

## THE HERITAGE EXPERIENCE INITIATIVE

Heritage is engagement with the past in the present. Heritage is therefore entangled in, and crucial for deeper understanding of, some of the most important contemporary global challenges: migration/integration, social divisions, conflict and cultural destruction, climate change and adaptation to rapid and major technological changes. The Heritage Experience Initiative (HEI), spearheaded by IKOS (Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages) and IAKH (Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History), is an ambitious effort to develop research with direct societal impact and new models for teaching by bringing together researchers, students and heritage professionals working across different disciplines, conceptual and methodological approaches, academic and professional skills, empirical contexts and institutions.

### **Aim and objectives**

IKOS and IAKH have developed diverse yet complementary approaches and expertise on heritage, based on our respective disciplinary specializations in cultural history and museology (IKOS), and archaeology, history and conservation (IAKH). Such complementarity places us in a unique position to become a national and international cluster of reference in heritage teaching and research. Building on this, our **aim** is to combine and build upon our disciplines and expertise, in order to develop radically new teaching-models, innovative research and a heritage network that transcends academia. We want to explore and problematize what constitutes heritage and why heritage matters in contemporary society. Our initiative revolves around two main objectives: **1) building a strong, long-term partnership with the heritage sector** (that is institutions concerned with heritage production, policy-making, management, enforcement of legislation as well as non-governmental organisations and commercial actors), and **2) a pioneering integration of teaching and research** (where teaching is enriched through project-based, work-life anchored components and research is driven by teaching).

*Humaniora i Norge* (Meld. St. 25:43) states that heritage research institutions (museums, archives etc.) need a better infrastructure for research funding and improved collaboration with universities. We believe that our initiative provides such a novel and creative platform for collaboration – from which to address major societal challenges. Moreover, HEI will provide students with excellent qualifications in order to bring new knowledge, skills and perspectives into the future production, management and mediation of heritage (thus adhering to the call in Meld. St. 25:41). The added value is to make the skills, competences and relevance of the education and research at UiO known in relevant private and public sectors (as called for in Meld. St. 25:6-7).

### **Motivation and framework for teaching and research**

Our initiative has a common, multi-disciplinary and theoretically informed motivation to gain deeper insights into the following two questions:

**1) What is heritage?** According to UNESCO **heritage** is the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. Heritage is thus an on-going process in which people assign objects, landscapes, places, narratives or traditions meaning, values and tasks based on present understandings, value-perspectives and interests. We want to engage with the complexity of heritage – understood as, but not restricted to, a concept and research field (framed differently in different disciplines and in different historical periods); a set of practices (across a wide range from archaeological fieldwork to curating collections and experiences); a set of actors (at local, national, global level, within and outside formal institutions); and a political arena (which works from the local to the global). We want to explore, map and critically engage with such complexity, and can only do this through a multi- and inter-disciplinary approach that retains close links to practice – and thus both the heritage sector and the society at large.

**2) What is the significance of heritage today?** Heritage takes up different roles in different times and places: Through time the past has been engaged with in multiple ways, and is continuously negotiated, mediated and contested – being a (re)source of conflict. At the same time, heritage has become mobile and diasporic, caught between the local, national and global (as illustrated by the recent inscription of Hebron as a Palestinian world heritage site, causing the withdrawal of the US and Israel from UNESCO), and constantly re-configured in processes of displacement, migration, and globalization. We will explore how contemporary phenomena such as globalization, global migration, digitalization, environmental issues and urban life experiences challenge heritage and management of heritage. This involves engaging with heritage as deep history, as well as with the politics of heritage, i.e. how heritage is used to form contemporary everyday life and traditions, both today and in past societies. Also taking into account the conflicts and construction involved.

### **Working together across disciplinary and professional boundaries**

HEI comprises an internationally renowned group of scholars within the field of heritage studies, and a study offer where practical experience and critical engagement are key components – with applications largely exceeding the number of students we can accommodate in each class. The complementarity of IKOS' and IAKH's expertise on heritage is a main reason for this joint initiative, and its major strength. We have become increasingly aware of the overlaps and inter-departmental synergies that the heritage field offers, and the pressing need to work across disciplinary and professional boundaries, and across institutional contexts. This is even more essential as we educate future staff for truly inter-disciplinary institutions and organisations that are often dependent on a high degree of cooperation and/or dialogue with other institutions and/or other stakeholders.

For teaching purposes, successful collaborations with the heritage sector have so far taken the form of practice-based teaching courses,<sup>1</sup> master students internships,<sup>2</sup> collaborative research

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<sup>1</sup> Eg MUSKUL4910 Utstillingsproduksjon teori og praksis, KONS2060 Forvaltning av kulturarven, ARK2130 From the Bronze Age to the Vikings and Beyond. Archaeological Analysis of Past Technology.

projects,<sup>3</sup> sharing of competence<sup>4</sup> and dissemination activities.<sup>5</sup> Such initiatives have made us aware of a high student demand for ‘hands-on’ learning experiences. Participation in activities relevant to working life has increased the number of students who pass their exams, and we will use this experience to identify further successful strategies for avoiding drop-outs (as called for in Meld. St. 16 and 7). However, our collaborations with the heritage sector remain – to date – isolated efforts. There is a need for a long-term, collaborative and systematic endeavour. In particular, we need to develop enduring relationships, to devise new collaborative ways of working, and to test them. A parallel ambition is to elicit the expectations of the heritage sector vis-à-vis academia.

It is essential for HEI to develop successful methods to engage with the world outside UiO, both in teaching and research. In order to develop collaboration we will convene a *HEI Advisory board* in 2018 with c. 12 representatives from national and international institutions and organisations and a *HEI Network* operative from January 2019, open for academics and everyone operating within the heritage field in Norway. This will be the first explorative steps in a long-term process aiming to identify our sector interlocutors, engage in discussions about our mutual expectations and needs, explore possibilities for joint teaching and research, formalize such intents through long-term institutional agreements, and test out new and innovative teaching methods – relevant far beyond the field of heritage studies. Identifying the important questions and challenges within and for the heritage sector, we aim to develop research projects that can address these, and provide answers. As we believe heritage is a decisive force in shaping society, it is all the more important that the theoretical and critical perspectives that form our research projects are developed in dialogue and engagement with the heritage sector. We are particularly keen to explore how HEI can result in students better equipped to answer to the needs of their future labour market, and, conversely, to explore how we best can use heritage sites – and professional knowledge, exhibition and collection-driven research – to strengthen our teaching and research. These are time-consuming yet crucial endeavours. In HEI we see a unique opportunity to build a solid, strong and enduring framework for interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration, extending into fields where we lack expertise. HEI is a tool for capacity-building, which can be transferred beyond the participants, to benefit other fields of teaching and research at HF and in higher education more generally. In order to build on existing research and to disseminate our experiences we will invite UNIPED to take part in HEI from January 2019.

### **Develop research with direct societal impact**

HEI will seek to initiate and support research that critically engages with heritage; its historical development, contemporary issues and future potentials. Interdisciplinary research is asked for, we believe, to uncover the historically changing and contingent nature of heritage and the power issues that heritage processes are part of today. There is also an urgent need for

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<sup>2</sup> Eg MUSKUL4900 Praksis i museologi og kulturarv, KONS4081 Praksissemester, ARK4180 Arkeologisk praksis.

<sup>3</sup> Eg *Museum: Culture of Copies* where we collaborate with The Norwegian Museum for Science, Technology and Medicine.

<sup>4</sup> The seminar series *Museological Lunch* and *PolitiHøyskolens* use of IAKH's competence see <http://forskning.no/blogg/kulturminnebloggen/forhistorisk-asted-hvordan-kan-arkeologi-gi-bedre-politietterforskning>;

<sup>5</sup> Eg *Post-it prosjektet* at Vikingskipshuset KHM.

a selfreflexive understanding of how our own disciplines have taken part in forming heritage as a concept and heritage practices historically. This approach, we believe, is allowed by working between disciplines and with students and partners across the varied heritage sector. We will build on our ongoing work on questions about what heritage is and what its significance is today. However, we have singled out five themes that we see as central for the development of the heritage sector specifically, for our common future locally and globally, and not least for pursuing research that is relevant for society.

We will approach all these sub-fields from various angles, integrating them in teaching courses, combining our knowledge and taking both the present and the past into account. More specifically, in order to engage in ongoing public debates and contribute to develop problem-solving approaches HEI centres on five sub-fields of enquiry:

**1. *Heritage and sustainability:*** This sub-field embraces contemporary and historical perspectives of heritage, and interactions within the field. There is currently a need for professionals with competence to understand and address global challenges of sustainability (such as those spelled out in the UN sustainable development goals<sup>6</sup>) in order to inform policies and develop countermeasures. Furthermore, cross-disciplinary competence and research are needed to fully recognise the potential and value of heritage when facing and overcoming global crisis, such as climate change. Heritage is often both implicated in such crises, and positioned as a response (and possibly a solution) to it. How to negotiate different understandings of heritage, as a problem and a solution? And how to sustain a critical analysis of the inherent politicisation of heritage? Is there room within the sphere of heritage to reflect on the effects human activity has had on the planet? This research will not leave heritage unaltered; and the concept need to be opened and rethought. The very notions of natural and cultural heritage cannot be compartmentalized as binary – they are intermixed and heritage is contested and negotiated. What challenges does this pose to the concept of sustainable heritage, and its management?

**2. *E-Heritage:*** We will investigate how digitization and advances in virtual reality and social media affect the circulation of heritage, as well as heritage work and outreach. This includes problem-solving approaches to current challenges in the use of digital heritage tools, and involves new ethical issues and new ways of interacting with the public. Heritage production and reproduction is now 'taking place' in social media and photosharing platforms that are complicating the circulation of the past in the present. Digitalization in archaeological and museum practices are developing rapidly and our approach to this field of research is two-fold; we will contribute to develop innovative ways for the public to actively participate in archives, museums and archaeological fieldwork, and we will bring in a historical perspective to understand this technological shift, building on our broad knowledge of technology changes in earlier times and other contexts (as called for in Meld. St. 25:99).

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

**3. *Heritage in conflict:*** In Norway, as in the world at large, recent years has seen a rise in legal measurements aiming to protect cultural property from wilful destruction in times of conflict, and to prevent looting, smuggling and illicit trade in cultural objects.<sup>7</sup> In spite of increasing regulation over the last decades, however, the use of cultural property as an asset in illicit economies and illegal enterprises is growing. At the core of this field of enquiry is the need to understand the role of cultural heritage in conflict, and to involve future heritage practitioners in this field of research. Moreover, this competence is vital in order to address and assess the effect, enforcement and purpose of heritage legislation.

**4. *Heritage activism:*** Heritage is a powerful tool today and in the past, and we will investigate how heritage is and has been negotiated in various contexts in ways that ultimately inform social norms, instantiate notions of 'common good', and recast human rights. This also includes challenging the heritage sector itself, often characterized by a top-down perspective. Increasingly the heritage government is challenged by bottom-up strategies. There is a need for a more sustained understanding of the processes whereby minority groups and indigenous peoples as well as political activists are challenging and converting heritage in opposition to official heritage use and politics.

**5. *Heritage and the curatorial:*** Increasingly, we see objects, places, knowledge and practices being transformed into heritage as a result of curatorial practice, that is, practice aimed to protect, preserve, display, and interpret cultural heritage. Whilst often going unnoticed, curatorial practice has the potential to produce heritage, and thus deserves attention. In addition, curatorial practice is now transcending the competence of museums and curators, it is taking new forms and producing new kinds of heritage at the cross-roads of different disciplines and institutions. For instance, the curatorial has gained momentum in the art world, but curatorial practices have also broken down borders between artistic and heritage practices. Archives and museums are designing heritage experiences and inviting contemporary artists to interpret collections and engage with the public. New curatorial practices are also aiming to dismantle existing power-relations between visitors, publics and the heritage arenas.

Through a focus on these themes, HEI aims at providing insight on current challenges; integration/migration/conflict, climate/environment/sustainability and technology changes – thus answering the call in Meld. St. 25:70. These are all fields that transcends and questions the relationship between the local and the global, for example; What is the significance of studying regional or national heritage in an increasingly globalized world? How do globalisation, and global-local interactions affect heritage? How to educate future staff in national, regional and local heritage institutions prepared to operate in this globalized context?

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<sup>7</sup> Eg UN Security Council Resolution 2199 (2015) and European Parliament resolution on the destruction of cultural sites perpetrated by ISIS/Da'esh (2016).

### **Recursive education: Excellent teaching is excellent research**

HEI addresses current challenges that many students are genuinely concerned with, and we have already experienced that teaching can lead to successful grant applications<sup>8</sup> and publications in high-ranking journals<sup>9</sup>. Our experience also suggests that when students are involved in research projects, new, more ambitious and more experimental research questions, goals and methodologies arise.<sup>10</sup> Work-life anchored components in existing teaching courses offer the students the opportunity to learn by doing, reflecting and discussing with teachers and other heritage professionals, and we have witnessed that such experiences provide students with a feeling of mastering. We are therefore confident that our methodology will impart new vigour to both research and teaching, enabling HEI to make the leap to academic excellence, placing us in a position of national leadership and international prominence in the heritage field.

Research-based teaching is essential in our existing courses, and we often present results from ongoing research projects to our students. *Faglige prioriteringer III* has made us aware that we often do it in the role as teacher, not as researchers opening up for student engagement, input and critical questions. By bringing ourselves in as researchers we aim to inspire inquisitive thinking and research skills from an early stage, adhering to the call in Meld. St. 25:10 to identify and attend to talented students. The approach will also provide students with a more fundamental understanding of the nature of the research literature on their reading-lists, and the context of their BA-, MA- or PhD-theses, and other academic texts they write. Illuminating that results from MA and PhD-projects is often read and used by the heritage sector, will demonstrate to the students that what they often consider as the theoretical part of their education is of high relevance in their future working life (thus adhering to the call in Meld. St. 25:13). The pedagogical objectives of HEI revolve around establishing strong connections between teaching and research, and between theory and practice; across disciplines and with the heritage sector. We plan to attain this by developing new forms of education, including project-oriented teaching, in which students, teachers and heritage professionals can collaborate on common projects. The docent-student relationship is then reconfigured, as students become partners. HEI opens up for innovative experimentation in this direction, inviting students to contribute to the development of research projects, or to develop smaller and larger research projects themselves where they may invite in teachers and/or other HEI-partners. Through this interlinking of research and teaching, HEI will provide students at all levels with possibilities to engage in research projects, nationally and internationally (as called for in Meld. St. 25:41).

The HEI pedagogy is based on the experience that a successful teaching course provides the students with three types of skills; 1) theoretical knowledge within a specific field, 2) practical experiences within the specific field, and 3) transferable skills relevant in various work-life situations (e.g. teamwork, dialogue, use of digital tools). We also believe that we need to

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<sup>8</sup> Eg. *Using the Past in the Past. Viking Age Scandinavia as a Renaissance?* (NFR, PI: Julie Lund).

<sup>9</sup> Eg. Fredriksen, PD *et al* 2014, 'Innovation and collapse...' *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 47, 119–40.

<sup>10</sup> Experiences indicating this, see D. van der Meulen (2017) 'Teaching undergraduates research skills by doing and reflecting', CeROArt, <https://ceroart.revues.org/5055>

provide the students with knowledge and experience in all three fields. For example, we cannot expect the students to be good at teamwork without any instruction or guidance. Moreover we acknowledge our need to be updated on what types of transferable skills that the heritage sector needs. When combined, the three field will provide them with knowledge, skills and competence needed both in their studies and in future work-life, and the students will be armed with the tools needed to become self-directed learners. HEI teaching will provide students at all levels with active and social learning, giving them the opportunity for doing and reflecting, receiving systematic guidance from their teacher. They will also be trained in receiving and providing feedback to fellow students, teachers and other heritage professionals. Teaching courses at all levels will offer elements anchored in work-life, and we hope to motivate students by showing the relevance of the skills and knowledge they develop at UiO, and to fulfil expectations by making a stronger link to professional life.

### Organizing HEI

Most collaborative activities in HEI will take place within five working groups (WG), each focusing on one of the five sub-fields of enquiry and involving students and teachers from relevant teaching courses, other HEI core group members and partners from the *HEI Network* (fig. 1). Each workgroup will have a head from the HEI core group, responsible for dialogue with the *HEI Advisory board* and supported by HEI's research and outreach coordinator in all practical matters. As to ensure transfer of knowledge, the working groups will meet in informal workshops four times a year, to present results as quick talks followed by comments from the other working groups and discussion. Each work group will discuss inputs and plot the course forward later the same day.

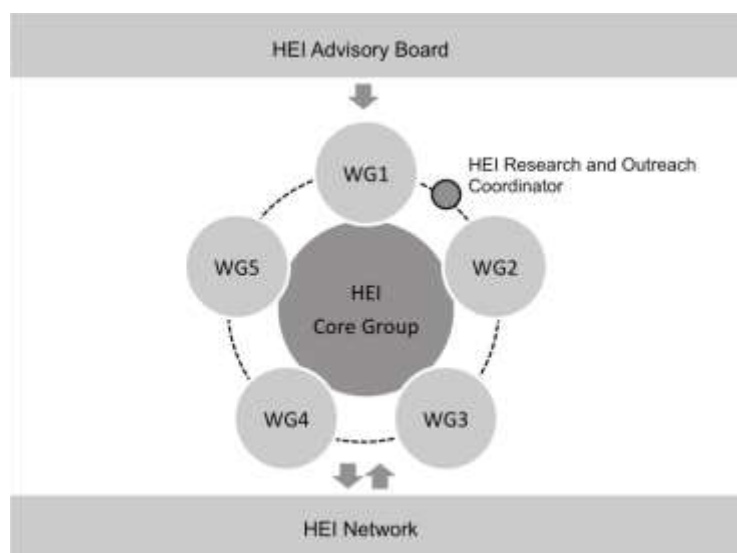


Figure 1.

An annual *HEI's Kulturarvsdag* at UiO will be an essential open access arena for exchange of experience and knowledge across the wide *HEI Network*. There will be room for talks, round-table discussion, mini-exhibitions, poster presentations and more unformal meetings, involving students, researchers and other HEI partners. This will also be an excellent opportunity to present new publications from HEI, including PhD and Masters theses, and to present ongoing research, including PhD and Masters projects. Such efforts to make the UiO

research visible will make the heritage sector more aware of the potential for cooperation with UiO and will also provide a venue for our partners in the sector to present research and projects. We will highlight the possibilities to suggest topics for future projects, both through *Vitenskapsbutikken* and the HEI working groups. The annual *HEI's international student conference* will be an essential meeting place for students and teachers in the *HEI Network*. The conference and *HEI's Kulturarvsdag* will be integrated activities in several teaching courses and they will be essential learning arenas for students at all levels, being responsible for smaller and larger tasks. The research and outreach coordinator will also be responsible for the practicalities at the *Kulturarvsdag*, the *student conference* and the workshops, and will keep a record of all contracts with HEI partners.

Activities in HEI will follow an annual cycle:

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| February  | Workshop 1   |
| April     | Workshop 2   |
| June      | HEI's Kulturarvsdag at UiO<br>HEI's Advisory board meeting |
| September | Workshop 3   |
| October   | HEI's international student conference                     |
| December  | Workshop 4   |

### **HEI outputs**

The initiative's strong research profile will provide a prominent outreach to prospective international students, including exchange students in other programmes at UiO. HEI will offer courses both in English and in Norwegian. A set of courses in English can cater for students in the existing programmes aiming at an international career as well as provide elective courses for international students and staff in the heritage sector. We consider internationalization as important as grounding, contextualization and valorisation of the resources available locally. However, the heritage sector in Norway is our main interlocutor and partner; a lot of the research in the field is driven by local specificities, and the majority of our students are Norwegian, who are eager to study and explore local contexts.

We will bring together research and teaching components by devising new courses under the five sub-fields of enquiry. Existing successful courses (see text box 1) will form the core for further development of our common portfolio, and the output of HEI will be both new and renewed courses, adding work-life anchored components to existing ones. We have a few new HEI courses on the drawing board (see text box 2), but input from the *HEI Advisory board* and the *HEI Network* is essential to develop new courses and adjust existing ones based on the needs of the heritage sector. The development of HEI teaching courses will therefore be a stepwise process (table 1) towards a 40-gruppe at BA level and a group of courses at MA level presented as a half-/full-year HEI-package on UiO's website.

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Spring 2019 | Testing out HEI pedagogy to improve existing courses, and evaluate.   |
| Autumn 2019 | Improve three existing courses based on experiences and input from the Advisory board.<br>Start planning new courses. |
| Spring 2020 | Finish the planning of two new courses.   |



Another concrete output is the production of a course book on heritage studies emphasising the HEI research fields, a handbook with an international focus tentatively titled *Introduction to Heritage Studies*, which would specifically address MA students. It would further contribute to international visibility and academic standing.

A parallel objective is to explore the possibilities to establish a Nordic joint program on heritage studies, drawing on our experience with the successful graduate school in archaeology, *Dialogues with the Past*. The *international HEI student conference* will be an essential arena to explore such cooperation.

### **Potential for external funding**

HEI aims at applying for EU-grants and becoming a Centre for Excellence in Education.... [TO BE IMPROVED....] In museum policy and by the Norwegian Museum Association, research activity has been singled out as a key field of priority. Museums financed by the cultural ministry are thus potential partners for research projects. There are also many potential partners in governing institutions and not least in non-governmental heritage sector. This collaboration is important building blocks for establishing research groups and networks that can apply for EU-funding. It is also expected that HEI will attract funding through its collaboration with various constituencies in the heritage sector, both public and private, thanks to the practice-based orientation of the research and teaching. For instance, experimental applications and digital platforms linked to e-heritage can generate funds through joint efforts with museums and other heritage sites. It can attract funding from *Kulturrådet, Norgesuniversitetet; Fritt Ord, Sparebankstiftelsen, Anders Jahres humanitære stiftelse etc.*

### **Project participants at HF**

HEI is initiated by a group of permanent staff at HF (the HEI core group):

- IKOS/Museology: Brita Brenna, Marzia Varutti,
- IKOS/Cultural History: Ane Ohrvik, Line Esborg, Helge Jordheim, John Ødemark
- IAKH/Conservation: Francesco Caruso, Douwtje L van der Meulen
- IAKH/Archaeology: Per Ditlef Fredriksen, Søren Handberg, Lotte Hedeager, Julie Lund, Unn Pedersen
- IAKH/History: Ulrike Spring
- DNIR: Christopher Prescott

We regard it as essential to include early career researchers working in the field in order to develop a dynamic project, and this application has benefited from their comments. Students taking HEI-courses will also be regarded as project participants.

### **Relevant partners outside HF**

HEI will build on established collaborations with the heritage sector: Kulturhistorisk museum, Riksantikvaren, Norsk institutt for kulturminneforskning (NIKU), Nasjonalmuseet, Teknisk

museum, Henie-Onstad kunstsenter, Munchmuseet, Oslo museum, Svalbard museum, Anno museum, Norsk folkemuseum, Maritimt museum, Økokrim, Akershus fylkeskommune, Politihøyskolen, Midgard museum, and Veien kulturminnepark offer student activities in existing courses. With support from *Faglige prioriteringer III* we can involve additional national partners (e.g. Klima- og miljødepartementet, Oslo Centre for Interdisciplinary Environmental and Social Research (CIENS), Kulturrådet, Fortidsminneforeningen, Den norske turistforeningen, Kulturvernforbundet), involve a wider range of institutions (e.g. Lofotr vikingmuseum, Kulturarv Vestfold) and establish an international network – drawing on existing connections with programs in sustainable heritage management in Aarhus; critical heritage in Gothenburg/UCL; and archaeology and ethnology at the Saxo Institute, Copenhagen. We have established contact with the Centre for Critical Heritage Studies (CCHS) in Gothenburg/UCL, and they have confirmed interest in sharing experiences and cooperate on the development of master courses.

### **Benchmarking**

In the pre-project phase in 2018 we will benchmark HEI against CCHS at the University of Gothenburg/ UCL, to uncover HEI's strengths and weaknesses, in order to start out in 2019 in the best possible way. It will also be essential to evaluate to what an extent different heritage management regulations and differences in organization plays a role, and whether it play a role that UiO is located in a capital.

### **Budget plans**

The following resources are considered essential in order to attain our aim:

- 2 associate professors (1 IAKH + 1 IKOS)
- 1 prof. II (IKOS)
- 2 postdoc (DNIR + IKOS)
- 1 PhD (IAKH)
- 1 research and outreach coordinator (50 % vit.ass. IAKH).

The associate professors will be responsible for teaching and establishing research respectively within subfields 2 and 4. The postdoc at DNIR will carry out research in subfield 3, and the prof. II and PhD within respectively subfield 5 and 1. The last postdoc is not designated to any subfield. The HEI core group will work within a subfield of their interest and all members of HEI together on the theoretical concepts and with grant applications.

1,55 mill NOK is needed to arrange HEI-conference, Kulturarvsdag, develop courses, cover student activities (e.g. excursion to partner institutions), prepare the book, prepare grant applications and cover our part of costs for collaborative meetings.