

Licence to experiment – encouraging new ideas, partnerships and collaboration models in Finnish museums

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The National Board of Antiquities

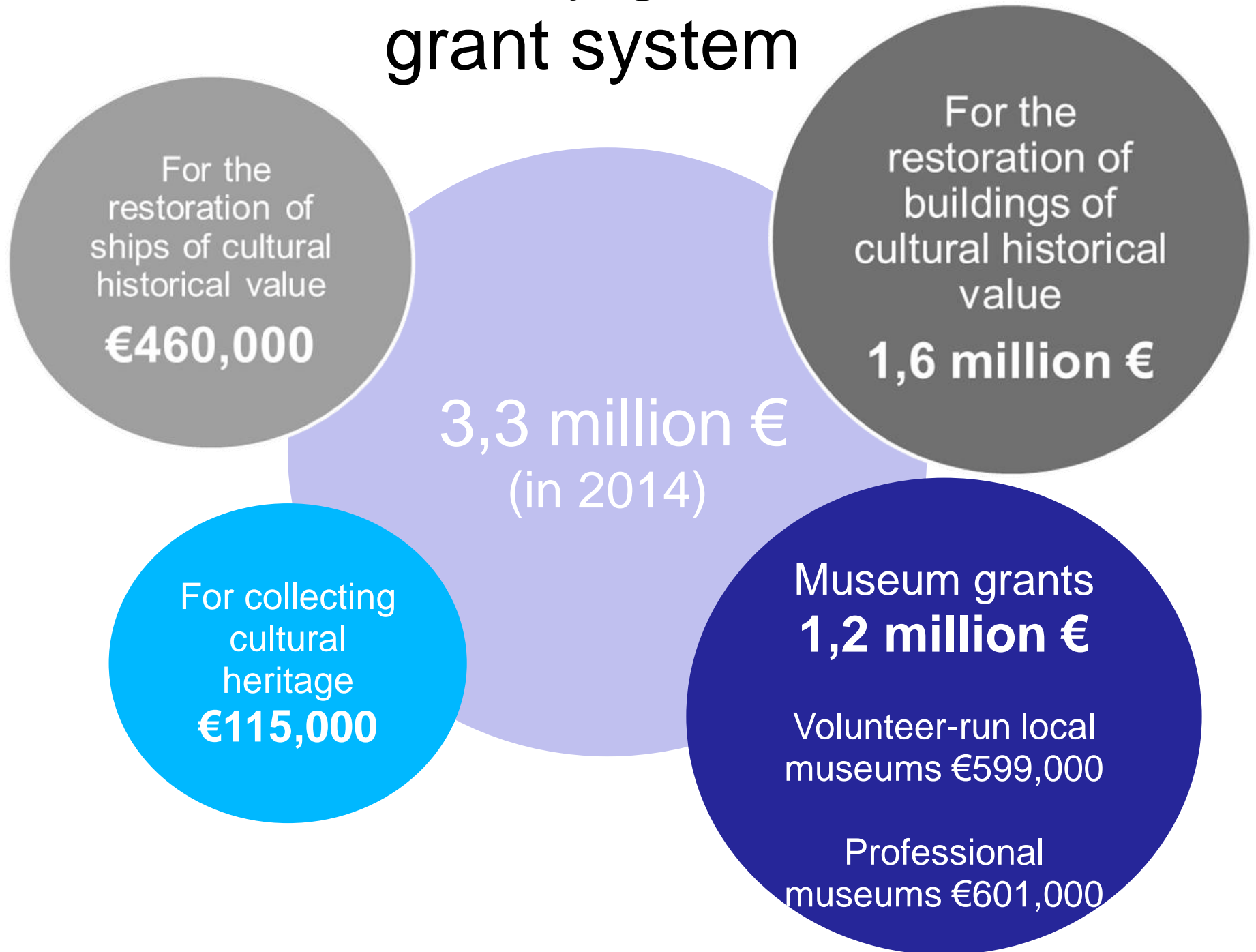
Finland's National Board of Antiquities is the nation's specialist, developer and authority in material cultural heritage and the cultural environment field. It provides varied and constantly developing services for all Finnish citizens.

The National Board of Antiquities preserves, collects and studies notable cultural heritage and produces and disseminates information related to it.

Organization



Discretionary government grant system



Rethinking the grants for professional museums

- For projects, since 2001. The average grant 18 000 €/project, variation 5 000-46 000 € (2014).
- Important and annual source of project funding for museums, enabling variety of projects (cultural diversity, cultural heritage education, accessibility, collaboration, open data...)
- Common challenges: expectations of the museums and funding applied vs. the funding available; challenges in disseminating the results; how to proceed from projects into more permanent operating models?
- Spring 2013, we asked ourselves: Could we do something differently?


”The Trial Thousand”

- To enable more agile and low-cost, experimental projects
- To encourage customer-oriented thinking
- Instead of prolonged planning, focus on the idea itself
- Online application process
- Projects were to be carried out in 5 months
- Two workshops
- 10 experimental museum projects were chosen from over 40 applications and given 1 000 € each.

The projects

- planned and carried out together with the whole museum staff and/or customers and stakeholders
- hands-on, low-threshold
- Customer panel; live action role play; yoga; interaction with families, schools or local communities, developing workshops, lobby services, guidance practices...





New services,
audiences,
partnerships
and networks

Occupational
well-being and
knowledge
about own
organization

Customer
panels and
participation

Models and ideas for
developing exhibitions
and activities inside
and outside the
museums

Contacts with
the local
community

...with only 1 000 euros.

The workshops

- Development services organized two workshops during the process
- Workshop 1: sharing ideas and experiences, encouraging others, learning together
- Workshop 2: evaluating the projects, sharing experiences, developing new projects together
- Very supportive, motivated and enthusiastic atmosphere, direct feedback



Lessons learned

- Experimental project doesn't have to be something that's never been done before, as long as it 's new at your museum. Start small.
- The grant gave the museums "a permission" to experiment and try something new
- What is needed, is motivation and attitude – some even had difficulties spending all of the grant
- Ideas and experiences (good and bad) are meant to be shared
- Challenge yourself and your organization