



arts & culture

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Department:  
Arts and Culture  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

# Draft National Museums Policy

## Abbreviations and acronyms

ACTAG:	Arts and Culture Task Group
CATHSSETA:	Culture, Art, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority
CIA:	Cultural Institutions Act, 1998
CSI:	Corporate Social Investment
DAC:	Department of Arts and Culture
NHC:	National Heritage Council
DST:	Department of Science and Technology
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
HEI:	Higher Education Institution
HHRDS:	Heritage Sector Human Resource Development Strategy
ICH:	Intangible Cultural Heritage
ICOM:	International Council of Museums
IKS:	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
NAC:	National Arts Council
NLB:	National Lotteries Board
NLDTF:	National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund
NMPF:	National Museums Policy Framework
NPA:	National Prosecuting Authority
NRF:	National Research Foundation
OSD:	Occupation Specific Dispensation in the Public Service
QCTO:	Quality Council for Trade and Occupations
R&D:	Research and Development
SAHRA:	South African Heritage Resource Agency
SAMA:	South African Museums Association
SAPS:	South African Police Service
SARS:	South African Revenue Service
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
UNIDROIT:	International Institute for the Unification of Private Law

## **Vision**

A people accepting of who they were, comfortable with who they are and proud of who they are becoming. A country united in diversity. A nation proud of its heritage.

# Foreword

## Preamble

The advent of democracy in South Africa was accompanied by a vigorous process of re-examining culture and heritage in the making of a new national identity. The cultural landscape has been much transformed in the past two decades. Yet South Africa is still a society in transition and must complete unfinished business in terms of the transformation of heritage institutions. Museums, particularly, need to develop sustainable management models. After two decades of democracy the time is opportune to review the progress made in the transformation of the museum sector.

The aim of this National Museums Policy Framework is to transform the management and operation of South African museums in terms of access, redress, equity, social cohesion and nation-building to enable the sector to efficiently preserve our national heritage while contributing effectively to national development.

Prior to 1994, several declared cultural institutions were subsidised by the national government. Some of these institutions continued to receive financial aid after 1994 and more subsidised institutions were declared through the Cultural Institutions Act in 1998. The funding burden on the Department of Arts and Culture increased with the introduction of the Legacy Projects.

While some of these funding arrangements reflected DAC's strategic investment in the sector, the distribution of funds did not efficiently promote government's goals of equity, access, redress, social cohesion and nation-building. Furthermore, the steady increase in subsidisation has occurred in the face of two decades of slow economic growth, increased infrastructural investment in response to pressures of globalisation and national development, and the state's ongoing need to expand social spending to lessen the impact of poverty and address socio-economic challenges, including:

- creating a safe and secure environment for all
- promoting cohesive and sustainable communities
- creating an environment where people can acquire knowledge and be creative
- enhancing the ability of communities to make informed decisions about matters that concern them. This aspect includes access to information, capacity to debate and interpret information and make decisions within an environment free of autocratic and/or intimidating influences
- creating a tolerant society by addressing tolerance for diversity and xenophobia
- promoting national pride.

The sustainability of museums is at risk due to aging infrastructure, inefficient business models, rapid expansion and proliferation of competing entertainment media and lack of investment in heritage tourism infrastructure.

As a result:

- National museums (and most of the Legacy Projects) cannot operate without DAC grant funding.

- The funding requirements of national museums have increased steadily since 1994.
- National museums lack the resources to increase their market share and revenues.
- DAC's share of the fiscus is unlikely to grow to fund the development of the museum sector, including the support of new museums.

Given the above, a funding model that requires the state to provide most of a museum's core funding through an annual grant is untenable over the long term. New funding and operating models are needed that must not only support existing museums, but must enable the flow of investment to new museums and heritage initiatives, especially those that address geographical and historical inequities.

However, successful transformation of the scope and scale envisaged by government cannot be achieved through merely adjusting funding arrangements. All aspects of museum practice and operation must be critically examined and policies aligned with the national development goals if the sector is to be transformed and placed on a permanently sustainable footing to preserve and promote South Africa's heritage.

As an aid to policy development, this National Museums Policy Framework addresses a wide range of policy issues, without attempting to speak comprehensively to every aspect of museum practice. While it is intended as a framework for all policy development by nationally-aided museums, it is hoped that this policy will also encourage policy development at other museums in the sector.

# Table of Contents

<b>Abbreviations and Acronyms</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Vision</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Preamble</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction and Context</b>	
1.1. Introduction .....	10
1.2. Problem statement .....	10
1.3. Policy objectives .....	11
1.4. Policy principles .....	12
1.5. Legislative and regulatory framework .....	13
<b>Chapter 2: Defining a South African Museum</b>	
2.1. Background .....	18
2.2. Proposed general definition .....	19
<b>Chapter 3: The Roles of Museums in Society</b>	
3.1. Background .....	21
3.2. Africa and museums .....	21
3.3. Changing trends in museum practice .....	22
3.4. Museums as agents of social change .....	23
3.5. Ethical museum practice .....	24
<b>Chapter 4: Restructuring for Delivery</b>	
4.1. Introduction .....	27
4.2. Centralised national coordination .....	28
4.3. Streamlined national museum management structures .....	29
4.4. Proposed new structure .....	30
4.5. Risk management compliance .....	32
4.6. Museum human resources development .....	33
<b>Chapter 5: Museum Accreditation System and Criteria</b>	
5.1. Introduction .....	35
5.2. Advantages of accreditation .....	35
5.3. Accreditation levels .....	36
5.4. Accreditation process .....	37
<b>Chapter 6: Museum Functions</b>	
6.1. Introduction .....	38
6.2. Preservation .....	39
6.3. Research .....	43
6.4. Dissemination and communication .....	44

## **Chapter 7: Implementation**

7.1. Implementation framework .....	46
7.2. Summary of proposals .....	46

## **Chapter 8: Revisioning Museum Practice .....48**

### **Appendices**

A: Schedule of Legislation, Regulations, Conventions and Policies .....	50
B: Ethical Guidelines .....	52
C: Guidelines to Broaden Access .....	54
D: Possible Institutional Arrangements .....	57
E: Minimum Accreditation Standards .....	60
Glossary of Terms .....	62
Bibliography .....	65

## Executive Summary

# Chapter 1: Introduction and Context

## 1.1. Introduction

When the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, 1996 (hereafter referred to as the White Paper, 1996), was adopted and implemented by the then-Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST), the Department undertook to review declared cultural institutions, based on the following principles:

- reconceptualisation of national museums to present a nationally coherent structure
- provision for a dynamic infrastructure that will allow future inclusion of other heritage institutions
- effective and efficient use of limited resources
- facilitation of the sustainable development of heritage appreciation through exhibitions and focused educational programmes
- promotion of national museums through cooperation with provincial museum structures
- promotion of scientific activities in the national system of innovation.

Since the adoption of the White Paper there has been an increase in the number of museums, monuments and interpretive centres in all spheres of government as well as in the private sector. Serious challenges remain.

These include an inequitable geographical distribution of museum resources, particularly in terms of rural communities; the poor national coordination of the museum sector; and the lack of performance and professional standards for museums at national, provincial and local levels.

This situation cannot be allowed to continue if all South Africans are to have an equitable opportunity to preserve, promote and conserve their heritage as envisaged in our Constitution.

This National Museums Policy Framework (hereafter *NMPF*, *policy framework* or *framework*) has been initiated by the national Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) to provide a long-term framework and guideline for the development of norms and standards of museum practice and governance in South Africa that will help ensure that museums act in the service of society.

## 1.2. Problem statement

While preservation of heritage remains a concern, museums the world over are being called on to play more active social roles to provide spaces to address socio-political issues. Museums are now required to develop new practices that integrate specialist museum fields and heritage management while accommodating community heritage practice. The challenge for museums is to become more service-oriented.

In South Africa, museums have to align with government imperatives, including:

- national reconciliation, the development of a national identity and social cohesion.
- improving the quality of basic education
- equitable distribution of resources
- improved access to resources and opportunities, including knowledge and jobs
- redress in terms of inclusiveness, multiple narratives and ownership of programmes

The National Museums Policy Framework recognises that:

- Despite its contribution to tourism, the sector is not making a significant contribution to national priorities, such as the reduction of poverty, creation of decent work and the promotion of a knowledge economy.
- The current heritage legislation requires revision and amendment to enable clearer direction, better coordination between national heritage entities and more efficient management of national museums.
- Resources in the sector are inequitably distributed in ways that disadvantage people who are black, poor, rural, disabled or female.
- Resources in the sector are inequitably distributed in terms of geographical location.
- The sector is underfunded and individual institutions are unable to be sustainable without the support of state funding.
- The current funding environment is structurally flawed and unsustainable over the long term.
- The performance, norms and standards achieved by national museums require improvement.
- The sector experiences unacceptable systemic risk to its heritage resources, assets, intellectual property and human capital.
- The process and basis for the declaration of museums as 'national' requires urgent review.
- There is a lack of coordination at national level that can guide the development of museums while advocating for resource mobilisation to the sector.

### **1.3. Policy objectives**

The overall objective of this policy is to provide a framework for museums to contribute effectively to the socio-economic objectives of the country. The policy framework sets out to provide clear guidelines that inform national, provincial and local museum policies, with special emphasis on the governance, management and responsibilities of nationally aided museums and related structures. As it is recognised that different museums face challenges that require specific policy responses, the policy framework does not provide detailed policy prescriptions.

Against this background, the specific objectives of the policy framework are to:

- Guide the development of a service-oriented museum practice.

- Inform the development of institutional and governance frameworks.
- Provide norms and standards for the management of museums.
- Propose mechanisms for a categorisation (grading) and accreditation system.
- Highlight issues around a sustainable funding framework for national museums and nationally significant collections.

## **1.4. Policy principles**

### **1.4.1. General Principles**

The policy framework promotes the development of a heritage sector that respects the following general principles:

- Defence of diversity –Fostering the recognition of, and respect for, diverse social and cultural practices, and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all regardless of race, gender, language, class, national origin, religion or ability
- Promotion of equality – Ensuring that all persons, groups and communities have equal opportunities to participate in cultural life and to conserve and develop their cultural heritage
- Championship of non-racialism and non-ethnicity – Refraining from supporting or promoting any theory claiming or implying racial or ethnic superiority or inferiority, or which bases value judgements on racial differentiation, without scientific foundation and contrary to the moral and ethical principles of humanity
- Encouragement of freedom of expression – Ensuring that all persons are free to express opinions without interference or fear of victimisation, with the understanding that the principles of diversity, equality and non-racialism should be protected
- Promotion of social cohesion and nation building – Facilitating the inclusion of persons and groups from varied cultural and social backgrounds and contributing to the development of a unified national consciousness.

### **1.4.2. Specific Principles**

Guided by the above principles, the policy framework envisages a systematic process of museum transformation that in principle includes:

- conceptualisation and development of a coherent structure for national museums that may include clustering, amalgamation or other forms of rationalisation
- promotion of cooperation between national museums and provincial and local museum structures
- improved use of and access to national collections across institutional boundaries
- inclusion of other heritage institutions through provision of a dynamic infrastructure
- effective and efficient use of available resources
- promotion of a professionalism through human resource development, accreditation of museums and museological research

- creation of jobs at all levels
- sustainability based on diversifying revenue streams, managing and reducing input costs and employing long-term investment strategies to grow reserves.

## 1.5. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

In 2008 DAC undertook a review of national policy and legislation to take stock of transformation of the heritage sector and to identify the areas of the legislative and regulatory framework that were in need of revision. The development of the National Museum Policy Framework is informed by the legislative review as indicated in the discussion of key heritage-related acts below (a complete list of laws is provided in **Appendix A**) and takes cognisance of the draft Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage 2014.

In addition to the White Paper and the Cultural Institutions Act, 1998 (Act 119 of 1998)(CIA), a number of heritage laws were passed between 1996 and 1999 that redrew the heritage landscape in South Africa, including: the National Archives Act, 1996; the National Arts Council Act, 1997; the National Film and Video Foundation Act, 1997; the South African Geographical Names Council Act, 1998; the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 and the National Heritage Council Act, 1999. These laws were not only a response to the need to transform a heritage sector inherited from the apartheid era, but were also required to ensure compliance with internationally agreed ethical principles and professional standards and the international conventions and treaties to which the new South African government had subscribed (see below and **Appendix A**).

As these laws and the regulatory institutions founded by them govern the legal framework in which every South African museum operates, and with which all museum policies should comply, a brief discussion of each follows below.

### Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)

The Constitution of South Africa provides the primary legal framework for government at the national, provincial and local levels and provides principles of cooperative government<sup>1</sup> and inter-governmental relations that regulate and limit the powers and legislative authority of each sphere of government<sup>2</sup>. In matters over which the national and provincial legislatures have concurrent legislative authority (Schedule 4<sup>3</sup>), national legislation is to prevail over provincial legislation, including in matters described in Schedule 5 of the Constitution as the legislative competences of provincial legislatures<sup>4</sup>, if the following special circumstances apply (Section 44 (2)):

(a) to maintain national security;

(b) to maintain economic unity;

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter 3 of the Constitution

<sup>2</sup> Chapter 4 of the Constitution

<sup>3</sup> These include 'cultural matters', education and tourism.

<sup>4</sup> Museums other than "national museums" are a provincial competence.

(c) to maintain essential national standards;

(d) to establish minimum standards required for the rendering of services; or

(e) to prevent unreasonable action taken by a province which is prejudicial to the interests of another province or to the country as a whole.

Subject to schedules 4 and 5, the Constitution therefore empowers national government to establish minimum standards for the nationally funded museum sector, as well as to ensure that the policies of museums administered by provincial and local governments are not in conflict with national policy.

#### White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, 1996

The White Paper, 1996, was the first comprehensive post-democracy statement on the state of the heritage sector. It advocated a broad range of structural changes aimed at completely overhauling the sector through a process of restructuring and rationalisation, and the creation of new management institutions.

The White Paper, 1996, noted that, while there were many publicly funded local, provincial and national museums:

- There was no national museums policy.
- The provision of museum services was not coordinated.
- Planning was fragmented.
- Resources were not fairly distributed.
- Many communities had no access to museums.
- Cultural collections were often biased.
- Funds were needed to support new museums and those that fell outside of the national network.

As many of the declared cultural institutions were national in name only (neither their collections nor the services that they rendered could be described as being truly national in character), these institutions were to be reviewed and “evaluated according to accepted criteria of what constitutes ‘national’”.<sup>5</sup>

The White Paper also sought to transform the conservative, undemocratic institutions governing the heritage sector, and the demographically skewed management and professional strata of the museums.

#### Cultural Institutions Act, 1998 (Act 119 of 1998) (CIA)

This Act provides for the declaration of national cultural institutions, including nationally funded museums. Due to their perceived strategic importance, these institutions are directly governed and funded by DAC. The CIA also provides for the establishment of a National Museums Division, a national consultative body of museum directors and chief executive officers.

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<sup>5</sup> White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, 1996, Chapter 5:6.

While the CIA clarified the legal status of established national museums and several new ones (some of the post-1994 Legacy Projects, namely Freedom Park, Nelson Mandela Museum and Luthuli Museum) as Declared Cultural Institutions, it has not stood the test of time and is in urgent need of revision, not least to remedy the following flaws:

- The CIA did not enable a museum environment that would deliver the clear mandate in the White Paper, 1996, of transformation of the museum sector.
- No provision is made for cooperation between national, provincial and local museums.
- No rationale is provided for the clustering of some national institutions into 'flagships' and their mandates are poorly described.
- The CIA does not provide a clear legal definition of a 'national museum' and does not specify the criteria that would distinguish a nationally-aided museum from a provincial or local museum (except for the passing reference in the Constitution, no other legislation makes reference to local and provincial museums). Without a policy framework and enabling legislation based on clear definitions (a proposed broad definition is mooted in Chapter 2 below), the constitutional mandate embodied in Schedule 5, part A of the Constitution Act, 1996, that assigns museums "other than national museums" as "functional areas of exclusive provincial legislative competence" cannot be properly effected, leaving DAC and provincial governments unable to exercise any effective influence over the development, standards or activities of most museums.

In the light of the above, this policy framework recommends that the Cultural Institutions Act, 1996, be replaced by comprehensive legislation that will take into account the dynamics of the diverse cultural institutions under the authority of the Department of Arts and Culture, including all national museum institutions.

#### National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999)

The National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (hereafter referred to as NHRA) established the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) and its provincial equivalents. SAHRA's main function is to be the custodian of the national estate, coordinating efforts to protect all heritage resources, including objects and sites.

A three-tier grading system for heritage sites (that mirrors the national, provincial and local government levels) is in place. The NHRA impacts on some research activities as well as on the operation of museum buildings, many of which are declared heritage sites and subject to SAHRA's custodial role.

Moreover, the Act impacts on the operations of museums in so far as they hold in their collections heritage objects defined under Section 3(2) (i) (i-vii) as being part of the "national estate".

Section 7 provides for the grading of objects as part of the national estate according to national (Grade I), provincial (Grade II) and local significance (Grade III).

The NHRA also defines parameters for the declaration and registration of an object as a heritage object, regulates the import and export of heritage objects and sets out procedures for the restitution of heritage objects.

While SAHRA has exercised responsibility for compliance monitoring with respect to immovable cultural heritage, there is no national agency with an oversight role over heritage objects or museum collections.

#### The National Heritage Council Act, 1999 (Act 11 of 1999)

The NHC Act, 1999, brought into being the National Heritage Council (NHC), whose mandate includes advising the Minister of Arts and Culture regarding heritage, initiating research and policy development and funding heritage initiatives (current funding policy limits the funding of government and government-aided museums).

Although none of these responsibilities have been articulated specifically in relation to museums, the NHC Act gives the NHC a specific role to "monitor and coordinate the transformation of the heritage sector, with special emphasis on the development of living heritage projects".

#### International Conventions

South Africa is a signatory of the following international conventions:

- 1954 UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Cultural property in the Event of Armed Conflict (generally known as the Hague Convention)
- 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property
- 1972 UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
- 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
- 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects
- 1999 Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict
- 2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage.

In addition, the following conventions are under consideration:

- 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage
- First Protocol to the UNESCO Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

The 1970, 1972, 2001 and 2003 UNESCO Conventions encourage the protection, safeguarding and documentation of heritage through establishing inventories, conducting research and implementing awareness and educational programmes. Though museums may not be the main implementers of these programmes, they may contribute to implementation and are required to align their programmes to these initiatives. Museums must also ensure that they have complete, regularly updated inventories.

While generally focused on heritage, some of these conventions have particular implications for museums and cultural institutions. For example, the 1954 Hague Convention specifies that buildings to be protected in terms of this Convention should be marked with the Blue Shield. The Convention requires that cultural institutions should be located far from locations that may be military objectives during times of conflict.

The 1954, 1970 and 1999 Conventions require museums to put processes in place to safeguard collections in conditions of conflict as well as times of peace, and to ensure that they do not participate in the trade or movement (through acquisition) of cultural objects .traded or removed from their source country during conflict. The guidelines supporting the 1972 Convention clarify professional standards regarding the management of heritage sites, including museum buildings and museum landscapes. The 2001 Convention places restrictions on the excavation and collecting of underwater heritage as *in situ* preservation should be the first option. In terms of the 2005 Convention, museums can play an important role in providing opportunities for diverse cultural groups to protect and express their cultures through public programmes, collection and research. As these conventions could ensure that museums have access to international assistance in safeguarding of our heritage, they should be taken into consideration in the planning and development of cultural and heritage infrastructure and the development of policies.

## Chapter 2: Defining a South African Museum

### 2.1. Background

Museum definitions tend to reflect the specific social and cultural environment in which museums operate. The South African Museums Association (SAMA) definition for instance reflects the effects of the major political and social changes experienced in South Africa in the 1990s and the more inclusive democratic values of the museum sector. The SAMA definition reads:

Museums are dynamic and accountable public institutions which both shape and manifest the consciousness, identities and understanding of communities and individuals in relation to their natural, historical and cultural environments through collection, documentation, conservation, research and education programmes that are responsive to the needs of society<sup>6</sup>.

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) definition of a museum<sup>7</sup>, which has been revised several times since it was first introduced in the 1940s, reads:

A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.

The ICOM definition emphasises generic functions and governance systems. It does not address the role and purpose of museums within a cultural and social context, nor does it address the diversity of formats that museums can take. But, as the ICOM definition is the operational definition generally used in Europe and Africa (and endorsed by ICOM's more than 30 000 members in 136 countries), it is a useful starting point to interrogate against South African perspectives before developing a South African definition.

In general, museums in South Africa are "non-profit" organisations in the sense that they exist for the benefit of society rather than for private gain.

While perhaps no museum can be considered a "permanent institution" they have tended towards longevity. South African museums are generally legally formalised entities, whose activities are controlled by a formally constituted governing body.

In the past, "service of society" was interpreted as collecting objects, conducting research and developing educational programmes and exhibitions to improve knowledge and understanding within society. During the past two decades, the emphasis has shifted to the role of museums as agents of social change. In South Africa, this means museums that:

- promote national reconciliation, national unity and the development of a national identity by creating conditions for mutual understanding of diverse societies

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<sup>6</sup> Source: <http://www.sama.za.net>

<sup>7</sup> According to the ICOM Statutes, adopted during the 21<sup>st</sup> General Conference in Vienna, Austria, in 2007. Source: <http://icom.museum/the-vision/museum-definition>

- contribute to the economy and job creation through heritage tourism and the creative industries
- contribute to the development of a knowledge society by acquiring knowledge and by making information available through educational programmes and various media
- allow community members access to express themselves through programmes.

All government-aided museums are "open to the public". In general, every South African museum "acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits [...] for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment".

## 2.2. Proposed general definition

While acknowledging the ICOM definition of museums, and recognising the wide range of unique and disparate museums in South Africa, this policy framework proposes the following general definition:

***A South African museum is a formally constituted institution that promotes the development of society through research, collection, conservation, communication and exhibition of natural and cultural heritage in ways that reflect the diversity and values of a democratic society.***

### 2.2.1 Defining museums by type

Within the above general definition, museums can be individually distinguished in terms of types of research, collections, technology or activities.

Traditional museums in South Africa coexist with newer models of heritage preservation. Natural history museums remain an important component of the museum sector, collecting, preserving and studying natural history collections for the purpose of advancing scientific knowledge. Traditional cultural and social history museums, as well as art history museums or galleries, continue emphasising collecting, conservation, research and the dissemination of information.

Identity-building museums include sites that interpret events, such as liberation history museums, community museums and museums that define themselves as social agents, such as peace museums or sites of memory.

Some urban and cultural landscapes have been defined as museums with their associated interpretative centre or site museum being considered as the communication section of the museum and not as the museum itself.

Eco-museums involve large spaces acting as a continually changing exhibition typically depicting a way of life, culture, occupation or customs and consisting of everything in the area – biophysical or cultural, tangible or intangible, movable or fixed.

Cyber museums, or virtual museums, challenge the traditional concept of museums as object and institution-based. The cyber museum has been defined as “a logically related collection of digital objects composed in a variety of media which, through its connectivity and its multi-accessible nature, lends itself to transcending traditional methods of communicating and interacting with visitors...; it has no real place or space; its objects and the related information can be disseminated all over the world” (Schweibenz, quoted in ICOM’s *Key Concepts of Museology*).

## **Chapter 3: The Roles of Museums in Society**

### **3.1. Background**

The establishment of museums is closely linked to colonialism and the development of the philosophy of science. From the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, people of European origin came into contact with different cultures and environments across the world. They collected evidence of difference and took them home as specimens and curiosities. Wealthy individuals kept rooms in which they displayed their collections for their own enjoyment or study (known as 'wonder rooms' or 'cabinets of curiosities'), some of which later evolved into private or public museums.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, museums became spaces to exhibit scientific and technological progress, which had become the markers of development and civilisation from a European and Northern American perspective. Since science and technology had made industrial capitalism and economic growth possible, non-industrialised or less industrialised cultures were seen as inferior.

The first museums that were established in South Africa (South African Museum – 1825, Natal Museum – 1851, National Museum in the Republic of the Orange Free State – 1877, Staatsmuseum in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek – 1892) followed the European model, as did almost every museum established before 1994. When South Africa became a union in 1910, the Minister of National Education accepted responsibility for the administration and financing of the 'national' museums.

The Transvaal Museum, South African Cultural History Museum, National Cultural History Museum and the South African National Museum for Military History were pronounced 'declared cultural institutions' in the Cultural Institutions Act, 1969. The Afrikaans Language Museum and Language Monument, Engelenburghuis Art Collection, Natal Museum, National English Literary Museum, Voortrekker Museum, War Museum of the Boer Republics and the William Humphreys Art Gallery were declared cultural institutions either under the Cultural Institutions Act of 1969 or the Cultural Institutions Act of 1989 (Act 66 of 1989).

All these institutions were 'national' only in the sense that they resorted under the Cultural Institutions Act (either 1969 or 1989) and received funding from the national Department of Education. The Cultural Institutions Act of 1998 merely perpetuated the status quo, with DACST as the funder, and added some post-apartheid museums.

### **3.2. Africa and museums**

The view which holds that museums are not African requires examination. While mostly true in terms of the structure of museums, there are nevertheless indigenous practices which resonate

with standard western museological approaches<sup>8</sup>. Museum-like concepts of preservation, heritage and continuity and ways of storing and conserving are practiced world-wide and by all people (Kreps: 2003). There is a long history in West Africa and Egypt of the protection and conservation of heritage, for example, burial sites.

Within South Africa, indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) document heritage primarily in terms of performance and place in praise poems, story-telling, music and healing rituals and places such as altars, where ancestors were invoked and became the locus of memory and genealogy.

There are recorded accounts of the preservation, protection and promotion of values through the retention of material objects, such as headrests handed down to the oldest son or buried with their owners, beads reused for a child's protection, or drums moved like the *ngoma lugundu*<sup>9</sup>.

There is also a long history of acculturation, of adaptation, incorporation, re-invention and transformation. Every glass bead, for example, was imported and yet gave rise to an African beading 'tradition'. In the same way that beads have become African, soccer and Christianity are now indelibly part of the African experience, yet neither is indigenous.

There are, however, important differences between local traditional practices and western-style museums. Most societies preserve only their own memories and artefacts and not that of others, while the western colonial enterprise collected the world and displayed it. South Africa and other African countries adopted the universal model for museums, and retained them even after the colonial era. Many museums on the continent associate themselves with ICOM, which means that they not only follow the form but also the functions of international practices. The move towards increasing social responsibilities in museological practice (see below) has undoubtedly been influenced by African and other non-western societies who play a role in the reassessment of museum practice on a global level.

### **3.3. Changing trends in museum practice**

Though discipline-based museums, with their emphasis on knowledge production through basic and applied research, are still valued, many museums today can be described as identity-forming institutions. These include community museums and museums that reflect social, political and environmental issues.

Museums play an important role in social development by providing access to knowledge and creating environments where people can learn to think innovatively. Museums do not only research and exhibit social, cultural and natural phenomena, but also influence behaviour by providing access to information or taking a stand on issues.

The importance of intangible culture has lately been recognised and has opened up new avenues in collecting, research and public programmes. Museum research and collecting now include

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<sup>8</sup> Western now means a consciousness that is not determined by geography and can be located anywhere.

<sup>9</sup>

safeguarding memories and documenting intangible cultural practices. Museums are no longer confined to exhibitions within buildings.

The new thinking allows museums new roles, as places of memory for our ancestors, spaces in which to claim history, places of discussion and places where communities and curators can animate objects through research and display.

### **3.4. Museums as agents of social change**

South Africa has gone through a social and political transformation process and South African museums have a role to play in contributing to national government imperatives such as social cohesion and socio-economic development.

The social and developmental role of museums is not particular to South Africa. Internationally, there is a move towards museums acting as agents of social change, specifically to increase social tolerance, appreciation for diversity and working towards social harmony. Appreciation of diversity includes acceptance of differences regarding race, culture, sexual orientation and religion. Gender mainstreaming and other cultural borders of diversity such as race, ethnicity, class, faith, age, physical ability, language, regionalism and sexual orientation are important for the development of the principle of inclusiveness in museums.

Efforts to create national pride and social cohesion should be built on an acceptance of diversity as a key characteristic of the South African identity. While cultural practices should be safeguarded according to the wishes of the practitioners, they should not be artificially frozen to protect the status quo. Intercultural tensions are often bound up with conflicts of memory, competing interpretations of the past, conflicting values and conflicting meaning attached to heritage sites and objects, and may lead to debates based on an either-or approach. Shared heritage does not necessarily imply shared memories, meaning and values regarding a site or event. National pride and cohesiveness requires transformation of museums and sites to be inclusive and to sensitively portray multiple voices, including different perspectives of the same event.

As public spaces, museums can create opportunities that allow community members to express themselves and, through programmes, create intergenerational contact and understanding and a sense of belonging. They can play a formative role in developing democratic skills and confidence. Museums can contribute to economic development by becoming tourist attractions or participating in urban regeneration projects. However, while heritage tourism has important economic benefits, too much emphasis on economic development could have a negative impact on the environment, heritage sites as well as the social and cultural environment of the host communities.

### **3.5. Ethical museum practice**

Policy development should address the key issues of ethical concern in museum practice. Section 13(d) of the Cultural Institutions Act, 1998 (Act 119 of 1998) makes provision for the development of a code of ethics by the National Museum Division (although the National Museums Division was not implemented and no code of ethics was adopted).

In addition to broad ethical imperatives and global issues which confront society at large, such as peace, security, freedom, and the urgent need to preserve our environment, a code of ethics for museums is required that addresses issues specific to museum practice and that sets minimum standards of professional practice and performance for museums and their staff. **Appendix B** describes ICOM's Code of Ethics and a code of conduct for staff.

#### **3.5.1. Human remains**

Several South African museums hold human remains in their collections. The processes and mechanisms for dealing with collections of human remains are beyond the scope of the NMPF and would best be served by the development of a national policy on human remains. Such a policy should address human remains in museum collections, research on human remains, access to human remains collections and repatriation of human remains (including repatriation claims to and from foreign collections).

Whatever the original motivation for collecting them, collecting human remains is now rejected across the world as an undesirable museum practice, from an ethical perspective. Therefore, museums must not actively collect human remains.

However, the following general principles may serve as ethical guidelines for the formulation of policies for museums with human remains in their collections:

- Where human remains are already in a museum's collections they should be managed according to ethical and moral standards that recognise the dignity and humanity of the deceased.
- Museums may not exhibit human remains.
- Unethically collected human remains must be repatriated to genealogical or cultural descendants or be reburied in a separate holding space if no claimants come forward.
- Artefacts made from or including human remains should be afforded the same dignity and respect as human remains.

#### **3.5.2. Restitution of heritage objects<sup>10</sup>**

In terms of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, museums are required to assist the South African government in the investigation and restitution of objects stolen from another 'State Party'. Section 41 of the South African Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act 25 of 1999) mandates

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<sup>10</sup> Restitution is defined as the return of heritage objects that were removed under inappropriate circumstances from their country of origin.

SAHRA to mediate between parties in restitution claims. If a national museum agrees to reconstitute an object or collection of objects, the museum has to obtain permission from the Minister of Arts and Culture in terms of the Cultural Institutions Act, 1998. In the case of archaeological objects, the institution has to apply to SAHRA or the relevant provincial authority to be relieved of responsibilities in terms of the excavation permit.

Inappropriate acquisition of heritage objects may have occurred where the objects were acquired:

- without the free and informed consent of the custodian of the time
- in contravention of tradition and custom
- through a person legally or culturally unauthorised to dispose of them
- through an act of war or aggression
- through a method that was illegal under South African law at the time and that is still illegal.

It is proposed that South African museums consider restitution of all heritage objects, whether claimed by local or foreign parties, that were acquired under inappropriate circumstances that:

- are deemed to have significant historical, traditional or cultural significance and are regarded as of central importance to the country of origin
- have significant historical, traditional or cultural importance that is central to the cultural life and continuance of cultural practices of a cultural group.

Restitution of heritage objects should include all rights associated with the object. The continued use of research and reproductions after restitution, including photographs and visual recordings, should be negotiated with the claimant.

### **3.5.3. Access to museums**

Museums are required to service all people in their diversity, not only as an ethical principle, but as a human rights requirement of South African law. The legal obligation of museums to ensure that barriers to access are addressed to facilitate the promotion of diversity and inclusivity is derived from the Constitution of South Africa.

This right is upheld in the White Paper, 1996, which states:

Access to, participation in, and enjoyment of the arts, cultural expression, and the preservation of one's heritage are basic human rights, they are not luxuries, nor are they privileges.

However, there are a number of barriers to access affecting the exercise of these rights, including financial and economic access, transport and opening hours, physical and sensory access, cognitive access (including different learning styles) and linguistic access. As circumstances differ from museum to museum, museums are strongly urged to develop their own institutional policies on promoting access. This framework provides a set of guiding principles below for consideration in institutional policies (a detailed list of specific principles and guidelines is provided in **Appendix C**):

- No person may be refused access on discriminatory grounds to a heritage resource that is open to the public.
- The museum sector should take positive steps to increase inclusivity and enable access to heritage resources.
- Access to collections and sites has to be understood within the context of professional standards and accepted conservation practice. It may be acceptable to restrict access to sacred and sensitive collections, sites and traditional practices – or to restrict access to protect a fragile heritage resource against irreversible damage.
- All restrictions on access to collections, sites and practices should be guided by a formal institutional policy that provides reasons for restrictions (the policy should be publicly available).

#### **3.5.4. Illicit trafficking and heritage crime**

The illicit trafficking<sup>11</sup> of cultural goods is considered one of the most persistent illegal trades in the world, along with trafficking in drugs and arms. Africa's archaeological resources and art works are considered to be very vulnerable.

Museums can contribute to preventing heritage crime through ethical museum practices, including:

- developing institutional policies to prevent the collection and acquisition of illicitly obtained objects
- refusing support to owners of collections that are of doubtful origin
- maintaining good documentation systems to ensure that stolen museum objects can be positively identified if found
- not appearing to promote or tolerate the sale of unprovenanced material through inappropriate or compromising collaborations with dealers
- not providing expertise or professional advice to possessors of unprovenanced objects
- informing the appropriate authorities when they have reason to suspect that an object was illicitly obtained.

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<sup>11</sup> 'Illicit trafficking' encompasses illegal means as well as means that might be considered unethical or culturally taboo.

## Chapter 4: Restructuring for Delivery

### 4.1. Introduction

This policy framework envisages a systematic process of transformation guided by the mandate established in the White Paper, 1996, as well as the transformation agenda set by government as embodied in its more recent strategic development plans. The overall objective of the transformation process is to create a museum sector that is a driver of change and progress in the arts, culture and heritage sector of the economy. Only a bold, visionary approach underpinned by sustainable policies and progressive practices will result in the completion of the transformation programme initiated in 1996 and the achievement of the goals of the developmental state.

While some restructuring and rationalisation, as well as new institutions to broaden inclusion (Legacy Projects), were attempted, the transformative agenda envisioned in the White Paper, 1996, was only partially achieved. Remaining challenges include:

- Alignment of the development of museums with the strategic objectives of government for the broader cultural and creative industries, notably with the Mzansi Golden Economy (MGE), New Growth Path (NGP) and the National Development Plan 2030.
- Rationalisation of museum management and governance across tiers of government, and between government departments.
- Implementation of an appropriate monitoring and evaluation system, including a performance management system and performance targets for museums and their employees.
- The development of an equitable, sustainable funding model for the museum sector.

The policy framework proposes resolving these issues through a revision of the system of museum management and governance, including a new management model that ensures national coordination, interdepartmental collaboration and equitable distribution of museums and their resources; rationalisation of government-aided museums' governance and management structures; categorisation of all government-aided museums as national, provincial or local museums; implementation of a new system of accreditation for all government-aided museums, with attendant performance standards; and, alignment of the funding, legislative and regulatory frameworks to facilitate the achievement of the above objectives.

In pursuing these objectives, the museum sector cannot act in isolation from the broader arts, culture and heritage landscape, most of which faces the same historical and socio-economic challenges. It is thus anticipated that the changes envisaged in this policy framework may be adapted, aligned or subsumed within the transformation and development of the broader sector.

## 4.2. Centralised national coordination

Section 12 of the Cultural Institutions Act, 1998 (Act 119 of 1998) envisaged a national coordinating forum (the National Museums Division) consisting of the Director-General of DAC and the CEOs of the national museums. This structure, which was never convened, was conceived as a think-tank rather than an implementing body. In its absence, the Department of Arts and Culture convened the CEOs' Forum instead, which functions only as a consultative group. As a result, despite the fact that nationally funded museums receive the bulk of their funding from DAC, museums by and large determine their own policies and programmes, without any central coordination.

The national museum sector requires a centralised unit within the Department of Arts and Culture to ensure strong national coordination and direction and the implementation of policy. A national, well resourced coordinating structure within DAC would also provide leadership regarding performance management, and the monitoring and evaluation of the quality, content and impact of projects conducted by museums.

While Central coordination would also ensure effective liaison between museums and agencies of the Department of Arts and Culture, such as the National Heritage Council and the South African Heritage Resources Agency, regarding mutual concerns and shared mandates; with training institutions to ensure that appropriate training and qualifications are available to museum workers; and with professional organisations.

Liaison is also needed to ensure interdepartmental collaboration to prevent museums in government departments such as Defence, Police, Public Works and Basic Education from inhibiting DAC's ability to establish national ethical and professional standards.

It is recommended that the coordinating centralised structure should exercise the following functions:

- Advise the Minister on policy, strategy, legal and fiscal frameworks.
- Coordinate implementing agencies and councils in the museum sector, including national museums, SAHRA, NHC and professional bodies.
- Facilitate coordination and communication for the sector.
- Promote scientific activities in the national system of innovation.
- Develop a system of monitoring and evaluating the museum sector.
- Set best practice standards for professional development, including training frameworks and ethical standards.
- Develop a performance management system for museum programmes.
- Create interventions and set standards to combat cultural crime, in cooperation with SAHRA, SARS (Customs & Excise), the National Prosecuting Authority and the SA Police Service.
- Set standards for the categorisation of museums.
- Develop and manage interventions to transform museums.
- Coordinate and liaise with government departments regarding research and education.

### 4.3. Streamlined national museum management structures

The Department of Arts and Culture inherited 14 declared cultural institutions in 1994. When the four provinces were divided into nine, some provinces did not inherit nationally funded museums.

Seven new institutions were declared as cultural institutions after 1994. Since 2000, a significant part of the department's annual budget has been transferred to the cultural institutions in subsidies. At the same time DAC's mandate has been expanding, with funds needed for new museums and museums outside the current national museum network. It is important to note however that the department's budget has not grown in line with the new mandate.

This position was anticipated in the White Paper, 1996, in accordance with which DACST commissioned a feasibility study to investigate the possibility of clustering specific institutions to achieve 'economies of scale'. The resultant report (Simeka, 1998) asserted that the 'flagships' (that is, the amalgamated institutions) would *assist in building a progressive, representative heritage service which reflects the interests of/serves all members of SA public.*

Having accepted the Simeka recommendations, the Department then, through the Cultural Institutions Act, 1998 (CIA), established the Northern flagship (now Ditsong Museums of South Africa) and the Southern Flagship Institution (now Iziko Museums of South Africa). A KwaZulu-Natal flagship (Natal, Voortrekker and Ncome museums) and a Bloemfontein/Kimberley flagship were investigated in a DACST-commissioned feasibility studies in 2001 but were not pursued.

The CIA did not define the responsibilities of the flagships, nor describe their relationships with any of the other declared institutions or any other museums. Nevertheless, it was expected that the flagships would be more efficient through:

- amalgamating management and governance structures
- centralising corporate services
- making more efficient use of pooled resources
- generally pursuing the transformation agenda (equity, redress, nation-building, access, etc.) described in the White Paper, 1996.

From a structural point of view, both flagships achieved their objectives of rationalising governance structures. By 2000, one Northern Flagship council had replaced three (for the National Cultural History Museum, the South African National Museum for Military History and the Transvaal Museum) and there was one Southern Flagship council instead of five (Michaelis Collection, the South African Cultural History Museum, the South African Museum, the South African National Gallery and the William Fehr Collection).

Both flagships had to restructure more than once in order to develop a functional management model. Obtaining parity in terms of salaries between the constituent museums as well as the creation of additional corporate portfolios such as the posts of CEO, CFO, internal auditor and

executive directors resulted in increased salary bills, rather than savings through centralisation of functions.

The current funding model and structure for managing museums are not sustainable. The multiplicity of institutions, compliance requirements in terms of the PFMA and Treasury Regulations, and increasing costs are challenging the long-term preservation and promotion of heritage. Restructuring must be undertaken to meet these challenges.

## **4.4. Proposed new structure**

### **4.4.1. Clustering**

This policy proposes that the current institutional and governance framework be reconfigured to allow for the clustering of national museums into new management structures that will achieve the broad objective of the policy framework, which is transformation through equity, redress, access, social cohesion and nation-building. The mandate for clusters will include regional solutions in the following problem areas:

- preservation and promotion of heritage within the cluster
- public access to museums, including physical and virtual access by previously marginalised communities, rural, poor and disabled people
- the distribution of resources across provinces
- development of conservation capacity
- training of museum personnel
- the establishment of new museums
- safeguarding of intellectual capital and promotion of research
- heritage tourism promotion
- advocating for the museum sector
- service provision to all other museums in the cluster.

The above objective will be best served by clustering museums as follows:

Cluster 1 – Gauteng and Limpopo (anchor institution– Ditsong)

Cluster 2 – Western Cape and Eastern Cape (Iziko)

Cluster 3 – KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga (KwaZulu-Natal Museum)

Cluster 4 – Free State, North West and Northern Cape (National Museum).

A feasibility study should be undertaken to determine the appropriate model of implementation for the clustering of museums that would best improve cost-efficiency and advance equity.

#### 4.4.2. National Council

A single national council is proposed for all national museums. Each cluster would be managed by a Chief Executive Officer. Each museum in the cluster will be managed at a programme level by a director. The CEO will be an ex-officio member of the National Council. As transitional arrangements, the CEOs of the anchor institutions will be the accounting authorities for the clusters. A possible institutional arrangement is graphically depicted in **Appendix D**.

The National Council will appoint sub-committees to focus on particular museum areas. The sub-committees will report to the Council.

While standards will be set by the proposed national coordinating structure in DAC, that will also be responsible for research regarding national museum best practices, the clusters will be the main implementing bodies.

In order to fulfil such a mandate, both existing and new clusters must be adequately resourced and supported at national level and relevant legislation amended (particularly the CIA).

#### 4.4.3. Grading of museums

There is no logical basis for the current differentiation between national, provincial and local museums (e.g. the term 'national museum' simply refers to a museum that is funded by national government and governed by the CIA). The proliferation of museums and museum-like institutions adds urgency to the need to develop criteria for the categorisation or grading of museums.

The purpose of developing grading criteria would be to provide a basis for grading museums according to the quality, scope and significance of their collections and to enable more equitable funding. Such a grading system would undo the false impression that currently designated national museums are more important than provincial and local museums, as the process would be based on the grading of collections, rather than the size of the holding institution. For example, a grading system could allow individual collections to be graded as national collections<sup>12</sup> while remaining in a museum funded by the provincial or local authorities or other funding body. Such a collection may then be supported by the Department of Arts and Culture through a conditional grant to cover operational functions related to key museum functions. Other possible consequences of a grading system may be that:

- Currently declared national institutions or parts of such institutions may not be graded as nationally funded museums.<sup>13</sup>
- Museums and collections not declared under the CIA may be graded as nationally funded museums.
- Museums graded as nationally funded museums and museums curating collections graded as national collections should attain the minimum standards of accreditation before receiving funding from the national government.

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<sup>12</sup> A national collection is defined as a collection that is of unique or outstanding cultural or scientific significance to the nation and contributes to national identity.

<sup>13</sup> A nationally funded museum is defined as a museum that predominantly consists of national collections.

The grading criteria and grading process will be determined by the Minister of Arts and Culture.

## **4.5. Risk management compliance**

### **4.5.1. Introduction**

Museum objects are irreplaceable. Therefore every museum should have a risk management policy, that includes a risk management strategy and implementation plan, tailored to the specific risks and needs of each institution. In the case of government-funded and aided museums, such policies should also comply with Treasury Regulations, with the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) (Act 1 of 1999) in the case of national and provincial museums, and with the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA)(Act 56 of 2003) in the case of local authorities' museums. Risk management strategies include not only financial and asset management, human resource management, and health and safety legislation and regulations, but also risk management in terms of core functions.

### **4.5.2. Risk Management Framework**

Risk management policy should be regularly reviewed and be aligned with the museum's accreditation standards and performance management systems. Accountability for the risk management framework resides with the museum's accounting authority.

Institutions are encouraged to develop a risk management system based on the Public Sector Risk Management Framework, which describes the following process for the development of a risk management system:

- create an enabling environment
- integrate risk management activities
- identify risk
- assess risk
- respond to risk
- communicate and report risk
- monitor risk
- define the roles and functions of people responsible for risk management.

The museum's accounting authority must ensure that the necessary structural components to enable the above processes are in place.

### **4.5.3. Minimising risk in museum core functions**

Risk management strategies in terms of core museum functions should include:

- regular evaluation of museum programmes to remain relevant to a changing social environment and changing community needs
- preventative conservation programmes to prevent deterioration of museum objects
- adequate documentation of collections to ensure identification in cases of theft or loss

- security measures in exhibition areas and collections in storage to prevent theft or vandalism
- disaster management plans
- quality assurance procedures, such as peer review processes regarding research and the development of exhibition texts
- protection of intellectual property
- policies to ensure that museums do not fall victim to illicit trade activities.

#### **4.5.4. Minimising risk to infrastructure**

Risk management strategies in terms of infrastructure should address:

- financial sustainability
- human resource capacity to ensure that the museum's programmes are implemented according to best practice standards. The museum must implement a continuous professional development strategy for staff that includes a performance management system
- financial management and supply chain management procedures that prevent fraud, corruption and theft
- inventorying of assets to prevent theft and to evaluate the assets of the organisation
- Occupational Health and Safety legislation and regulations
- public liability
- environmental threats.

## **4.6. Museum human resources development**

### **4.6.1. Introduction**

Museum work includes various educational levels and a wide range of academic disciplines and museum-specific support services. In terms of human resource development, the museum sector lacks an occupational framework that recognises the diverse careers within the museum sector, and a framework that details training standards for the museum sector.

Without such a framework and standards, the museum sector is unable to prescribe the qualifications required for entering the museum field, to develop programmes for continuing professional development or to develop performance management systems.

The Department of Arts and Culture has developed a Heritage Sector Human Resources Development Strategy (HHRD) that aims to:

- provide sector-specific training and development interventions that address critical, scarce and priority skills
- partner with training and development institutions to deliver appropriate training curricula.

Training standards should be developed in terms of:

- new roles and social responsibilities of museums
- national and international legislative and regulatory frameworks
- key museum functions
- risk management compliance issues
- ethics and professional conduct
- accreditation standards.

The policy framework proposes that DAC, in cooperation with relevant South African professional associations and stakeholders, implements a strategy to:

- Develop occupational frameworks for the diverse careers in museums in cooperation with CATHSSETA<sup>14</sup> and representatives of the profession, with the aim of standardising job qualifications and enabling succession planning.
- Develop training standards in cooperation with CATHSSETA and other relevant Setas for the academic, museological, management and or support services skills required in museums.
- Assess existing museum training courses in terms of agreed standards and develop appropriate training courses in collaboration with training and development institutions.
- Develop a programme to recognise prior learning (RPL).
- Develop a continuing professional development programme (on-the-job training) in collaboration with relevant professional associations and training institutions. Continuing professional development should be incorporated in the governance and management systems of national museums.

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<sup>14</sup> Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority

## Chapter 5: Museum Accreditation System and Criteria

### 5.1. Introduction

The purpose of accreditation is to create a system to evaluate and rank institutions in terms of established standards of best practice, based on criteria drawn from measurable performance indicators in the exercise of the museum's operational tasks (see list of indicators in **Appendix E**). Museums will be accredited according to the roles they play in socio-economic transformation, and the performance standards achieved in museum core functions and management of resources.

In South Africa the museum sector is extremely diverse in scope, function, content and location and a one-size-fits-all standard is not advisable. For this reason a flexible accreditation system is proposed to accommodate the diversities in the museum sector and to ensure that unreachable or unreasonable quality controls do not perpetuate the inequalities of the past. Museums and museum-like organisations must be evaluated on their own terms and not in terms of some universal unrealistic ideal or imagined flat playing field. The same approach will apply to national, provincial and local museums. While international standards have been set, local realities must be considered. Consequently, accreditation is seen as a process in which a museum's efforts to improve its practice will receive recognition.

Accreditation goals and standards include:

- ethics and professional conduct of staff
- museum core functions, including documentation, storage, preventative conservation, ethics of acquisition and disposal of items in a collection
- transformation roles in museums
- sustainability
- risk management
- skilled and knowledgeable staff
- expanding access to museums in terms of location, knowledge, financial, physical, and linguistic access
- research.

### 5.2. Advantages of accreditation

- Applying the principles of accreditation will lead to improved professionalism in the care of collections.
- Accreditation implies that the governance, management and professional services in a museum are moving towards professional practice and its services are transparent and

open to public scrutiny. Such status is likely to positively influence funding from corporate and charitable bodies.

- As museums adopt better governance structures and good management practices these can be linked to a performance management system.
- An accredited institution will be able to register with a designated professional body.
- In South Africa the word 'museum' is in the public domain and any organisation or community site can call itself a museum. However, only an accredited museum will be allowed to describe itself as such, and thereby acquire the prestige of having met progressively rigorous minimum standards.
- Accreditation will be seen as a badge of honour by those working at an accredited museum. It will also have a positive impact on a museum's image and may lead to wider recognition and patronage by the public.

### 5.3. Accreditation levels

A ranking system must be developed that accommodates different types of museum institutions but recognises the differences between them. Thus, although they will have a number of accreditation criteria in common, an art museum should not be graded according to the same criteria as a natural history museum where their functions and audiences differ<sup>15</sup>. A system attempted by SAMA had four grades with the intention that all museums should aspire to reach the highest level<sup>16</sup>.

Heritage and interpretation sites outside the conventional museum structures may use these guidelines for improvement. In this sense accreditation can be used as a means to bridge the gap between different types of museums and interpretation sites. It could take a number of years for a museum to reach the highest level and not many institutions will achieve instant accreditation status.

It is important to note that:

- Standards must be measurable and achievable.
- Museums' standards will be periodically audited.
- Museums should re-apply for accreditation after a specified period of time.
- Museums that are not accredited or in the process of becoming accredited should not qualify for government funding.
- Accreditation can be used to close the gaps in museum practice.

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<sup>15</sup> For example, the Australian model separates different types of museums and has different sets of accreditation standards for each.

<sup>16</sup> In the late 1980s, SAMA published a set of accreditation standards for museums but these were found to be unusable and only one museum met the high accreditation standards. Later SAMA introduced a graded system but that too did not find support within the museum community. Although the later accreditation system used multiple criteria, emphasis was placed on staffing. A museum with more staff would earn a higher grade than a smaller museum on the assumption that it would be able to provide a wider spectrum of services.

## 5.4. Accreditation process

DAC should provide the infrastructure and system for museums to be accredited although accreditation should be voluntary. Proposed minimum guidelines are provided in **Appendix E**.

Different standards and mechanisms for accreditation must be worked out by DAC in cooperation with professional associations. Professional bodies should be empowered to play this role effectively. Applications should be assessed by professional museologists. The accreditation process and ongoing monitoring should make provision for continued self-evaluation and improvement as well as peer review<sup>17</sup>.

A new funding model for the sector should consider funding for accreditation which should be linked to training initiatives to assist museums, especially those in rural areas, to achieve the minimum standards or to achieve a higher level.

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<sup>17</sup> Models exist in other countries such as MAP of the American Alliance of Museums, and Australia.

## Chapter 6: Museum Functions

### 6.1. Introduction

The lack of a clear definition of national museums in South Africa creates uncertainty about the roles that national museums should play and the Cultural Institutions Act, 1998 (Act 119 of 1998) leaves determination of the functions and roles of national museums to their Councils. The fact that the National Museums Division contemplated by the Act to advise the Minister on "matters of common interest" and a code of ethics for the declared institutions was never activated, resulted in national museums operating in isolation according to their own notions of functions and standards.

Desvallées & Mairesse (2010) noted that the Reinwardt Academie in Amsterdam recognised three core functions of the museum, namely Preservation (which includes acquisition, conservation and management of collections), Research, and Communication (which includes education and exhibitions). These functions generally apply to all museums and are accommodated in the definition of a South African museum proposed in Chapter 2 of this policy framework. .

This policy framework recognises that museums are not homogenous and that it cannot prescribe how they should execute all their functions. The NMPF nevertheless provides useful guidelines from which individual institutions can articulate values and operate in line with their missions to ensure that minimum standards are adhered to.

South African national museums currently spend the bulk of the grants received from DAC on salaries and other infrastructure costs, at the expense of the museums' core functions. The reason why museums often misplace priorities therefore needs to be critically addressed by policy directives. Museums must transcend the conventional notion of a 'frozen' core of museum functions and embrace other expressions, narratives and interpretations of the museum landscape. For instance, community museums may have a less developed collections management function and focus instead on living traditions and performances. Such museums therefore may not have the infrastructure of a conventional museum but nevertheless still manage to be of public relevance. Museum core functions must be determined by the rendered public service in line with the values and culture of South Africa. The museum transformation process has the potential to help museums redefine their functions to become community service centres for entertainment and knowledge development in addition to their core functions.

Museum research, collection management and conservation should embrace intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and the principles of safeguarding. Safeguarding focuses on ensuring the continuance of practice rather than mere documentation. In other words, safeguarding is about 'singing the song' rather than documenting the song.

Some key functions of museums as developed by ICOM (e.g. the care of cultural assets) do not require any kind of change and reconceptualisation in order to fit into the South African context. But those functions that support the increased social role of museums will need to shift to the centre in order to make museums more representative, and avoid mistakes of the past. Museums must support social integration programmes by changing collecting practices and revising narratives to attract audiences across the social spectrum.

They must continue to negotiate other territories and viewpoints, deal with new subjects such as indigenous knowledge, new phenomena such as the internet and social media, and change attitudes towards what is collected and valued, engage in appropriate social practices of representation, and work directly with local communities.

## **6.2. Preservation**

Preservation is the most important of the museum functions. It refers to the maintenance and protection of collections in perpetuity. It includes the acquisition of collections and their conservation and management.

### **6.2.1. Acquisition of Collections**

Collections acquisition is closely related to the museum's research and communications functions. Collecting practices in museums have changed considerably during the last two to three decades, reflecting the paradigm shift in the roles of museums.

In the past the focus was on tangible objects as markers of human values, world views and technology. Recently, intangible cultural heritage has become a significant addition to the collections of museums.

Museum collections are not restricted to movable tangible heritage, but also include landscapes as well as heritage features and objects preserved *in situ*. In addition, the boundaries between museums, memory and interpretive centres and archives have become more fluid.

The primary objectives of museums in the past were to build representative collections around specific themes that were regarded as permanent and inalienable. However, as these objectives shifted, new strategies were developed to address emerging issues, such as collections that remain the property of a community, collections that are shared between museums, and ephemeral collections that have a limited lifespan.

Collecting policies should address what is to be collected, how it is to be collected, and for what purpose. Collecting can be a specialist curatorial or a participative community process, and a museum should have a clear plan on how to deal with these different approaches. However, the following should be adhered to:

- The methods by which museums acquire their collections should be clearly documented.

- The ethical considerations that should be adhered to in acquiring collections should be documented.
- Policies and relevant agreements should be developed for all research-derived collections.
- Procedures for the acquisition and future use of cultural resource management-derived collections should be developed for all museums.
- Museums should set aside funds for the acquisition of relevant additional collections.
- Procedures for the acquisition of collections through donations and purchases should be clearly documented for all national museums.
- Specific funding should be made available to develop special programmes for the digitisation of all museum collections.

### **6.2.2. Deaccessioning objects**

Museums acquire objects and preserve them for posterity. Therefore, deaccessioning should be used as a last resort and under clearly defined circumstances. Deaccessioning to another museum or heritage institution should be considered as the preferable option. Complete records of the deaccessioned objects and processes should be kept and all stakeholders should be consulted or informed. This includes obtaining information from the Minister of Arts and Culture or the relevant provincial MEC in the case of nationally and provincially funded museums.

SAMA (2001) identify the following possible criteria for deaccessioning

- A lost, stolen or destroyed object
- A duplicate object
- An object that has lost its physical integrity or its authenticity or usefulness
- An object of better quality and condition has been acquired
- Inherited material which is inappropriate and serves no useful purpose in the collection, exhibition or research programmes of the museum
- When an institution is unable to continue to store and care for the object
- When the transfer of items, such as from one scientific institution to another, is in the interest of furthering research.

### **6.2.3. Management of collections**

Documentation is the management and organisation of all information relating to an institution's past and present activities. Collectively these documentary records are the written records of the museum and contain not only the facts but reflect the values of the institution. If this documentation is comprehensive and accurate, then ICOM considers the possibility that museums can establish themselves as documentation centres that gather, manage and disseminate cultural information, information which can be as important as the collections themselves. In essence this means that the records of the museum must be kept up to date, validated and stored.

Documentation processes involve:

- collecting and archiving all types of material including historical, technical, graphic and audio-visual information, and plans

- registration and inventory of the cultural assets (i.e. the collections)
- making information for the kinds of data and fields (minimally those listed in the ICOM Object ID list) available on the internet.

Aspects of documentation include:

- empirical data obtained from the work itself
- administrative data (receipts, lending contracts, transfers, disposal, etc.)
- metadata (research, publication, provenance).

#### **6.2.4. Documentation policy guidelines**

If a museum does not have a computer and/or database programmes, then all documentation must be done manually, i.e. in registers or on cards. Museums should adhere to these guidelines for their collections:

- Management and conservation plans should be developed for all collections earmarked for accessioning.
- Only collections that are relevant to the goals and mission of the museum should be accessioned.
- Adequate accession records should be kept for all collections.
- In order to improve research access to collections, museums should all use specific software that is freely available, customised and fit the needs of all collections.
- Museums should have electronic reference collections of their primary and secondary materials. If possible, digital images should be made of all collections.
- All museums should have a loans procedure to manage the loan of objects in their collections.

#### **6.2.5. Conservation**

Museums conserve cultural and natural assets so that they can be handed on to future generations. The conservation function is essential and on its own justifies the existence of museums. Conservation is of two types: preventative and remedial (restorative). Conservation refers to all practices that protect museum collections from deterioration, restore collections to a stable state or to some representation similar to its original state, and maintain them in that state.

##### **6.2.5.1. Preventative conservation**

Preventative conservation is an ongoing, integral process that affects all heritage assets. Preventative conservation generally applies measures and actions aimed at avoiding and minimising deterioration and loss of collections. Preventative conservation does not interfere with the measures and structures of the items that are being conserved and does not modify the appearance of the items (ICOM, 2008). Desvallées & Mairesse (2010) noted that preventative conservation measures and actions are carried out within the context or on the surroundings of the item or group of items.

### **6.2.5.2. Restorative conservation**

Restorative conservation includes all measures applied to collection items in order to bring them as close as possible to their original state. Restorative conservation measures are aimed at facilitating the appreciation, understanding and use of the items. Restorative conservation practices should be based on restoring the integrity of the collections as far as is possible, and should always be reversible.

### **6.2.5.3. Conservation policy guidelines**

A museum's conservation policy should outline the museum preventative and restorative conservation practices. The conservation policy should stipulate the philosophies, principles and guidelines to be applied in the care and conservation of a collection. It should describe how objects are to be managed to protect them, in perpetuity, from damage through degradation and human desire.

The conservation policy should address preventative conservation issues, including handling, storage and environmental controls (dust, pests, light, temperature and humidity, pollutants). The policy must define the criteria used to determine whether an object is conserved or restored, and requirements for objects on display. The conservation policy should be implemented through a collection management plan and procedures manual in line with ICOM standards of practice that define processes and documentation.

A key principle in museum practice is to employ preventative conservation as this will avert the need to use the restorative process. It is the preferred means of taking care of a collection and involves controlling environmental conditions (temperature, relative humidity and contamination, light intensity and quality, pest control) and the exhibition, storage, maintenance, cleaning and handling of pieces.

There are no environmental conditions for optimum relative humidity and temperature established for museum collections. Each case is different and requires an initial analysis of the environment in which the asset is housed. The general recommendation is to prevent abrupt changes. The environmental conditions refer as well to lighting, contamination and pest control.

### **6.2.5.4. Conservation procedures**

Science has added greatly to our knowledge and understanding of collections' environments, as well as to the nature, technical make-up and degradation of materials. This knowledge allows for the selection of an appropriate treatment.

The following description of the duties of managers of collections will assist to clarify both the systems required for effective conservation and the relevant issues to be covered by a museum's conservation policy:

- Provide conditions for preventative conservation in storerooms, exhibition areas and restoration areas.

- Organise museum storage systems so that the collections are sorted, accessible and in appropriate conditions for their preservation, study and exhibition.
- Inspect, assess and record the conservation needs of the collection.
- Train staff working with the collections to identify and report on items in need of conservation and/or restoration.
- Report on the condition of objects requested for temporary loan.
- Ensure that all conservation or restoration work is undertaken by a trained conservator.
- Report on conservation work undertaken and to retain such reports in the museum archive.

### **6.3. Research**

The South African government committed itself to ensuring that Research and Development expenditure is above 1% of GDP from 2008 (DST Budget Speech, 2007). Since then there has been a gradual increase in R&D expenditure as a percentage of GDP but the target has not been met. The National Research Foundation (NRF) remains the primary supporter of research in South Africa. Part of the NRF's strategy to promote research has been to grow the National System of Innovation that will ensure that South African research promotes growth and development and is responsive to national needs. To achieve this, various National Research Facilities were formed under the NRF. The NRF notes that these National Research Facilities are responsible for driving research collaboration, and provide valuable opportunities for growth in the sciences and technological fields of the country.

Research is a core museum function following preservation and is conducted with a view to increasing the general knowledge base and applied research. The requisite resources to conduct research are libraries, archives, laboratories, workshops and collections. Research programmes should be aligned to the national system of innovation.

Lack of adequate funding has threatened the future viability of museums-based research, resulting in a loss of expertise and deteriorating collections. A recent 'Audit Report on South Africa's Natural Science Collections' released by the NRF painted a very bleak future for museum collections and collections-based research.

The Department of Arts and Culture should secure funding for museological research. It is proposed in this policy that a Research and Innovation Directorate should be formed within the Department of Arts and Culture that would focus museological research in all museums, and liaise with the DST and NRF regarding funding for museums research, especially natural and human sciences research that is not funded by the DAC structures such as NAC, SAHRA, and NHC. The Research and Innovation Directorate of the DAC should directly source funds from the NRF through a joint MoU between the departments of Arts and Culture and Science and Technology.

The envisaged Research and Innovation Directorate within DAC will ensure that its institutions are equipped to contribute to the National System of Innovation effectively.

## **6.4. Dissemination and communication in museums**

The ultimate objective of communication is to take the museums to society. Museums disseminate information on their roles and knowledge derived from their collections through publications and exhibitions and through public and education programmes. Museum communication strategies may include:

- print and electronic communication media that distribute information about the collections and the objects they contain
- permanent and temporary exhibitions, public programmes and training programmes
- education and outreach programmes.

### **6.4.1. Communication linked to knowledge of collections**

This kind of communication is aimed at enriching public knowledge about the collections and their significance to the society. It is mostly driven by advances made in the study of the collections. In order to communicate effectively to the public, museums that:

- they develop catalogues and formal and informal articles for publication of research outputs on collections
- communication is aimed at both the research community and the general public.
- electronic media is used to facilitate the communication process.
- staff are encouraged to attend formal conferences and information centres to communicate their work.
- research staffs publish their work effectively (from the perspective of an NRF rating).

### **6.4.2. Communication linked to exhibition and interpretation**

Museum exhibitions are an integral part of the communication system that relies on collection-specific exhibition and role-based exhibition.

Collection-specific exhibition refers to exhibitions developed from knowledge generated through the study of museum collections. It seeks to convey information to the public and so enhance the significance of resources housed and researched by the museum.

Role-based exhibitions are exhibitions that are not necessarily based on the collections, but on the museum's role as outlined in its vision and mission in line with its institutional mandate. Museums are increasingly expected to use their expertise in developing exhibitions that address social cohesion and nation-building. In many instances the museums do not have relevant collections and/or outputs to promote such 'national imperatives' and would therefore develop these based on outside information.

In order to disseminate and communicate their role effectively, museums should develop an interpretation policy that is aligned to their mandate. The following guidelines should apply to the policy:

- The interpretation policy should identify the museum's key themes (stories) and sub-themes, and sets the standards for their communication with the public.
- The policy document should restate the museum's mission or statement of purpose, aims and objectives, and include the major themes, use of space and site, design guideline standards, resource management and evaluation. It should be subject to regular review.
- An interpretation plan should provide the practical guidelines for the implementation of the interpretation policy.
- An interpretation policy should be the umbrella under which exhibitions and other aspects of the stories are communicated.
- A display focus group should be constituted to advise on all role-based exhibitions.
- Role-based exhibitions should include community liaison.

### **6.4.3. Museum Education**

Museum education strengthens the public role of museums by communicating the development of knowledge to various levels of the learning public. Museum education provides general education to the public about the heritage materials in the museum and the roles that these materials play in the promotion of the country's heritage, and promotes knowledge through educational enrichment programmes tailored to specific audiences.

In terms of policy principles, museums should develop educational programmes that recognise that:

- Enhancing visitor understanding of the collections held by the museum requires recognition of the multiplicity and diversity of audiences.
- Public programmes lend themselves to addressing national imperatives aimed at advancing democracy, social cohesion and national identity.
- The foundation of future sustainability in audience development is the promotion of understanding and appreciation of local and national heritage in young learners.
- Transformation of the museums, and particularly the demographic profiles of staff and management, begins with promoting an interest in museums and museum work among learners.
- While there is a distinction to be made between museums and formal educational institutions, in a developing economy, museum education must directly supplement and be aligned with the education curriculum at schools.
- Relationships between museums and communities, and access to museums by communities, should be promoted.
- In order for programmes and educational content to be relevant and valuable, new communication technologies should be embraced and explored.

## Chapter 7 Implementation

### 7.1. Implementation Framework

A costing exercise will be done on the Policy. The Implementation Framework will be done in conjunction with this.

### 7.2. Summary of proposals

The policy framework aims to provide guidance in terms of the legislative and management frameworks of the museum sector. In pursuing this objective, issues relating to transformation, funding, categorisation, human resource development and demographic and geographical representivity have to be addressed. The key proposals are:

1. Transformation of the system of museum management and governance, including:
  - a new coordinating structure for national museums, operating from within DAC
  - a single governing body for all national museums, the National Council
  - a revised management structure for national museums, based on four regional clusters.
2. The amendment of existing legislation to facilitate the achievement of the above objective, including:
  - the replacement of the Cultural Institutions Act, 1996, by legislation that describes the roles and responsibilities of all museum institutions under the authority of the Department of Arts and Culture
  - the adoption in the new legislation of a general definition of a South African museum.
3. A system of categorisation of all government-aided museums as national, provincial or local museums, graded according to collections-based criteria.
4. A system of accreditation for all government-aided museums, including a ranking system based on performance standards and the establishment of implementing mechanisms.
5. The transformation and professionalisation of the museum service, including:
  - The adoption of a code of ethics for museums that sets minimum standards of professional practice and performance for museums and their staff. Museums are encouraged to adopt subsidiary policies on ethics, and are particularly urged to adopt formal policies on access.
  - Human resources development focused on improving the qualifications framework for museum work, and increasing access to jobs, skills and knowledge, through partnerships with training providers to improve access to academic training and the development of a continuing professional development programme (on-the-job training).

- A Research and Innovation Directorate formed within the Department of Arts and Culture that would focus museological research in all museums, and liaise with the DST and NRF regarding funding for museum research.
- The adoption of comprehensive formal policies for managing collections, including policies and procedures for managing documentation and conservation to acceptable performance standards, and interpretation policies, to guide the effective communication of the museum's mandate and work to the public.
- The implementation of risk management strategies. As a minimum standard, every museum should have a risk management policy, that includes a risk management strategy and implementation plan.

6. The adoption of a new funding model for national museums, based on grading and accreditation criteria.

## Chapter 8: Revisioning Museum Practice

Much has been said of transformation in this document, yet admittedly, transformation has largely been discussed within the paradigm of the existing dominant traditional model of museum practice, a model still as much in use in developing countries as it is in the European countries from which it was derived.

The transformation challenges to South African museums that have been interrogated within the scope of the NMPF may be paraphrased as the need to:

- Develop complex narratives and inclusive collections that reflect the diversity in South African society.
- Continually adapt to new trends in heritage and museum practice.
- Adapt to the opportunities and challenges presented by new technologies and social media.
- Recognise the increasing emphasis on memory in museums.
- Recognise that the borders between museums and other heritage institutions and heritage landscapes are fluid and that “acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibit” (see definition, Chapter 2) is not restricted to objects housed in a building.
- Recognise South Africa’s and Africa’s rich heritage of well-developed scientific research and indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and the roles of universal and indigenous knowledge in the study of our natural environment.

The drafting panel of this policy framework hopes that users of the NMPF will not only find this policy framework useful, but will even go beyond these issues and take up the challenge of Africanising their museum practice and exploring revolutionary and evolutionary notions such as:

- museums without walls
- museums without objects, and where 'collections' consist of memories, stories, performances, rites and rituals – activities that may be constantly evolving and are allowed to do so
- museums that communicate in indigenous languages and from indigenous perspectives
- democratising curation and design
- 'collecting' and conserving objects and practices *in situ*
- finding alternative forms of preservation and memorialisation, particularly in ways that maximise the transfer of value to beneficiary communities while minimising the cost to communities
- embracing the economic value of heritage and growing a heritage economy that creates jobs and wealth.

The transformation of the museum sector to a point where it can be said to be efficiently preserving our national heritage while contributing effectively to national development will yet take much time, effort and resources and the collective will and commitment of all museum

practitioners. It is hoped that implementation of this policy framework will hasten the moment when we can truly be said to be a country united in diversity, celebrating our heritage, together.

## Appendices

### A: Schedule of Legislation, Regulations, Conventions and Policies

**The following are laws that impact on museums and heritage in general:**

The Heraldry Act (Act 18 of 1962)

Pan African Language Board Act (Act 59 of 1995).

National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act 43 of 1996)

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act (Act 108 of 1996)

Legal Deposit Act (Act 54 of 1997)

South African Library for the Blind Act (Act 91 of 1998)

National Library of South Africa Act (Act 92 of 1998)

South African Geographical Names Council Act (Act 118 of 1998)

Cultural Institutions Act (Act 119 of 1998)

National Heritage Resources Act (Act 11 of 1999)

National Heritage Council Act (Act 25 of 1999)

National Council of Library and Information Services Act (Act 6 of 2001)

**Some of the laws that had the most direct impact on the operations of museums, and their internal operational transformation, were:**

General Laws Amendment Act (Act 62 of 1955)

Income Tax Act (Act 58 of 1962) (Section 30)

Occupational Health and Safety Act (Act 58 of 1993)

South African Qualifications Authority Act (Act 58 of 1995)

Labour Relations Act (Act 66 of 1995) (with amendments)

National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996)

National Arts Council Act (Act 56 of 1997)

The Non-Profit Organisations Act (Act 71 of 1997)

Basic Conditions of Employment Act (Act 75 of 1997)

National Research Foundation Act (Act 23 of 1998)

Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998)

Skills Development Act (Act 97 of 1998)

National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998)

Public Finance Management Act (Act 1 of 1999)

Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act 2 of 2000)

Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act 3 of 2000)

Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (Act 4 of 2000)

Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (Act 5 of 2000)

National House of Traditional Leaders Act (Act 41 of 2003)

Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework (Act 41 of 2003)

National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004)

Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (Act 13 of 2005)

Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act (Act 51 of 2008)

National Qualifications Framework Act (Act 67 of 2008)

Second-Hand Goods Act (Act 6 of 2009)

**International Conventions that impact on museums:**

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 1954. Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 1960. Recommendation concerning the Most Effective Means of Rendering Museums Accessible.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). 1970. Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). 1972. Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) of Wild Fauna and Flora, 1973.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). 1978. Statutes of the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in the case of Illicit Appropriation.

International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT). 1995. Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). 2001. Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). 2002. Memory of the World: General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). 2003. Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). 2003. Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). 2005. Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007.

## **B: Ethical Guidelines**

### **Code of Ethics**

The ICOM Code of Ethics has been endorsed by the South African Museums Association (SAMA) and provides the basic ethical standards and principles, including:

- Museums should have management systems, processes and resources to preserve, interpret and promote the natural and cultural inheritance of humanity. These include compliance with risk management frameworks, insurance requirements and security arrangements as well as sustainable financial strategies.
- Museums should employ or have access to skilled staff to collect, research, conserve and interpret collections. Museums should ensure that their staff have access to training and professional development opportunities.
- Museums hold collections in trust for society and are legally and ethically obliged to comply with accepted conventions regarding collecting and researching heritage. These include the 1970 UNESCO Convention regarding illicit trade and due diligence in acquiring collections, the 1991 UNESCO Convention on Underwater Heritage and South African legislation protecting indigenous knowledge holders.
- Owners of unprovenanced collections should not be given support, such as identification and conservation services.
- Museums holding live specimens are obliged to abide by ethics developed by zoos, aquaria and the Code of Ethics developed by the ICOM Committee for Natural History Museums.
- Museums collecting animal and plant specimens should consider environmental sustainability in determining the sample size of their collections.
- No natural history specimen should be collected for research or display that would threaten the sustainability of a species.
- Museums must provide appropriate facilities to ensure the conservation of their collections and to keep collections in trust for society in perpetuity. If collections are de-accessioned, they should be transferred to similar organisations.
- Museums should respect the rights of communities and be sensitive to the views of communities when researching collections and conducting fieldwork, as well as in how they depict cultures.
- Museums may not actively collect or exhibit human remains.
- Museums should respect traditional practices that limit access to collections.
- Museums should be aware that they exist to serve society and should, whenever possible, prioritise areas of social responsibility, community consultation and transformation.
- Museums should develop ethical guidelines for electronic media that address issues such as copyright, the unlawful reproduction and use of museum objects on the internet, and commentary on social networks and in other media.
- Museums' staff must operate in a professional manner and the code of ethics should include personal codes of conduct as well as processes to resolve conflicts of interest.

## **Code of Conduct**

A Code of Conduct should require staff to:

- Be responsible in relation to the collections.
- Be appropriately trained in care and handling procedures.
- Be aware of the conditions under which objects are exhibited.
- Be efficient and courteous to the public and colleagues.
- Exercise confidentiality about the collections.
- Know and respect the legislation and international conventions pertaining to objects (especially if they are from another culture).
- Avoid conflicts of interests and be aware of the procedures relating to private collecting of overlapping material. If a conflict develops, the interests of the museum and the collections must prevail.
- Not take advantage of privileged information because of his or her position in curation processes.
- Be aware of the regulations pertaining to the acceptance of hospitality, gifts and rewards and of the procedures to follow to avoid suspicion of corruption.

## **C: Guidelines to Broaden Access to Museums**

### **Recommended principles and guidelines regarding financial access**

- The fee structure should be clearly indicated at the site entrance to protect users against arbitrary decisions and corrupt practices.
- Differentiated fees based on age and citizenship is appropriate. However, differential fees may not be practical as most institutions charge low entrance fees.
  - Children usually do not pay admission fees or pay only a nominal fee.
  - People older than 65 years usually pay a lower fee.
  - Special fees for school groups should be considered, especially schools categorised by the Basic Department of Education as being poorly resourced (Quintile 1–3 schools).
  - Waiving fees or lowering fees should be considered for people who qualify for social grants.
  - Foreign nationals, SADC citizens and South African citizens could be charged different admission fees. The recommended ratio is 4:3:2 (foreign:SADC:SA).
  - Incentive schemes for regular visitors could be introduced.
  - Special arrangements for people with financial challenges could be introduced, such as a free day per week.

### **Recommended principles and guidelines regarding opening times**

- Opening times should be regular.
- Opening hours and services must be made known as widely as possible and, at the very least, should be displayed at the entrance.
- Opening times should include hours outside office hours, for example one or more evenings in the week and/or part of the weekend.

### **Recommended principles and guidelines regarding physical access and transport challenges**

- Museums should advertise public programmes at community centres and libraries.
- Open-air programmes and travelling museums/exhibitions in residential areas should be considered.
- Museums should consider partnerships to enable transport to museum buildings, e.g. with bus companies, donor agencies or corporate sponsors.

### **Recommended principles and guidelines regarding physical and sensory access**

- Museum managers and relevant staff should be trained in the concept and implementation of universal design.
- Guidelines on adapting historical buildings to increase access for those with mobility and sensory impairments in a South African context should be developed and training provided in the implementation thereof.

- The national and provincial departments of arts and culture, together with the National Lotteries Distribution Trust, should make funding available to enable curatorial organisations to increase access for people living with physical or sensory disabilities.

#### **Recommended principles and guidelines regarding cognitive access**

- Museum managers and relevant staff should be trained in the concept and implementation of universal design.
- Information should be provided in clear, systematic and easily understood formats, such as guide books, exhibition texts and audio phones.
- Information should be accessible on multiple intellectual levels.
- Front-of-house staff must have the necessary knowledge and skills to receive visitors.
- Tour guides and educational staff should be appropriately qualified.
- Research collections, such as archives and special collections, must employ properly qualified staff to assist the general public to access collections.
- Museums should have formal education programmes and liaise with educational facilities such as schools to ensure that information is transferred in a usable form.
- Educational programmes should make provision for people with diverse cognitive and mental abilities.
- Public programmes, including formal exhibitions, should take into account differences in people's educational backgrounds, learning styles and ways of understanding.

#### **Recommended principles and guidelines regarding linguistic access**

- Own languages should be catered for as much as possible. The ideal is mother tongue education for learners.
- All museums, whether government aided or privately owned, should provide information in the locally used languages.
- Government-aided organisations should be enabled by their governing bodies to use local languages in signage and exhibition texts.
- Information should be of high quality.
- New audio and digital technologies could be used to create broader language access.

#### **Recommended principles and guidelines regarding conservation barriers**

- Conservation restrictions should be limited to sound heritage practices and should be clearly defined in a policy that contains conservation standards as well as criteria for limiting access. This policy should be accessible to the public. No decisions may be taken on an *ad hoc* basis.
- Where access is denied for conservation reasons, digital copies or replicas should be made available.
- Historical buildings:
  - Conservation measures that prevent access to a resource have to be explained in a policy that is accessible to the public. The policy must be based on sound research and professional standards.

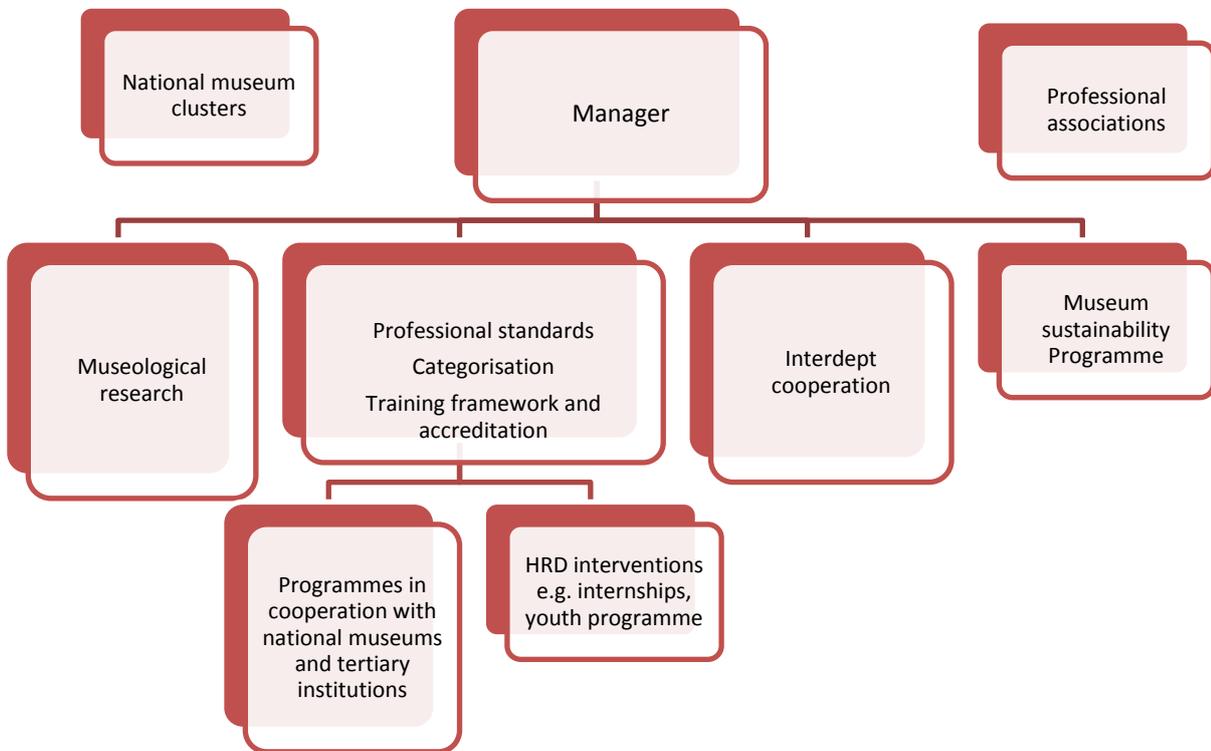
- Policy documents should address risk management and visitor management.
- Collections:
  - Special and fragile collections may only be used by researchers and the general public under supervised control.

**Recommended principles and guidelines regarding restricted access to sensitive sites, collections and practices**

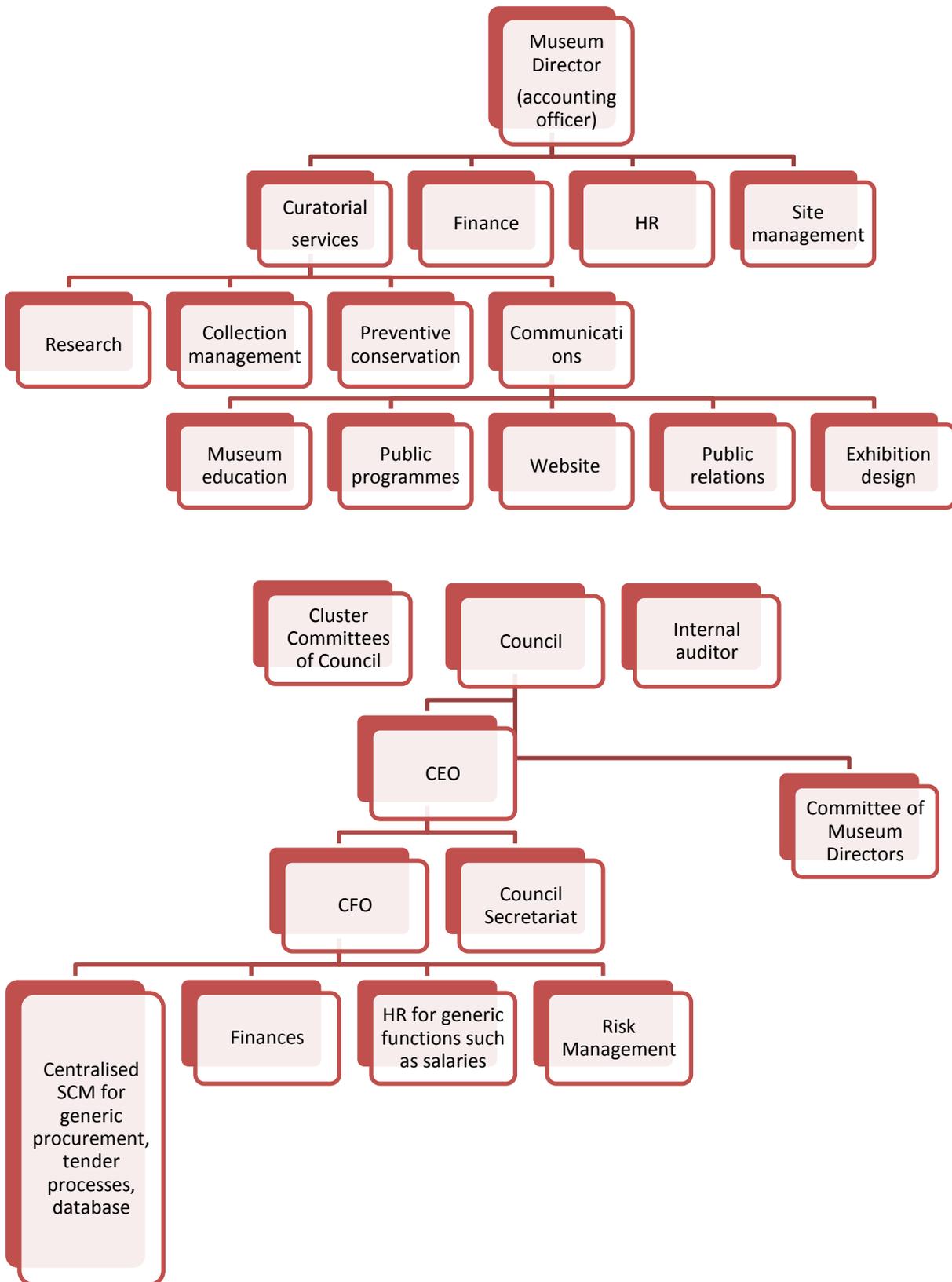
- Materials of sacred significance must be displayed in a manner consistent with professional standards, based on international conventions and recommendations and, where known, take into account the interests and beliefs of members of the source community. Affected communities should be consulted in developing an access policy to sacred sites, objects and restricted religious and cultural practices. In some cases, access could be restricted to specific communities according to the beliefs of the practising community.
- Embargoes placed on sensitive events and the life history of individuals in terms of donation conditions should be respected. However, a museum may reject donations with unreasonable embargo specifications attached.

## D. Possible Institutional Arrangements

### Centralised coordinating body



## Possible cluster organogram



## **E: Minimum Accreditation Standards**

The following are considered as minimum standards for accreditation.

### **Governance**

- A renewable governing or management body
- Founding documents (deed of trust, constitution, charter, etc. with clear indications of the history of the collections and the site)
- Some key documents such as a mission statement or description of the museum's purpose Policies (in process or complete) or plans should be provided. The minimum required is indicated below. Even in the early stages of accreditation the organisation should have a code of ethics.
- Type of museum should be indicated: e.g. where located (urban or rural); whether national, provincial, local, community, or private; whether community, specialist, heritage/ interpretation site, etc.

### **Permanence**

- Guaranteed accommodation for at least five years, preferably longer

### **Finance**

- An indication of financial planning and sustainability must be supplied for accreditation. All museums should preferably be non-profit organisations and must be geared towards benefit to the public. If a for-profit organisation or company owns the museum, the revenues raised through the museum must be used for the museum only.

### **Staff**

- Must have at least one professional staff member or one that is undergoing training.
- Training is an imperative for job creation.

### **Permanent collections**

- If a museum does not have permanent collections, it must at least have a strong lending policy.
- Provenance must be clear in order to establish authenticity.
- Type of ownership must be clear (trustees, government, private, corporate, etc.).

### **Documentation of collection**

- If the collection is not documented then the museum must have a documentation plan that makes provision for the documentation of intangible heritage as well as born-digital items.
- ICOM/AFRICOM Object ID to be used.

## **Collections management**

- Must have a collections management policy (can be work-n-progress)
- Collections must be systematically stored.
- Routine cleaning and maintenance programme
- Must be physical secure and inspected regularly for damage and pests
- Protection of stored/display items against environmental conditions and risks

## **Conservation and restoration**

- Must be able to do preventative conservation

## **Access**

- Must have an access and visitor management plan or policy
- Must have regular opening hours
- Opening hours must be advertised on front gate or at the entrance to the museum.
- Appropriate directions in the town/city to the museum
- Where access cannot be granted a strong motivation must be given.

## **Exhibitions**

- The majority of exhibitions must address issues such as nation-building, current social issues, appreciation of cultural diversity, etc.
- Exhibits must be educational and information provided in at least two local languages for objects on display.
- Communities must be demonstrably involved.
- Peer review of exhibits is important.
- Security of items on display is important.
- Exhibits must be accessible.

## **Educational programmes**

- Education plan or policy

## **Research**

- Evidence of basic research (including for exhibitions)

## **Risk management**

- Must have a risk management policy

## **Other features**

- Must have a deaccession policy
- Must conform to relevant legislation

## Glossary of Terms

**Accession** refers to an object, artwork or specimen that has been acquired by a museum and registered in a museum collection.

**Acquisition** refers to an object, artwork or specimen that has been obtained by a museum or the method whereby an object has been acquired: donated, purchased, collected, exchanged or bequeathed. It is imperative that an acquisition is accompanied by evidence of valid legal title in the form of a signed document stating source and method of acquisition.

### **Collection of human remains:**

- **Active collecting of human remains** refers to purposely acquiring human remains through excavation, purchase exchange and other means of accessioning.
- **Ethical collecting of human remains** refers firstly to human remains excavated as part of a legitimate archaeological project, and secondly to taking custody of human remains that were accidentally discovered on private or public property and/or legitimate intervention at the request of a community in areas where burial places are at risk.
- **Unethical collecting of human remains** refers to collecting human remains solely for the purposes of racial study and collecting, without appropriate consent, human remains from recent graves of individuals who were known in life, or were from known communities.

**Cultural significance** means aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance.

**De-accessioning** refers to the process whereby entries in the accession register are cancelled and items removed from the collection.

**Due diligence** is the requirement that every endeavour is made to establish the facts of a case before deciding course of action, particularly in identifying the source and history of an item offered for acquisition or use before acquiring it.

**Governing body** refers to the principal body of individuals in which rests ultimate responsibility for policy and decisions affecting the governance of the museum. Legal title to the assets of the museum may be vested in this body.

**Heritage collection** is a set of objects that forms a coherent and meaningful whole. Museums can be considered to be the institutionalisation of heritage collecting.

**Heritage crime** is defined by common law, the Second-Hand Goods Act, Act 6 of 2009 – hereafter referred to SHGA) and the NHRA (No 25 of 1999 – hereafter referred to as NHRA). According to the NHRA, it is an offence to:

- Destroy, damage, disfigure or alter any heritage object, or disperse any collection which is listed in part II of the register, without a permit issued by SAHRA – Section 32(13).
- The custodian of a heritage object, listed in part II of the register of heritage objects, must immediately report to SAHRA the loss of or damage to such a heritage object or any part thereof upon discovery of such loss or damage – Section 32(16).
- No person may carry out any work of restoration or repair of a heritage object in part II of the register of heritage objects, without a permit issued by a duly authorised representative of SAHRA – Section 32(17).
- No person may export or attempt to export from South Africa any heritage objects without a permit issued by SAHRA – Section 32(19).
- No heritage object may be removed from South Africa other than through a customs port of entry – Section 32(20).

Common law addresses incidents where heritage items are stolen, such robbery, house breaking and theft. In addition to these is the offence of knowingly receiving stolen property as defined under Section 164(1) of the Criminal Procedure Act, Act 51 of 1977. According to the General Law Amendment Act, Act 62 of 1955, General Law Amendment Act, Act 50 of 1956 and the Second-Hand Goods Act, Act 6 of 2009, museums must report to the SAPS:

- Any stolen objects that they are aware of
- Incidents, if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that someone had stolen objects in their collection/possession
- As soon as they become aware that they have a stolen object in their collection.

**Heritage objects** refer to movable heritage objects as defined in the NHRA (1999) as well as elements of artist or historical monuments or archaeological sites which have been dismembered, but exclude human remains as defined in this policy position paper.

**Human remains** refer to all forms of material or remains of anatomically modern humans, including:

- Osteological material (whole or part of skeletons, individual bones or fragments of bones, teeth)
- Soft tissue including organs, skin, hair, nail, etc. (preserved or waxed or dried/mummified)
- Slide preparations of human tissue
- Artefacts made wholly or largely from any of the above.

Human remains excludes fossils and sub-fossils.

**Intangible Cultural Heritage** The 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage defines intangible cultural heritage as: "... the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment,

their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.”

**Movable heritage objects** are defined in the NHRA (Act 25 of 1999) as:

- Objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa, including archaeological and palaeontological objects and material, meteorites and rare geological specimens
- Objects to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage
- Ethnographic art and objects
- Military objects
- Objects of decorative or fine art
- Objects of scientific or technological interest
- Books, records, documents, photographic positives and negatives, graphic, film or video material or sound recordings, excluding those that are public records as defined in Section 1 (xiv) of the National Archives of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act 43 of 1996)

**Museum workers** include all people working on a regular basis in museums, or for organisations that support, advise or provide services to museums, whether paid or unpaid, whether full-time or part-time and whether they have a formal contract of employment or not.

**National collection** is defined as a collection that is of unique or outstanding cultural or scientific significance to the nation and contributes to national identity

**National museum** is defined as a museum that predominantly consists of national collections

**Non-profit organisation** is a legally established body whose income (including any surplus or profit) is used solely for the benefit of that body and its operations.

**Provenance** refers to the full history and ownership of an object or specimen from the time of its discovery or creation to the present day, through which authenticity and ownership can be determined.

**Repatriation** refers to the return of human remains to their country, source community or place of origin. It is differentiated from restitution that refers to the return of heritage objects.

**Restitution** refers to the return of heritage objects, as defined in NHRA (Act 25 of 1999) to their country or place of origin.

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