Purchase Grant Fund, Regional Liaison, Exhibitions, Loans, Research, Trading – in fact in most areas of the Museum. The geographical reach is wide and we deal with a diverse range of museums, libraries and archives. Expectations with partnerships can sometimes be difficult. Better recognition by Government of national museums' commitment to national work would be good.

London national (20)

The strategic commitment to natural history in regional museums is patchy, so there is limited potential and resources at regional partner end for collaboration. We are proud of successful projects, such as Real World Science and the Jurassic Coast Fossil Festival. Most of our loan base understandings do not operate with regional museums, though. Response to public interest in natural history are often delivered by a range of organisations inc conservation bodies, trusts, societies with whom we have active partnerships. The regional museum is not always the obvious choice. Would like to draw them into those collaborations but they need resources to facilitate this. Sometime we work through a network e.g NBN, which are joined to local museums re data collection

London national (18)

We would like to explain that we are at present between major projects, except for Strategic Commissioning. Our 7 year partnership with Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives and Tyne and Wear Museums has now finished. We are in the process of developing a new national strategy and considering partnerships and new developments.

London national (13)

15.2 Views – strengths

There has been a huge amount of activity over the last 5 years and National Museums have made a significant effort to work more strategically with regional museums. As a result of the work we have undertaken, there is a strong desire (and concrete plans) to further pursue partnership working, however, we must be realistic about the costs involved.

London national (19)

My impression is that national-regional museum working is increasing in volume and effectiveness. It's still sporadic - and some areas of the country do better than others (eg. East Midlands) and there's an important role for NMDC/MLA here in coordinating as far as possible, and helping nationals to be strategic. We should take pride, I believe, in a more sophisticated approach - with a greater focus on genuine partnership working - leading to partnerships that have a greater long-term impact.

London national (16)

National and regional partnerships are working well at the moment, but could be better and more extensive. We should take pride where national museums are truly working as national museums (i.e. not London museums) and where large regional museums are serving their region and beyond. We should also take pride where partners of equals are established (i.e. not paternal, or supplier/suppliant relationships).

English non national (8)

Should take pride in the openness of staff at institutions to share knowledge and skills. Many would like to do more, but time constraints and pressure to deliver on internal deadlines means further development of such partnerships are put on back burner.

London national (7)

National/Regional Partnerships are extremely strong providing enormous benefits for audiences, learning opportunities and access to high quality collections. Schemes such as the DCMS/DCSF Strategic Commissioning Scheme and the HLF funded partnerships have supported the ways in which these partnerships have been able to grow. Renaissance has also had a significant impact on the increasing the capacity of Regional museums to work with national partners. This is welcomed. National/ regional partnerships activity, supported has enabled increased the commitment within nationals to developing an active Collection outside London.

London national (4)

15.3 Views - weaknesses / threats

These are inconsistencies across the national museum sector with some highly developed partnerships and others less formal partnerships which are more reactive rather than a planned strategy. Challenge of meeting business drivers of an individual institution can outweigh the role national institutions feel they have in the sector. If true national regional partnership working to take place, DCMS has to make much clearer its requirements and possibly ring-fence funding for this purpose, or establish some form of accountability around national regional working beyond what it does at present - possibly requiring info on national museum's partnership strategies.

London national, (7)

A change required across the sector is consistency over charging. This will in part, contribute to a greater degree of clarity in all processes and help to manage expectations. Unrealistic expectations have undermined negotiation between nationals and non nationals. For example, nationals should have realistic expectations in terms of loan processes and these could and should be simplified. As pressure on available resource intensifies in the current climate, this problem may be exacerbated.

London national (19)

The continuation of support for national/ regional partnerships requires underpinning at a national and local level to ensure it is embedded and not subject to reduction or closure when funding agreements are set.

London national (4)

In terms of gaps an weaknesses, we should do more staff exchanges; be more prepared to work nationally as a matter of course rather than as a special favour: i.e. see it as part of our core business and not something that can be done with special funding; funding agreements with Government should better reflect this national role.

English non national (8)

Where such partnerships exist they work well, however, increased pressure on budgets is likely to have an adverse effect as the capacity to participate reduces. We should be proud of the fact that due to such initiatives Museum attendance is higher than it has ever been. The key weakness remains the funding.

English national, (2)

Partnership goals are loaded to National Museums' objectives and targets - not partner drivers or needs. Funding is directed to support the National Museum side of developing partnership - leaving little funding which can be accessed directly by the recipient organisations e.g. staff training and exchange funding. National Museums are beginning to engage in more meaningful discussion of what makes effective partnership working, but still could be more of a dialogue with greater understanding of recipient organisation drivers/constraints and objectives. The differences between home country funding streams,

the different home country/national supporting non – governmental organisations, devolved government policies is problematical and creates inefficiencies and discrepancies. Overall approach to partnership is top down rather than collaborative (on the whole).

Home country, non-national, (6)

15.4 Views - opportunities

National/ regional activity has great potential to add value to the cultural experiences of those living too far from a national collection to visit regularly and increase engagement activity to support inspiring and creative learning for all ages. Moving forward there is the opportunity to align the policy agendas within relevant departments such as DCMS and DFES to ensure that effective learning and access to collections through audience development, learning and mobile national collections is maximised and sustained.

London national (4)

National/local museum partnerships in Scotland have developed well in recent years but are now at a point where they require dedicated resources, a national strategy in Scotland, and a framework to allow the national institutions in Scotland to take on a role.

Home country national, (5)

Also very encouraged by cross-UK initiatives like Stories of the World where we are the Scottish partner. Strategy cross-UK and strategy for Scotland's museums main gaps/weakness. Across the UK there is again no formal structure to involve Scottish museums, but also a national institution like NMS in cross-UK initiatives.

Home country national, (5)

16 Geographical distribution

Complaint and comment about inequitable distribution of national / non-national partnerships have been a constant in the sector. These have rarely been supported by evidence, but neither have the NMDC's responses. In 2004 they gave it considerable attention:

We should however ensure that collectively we achieve an equitable provision across the nation, avoiding as far as possible unnecessary concentration and 'blank spots'.

Ultimately, we will best fulfil our national role as institutions by being responsive to the needs expressed by colleagues, the regions and the people of Britain at large.¹⁷²

The shift in the national policy focus towards education, social inclusion and access, and the accompanying expectations placed on national museums to broaden their geographic reach and attract audiences which traditionally have been under-represented; increased emphasis on equity of geographic distribution of public resources and opportunities ...¹⁷³

That said, a number of national museums and their branches are based outside the capital cities, and their number has increased in recent decades. They span across the country although there is no even coverage, with no national museum presence for example in the West Midlands (with the exception of RAF Cosford) and the North-East (although Tyne & Wear Museums are in receipt of central government funding).¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² National Dimensions, NMDC, 2004

¹⁷³ National Dimensions, NMDC, 2004, p12

¹⁷⁴ National Dimensions, NMDC, 2004, p34

The uneven geographic distribution of touring exhibitions is frequently commented on, and the concentration of activity over the last few years around a relatively small number of institutions – usually large regional venues – and the fact that the ‘winners’ tend to be institutions located at a long distance from London. It suggests the South-East as being at a disadvantage, lying within the wider catchment of London and therefore competing with national museums for core audiences.

This suggests reviewing the level and structure of provision and exploring the possibility of extending the circuit of venues across the country. This is already being considered actively by a number of national museums (e.g. the National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery and Tate). 2004, p39 ¹⁷⁵

16.1 Maps of national museums’ UK partnership activity

The maps on the following pages illustrate the geographical distribution of national museums’ partnership activity around the UK, separated into different types of activity. The maps were created using postcode data provided by national museum respondents to the NMDC survey.

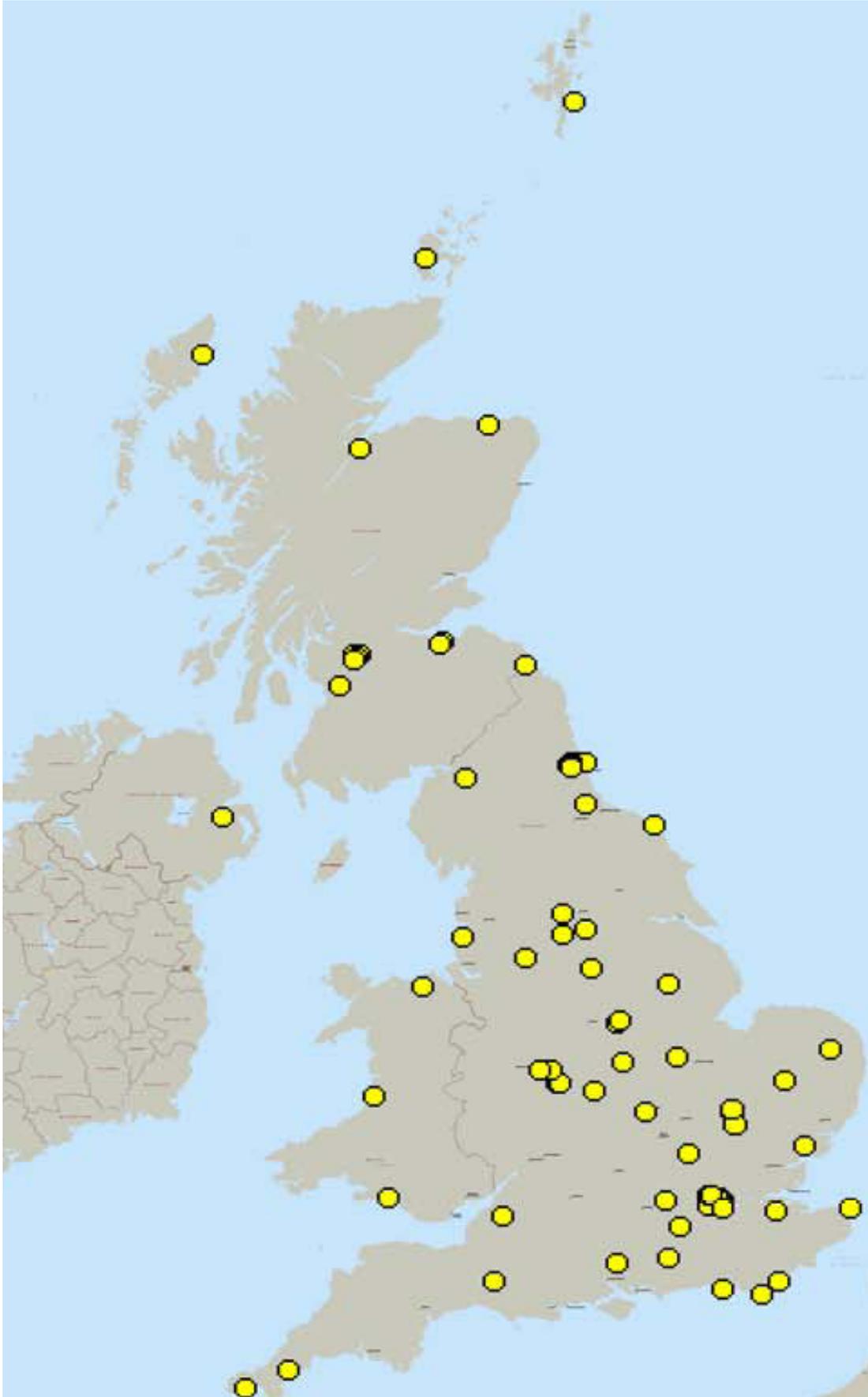
¹⁷⁵ National Dimensions, NMDC, 2004, p12

1. All partnerships



Locations of regional museums with which national museums worked in partnership on all types of activity in 2008-09.

2. Formal partnerships



Locations of regional museums with which national museums have formal partnership agreements with contracts in place.

3. Joint exhibition work



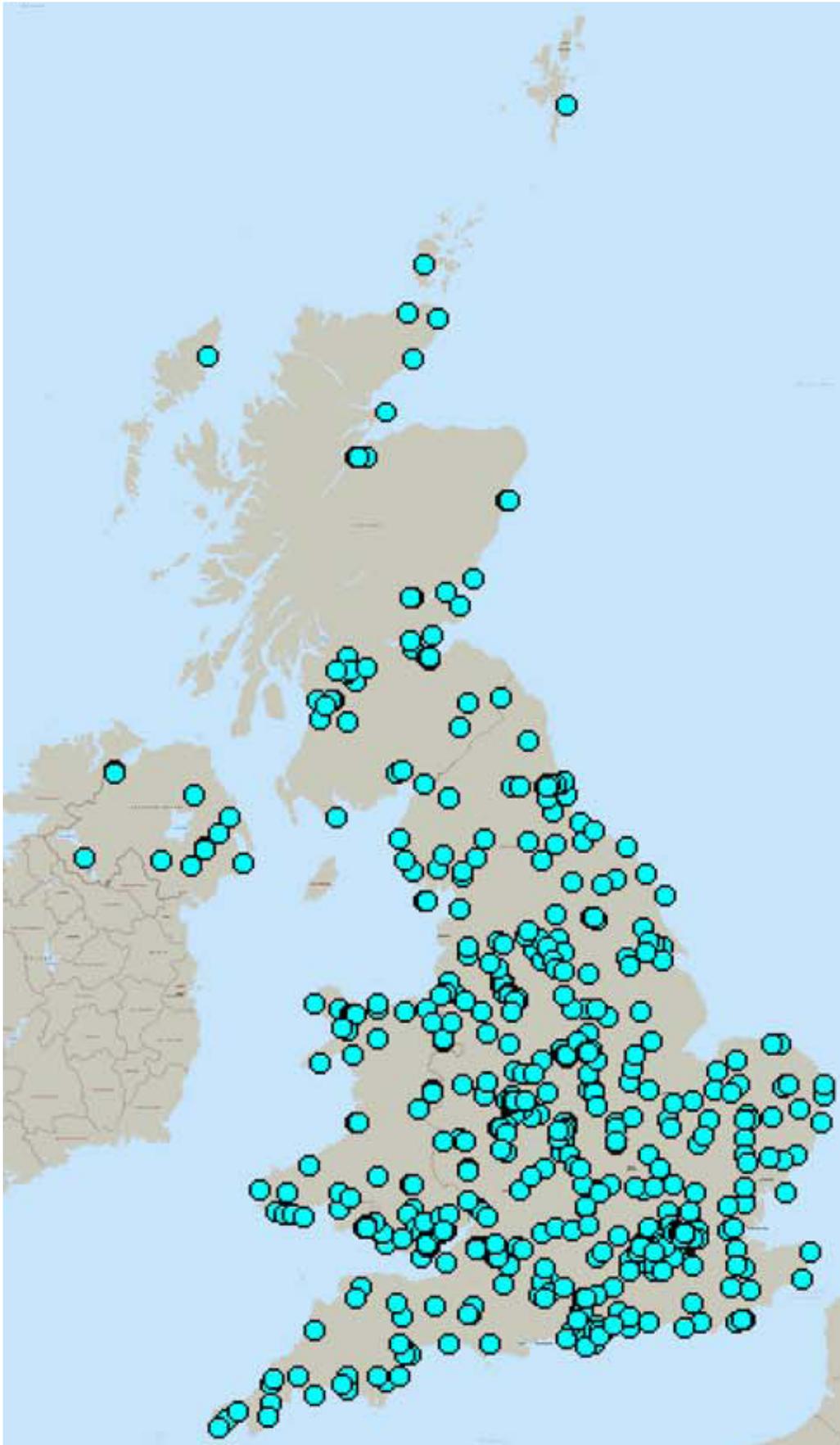
Locations of regional museums with which national museums worked on joint exhibitions in 2008-09.

4. Strategic commissioning



Locations of all 2008-09 strategic commissioning project partners.

5. Loan agreements



Location of regional museums with which national museums had loan agreements in place in 2008-09.

6. Other types of partnership



Locations of regional museums with which national museums worked on any other types of partnership activity in 2008-09.

7. Participating national museums' sites



Locations of all branches of national museum respondents to the NMDC survey.

APPENDIX 1. PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

NMDC Survey 2009 – Participants:

Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales

Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery

British Library

British Museum

Glasgow Museums

Imperial War Museum

Museum of London

National Galleries of Scotland

National Gallery

National Library of Scotland

National Maritime Museum

National Museum of the Royal Navy

National Museum of Science and Industry

National Museums Liverpool

National Museums Scotland

National Portrait Gallery

Natural History Museum

Royal Armouries

Sir John Soane's Museum

Tate

Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums

Victoria and Albert Museum

Wallace Collection

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