



Collections Care & Conservation Strategy 2023-2028

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1 Introduction

The Collections Care and Conservation Strategy 2023-2028 (referred to below as “the Strategy”) details how the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) fulfils its responsibilities in relation to the care and conservation of the collections. It is developed in line with the Master Vision Statement 2018-2032 “Connecting our Past and our Future” and responds to the vision for NMI as a museum of international quality, preserving and presenting the stories of Ireland and its place in the world.

The Strategy fully aligns with the themes identified as part of the Master Vision by:

Creating Change through organisational transformation to produce improved outcomes for the collections. In particular, it will support the objective of “ensuring professional standards of excellence in collections care.”

Building Change by underpinning the ambitious programme of capital development with improved standards of conservation and care that ensure the central principles to **Protect, Safeguard** and **Make Accessible** collections are delivered.

The strategy is aligned with NMI’s second Strategic Plan ‘Increasing Accessibility, Engaging Community’ which runs from 2023 to 2028.

The Plan highlights NMI’s leading role at the heart of Ireland’s cultural heritage, presents a vision for the future, and sets out three lenses through which to shape and view the museum’s work: community, planet and shared knowledge.

1.1 For communities

This lens identifies accessibility and inclusivity as the bedrock of the museum’s work. This will direct the work of the museum including capital development, exhibitions and collections care. Accessibility to the collections is a guiding principle of the NMI corporate strategy and underpins strategy, policy development and operations. It is reflected in the principles of the Collections Care and Conservation Strategy under Public Benefit.

1.2 For the planet

As a major repository for natural science collections, the museum has a leading role in developing an understanding of our environment. It will be a leader in supporting actions to address biodiversity loss and climate change. This will be implemented through best practice in capital development programmes and through supporting low carbon measures. It is reflected in the principles of the Collections Care and Conservation Strategy under Sustainability.

1.3 For shared knowledge

As part of a wide network of partners which includes cultural institutions, research communities and public sector stakeholders, the museum will collaborate across geographical and cultural boundaries, supporting research and sharing of expertise. This is reflected in the Collections Care and Conservation Strategy through the aims of Conservation Excellence and Communicate and Collaborate.

This strategy is also developed in line with the Collections Care and Conservation Policy

The Strategy sets out a programme of work to ensure that progress is proactive and sustainable and will be supplemented with annual plans that provide a detailed programme identifying both preventive conservation and remedial conservation measures which will ensure the continued preservation of the collections. Overarching Collections Care is the range of activities intended to safeguard a collection. These activities can include organisational policies, security, storage, cleaning, maintenance, handling, scientific investigation, environmental monitoring and control, exhibitions and loans, conservation, provision of surrogates, and emergency planning. While the Conservation Department are the owners of this strategy as it pertains to conservation, it relies on a wide range of staff from both the collections and operations department across the NMI for its delivery.

2 Purpose:

The purpose of the Strategy is to ensure professional standards in the long-term preservation and conservation of the collections of the National Museum of Ireland and to support the aspirations of the 15-year Master Vision Statement “Connecting our Past and Our Future” and the Vision for NMI as “a museum of international quality, preserving and presenting the stories of Ireland and its place in the world”.

3 Corporate Values

The corporate values will inform and enable our work.

STEWARDSHIP

We are responsible for the professional care and interpretation of the National Collections, informed by rigorous research, scholarship and staff expertise.

INNOVATION

We will increase our capacity to share our collections and engage new audiences across physical and online platforms by exploring innovative collaboration across sectors.

TRANSPARENCY

We will operate strong corporate governance and compliance principles with oversight by a voluntary Board underpinned by legislation and public policy. We will ensure that our decision making is clear and transparent by making our policies, procedures, and strategies accessible online

ACCESSIBILITY

We are for everyone. We will ensure our collections and activities are wide-reaching and seek to engage people who visit our museums, connect with us online or through our public programmes nationally and internationally. We aim to provide universal access across all our sites and services.

COLLABORATION

We will maximise our impact and increase our interaction at local, national, and international level by working with organisations and communities.

4 Overarching Guiding Principles

- Everyone who uses the collections or who manages or accesses the spaces in which items are stored or displayed has a role to play in the effective care of the collections.
- We recognise that all activities which involve the use of the collections, such as handling, transportation, and display, carry a potential risk to the security, longevity and condition of each collection item.
- We will adopt a risk-based approach across the museum to identify collections care and conservation priorities and to inform the allocation of resources.

5 Definitions

This strategy outlines developments in preventive and remedial conservation, which is focused on ensuring long-term preservation while enabling the optimal use of collections. It also includes investigative conservation which builds a greater understanding of collections making them more accessible.

Collection care: Involves safeguarding and protecting the collections through measures to reduce risks that cause deterioration, damage and loss and embraces both preventive, remedial and investigative conservation.

Conservation: measures and actions aimed at safeguarding cultural heritage while respecting its significance, including its accessibility to present and future generations.

Preventive conservation: measures and actions aimed at avoiding or minimizing future damage, deterioration and loss and, consequently, any remedial intervention.

Remedial conservation (Conservation Treatment): actions applied directly to an object to arrest deterioration and/or to limit damage.

This involves treatment to an object or specimen to bring it to a more acceptable condition or state in order to stabilise it or enhance some aspects of its cultural or scientific value.

Investigative Conservation involves the scientific investigation of objects from the collections in order to better understand their manufacture and history, therefore improving the understanding of the collections and their cultural significance.

6 Scope of the Strategy

This Strategy refers to the care and conservation of collections while:

- On display as part of exhibition or loan.
- In storage as part of our reserve collections.
- In transit between sites or to other venues.

The Strategy refers to collections items that are:

- Individual accessioned items and collections.
- Collection items in the care of NMI through loan.
- Archival collections that have been catalogued and are held within NMI as a designated place of deposit under the National Archives Act 1986.

Historic furnishings and fittings are part of the responsibility of the Office of Public Works (OPW), and the National Museum of Ireland works in collaboration with the OPW to outline and implement standards of care and treatment.

The Strategy does not include:

- Collections primarily developed for educational or outreach use.
- Working library collections (apart from those items or collections which are identified as permanent collection material because of rarity or cultural value).
- Works developed through artist residencies (unless these are accessioned into the collections).
- Replicas (apart from those of historical significance).
- Items primarily used for events or in connection with corporate hire.

NMI has responsibilities under The National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 as the State's repository of archaeological objects and nothing in this strategy shall contradict the provisions of this or the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997. As such NMI has a duty to support the care of archaeological assemblages to ensure their long-term preservation. It carries out these

obligations through provision of advice, specific care for vulnerable or important material and on occasions takes on the responsibilities of the excavator. All archaeological objects without a known owner are property of the State and the Director of NMI has a role in ensuring the highest standards of treatment and care for all such objects. The obligations for care of excavated material are detailed in the Standards for the Care and Treatment of Archaeological Objects from Excavation. April 2022. [IAD StandardsforExcavationObjects 1.pdf \(museum.ie\)](#)

7 The Three Principles of Conservation and Collection Care

Protect: To provide the best conditions for the care of our collections, as well as access for education and research.

Safeguard: To ensure all of the NMI sites are safe and secure for the collections and the public.

Make Accessible: To make NMI's sites, exhibitions and interpretations fully accessible for all people. While each site will have a distinct masterplan, each plan will be predicated on these considerations.

8 Guiding Principles of our Collections Care and Conservation Strategy

The Strategy aims to balance the long-term preservation of the collections and the provision of access for education through the management of risk to the collections and management and training of staff.



Fig. 1 Diagram of the strategy's 5 guiding principles

In order to develop the collections care and conservation strategy, a range of underpinning principles have been adopted. NMI will:

8.1 Utilise a risk-based approach to collections care

NMI will undertake assessment of collection care and conservation needs on the basis of a pragmatic risk management model. Evaluation of the likelihood of risk and its impact in terms of loss of value of the item or collection will be used to identify and prioritise collection care measures. These measures will reduce damage and loss to an acceptable level within the available resources.

8.2 Take a holistic and consistent approach across collections and sites

NMI will look holistically at collections care and conservation across all museum sites and storage environments. Application of the risk-based framework and development of a suite of policy, plans and procedures will ensure that there is a consistency of approach across all sites and divisions. This will be tailored to the nature of the material and analysis of risk.

8.3 Underpin practice by recognised standards

NMI will exercise leadership in setting standards within its statutory remit and implement and conform to recognised standards for the care and conservation of its collections. This includes adherence to legal, ethical and professional standards together with the accompanying guidance developed both nationally and internationally to promote excellence while ensuring best practice in museums and cultural institutions. NMI will develop an understanding of such standards across the organisation.

8.4 Encourage sustainability in practice

NMI will endeavour to minimise the environmental impact of measures taken to safeguard the collections and will embed sustainability into plans and procedures for collections care and conservation. This will involve reducing energy use, promoting recycling and reuse, as well as limiting the use of products that may be harmful to the environment.

8.5 Support public benefit

NMI will support access to and use of the collections for public benefit now and in the future. This includes making collections available through exhibitions, loans and digitally as well as contributing to knowledge about collections through study and research. It is recognised that the use of collections may result in increased risks. Assessment of risk will take into consideration the nature of the risks and the impact on value of the collection item and will ensure that appropriate measures to minimise damage are in place.

9 Strategy Methodology

9.1 Utilising a Risk- Based Approach

An assessment of collections care and conservation needs will be undertaken based on a pragmatic risk management model. Evaluation of the likelihood of risk and its impact in terms of loss of value of the item or collection is used to identify and prioritise collections care measures. The process of planning and implementation is summarised in the following diagram and determines the structure for addressing issues as part of the Collections Care and Conservation Strategy. This corresponds to the requirements under the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland.

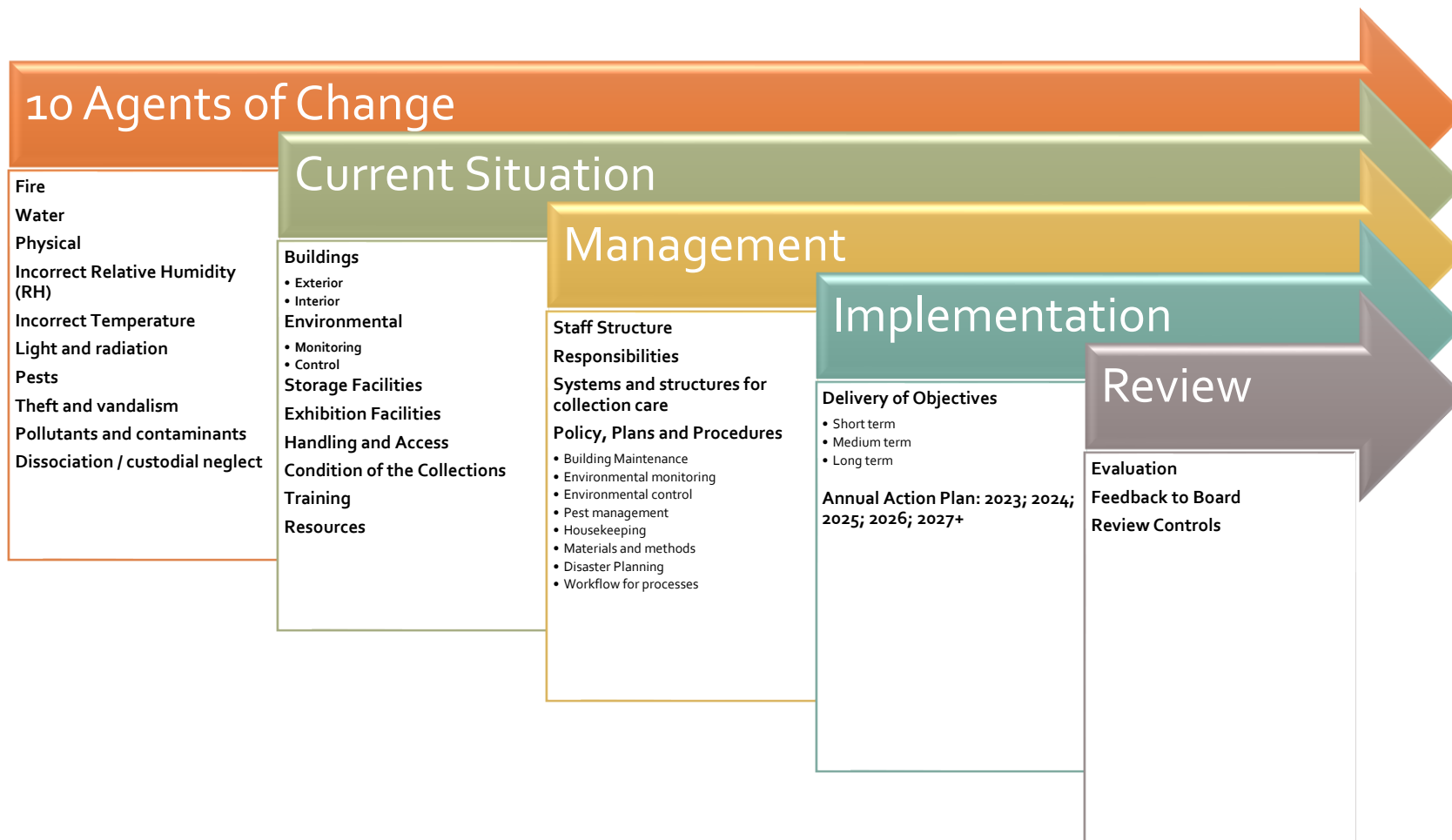


Fig. 2 Planning and Implementation for Collection Care

Opportunities for developing enhanced collections care are based on an understanding of how collections materials behave in different environments and taking steps to ensure that optimum conditions are established within the museum. The identification, analysis and management of risk which directly impacts on collections is clearly fundamental to collections care. NMI will establish a risk management process based on a well-established framework first developed by Stephan Michalski. This will involve identifying, assessing and mitigating risks based on the **ten agents of deterioration**. For further information see Agents of deterioration - Canada.ca

In line with the Collections Care and Conservation Policy, the management of risks is used to limit the loss of collections value, whilst supporting the other key principles such as sustainability and public benefit. Within the Collections Care and Conservation Strategy we are not aiming at minimum risk, rather the aim is to reduce risk while facilitating collections use and supporting their continued use in fulfilling the wider objectives of the National Museum of Ireland.

9.1.1 Estimation of Risk

In developing a risk analysis methodology, identification of the type of hazards to be considered is a first step in categorising the risk level. There are many models that have been developed over the years, however, the most widely used is that proposed by Michalski 1990 which sets out nine agents for deterioration, these have more recently become referred to as “Agents of Change”. An additional risk initially identified as “custodial neglect” but latterly referred to as “dissociation” was subsequently added to the model by Rob Waller.

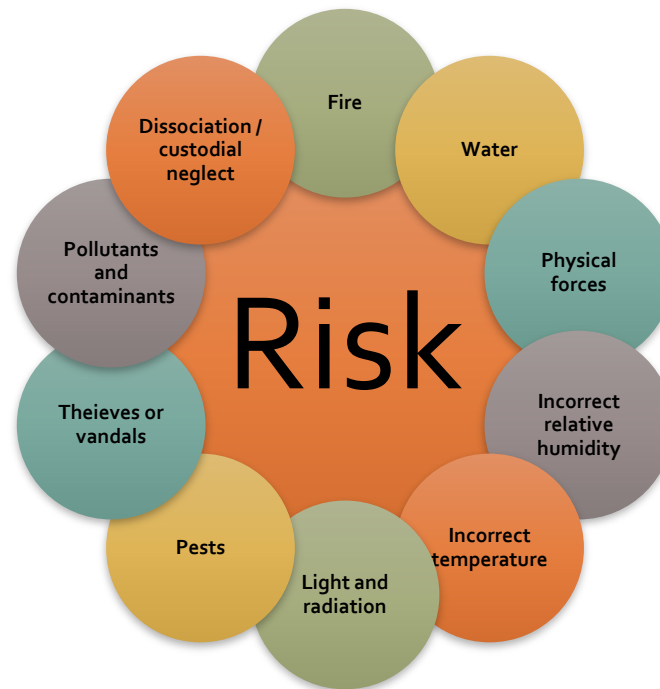


Fig. 3. The Ten Agents of Deterioration (after Michalski, S. 1990 and Waller, R, 1994)

9.1.2 Using the Risk Management Model

The risk management process is a way of looking at key risks and assessing them in terms of likelihood and impact.

Risk types are considered separately for each of the ten agents of deterioration and at different collection locations. A grouping of storage locations will be required to assess areas that are exposed to similar risks.

Similarly projects that impact on collections will utilise a risk assessment process to establish the key risks and appropriate mitigation measures that can be applied to reduce or minimise both the likelihood of damage and the impact of any damage caused.

Different collections will be impacted differently by risk factors (for example, pest damage may be most destructive to organic materials such as textiles or taxidermy). While the consideration of the detail of loss of value for each collection type would be very helpful, it would also be time consuming considering the diversity of collections and the numerous locations and projects proposed. In the initial period, risk assessments will be kept at a high level to avoid excessive detail.

For the purpose of the strategy, it has therefore been considered acceptable to generalise in terms of the susceptibility of the collection and the loss of value.

The management of risk then enables mitigating measures to be implemented for the prioritised risks. The management processes are summarised for display, storage and collections in transit. Control levels may be at building level, hardware level or at procedural level. Managing risk through improvement to buildings is often a more effective way to create controls but is likely to be more capital intensive. This may be costly in the short term but often reduces the cost of mitigations at a hardware or procedural level when considered in the whole life cost as related to the building. Controls that are based on procedural level will have minimal capital costs but may be costly when considered over a longer period.

Over the 5-year period of the strategy the NMI will be undertaking a range of ambitious capital projects. This is an opportunity to utilise the risk management model for collections care to prioritise and focus on measures that will have the greatest benefit on the long-term preservation of the collections while at the same time increasing sustainability.

Risk / Agents of Change

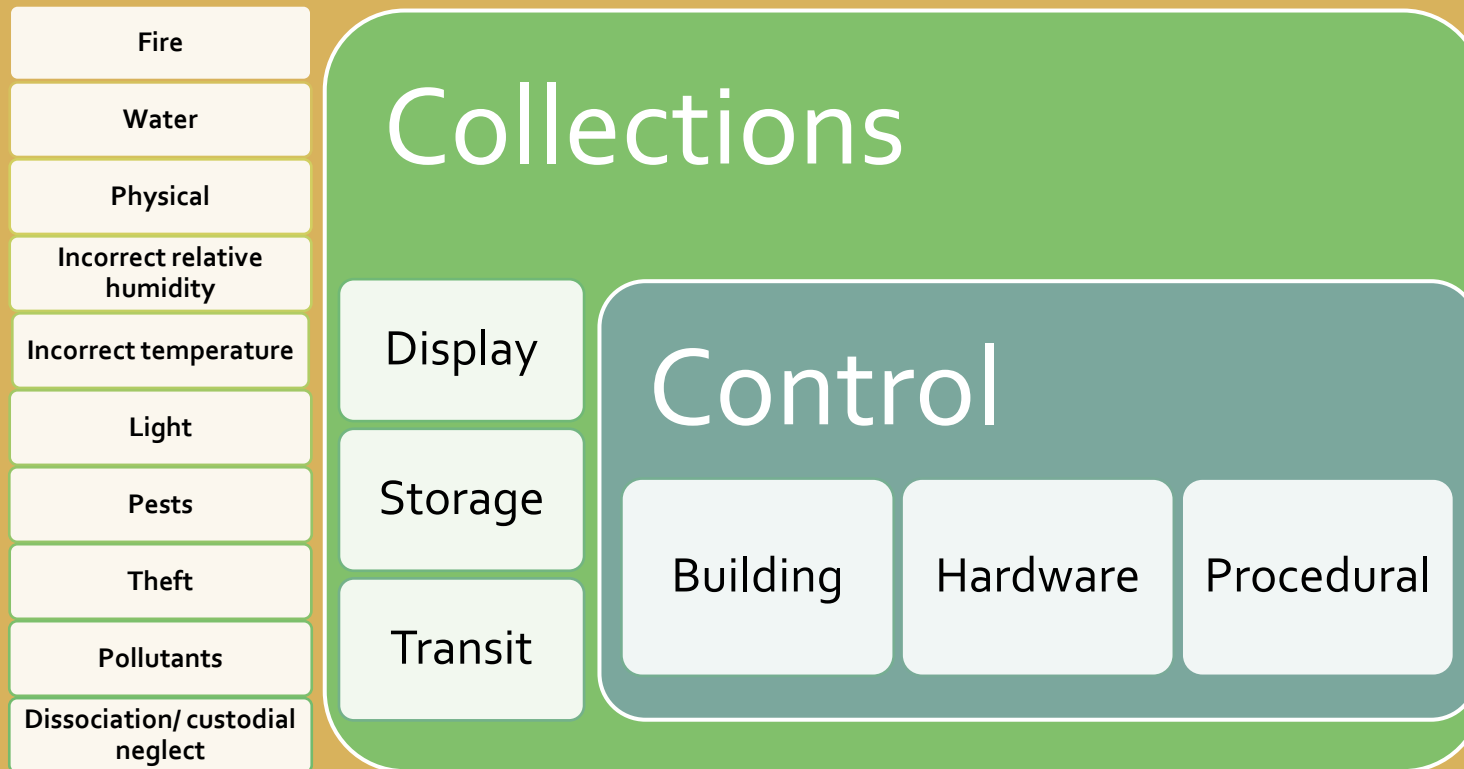


Fig. 4. Risk / Agents of Change; collections locations and controls © Legacy Conservation and Karena Morton NMI

The core Conservation Team in collaboration with inter-departmental colleagues will produce a risk assessment schedule based on available resources and capital projects stages.

Information from the risk assessments will be used to inform the prioritisation of the collections care programme and the development of the **Collections Care Action Plan**, which takes forward collections care throughout the NMI.

9.1.3 Risk Appetite and Decision Making

Risk appetite is the amount of risk that an organization is willing to take in order to meet its strategic goals. Given that the principles of safeguard and protect are core to the NMI strategic master vision, it can be assumed that the risk appetite for collections risk is low.

The capital projects are a critical activity often with the explicit goal of improving collections care and accessibility. This will bring long-term benefits for the collections therefore the tolerance for risk in accommodating capital improvements will be higher than under normal circumstances. An example of this is in terms of movement of collections. This is required to mitigate risks but will in turn increase the risks to which the collections are exposed in the short term.

It is important that measures to mitigate the likelihood and impact of the risks are taken for each phase of the capital projects to bring down the overall risk to within acceptable tolerances.

It is therefore vital that the scope of the projects includes consideration for collections that may be either directly or indirectly affected by the project and that risk assessment for collections is incorporated into the project at initiation and informs project design and planning.

Collection Care Stage

Define collection impacts

Collection Risk Assessment

Planning mitigation measures and design input

Appoint Collection Team

Collection preparation

Decant in advance of capital works

Collection care and conservation

Reinstatement of collections

Collection benefit realisation

Capital Project Stage

Strategic Assessment

Preliminary Business Case

Project Design, Planning and Procurement Strategy

Tendering

Final Business Case

Implementation

Project Review

Evaluation

Fig. 5 Integrating Collections Care with Capital Project Stages

9.2 Sites and Collections – Taking a Holistic Approach

The NMI currently comprises eight museum sites. The four-public facing museum sites reflect the main curatorial divisions: Irish Antiquities Division (IAD), Kildare Street; Art and Industry Division (A&I) in Collins Barracks; The Natural History Division (NH) in Merrion Street; the Irish Folk Life Division (IFD) in the Museum of Country Life, Turlough Park House, Co. Mayo. All of the sites and departments work collaboratively to deliver the objectives outlined in this strategy.

The museums at Collins Barracks and Kildare Street have storage facilities on site, additionally, the museum's main store housing collections from all 4 curatorial divisions, is based at the Collection Resources Centre, Co. Dublin. The Natural History stores are also in Dublin, while there are secondary mixed collections' stores in Daingean Co. Offaly and the museum also has a waterlogged organics treatment centre in the Midlands.

The Collections Care and Conservation Strategy aims to ensure that there is consistency across all of these sites and collections by applying the risk-based framework and reviewing and applying a complimentary set of policies, plans and procedures across the collections whether these are on display, in storage or in transit.

The strategy will seek to establish practices that meet the minimum standards but also aims to develop and improve care to achieve best practice standards across all of its sites. The aim is for a consistency of approach across NMI which meets the minimum requirements through documented procedures and processes. It is recognised that each site will have particular challenges and may be at a different stage of development. Where this necessitates variation from the proscribed procedures these should be clearly documented and acknowledged as falling below the accepted standards. Priorities for improvement should be established as a mechanism for meeting and building on the minimum standards for collections and collections care.

The implementation of the Collections Care and Conservation Strategy is a collective responsibility across NMI. Good collections care involves all sites and divisions. Advice and support for collections care will be provided by the Conservation Department in consultation with colleagues across collections departments, registration, facilities, and any other relevant departments within the NMI.

The conservation department has a team of specialised conservators who provide expert advice and guidance on collections care to staff across the museum. The main Conservation Department is situated in tailored Conservation facilities in the Museum's headquarters at Collins Barracks. It includes a suite of dedicated studios and laboratory spaces for different conservation specialisms and functions, together with quarantine rooms among other facilities. There are further substantial conservation facilities in the Collection Resource Centre (CRC) and in the Museum of Country Life, (MCL) Mayo, with some limited studio space in the Archaeology Museum, Kildare Street. These facilities offer a resource for carrying out effective remedial or investigative treatment of collections. Through this work the Conservation Department supports the museum wide delivery of collection care.

9.3 Underpin practice by recognised standards

NMI has a commitment to implement recognised standards across the organisation and will adhere to legal, ethical and professional standards as defined within relevant professional organisations and by statute.

National Museum of Ireland will endeavour to meet the standards for collections care outlined through the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland. The strategy will be mindful of the need to address the standards and where possible ensure that these are met or at least partly met or that there is a firm commitment to improving practice particularly within the areas relating to collections care and conservation. The museum is committed to developing best practice through continuous improvement.

To support this the museum will ensure that appropriate provision is made for remedial conservation of artefacts and that this is carried out exclusively by appropriately qualified and /or professionally accredited individuals.

The museum will uphold the Professional Guidelines and Code of Ethics promoted by the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers 'Organisations (E.C.C.O.) and will subscribe to the standards as outlined in Competences for Access to the Conservation-Restoration Profession.

The museum has a role as a regulatory body in Irish Archaeology. The Irish Antiquities Division has therefore a particular duty for developing and implementing standards for the care of archaeological material through its responsibility as the States repository for archaeological material. The museum also has responsibilities to ensure that Irish and European legislation and global commitments are met for the care of human remains held by the museum. This is outlined in the Human Remains Policy.

Nothing in this strategy will contradict the responsibilities under the National Monuments Acts (1930 to 2014) and the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997.

NMI is committed to Spectrum, an international standard for museum collections management. Where possible, NMI will exceed the minimum requirements of Spectrum. This will be achieved by maintaining a Spectrum-compliant Documentation Procedural Manual and a complimentary suite of procedures which describes how museum records are created, maintained, and secured. Details are provided in the Collections Information and Documentation Policy, the Collections Documentation Strategy and the Inventory Strategy.

9.4 Sustainability and Biodiversity

Supporting sustainability and biodiversity are key objectives for public institutions by focusing on the lens, 'For the planet' the NMI commits to leadership in supporting actions to address biodiversity loss and climate change.

The Collections Care and Conservation Strategy will support the implementation of sustainable practices across operations and will forefront sustainability and innovative approaches to collections care.

In 2015 the Bizot Group –a group of the world's leading museums - agreed the Bizot Green Protocol. This protocol acts as guidance to the museum sector in establishing loan, storage and display conditions which reconcile the long-term preservation of collections with the need for museums to reduce their carbon footprint. The National Museum of Ireland will implement the spirit of this agreement to reduce its environmental impact.

The approaches to controlling the museum and collection storage environment will be balanced with a goal to reduce energy use particularly in managing collections care priorities with the Capital Development Programme. Sustainable design and implementation of measures to reduce the reliance on energy intensive climate control methods will help to align the museums programmes with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2021.

9.5 Public Benefit and Access

NMI wishes to make the best use of its collections while recognising that they are a finite resource. The Collections Care and Conservation Strategy will seek to balance the contemporary use of collections with its obligations to safeguard collections for audiences in the future. In so doing, we will enable the best use of the collections for exhibition, loans and study by working to reduce risks.

The remedial conservation programme will be focused on the priorities for exhibition, loan and research.

Research use of the collections and destructive sampling (which is carried out under a Licence to Alter issued by the Board of the NMI) together with other investigation of collections will be in line with the Research Policy and will encourage the publication of information about the collections to disseminate it to the widest possible audiences.

The NMI is committed to making its collections available digitally. Conservation will support and ensure that the digitisation of collections can be carried out safely to make collections available to wider audiences.

Priorities for library and archives will ensure that collections can be handled safely and that there are policies and practices in place to support safe handling so that collections remain accessible.

10 Situational Review

At present three of the National Museum of Ireland sites (the Collections Resource Centre, Co. Dublin, the Museum of Decorative Arts and History, Collins Barracks and the Museum of Country Life, Co. Mayo) were awarded full accreditation in July 2022 under the Heritage Council's Museums Standards Programme of Ireland (MSPI). As part of that process, a Collections Care and Conservation Strategy was developed to work within the first of three, five-year strategic plans developed for the National Museum of Ireland covering the period 2019-2022. This strategy builds on the work undertaken during that period.

As part of the preparation for MSPI Accreditation, a situational review was carried out. Since then, significant progress has been made around the extent of environmental monitoring and calibration at all sites.

The development work for this Collection Care and Conservation Strategy (2023-2028) focused on five areas:

1. Review of current provision
2. Development of a risk-based methodology for prioritising collection care and conservation measures
3. Development of a holistic policy framework
4. Identifying resources, capacity and responsibility
5. Developing the strategy and planning processes

The review of current provision involved

- Visits to key sites
- SWOT analysis of collections care
- Development of key review tools
- Creating template-based assessment methods for use at storage and display sites

A report on this process was produced and the conclusions inform the development of the Strategy. A risk-based methodology has been devised and policy objectives re-examined with a view to developing a holistic framework. In looking at resources and capacity development, opportunities were highlighted, and a cross-cutting structure has been established.

As part of the objective of the strategy the NMI will be carrying out risk-based reviews of buildings in the estate in terms of their suitability for collections. There will also be an overarching review of storage produced. These will inform and guide the implementation of the Collections Care and Conservation Strategy.

11 Capital Projects

The National Museum of Ireland is planning an ambitious and dynamic programme of capital development. The main projects within it are:

- The Changing Ireland – Stories from our Collections 1900 – 2020 gallery development is at the design phase and is due to come to fruition in October 2024.
- The Natural History Museum redevelopment project is in the second phase of development. This necessitates closure of the museum for an anticipated period of 7 years.
- The Archaeology Museum at Kildare Street upgrade to the buildings and mechanical and electrical systems, is at early planning stages and physical development to the site may not take place within the timeframe of the strategy, however, considerable planning and assessments will be required within the next 5 years. A plan to develop an underground Dublin Metro also has the potential to move forward the planning and decant of collections within affected areas.
- Further smaller capital projects are also in progress for The Museum of Country Life at Turlough Park. The Boat Gallery project will create a gallery space from the current visible storage area and will require rehousing of boat collections to enable redevelopment to take place. Only some of the boats are identified for incorporation in the new exhibition and consequently a new storage facility/location needs to be found.
- The Collections Resource Centre at Swords is due to be relocated to alternative permanent storage by c. 2030. Currently options are being explored for suitable sites or buildings. It is likely that considerable planning and preparation will be required and resources will need to be allocated within the period of this strategy. Relocation would necessitate a full decant plan with staff and material requirements and detailed sequencing to be completed by 2026 for a decant to commence from 2027.

The proposed capital programme has two major implications for collections care and conservation:

- ❖ The capital programme places a huge demand on existing conservation and collections care provision
- ❖ A high number of collection moves are planned – some of them are of a temporary nature with further moves anticipated

11.1 Opportunities for collections care offered by the capital programme

- The capital programme offers an opportunity to address collection care at the building level and hardware level. Addressing collections risks at building level is often more capital intensive at the outset but can be more cost effective than retrofitting modifications or implementing procedural mitigations at a later stage.
- The capital programme offers expanded opportunities for staff development as the programme is implemented and learning will be focused on new areas that will be beneficial for future development and business as usual.
- Cross team working offers an opportunity to break down departmental barriers and to spread good practice. This, combined with the implementation of revised policies and procedures, offers the chance to build a positive culture for collections and collection care within the institution.

11.2 Threats to collections care posed by the capital programme

- The capital programme introduces an expanded and different range of threats to collections. A risk-based assessment for each project is going to be an essential part of the process for mitigating the collections risks associated with the capital projects.
- The high number of collection moves expands the range of risks.
- Lack of capacity for timely and well-informed collections care, information, advice, and services with existing staffing.

12 Aims of Collections Care and Conservation Strategy

The following aims have been identified for the collection care and conservation strategy. All of these aims, with the exception of Conservation Excellence (which rests with professionally trained conservators), are shared responsibilities and will be jointly implemented by NMI staff across all divisions.

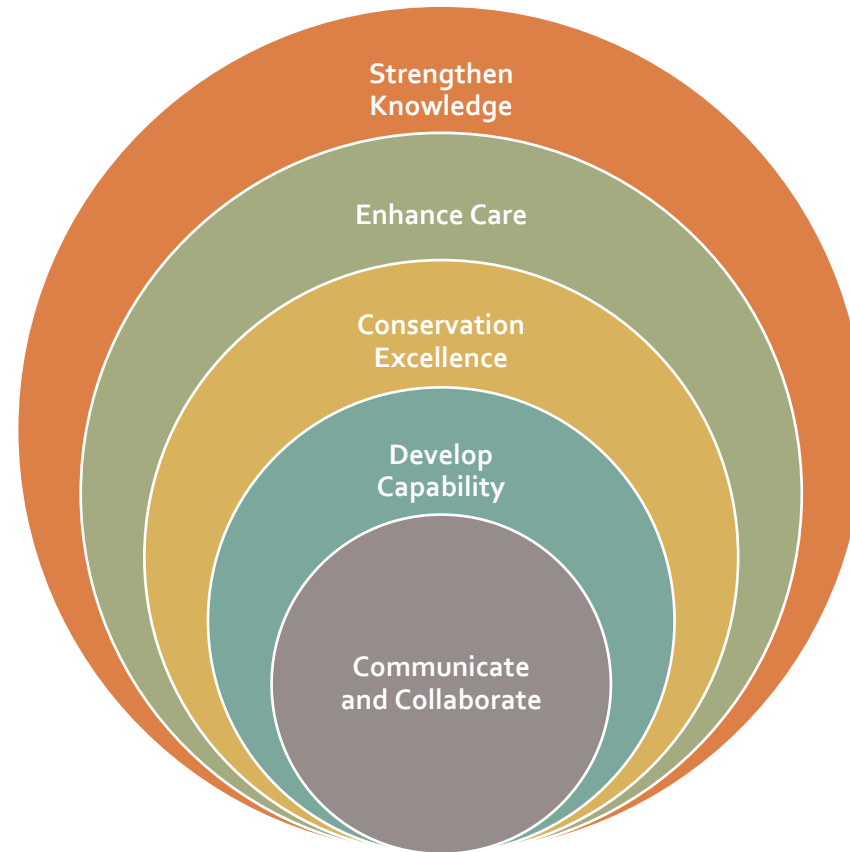


Fig. 6 Diagrammatic overview of the Collection Care and Conservation Strategy Focus

12.1 Strengthen Knowledge

To foster a greater understanding of collection conditions and risks across NMI sites

We will support the preservation and safeguarding of our collections through improving our understanding of collections care and conservation issues. This will include strengthening our knowledge of how the buildings protect the collections and how the building services support good environmental conditions. This will be underpinned by an improved understanding of risks to collections and will facilitate an evidence-based approach to reducing and managing the risks.

12.2 Enhance Care

To enhance conditions for collections while ensuring sustainable practices

We will use the improved understanding of collection conditions and risk to develop processes for prioritising and managing collection care measures across the existing estate and across the ambitious programme of cross cutting projects. This will support maintenance and improvement of storage and display environments and will be underpinned by a sustainable approach to energy use and by incorporating an understanding of collections care measures within the capital programme.

We will also focus on the transitional arrangements for collections by development of a Collections on the Move work stream to manage risks for collections in transit.

12.3 Conservation Excellence

To promote conservation excellence and improve collection condition through best practice in rehousing, remedial and investigative conservation

We will implement a programme of conservation and research to support public engagement programmes and to ensure our statutory responsibilities are met. We will enhance the understanding of collections through scientific research and will develop a schedule of conservation to support the exhibition and loans programming and to stabilise condition and improve housing for collections to ensure they remain accessible now and in future. This will be underpinned by a focus on public benefit.

12.4 Develop Capability

To develop the skills, facilities and personnel to deliver enhanced conservation and collections care across NMI

We will ensure that protection and safeguarding of the collections are shared priorities across NMI and make sure that there is an adequate resource for collections care within programmes and for capital developments. Skills and knowledge will be developed and shared widely across the organisation to ensure that there is a holistic and consistent approach that supports excellence in the care of collections.

12.5 Communicate and collaborate

To deliver improved outcomes for collections care across NMI through a shared understanding and responsibility for protection and safeguarding of collections.

We will deliver across the organisation by developing good communications and reporting procedures and by having an agreed range of policy statements that place collections at the heart of our vision. We will collaborate locally, nationally and across international boundaries. This will be underpinned by a commitment to recognised standards within collections care and use.

13 Implementing Collections Care Objectives

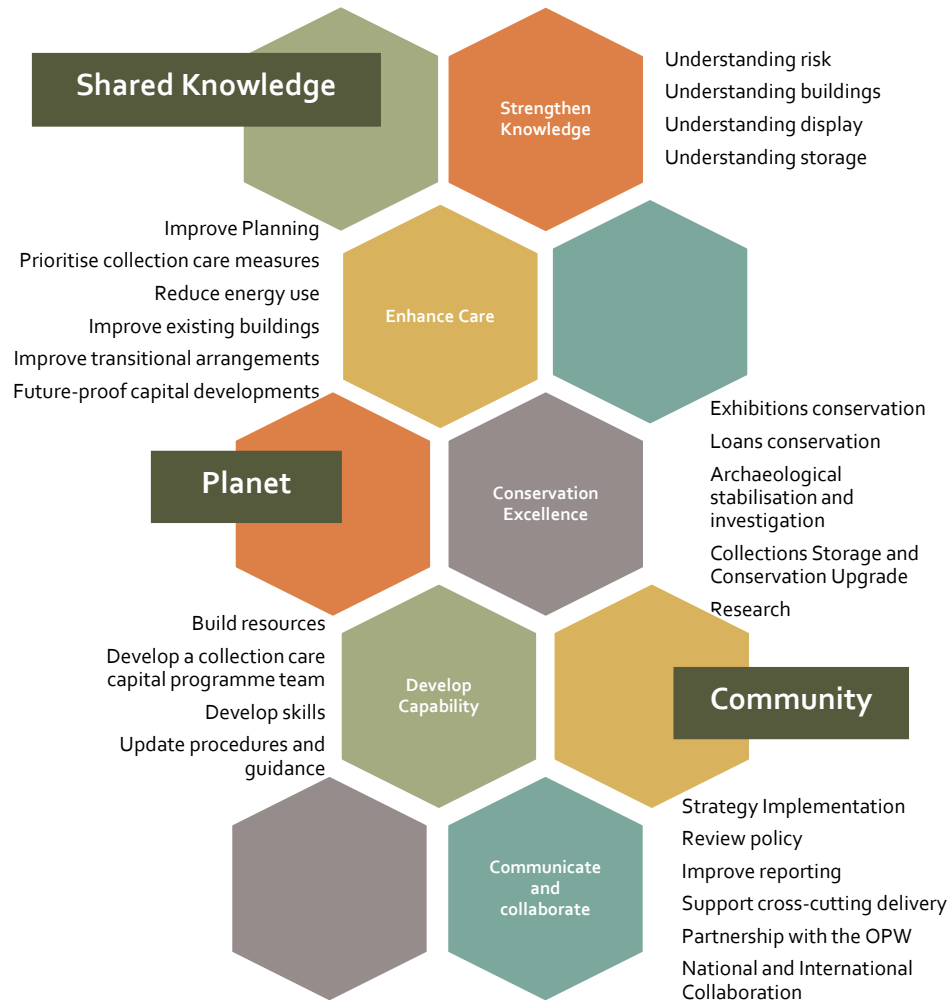


Fig 7 Aims and objectives of the collection care and conservation strategy

14 Implementation and Outcomes

The strategy focuses on the outcomes that will be achieved across the 5-year period.

A detailed implementation strategy has been established with priorities and targets which will focus on effective delivery of the ambitious capital development projects and exhibition priorities. Prioritisation of conservation treatment will be focused around the exhibition and publication programmes.

A full range of objectives have been designed to deliver improvements for collection care throughout all of the sites of National Museum of Ireland.

Yearly action plans will be developed to support the implementation of the strategy in line with available resources and capacity. Responsibility for implementation of the strategy is shared across the NMI and the targets will inform the business planning process enabling effective reporting of progress and achievements.

The following outcomes are identified for the Collections Care and Conservation Strategy.



Fig 8 Aims and Outcomes: Strengthen Knowledge

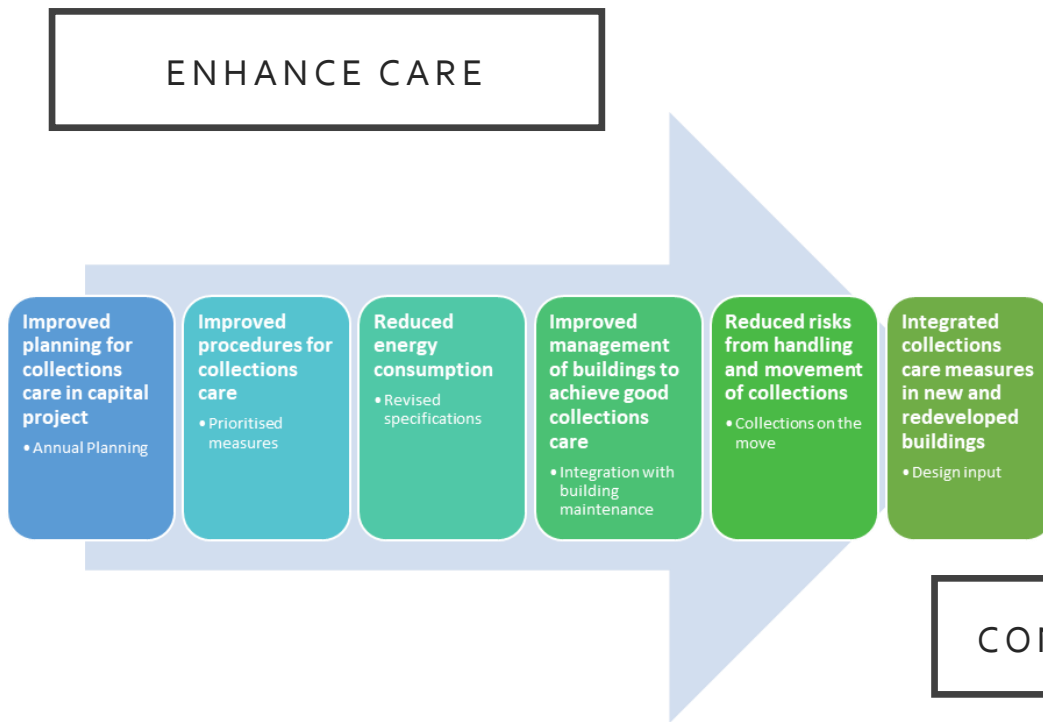


Fig 9 Aims and Outcomes: Enhance Care

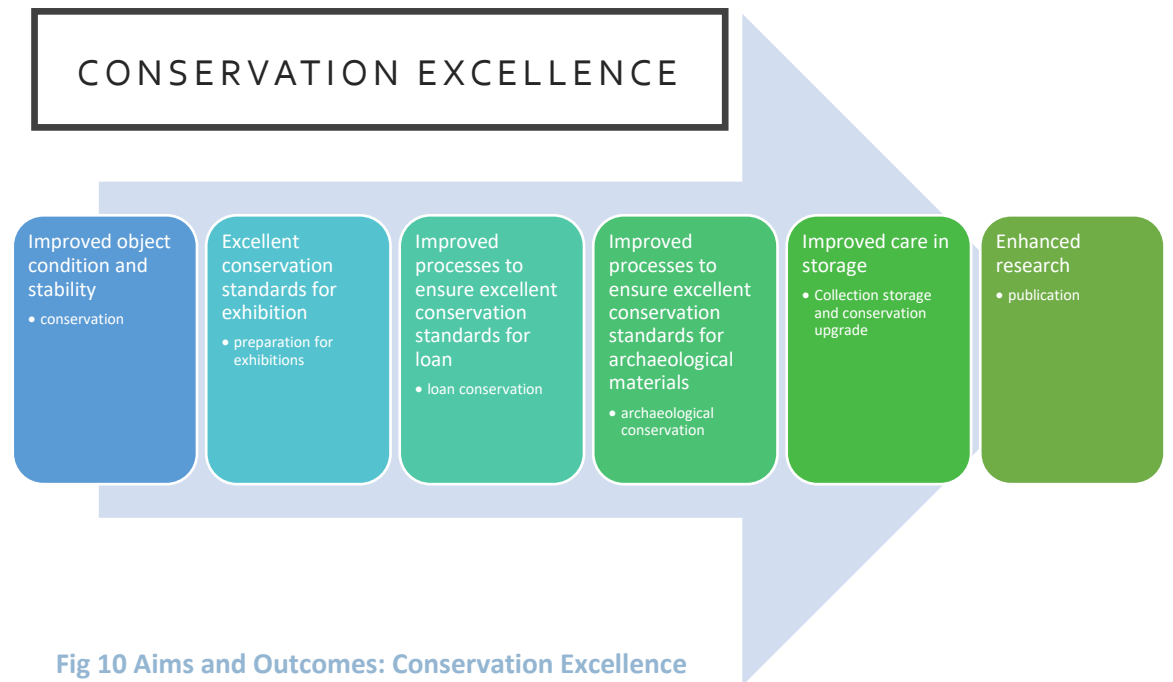


Fig 10 Aims and Outcomes: Conservation Excellence

DEVELOP CAPABILITY

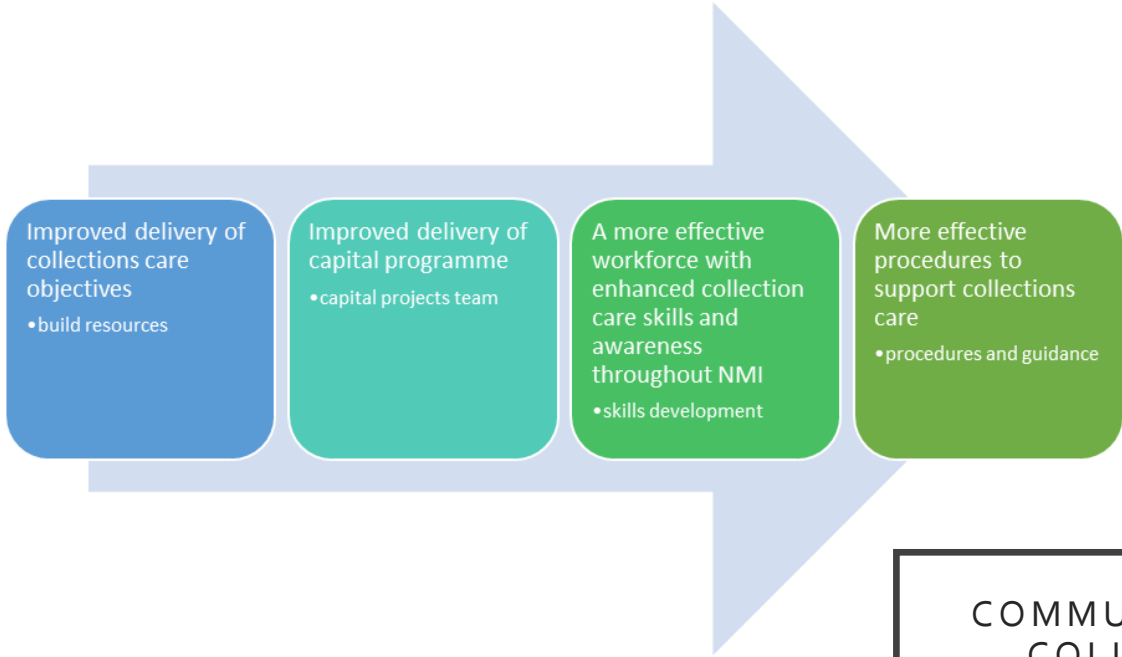


Fig 11 Aims and Outcomes: Develop Capability

COMMUNICATE AND COLLABORATE

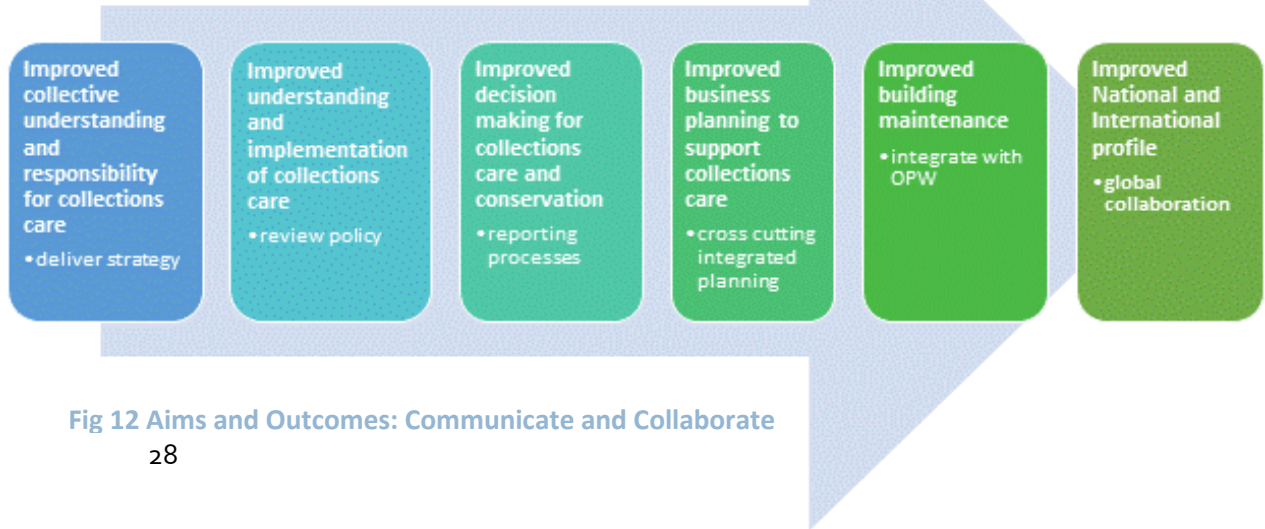


Fig 12 Aims and Outcomes: Communicate and Collaborate

15 Review

This policy will be reviewed in Quarter 1 2026.

16 Acknowledgement and Further Information

Acknowledgement – The NMI would like to acknowledge and extend our thanks to Legacy Conservation consultancy for working closely with us to develop the collection care and conservation strategy. The NMI would also like to thank all museum staff and our OPW partners for their engagement with the process and commitment to the delivery of the projected outcomes.

Further useful legislation, policy and strategy documents are found in:

The National Monuments Acts (1930 - 2014)

The National Cultural Institutions Act 1997

The Collection Care and Conservation Strategy is one of a suite of NMI policy and strategy statements. All NMI policies can be accessed at the following link [Policies & Guidelines | National Museum of Ireland](#)

Further information can be accessed under the Archaeology museum <https://www.museum.ie/en-ie/collections-research> and Standards for the Care and Treatment of Archaeological Objects from Excavation. April 2022 are found here [IAD_StandardsforExcavationObjects_1.pdf \(museum.ie\)](#)

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