The Cultural Protection Fund (CPF), is a £30m grant programme led by British Council in partnership with DCMS, with grants managed through a UK-based team. Between 2016 & 2020, the CPF awarded 51 grants across the 12 target countries in the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) region, as highlighted below.

**Driver**
Destruction of heritage in Syria & Iraq due to active conflict

**Rationale for the CPF**
Safeguarding cultural heritage can contribute to generation of sustainable & long-term social stability & economic prosperity

**Gap in support**
Limited other investment of similar scale with the same remit, objectives, & regional focus.

Evaluation & summary produced by ERS Ltd. (www.ers.org.uk)
This summarises Evaluation of the Cultural Protection Fund 2016 to 2020.
(ERS, March 2021)
The main CPF outcomes are as follows:

- **Outcome 1: Cultural heritage protection** - Cultural heritage under threat is researched, documented, conserved &/or restored to safeguard against permanent loss.
- **Outcome 2: Capacity-building** - Local professionals have sufficient business or specialist skills to be able to manage & promote cultural assets which [will] benefit the local economy & society.
- **Outcome 3: Advocacy / education** - Local people are able to identify & value their cultural heritage & have a good understanding of what can be done to protect their cultural heritage & the role it plays in society & the economy.

ERS was commissioned by British Council to undertake an independent evaluation of Phase 1 of the CPF (2016-2020). The evaluation aimed to assess & interrogate the following themes against the CPF objectives.

- effectiveness
- efficiency (including value for money)
- impact
- sustainability

The results of this are summarised on the following pages. The evaluation comprised the following research stages.

- Rapid international literature review on heritage protection
- Synthesis review of CPF project evaluations
- Workshop with CPF grant managers
- E-survey of grantees
- Telephone interviews with:
  - A sample of stakeholders internal & external to the CPF. (e.g. the Advisory Group, DCMS, BC staff in country)
  - A sample of grantees
  - A sample of unsuccessful applicants
# Outcome 1: Cultural Heritage Protection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>277,644</th>
<th>49</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>4,566</th>
<th>121,368</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actions taken to safeguard artefacts</td>
<td>Tools developed e.g. database/website</td>
<td>Management plans or strategies created</td>
<td>Materials produced (e.g. exhibitions, videos)</td>
<td>Records created</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Outcomes & Impacts

- A range of built heritage assets have been restored, some of which are now safer, more secure & being used by communities in a range of ways that they were not previously;
- Physical & digital outputs have increased ability to raise awareness of heritage & reach new audiences;
- Projects have contributed towards countering illicit trade of artefacts; and,
- Intangible cultural heritage has been recorded, in a number of cases prior to stories & traditions being lost as elders pass on.

“Now the shrine is rebuilt, it was a historic moment & provided a sense of identity back to the city. Sufism is well established & very popular in that part of Yemen. Overlooking the city again, the dome has provided a sense of normality, that things are back to normal.”

Grantee

## Enabling Factors

- **Partnerships & collaborations** have supported sustainability;
- **Translation of resources** enables accessible outputs & greater engagement;
- **Community engagement** has enabled continuation post-project, in turn enabling further recording of heritage.
Core to CPF, projects have placed great emphasis on training with an overarching aim of embedding sustainability from the start. In seeking to avoid ‘parachuting-in’ skills, CPF has sought to focus on in-country institutions, seeking to strengthen capacity & capability, with an emphasis on sharing knowledge & creating globally leading expertise in-country.

Outcomes & Impacts

- Increased employability & employment-related outcomes, such as gaining jobs or promotion;
- Safeguarding livelihoods & providing continuity for specific sectors;
- Continued application & development of skills in the same or new roles;
- Greater awareness of career opportunities & progression pathways within the heritage sector;
- Individuals progressing on to further study, for example, master’s programmes;
- Trainees organising to continue the work of the project &/or develop their own initiatives.
- Upskilling & employment of under-represented groups within particular heritage professions & institutions.

Enabling Factors

- Recruiting diverse cohorts, including beneficiaries from under-represented groups, can support greater knowledge of & access to heritage professions;
- Forging relationships & networks supports access to or generation of employment opportunities;
- A proactive approach to generating employment outcomes reportedly worked well.
OUTCOME 3: ADVOCACY / EDUCATION

3,988
Events delivered

1,280
Volunteers engaged

>1 million
People engaged via media/events

£2.9 million
Income generated for local economy

OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

- Grantees reported increased understanding & awareness of heritage amongst communities, particularly the younger generation.
- Grantees detailed communities coming to value & take action on behalf of their heritage.
- Projects reported engaging & influencing decision-makers & affecting heritage policy and/or practice.

“The key legacy left from this project is that building the capacity of young people from within their own communities to become the gatherers, mediators and disseminators of their own heritage under threat.” – Grantee

ENABLING FACTORS

- A range of media activity & events have supported awareness-raising & engagement, amongst beneficiary communities as well as audiences more widely.
- Face-to-face engagement: project staff getting out in “the field” complemented by community-to-community engagement & transmission of heritage to access communities project staff (or resource) cannot reach;
- Involvement of younger generations in safeguarding for the future, supported by intergenerational & peer-to-peer activity;
- A diverse pool of participants from across different societies, & providing opportunities to interact as part of project activities, &/or around shared heritage;
- Culturally specific solutions: e.g. developing translated versions of resources in local languages, & ensuring resources & examples are centred on local features.
The CPF has had wider-impacts beyond those stated within the 3 core CPF objectives. At a Programme level these tend to be strategic in nature, whereas at the project level they tend to be about securing outcomes into the longer-term. The diagram below illustrates these two levels of wider impact & how they overlap.

**Type of impact**

**CPF Projects**
- **Longer-term benefits of increased human capital** e.g. for employment, economic empowerment
- **Heritage sector is better equipped** e.g. tools & databases; new knowledge & lines of enquiry for research; reductions in loss due to looting, export.
- **Local economic benefits** e.g. visitor economy via hubs, touristic resources

**CPF Programme**
- **Joint**
  - **Stronger networks** young people & international heritage sector
  - **Developing new approaches** role of cultural heritage protection international stage, community-led
  - **Social cohesion**: intergenerational, inter-religion, inter-social group

**Networks:**
- international heritage professional network.

**Leadership:**
- UK, bring CHP out of cultural sphere.

**Reputation:**
- UK & British Council

The sustainability of benefits achieved through the CPF was considered dependent on the following factors:
- Continuation of funding, be that via the British Council or another funder
- The support of existing institutions to sustain activities, resources & outcomes
- The engagement of young people to continue enthusiasm for cultural heritage protection
- Training & capacity building, providing skills for when funding has finished.
- The development of a legacy of digital outputs e.g. databases.
The evaluation has demonstrated that there is a ‘dire need’ for heritage protection within the MENA region. While originally designed to protect heritage at risk of conflict, the Fund has shown that there is wider value to be gained through nurturing & protecting heritage, regardless of the threat. Overall, there is strong support for continuation of the Fund & rationale for using cultural heritage projects to contribute towards sustainable & long-term social stability & economic prosperity & to improve the reputation of the UK overseas.