



Riksantikvarieämbetet
National Heritage Board of Sweden

The Cultural Heritage Sector

Research & Development Programme

2006 - 2010

PART 1: Background

Introduction

The National Heritage Board (the NHB) is the central government agency responsible for questions concerning the cultural heritage and historic environment. In this context, cultural heritage refers to material as well as non-material representations. By way of clarification, when ‘cultural heritage’ is accompanied by the definite article, it refers to ‘the cultural heritage’ in all its diversity. The term ‘historic environment’ refers to humanly influenced historical and geographical environments, and can include everything from individual objects to large areas of landscape. Since 1990, the NHB has received an annual research grant allocation in order to construct and develop the knowledge base and stimulate further research in these fields. This allocation has varied from 16 million SEK per annum, to 12.3 million SEK in 2005.

The NHB is one of the government agencies responsible for carrying out the cultural policy determined by the Government and the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag). Research that the NHB supports through the R&D programme will contribute to the development of historic environment work and its significance for societal development. The purpose of the research grant is to support applied cultural heritage research, which means that the grant is to be used for research projects that interface the following three nodes: cultural policy, development of the historic environment conservation knowledge base and the scientific disciplines.

The Swedish Parliament (Riksdag) determined the following goals for activities within the historic environment field from the year 2000:

- A safeguarded and maintained cultural heritage,
- A sustainable society with attractive and stimulating environments and with historic environment work as a driving force in its development,

- That everyone will have an understanding of, participation in and responsibility for their own historic environment,
- National and international solidarity and respect for the cultural heritage of different groups.

These goals have led to broader cultural and socio-political objectives in historic environment work. The sustainable society, participation, solidarity and respect for the cultural heritage of different groups are all important aspects of a safeguarded and retained cultural heritage, and reflect a broader view of the historic environment field and its composition. The historic environment includes all those milieus where people are active, and should not be limited to particular demarcated places or objects in the local or surrounding community. The Swedish Parliament's goals emphasise people's social ties and participation as an important feature of planning towards a sustainable society.

The goals set for the historic environment field have meant a development of both the role and working mode of the entire historic environment sector. The NHB's vision and strategy document for 2004-2006 – *Cultural Heritage Past, Present and Future – Vital, Accessible, Meaningful!* – highlights these particular perspectives. In addition to putting considerable energy into the sector project, Operation Heritage, the agency has also contributed to this new strategy through its research and development activities. Experiences accumulated as a result of this work will now be utilised and developed further. This means that, during the period 2006-2010, the sector's research grant will be used to finance projects that support this work in terms of method development and cross-disciplinary activities within the historic environment field.

The Cultural Heritage in Our Age

The historic environment and cultural heritage, that both surrounds us and that we are part of, links us with history and gives depth to the present and the future. They emphasise and contribute to an illustration of societal and human processes that affect us all. The past has many aspects and can be interpreted in a variety of different ways. The different views of political, social and economic contexts created

as a result of different interpretations of history have led to the cultural heritage playing a significant role in, for example, the development of a country's self-image and people's identity, values and political ideologies.

In today's context, we need to take account of more multi-faceted historical environments, where history in all its different shapes and forms is transformed for different purposes and with different agents. The role and significance of the cultural heritage also changes in line with societal changes, increases in globalisation and changes at national and regional levels. Cultural heritage and historic environments therefore acquire new contexts and new audiences. In order to understand and evaluate current activities in relation to the needs of society, new methods for the follow-up and appraisal of the use of history and culture have to be developed. An awareness of how history and the cultural heritage are used is necessary to the fulfilment of the overall politico-cultural goals in the spirit in which they were intended.

The NHB will continue to develop a knowledge base and working mode that builds on extensive cooperation, joint responsibility and mutual reciprocity. The diversity aspect constitutes one of the starting points for the long-term development of the knowledge base. In the analysis entitled "Cultural Heritage is Diversity" (2004), the NHB has considered opportunities for furthering the diversity work of the historic environment field in some detail.

By definition, integration and diversity mean that historic environment work has to involve new groups and more people. One aspect of the historic environment's diversity perspective is to work with children's and young people's issues relating to the cultural heritage and a belief in the future.

Historic Environment Work in Societal Development

Cultural heritage grows and develops in a continuing societal process, where contemporary impressions play an essential part. Modern society has large-scale technical systems and financial resources at its disposal that can rapidly obliterate

traces of past societies and experiences. The historic environment sector therefore needs to be an energetic participant in the public discussion on societal development. It also needs to analyse and develop ways of participating in and influencing societal planning. In this way, the historic environment sector can contribute to the creation of a material as well as historical diversity, and an historical environment with differing time perspectives.

Working towards long-term sustainable development also implies a change in the role that historic environment conservation plays in society. Up to now, this work has primarily aimed at guarding against the more important expressions of the physical cultural heritage being negatively affected by societal development. While this conservation work is also important for continued historic environment work, it needs to be incorporated into the larger picture and supplemented with research into new cultural heritage issues. In terms of historic environment work, the goal of sustainable development provides a stimulating opportunity to integrate cultural heritage issues in societal planning at different levels. This means that the historic environment sector must become a more active participant in societal development, and put the cultural heritage at the forefront of the planning processes.

People's commitment and engagement are essential to the conservation and use of the cultural heritage. This does not mean, however, that protective and retentive instruments become obsolete in a historical environment conservation context. What it does mean is that new strategies, prioritisations and selection criteria have to be continuously developed in order to keep pace with a more extensive involvement in and increasing knowledge about the historic environment.

The societal functions of government agencies also need to be changed to match current social processes, such as the increased regionalisation taking place in Sweden and Europe as a whole. This will have a direct effect on historic environment work and relating issues at local, regional and central government levels. Acquiring deeper understandings and knowledge about these processes are vital to future historic environment work.

Developments and changes in the sector's field of responsibility also imply an increased need for qualified research and methodological development. The need for increased knowledge about historic environment conservation means relinquishing a more academic and discipline-bound approach, and instead developing one that is a more cross- and interdisciplinary in nature. Problems of cultural history, conservation and retention all demand collaboration between different scientific disciplines. Knowledge in new fields is also needed, where social, scientific and technical research, together with cultural analyses, can contribute to a deeper understanding of the effect of cultural heritage issues on society.

The National Heritage Board's Sector Research Responsibility

As a central government agency, the NHB has an important role to play in the strategic leadership and coordination of the historic environment field's knowledge development. The NHB is committed to developing a humanistic and historical perspective as well as the environment's cultural value. The NHB's task is not only to identify which research is necessary and to initiate that research, but also to contribute to a stimulating research and development milieu within the historic environment field. The NHB is therefore interested in developing extensive research collaborations and networks.

The principle of the R&D programme is that the research results will be applicable and relevant to those agents that work with and are affected by historic environment issues. In this context, it is important to highlight that, within the frame of R&D investment, only a cross-section of the research and development needs within the historic environment sector and its associated scientific disciplines can be accommodated.

The National Heritage Board's responsibility as the sector's research agency also means that the research commissioned and prioritised by the agency in response to the needs of historical environment work are, in the first instance, envisaged as being of benefit to country administrative boards, museums and the NHB itself. This does not prevent the research being of interest to other sectors or institutions, however. One of the objectives is that the research will also be of relevance to scholars at

universities and university colleges, and will interface with research carried out in other heritage institutions, such as museums.

Historic environment work is complex in character, which means that research- and development work is cross-disciplinary and inter-sector in nature and demands close cooperation with government agencies and research milieus alike, both nationally and internationally.

Future Challenges for Historic Environment Work

The NHB needs to acquire much more knowledge about as well as analyse historic environments from different epochs and with different characteristics. Effective tools with which to develop this work need to be identified. Both the politico-cultural goals and those determined for the historic environment field have meant that historic environment work increasingly serves as a resource for as well as a humanistic dimension of societal development. At the same time, there is the need to continue to develop a wider knowledge base and a deeper understanding of people's material culture and circumstances across the different ages.

The NHB's strategic work and social and environmental analyses point towards research that prioritises new and clearly problemised issues concerning the value of the historic environments and their use.

Problemising the past and identifying ambiguities helps to avoid categorical oversimplifications. This is essential to a more discerning, humanistic and democratic attitude in present-day society. Research on the ideological aspects of different ages and the different uses of history and cultural heritage is thus necessary, together with methods for following-up and evaluating the significance of the different ideologies in terms of identifying which cultural heritage is of value.

Both research and the methodological development of management and decision-making processes relevant to the historic environments are necessary, as is an evaluation and follow-up of these processes. This acquired knowledge will then form

the basis for identifying regeneration processes that facilitate selection and representation, and enable us to care for and retain the cultural heritage in the best way possible. Profiling the value of the historic environment can sometimes conflict with other interests in society. Commercial interests can also sometimes be so strong that, if the arguments are not sufficiently well-grounded, the value of the historical environment can easily be disregarded.

Documentation forms the basis of historic environment activities. This is why both research and the development of the nature, emphasis and regulation of the documentation are vital. The historic environment sector should be in a position to stimulate the development of knowledge on everything from traditional to modern cultural heritage, which means that new methods of documentation have to be continually developed. While the IT-based documentation technology has resulted in innovations and improvements in documentation, it has also led to an increased demand for continuous appraisal and follow-up. There are interesting possibilities for developing the knowledge base so that it can be used as teaching aids in, for example, history and social studies. Research that looks towards developing methods and approaches that increase and widen the possibilities for more people to understand and participate in society's decision-making processes, is also directly linked to this.

The importance of the historical dimension for sustainable societal development is central, and needs to be made much clearer. The cultural heritage is vital to such sustainable development in that it is a resource from an environmental, economic and social perspective. Present-day climatic changes and historical conditions alike can affect the cultural heritage and the efforts to preserve it. The cultural value of landscapes and settlements representing different ages can also be measured in economic terms, which makes them important aspects of growth and regional development. Cultural diversity and social and cultural interaction are crucial to a sustainable development of society. The first paragraph of "Agenda 21 for Culture" (2004) reads "Cultural diversity is the main heritage of humanity". Research that leads to a deeper knowledge of how a cultural diversity that is related to sustainable development can contribute to the development of historic environment work is therefore of importance.

To a considerable extent, historic environment work builds on teamwork – an interaction – where people’s commitment and enthusiasm, professional cultural heritage work and academic research meet and merge. Knowledge about cultural objects and historic environments are needed, likewise knowledge about those people for whom they have, or can have, significance. What particular needs do citizens have, and how do the institutional cultural heritage agents meet those needs? A meaningful response demands an increased audit of people’s surroundings, as well as specific research into how the cultural heritage is mediated.

The sphere of historic environment work has expanded from being a national discussion to one that is international as well as global. UNESCO is presently conducting comprehensive development work on the universal heritage, where questions concerning historiography, representation and participation are central. The role of diversity and culture is increasingly emphasised by international organisations. Considerable efforts to develop the diversity perspective within the cultural heritage field have been made, for example, by the UN, UNESCO and UN-Habitat, The Council of Europe and SIDA. There is a great need for research that analyses other countries’ experiences and investments in cultural heritage issues in, for example, multicultural urban milieus.

A cross-disciplinary applied research between social studies, the sciences and the humanities is necessary to achieving balanced and quality results in the above-mentioned research and development. This means that several educational and research environments with cross- and multidisciplinary approaches need to be both initiated and supported. In an attempt to marry theory with practical application, the R&D programme looks to support and facilitate collaboration between research environments at universities and university colleges, as well as those at different cultural heritage institutions.

PART 2: R&D Grant Schemes 2006-2010

The R&D programme for the period 20 October 2006 takes its starting point in a number of *research perspectives* considered to be of importance for the development of historical environment work. The intention is to highlight these perspectives by focusing research on three *thematic areas* (see figure 1 on page 17). A primary objective is that a multi- and cross-disciplinary collaboration will be developed to a much greater extent than has hitherto been the case. Cross-sector cooperation, where several government agencies with different social responsibilities collaborate, can naturally also be included.

Research Perspectives

Historiography

The importance of the past is not only fashioned in historic environment narratives and analyses of places and milieus, but also through people's experiences and memories. However, the relative strength of the different forces in society implies that all groups do not share the same possibilities or influence in these processes. Historiography is therefore an attempt to consciously highlight different groups' recollections and cultural heritage. Historiography also has direct significance on which milieus are attributed historic environment value.

Assessments cannot be limited to aesthetic values alone. An identification of the value of the historic environment must emanate from analyses of which and whose narratives the environments convey. Historiography has a direct effect on the types of documentation and historic environment knowledge bases that are created. In-depth analyses and the development of knowledge-base quality and usefulness in the different sectors of society are therefore vital.

The Use of History

The use of history constitutes those processes that take place when history – in all its different forms – is activated in order to form a specific meaning-making and action-oriented whole. One important research perspective deals with how historic environment work can be regarded as an asset in society's continuous transformation processes. Concentration and recycling are examples of changes where historic environment work can develop skills pertaining to the retention of quality and existing resources. Clash of interest and conflict analyses could be developed, as could in-depth analyses on natural and historic environments. Follow-up and evaluation methods as to the use of history and cultural heritage are also of paramount importance. By showing that the past can be interpreted in many different ways, and by counteracting categorical simplifications and providing examples of society's complexity and diversity in terms of time and space, opportunities for more discerning, humanistic and democratic approaches will hopefully be created.

Material and Technology

Acquiring and developing knowledge about conservation methods that allow for long-term retention of the cultural heritage means, among other things, studying and analysing material characteristics, degradation processes and conservation methods. Expert knowledge on historical trades and handicrafts, or more recent technology, is not only a question of conserving and retaining, however. Other new and important aspects within the historic field also need to be developed. Data that facilitates the assessment of older as well as more recent buildings, historical source material and the distinctive features and historic environment value of other constructions is also important in this context. Warnings of changes in the climate pose new challenges to the conservation and management of the physical cultural heritage. Recycling knowledge about resources that have been invested in practical historical environment conservation must increase, so that both practical and ideological possibilities can be examined and developed. Exchanges between the sector and universities need to be stimulated, as does professional training. More practical and cross-disciplinary features should also be added to academic education and training.

Cultural Diversity

Working with perspectives of diversity means taking a broader view of and having a more analytical approach to the historiography that the cultural heritage sector represents. Diversity involves the cultural dimensions of ethnicity, class, gender and generation. As an analytical tool, the concept of diversity helps the researcher to pose vital questions about our society, and to face conflicts in the historiography head on. Historic environment work contributes to a fostering and promotion of cultural diversity through using, conserving and developing places, milieus and objects that witness to different identities or represent the cultural heritage of minorities.

Participation

By making cultural heritages issues more visible, and creating opportunities for participation in the work, it thus becomes easier for people to develop their own attitudes and relationships to the cultural heritage. Historic environment work conducted in the communities and environments of our time needs to keep participation in focus, so that people's own knowledge, experiences and values of the milieus they live and work in are combined with the cultural heritage sector's expert knowledge, overview and input in societal planning. Participation means that people are given the opportunity to exert influence and take responsibility for societal development. Participating in cultural heritage work can be a positive and inclusive process that counteracts the more negative processes of exclusion and marginalisation.

Sustainable Development

The Swedish Parliament's (Riksdag) ambitions for the development of a sustainable society have led to the historic environment being regarded as a resource that should be used and administered. The cultural heritage is seen as an important dimension in this sustainable development in that it is regarded as a resource from an environmental as well as social and economic perspective. In this context, people's participation also increases the possibility of attaining a sustainable development. Having an increased influence on and responsibility for societal development, means that more people will be involved in the processes. Anticipated climatic changes also put new demands on our strategic planning. How will this affect our building plans, and what will happen to those materials and structures constructed to withstand

colder and dryer climates? A risk analysis audit of the consequences of climatic change, and the preparative measures that need to be taken, is an important aspect of this sustainable development.

Control Measures and Decision-making Processes

Another vital research perspective concerns how the cultural heritage perspective and related issues are dealt with in societal planning and decision-making processes. How, for example, do the economic and judicial control measures that historic environment conservation has at its disposal work? Applied studies into how grant systems and judicial practices work in practice in different contexts can lead to important insights. How can control measures be developed so that different parts of society – private as well as public – feel stimulated to regard the cultural heritage as a resource?

Three Thematic Areas

The programme period 2006-2010 is divided into project periods of three and two years respectively. This means that the programme starts with three-year projects. The NHB has chosen three thematic areas to which the above-mentioned research perspectives should be applied. The following presentation outlines the chosen areas in more detail.

Place and Tradition

In Sweden, many places, buildings and ancient monuments attract a large number of visitors every year. Cultural heritage tourism and educational activities are developed in connection with such visits – something that is on the increase within the historic environment sector. The main visitor attractions are often buildings, places or milieus of varying historical interest. Over the years, both time and money have been invested in the conservation and retention of historic environments in an attempt to make them more known and accessible. Examples of historic environments include properties that the NHB administers, such as Birka (Viking Settlement), Glimmingehus (Medieval Manor House) and Visingsborg (Castle). Milieus that are

both owned and used by private individuals and companies are also of interest in this context.

The significance of the historical environment in terms of regional development is also a field that has attracted increased attention. Many local authorities have highlighted cultural heritage as a developmental opportunity, especially in terms of improving the region's attractiveness for the establishment and transferral of both people and businesses.

In *Place and Tradition*, the NHB identifies the following vital areas: Research into material and techniques, conservation and retention, as well as research into the importance that the cultural heritage and visitor attractions have on regional development. Here, research is needed into processes that form the basis of how a region promotes cultural value as attractions – so-called place marketing. In connection with historic environment conservation activities at visitor attractions, more research is needed on the encounter between people and milieus, as well as the histories that are represented and how visitors perceive them. Research is also needed into how milieus are staged and made interesting to visitors. This also includes research into how places are mediated by the Internet, for example, through different types of home pages.

Landscapes with History

If the previously described theme – *Place and Tradition* – has its starting point in individual objects and milieus, the theme area *Landscapes with History* covers the larger, and perhaps more difficult to define, aspects of the use of land.

The development of the landscape is the result of factors that have been influenced by nature and humans alike. Both the old and the new are blended into the landscape and are inhabited, colonised and used. A landscape attracts many different agents in a variety of arenas and with different ways of working – often together with other agents, but also sometimes in opposition. Similar visions, long-term thinking and a holistic view are important key phrases for a functioning history-based and modern

society. The landscape is both everywhere and ever changing, and where the historic environment is a dimension of landscape development. Historic monuments result from the fact that people have used nature's resources through the ages. Landscapes should not only be regarded as monuments of times gone by, but also looked upon as sustainable resources. The question is therefore: How does an historic landscape work?

In environment-related work, the natural and cultural conservation of different milieus needs to be taken into account. The need for cross-sector work and overall planning therefore becomes all the more important. Research projects that take such a holistic perspective into account could contribute to the development of a sustainable knowledge base, both in terms of taking appropriate measures and follow-up work.

Within the thematic area of *Landscapes with History*, the NHB is keen to highlight the following essential areas of research: Which key factors are involved in the use and conversation of an historic landscape? How can cultural heritage and biological diversity be combined and a good interface achieved? Questions relating to the understanding of interactions/conflicts between nature, culture and business interests are also included here. Research into how climatic changes can affect the historic landscape in the long-term is also important. In this thematic area, the NHB is also keen to point out how climatic changes affect the conservation of, for example, archaeological artefacts. Research into the degradation of different kinds of material in the landscape and the development of conservation methods for these objects is vital.

Modern Cultural Heritage

For many people, modern historic environments can be a gateway to cultural heritage issues. Despite their historic environment value, everyday milieus, with their buildings and landscapes, are often taken for granted. Research that emphasises and highlights the historic value of these modern settlements and landscapes gives a significant depth and breadth to cultural heritage issues, and helps to convey the

message to more people and new social contexts. Cultural heritage is constantly being created, assessed, re-assessed and attributed new meaning. Society's large-scale transformation processes often affect modern historic environments. By drawing attention to the value of these historic environments, research can contribute to carefully considered changes and a better use of resources. In this context, new knowledge that relates to the aging of modern material and appropriate methods of conservation is needed.

Modern cultural heritage can also form the starting point for a problemising of the cultural heritage from the point of view of societal remembering and forgetting. The view of modern society's cultural heritage can be understood in terms of our attitude to history and cultural heritage. Modern society has developed an outlook and approach to previous epochs through the creation of museums and historic environment work where selected objects serve as reference points to earlier stages of development. Whose history is emphasised in the selection and preservation efforts of historic environment conservation? The sector needs research that shows the controversial nature of cultural heritage. It might be a matter of discovering those events and milieus that have either been forgotten or overlooked, but that nevertheless have much to tell us about a time or place, and can contribute to new or more in-depth understandings of an epoch or a specific way of thinking. Modern historic environments can also elucidate scientific ideologies and underlying assessments that have been crucial to what has been regarded as relevant research themes.

Within the theme, *Modern Cultural Heritage*, the NHB is looking towards research on urban landscapes where structural and urban development is identified and the value of historic environment protection discussed. In-depth studies are needed into how places and milieus are charged and re-charged with representations and values, and how the value of the historic environment can be maintained and used in relation to change. It is important to identify those milieus that nowadays are not regarded as having any culture-historical value, but which nevertheless have much to tell us about modernity and 20th century society. Analyses of control measures are needed in relation to modern cultural heritage. Research on modern materials and their

conservation is also essential, for example concrete, plastic and steel. This thematic area also includes research into the custody of the cultural heritage in modern milieus, i.e. issues concerning preventative conservation in indoor climates and modern material selection.

Research Perspectives and Thematic Areas

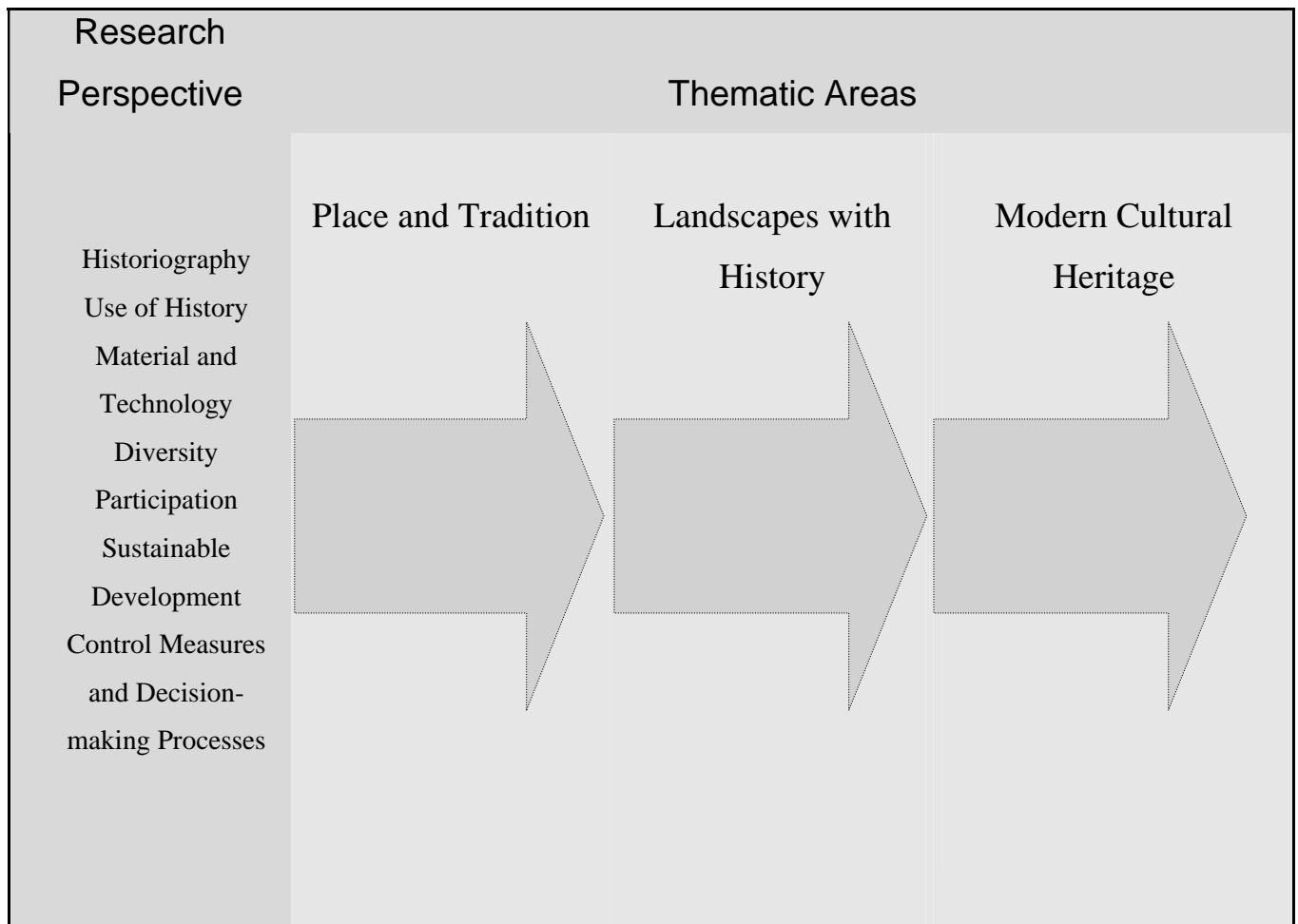


Figure 1.

R&D Applications

Applications for National Heritage Board R&D grants are considered on an annual basis – usually around the end of September/beginning of October.