



IHBC GUIDANCE ON SUBMITTING BRANCH BUSINESS PLANS & CLAIMING ANNUAL BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

IHBC National office, 051007

Summary

This paper explains how branches of The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (the IHBC) can claim allocations from the Institute's national budget. The only way to secure the allocation is to have your business plan approved by the Institute's national council. In accordance with current standards for managing charities, council must be assured that any funding to branches is dedicated to furthering the Institute's charitable aims. The business plan, which indicates just how the money will be used, must accompany any ordinary claim.

Any queries, issues or observations may be raised directly with the IHBC's Director, in the first instance (director@ihbc.org.uk), who is happy to advise on their development and progress. The national body provides samples, also available on the website. Branches may elect to adopt this, or to develop their own template. Again the website carries useful additional guidance.

The business plan and fiscal controls covered in this paper are not intended to burden or restrict a branch, but to give strategic direction to the branch's provision of local membership services. If a branch needs exceptional funding, or faces issues that cannot be addressed within these guidelines, then advice should be sought from the director.

What is the business plan?

The business plan is a forward plan for the forthcoming years that brings together what the branch wants to do, how and who will do these things, and how much it will all cost. It may cover one or more years. Typically IHBC branch business plans will keep the general content the same from year-to-year, while changing the detailed actions. Creating your first business plan is the challenge, and after that it should be simply a matter of modifying details to reflect changing needs.

What does the business plan look like?

The plan can take any number of forms. However it must state what the branch is doing and why, and include a realistic budget for the year, clearly allocating resources. For convenience we have prepared templates that can be used or adapted as needed. The basic model is an Excel file which can take a basic standard of figures. The appendix contains a draft sample plan from the Scotland and Wales branches as an indication of how a branch plan might look, though you need not feel tied to this format.

Why have a business plan

The business plan helps the branch to plan its operations for the coming year. It allows you to think strategically about these operations, so that they are most effective, and to keep them realistic, so that not all falls to the few volunteers. It also makes sure that

the costs are in line with what you want to deliver and the money that you can bring in. This then allows the national council to be sure that the money it releases will be used properly.

What do I need to do to draw down funds?

You need only submit a proper business plan to council that meets the right criteria. It must show how you intend to allocate your resources in the forthcoming year, and that any money you are claiming will be used for the charitable objectives of the Institute. These include education, advice, training and the provision of information on matters relating to our historic places.

When should I present my plan to Council to claim funding?

Ideally this should happen at the meeting of the council **before** the financial year to which it applies, that is the June or September meetings. However different branches operate to different timings, and there is no restriction imposed. You may prefer to send it in for approval **during** the year to which it applies, In that case a submission might be made in October and include your end of year statement for the previous financial year and your business plan for the current year . It could be approved at the December meeting of council,

In any case the allocation **must be claimed within the relevant financial year** of the national body of the IHBC (October to end-September). Business plans do not necessarily need the formal endorsement of the branch AGM, but many branches prefer to do this, and that presents a specific timetable for the branch to address howsoever it sees fit. A reasonable timescale is provided below.

How much can my branch claim for?

The national allocation for each English branch is £500, and £1000 for the 3 national branches (in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), as devolution brings additional policy demands that cannot properly be met by our consultations panel secretary. However any branch can team with another (or, in relevant projects, claim on behalf of another) so it is possible to claim more than the funding allocated. Of course this must be justified in the business plan.

What can I claim for?

In accordance with our fiscal responsibilities as a charity, the branch allocation must be used for charitable objectives, to include 'education' or any educational activities, such as policy, consultation, training and advice. It should not be used for day-to-day administrative costs or for travel to branch meetings; such costs should be met from other income, typically that raised at events. However the allocation may be used for travel to regional policy-related meetings, such as a Heritage Forum (in England) or a BEFS policy meeting (in Scotland) etc. In this case it would be administered by the local treasurer. All such costs need to be estimated in advance, and linked either to the branch allocation or your other income, as appropriate, which is why you use the business plan.

Isn't the business plan just tiresome administration?

The members of Council of the IHBC are trustees and director of the Institute, and morally and legally responsible for the proper use of its funds. They must be able to know that the money distributed by the Institute is used for suitable causes. The business plan provides the council with the opportunity to oversee the distribution of the national funds, and to be confident that the organisation's funds that it releases are used in accordance with our objectives, without intruding on branch operations.

Can I manage the branch with funding controlled in this manner?

If you spend money setting up an educational event, such as a visit, all income on that event can be retained by the branch, and used as you see fit, including covering administrative costs. This is subject to a maximum of £2000 that a branch is allowed to hold locally, in ordinary circumstances. Also, branches can claim from other funds allocated in the national budget, such as for publications, for assets such as computers and other funds. It should be stressed that these funds are small, and specifically for national objectives, and so any such claims must be clearly identified and justified, both in terms of their cost effectiveness and national need, if the claim is to be successful. The template for the business plan includes a very basic template for a project budget, but should be adequate for most claims on national funds.

Process summary - Sample

Month 1	Following committee agreement, proposed drafting of the plan is notified to members, requesting contributions, observations etc.
Month 2	Draft commenced
Months 3-4	Draft reviewed by committee and submitted to Finance and Resources Committee for provisional comment & endorsement (e-mail exercise) and then to stakeholders and contributors for further observations
Month 5	Endorsed by Branch AGM and passed to Finance and Resources for approval and submission to Council
Month 6	Allocation approved, reported on by Branch Representative, and funding drawn down by sending invoice to the national office. Plan sent to Peter Badcock, it@ihbc.org.uk , for posting on branch web page.

Where can I get more help?

Contact the Director: e: director@ihbc.org.uk; t: (0131) 5583671

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