



South African Museums Association  
Professional Standards and  
Transformation Indicators



A project of the Transformation Training Programme funded  
by the Department of Arts and Culture

Copyright © 2006  
South African Museums Association (SAMA)

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted  
in any form or by any means without prior permission of the publisher.

ISBN 0-9585067-1-X

Published by  
South African Museums Association  
PO Box 2859  
PORT ALFRED  
6170  
South Africa

# Contents

Introduction.....	1
SECTION I	
Professional Standards and Transformation Indicators .....	4
Governance and museum management .....	4
Collections management .....	6
Public programmes and visitor services .....	12
Facilities.....	14
SECTION II	
Policy framework for museums.....	16
SECTION III	
Legislation.....	18
SECTION IV	
Glossary.....	21
References .....	27

## Introduction

One of the hallmarks of a profession is that it sets standards for its service to society. SAMA embarked on this process in the 1970s through a system of accreditation. In 1989 B.C. Wilmot and W. Holleman produced the *Professional Standards: Accreditation Handbook for Southern African Museums* together with questionnaires which would assist the evaluation panel to assess museums for accreditation. Few museums applied for accreditation and even fewer achieved it. Although the authors stressed that these were minimum standards, museums, particularly the long established national and larger provincial museums, could not meet the requirements. So it was decided in 1993 to introduce grading whereby 45 basic standards were set for a Grade 4 museum, and museums could aspire to Grade 1 status by meeting approximately 160 standards in a step-by-step process. Only one museum met all the minimum standards and was awarded Grade 1 Status in 1994.

These early attempts at setting standards were aimed mainly at collections management as the concern then was for the preservation of collections. With the birth of a new and democratic South Africa in 1994, SAMA's Accreditation Committee started to broaden the scope of the minimum standards to incorporate museum libraries and research and to place a greater emphasis on public services, equity and multi-culturalism. The *Accreditation Handbooks* compiled by M. Briedenhann and E. A. Voigt were launched in 1996.

Only one museum has been accredited since 1996. In all cases accreditation has fallen away because the museums did not seek review of their status, which was a necessary part of the scheme. Members agreed that the scheme was worthwhile, but there was no motivation for museums to meet standards. Further complaints were that the process of assessment was laborious, expensive, complicated and that the standards were too high.

# 1

## The TTP and professionals standards

In April 2004 SAMA was awarded a grant of R5 million by DAC for training to facilitate the transformation of our museums. The Transformation Training Programme that followed from this incorporates several sub-programmes and projects.

Foremost among the TTP projects is the project on Professional Standards and Transformation Indicators since it informs other projects. The aims of the project are:

- to compile minimum professional standards which meet the needs of South African museums;
- to compile transformation indicators to enable transformation in museums within a broad context;
- to revise the accreditation process;

- to provide training for new museum and heritage sector professionals;
- to strive for all South African museums and other heritage institutions to meet the minimum professional standards within 10 – 15 years.

Standards are the foundation of museum professionalism and are accepted requirements for responsible operation and best performance. They inform us of the many different factors we must be aware of in order to fulfil our obligation as custodians and service providers in the heritage sector. Established standards also ensure a uniform system of delivery among museum and heritage workers which can be evaluated for the accreditation of museums. Most importantly, a set of professional standards forms an indispensable tool for training and re-training. For this reason the project on Professional Standards and Transformation Indicators underwrites transformation of our museums and was given priority in the TTP.

### **The process**

The Professional Standards and Transformation Project under leadership of Henriette Ridley was launched in November 2004 with a training workshop for the regional facilitators from each of the SAMA Branches and facilitated by R. M. Tietz. The aim of the workshop was to ensure a common understanding among facilitators of the principles that define professional standards and transformation in museums as essential to render an optimal museum service to the people of South Africa.

Thereafter workshops were organized by SAMA Eastern Cape, SAMA North, SAMA KZN and SAMA Western Cape to consult with a wide range of people representing the demographics and gender realities of each region as well as all aspects of museum work; trustees, experienced professionals, new recruits and people not yet formally associated with museums or the heritage sector.

Reports from these workshops containing regional proposals for minimum professional standards as well as the indicators of transformation in the museum / heritage sector were then considered by a National Working Group who met in Pietermaritzburg from 4 – 8 April 2004 and who compiled a *Draft Document on Professional Standards and Transformation Indicators* which was circulated to SAMA members by e-mail and also tabled for discussion at SAMA's 68<sup>th</sup> AGM and Conference in Bloemfontein on 26 May 2005.

While membership applauded the steps that had been taken and the guidelines for best practice that had been compiled, they believed that as it stood the standards were not attainable by the majority of museums and that transformation indicators were not sufficiently emphasised. The National Working Group was tasked to review their document and to produce a more accessible one.

This document represents the result of deliberations of the National Working group during meetings held in Port Elizabeth from 12 – 14 July. In this second draft inspired by the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Accreditation Scheme for museums in the United Kingdom, the professional standards and transformation indicators are grouped in four performance areas namely: governance and museum management, collections management, facilities and public programmes and visitor services.

There is no doubt that evaluation or accreditation of heritage institutions against professional standards has benefited museums and the incorporation of transformation indicators has distinct advantages in that:

- The general standard of collections management and services to the public will be raised.
- Standards and indicators assist governing bodies and stakeholders in setting policies, drawing up strategies and planning work programmes.
- Public confidence in museums will be restored.
- Efficient and effective service delivery in non-profit institutions attracts partnerships and sponsorships.
- Standards and indicators provide an outline guide to training needs within in each institution.

It is hoped that this document will assist and guide our museums in achieving these goals.

### **The SAMA National Working Group**

Project Manager :	Henriette Ridley
SAMA Eastern Cape:	Fezile Cindi (regional facilitator) Fleur Way-Jones Zandisile Sakata
SAMA KwaZulu-Natal:	Estelle Liebenberg-Barkhuizen (regional facilitator) Rikki Abbott Luthando Maphasa (alternate Peter Croeser)
SAMA North:	Allan Sinclair (regional facilitator) Comfort Makakaba Ishmael Mbhokodo
SAMA Western Cape:	Caroline Wintein (regional facilitator) Michael Jonas Sipho Ndabambi
Scribe:	R. M. Tietz

## SECTION I

### Professional Standards and Transformation Indicators

SAMA's professional standards and transformation indicators are presented in the four main spheres of museum operation: governance and museum management, collections management, public programmes and visitor services and facilities. In addition to the core standards, which *define* a museum, there are additional standards that may not be applicable to all museums. The core standards should be regarded as basic standards to be met by all museums regardless of their source of funding (state or privately owned), specialization, status, range of collections or staff establishment.

Performance is measured by inspection, comparing the standard against what exists on the ground and relies on consistent, honest and accurate records which feature in minutes of proceedings, published policies, reports and financial statements. Comments, interviews, independent media reviews and press appearances are also a measurement of the museum's success. Transformation as a process will be assessed continuously over a period and will not be finite. Setting goals with time frames will be up to each museum.

#### Governance and museum management

The will to improve service delivery to the public and to achieve institutional transformation stems from the governing body. In this category standards and indicators have been designed with due regard to the following values:

- Access:** All individuals and groups have the right of access to the museum and its services.
- Accountability:** Transparent proceedings, responsible reporting and performance evaluation which are open to public scrutiny.
- Diversity:** Equal recognition and acknowledgement of all groups in our multi-cultural society together with a commitment to gender sensitivity which is reflected in every aspect of museum operations, staffing and programmes.
- Participation:** People-centred focus through the representation of civil society on governing structures and community involvement through extensive consultation, cooperation and coordination.
- Quality:** Striving for excellence in creating experiences and providing services that meet expectations and give value for money, and which derive from ethical practice and adherence to professional standards.

Along with the commitment to preserve for posterity the collections in a museum's care, these values should be reflected in the policies and programmes of the institution. The responsibility for wise use and fair and equitable allocation of resources in our multi-cultural society rests firmly with the governing body and management.

A foremost responsibility of the governing body is to ensure that in its operation the institution complies with all national and provincial legislation, local regulations, and with international laws and conventions. A list of some relevant legislation is found in Section III of this document.

## **1. Core standards: governance and museum management**

- 1.1 Responsibility for the museum is vested in a formally constituted, autonomous governing body<sup>1</sup>, whose purpose it is to ensure the continued sustainability of the museum
- 1.2 As representatives of museum stakeholders, members of governing bodies should be appointed in a transparent manner to represent diverse backgrounds and provide a range of competencies<sup>2</sup> to best serve the interests of the museum.
- 1.3 The governing body of the museum must have written vision and mission statements.
- 1.4 The governing body must prepare and disseminate for public scrutiny annual reports and financial statements, as well as the strategic plan of the institution.
- 1.5 The governing body in consultation with relevant stakeholders<sup>3</sup>, is responsible for developing and approving policies, in compliance with the relevant legislation, as detailed in section III of this document.
- 1.6 The published policies, practices and services of the museum must reveal its commitment to the ICOM / SAMA Code of Ethics, and the Code of Ethics should be the foundation on which induction training for members of the governing body and staff is based.
- 1.7 The constitution of the museum must include a dissolution clause that makes provision for the disposal of the collections and other assets in the event of closure of the museum.

---

### Footnote

1. The Governing Body may be a Board of Trustees, Museum Council, Management Committee or, in municipal museums, the Municipal Council.
2. Skills, expertise and experience in strategic management; the legal, financial and education sectors; fundraising and advocacy are required in a governing body.
3. Stakeholders include members, "Friends", subscribers, donors, sponsors, partners, educators and learners, the funding authority, volunteers and any person or body in a regular relationship with the museum / institution.

- 1.8 The museum must make provision for public liability claims and also to carry general insurance unless the risk is carried by the state.
- 1.9 Operations management of the museum is vested in the executive head of the museum who will also be an *ex officio* member of the governing body.
- 1.10 Every museum must have a disaster plan (including evacuation procedures).
- 1.11 The governing body must develop and implement a skills development programme for its staff and volunteers.
- 1.12 The governing body should facilitate access to opportunities and support staff wishing to further their academic qualifications.

### **Additional standards**

The following standards based on transformation principles do not necessarily apply to all museums but, if applicable, should be used as guidelines for best practice.

- 1.13 The title deeds to properties in which a museum is housed should be vested in the governing body unless it is the property of the state or funding authority; alternatively there must be a sufficiently long-term contract to ensure stability for the collections.
- 1.14 The museum should pursue partnerships with other institutions and stakeholders in order to enhance its sustainability and ability to deliver appropriate services.

### **Collections management**

The acquisition and conservation of permanent collections sets museums apart from any other institution. The nature and scope of collections define the exhibitions that can be mounted, the services that are offered, the research that is undertaken and the skills required to manage them. As such, collections management is a key factor in institutional transformation and is underpinned by practically all the transformation values. It is through collections that museums can address issues of accountability, diversity and inclusiveness, redress imbalances of the past and promote a sense of identity and ownership of heritage.

No less important are matters of access to the information associated with collections and participation by stakeholders in developing collections through representation on governing bodies and/or acquisition panels. Ethical practice that manifests in honest dealings with the public, accuracy of information recorded in documentation, and objectivity in prioritizing research projects that relate to users and potential users is absolutely essential. The twin goals of reconciliation and nation-building are attainable through wise collecting to foster appreciation of a shared South African heritage and identity.

## **2. Core standards: collections management**

- 2.1 All museums must have an acquisitions and disposal policy in line with applicable legislation and/or policy, the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums and SAMA's De-accessioning Guidelines (2001). This policy must detail themes of collections and the rules regarding exchanges and transfers between institutions. Procedures and conditions for acquisitions, including donations, loans and exchanges must also be stated in the policy.
- 2.2 An accessions register must be kept and maintained detailing all objects, including their locations, for which the museum is legally responsible.
- 2.3 All objects in a museum must be assigned a unique accession number and permanently marked with this number (or attached to it) without defacing the object in such a way as to be traceable to the accession record.
- 2.4 Incoming and outgoing loans can significantly increase access to collections but must be documented and controlled in the same manner as permanent collections. A separate loan register must be kept and maintained as a permanent record.
- 2.5 Collections must be safely and systematically stored in a suitably secure and stable environment.
- 2.6 Only staff (and volunteers) with the appropriate knowledge and skills to handle, clean or conserve collections may do so.
- 2.7 Museums must dedicate resources annually to the care and maintenance of its collections and demonstrate the means to ensure the long-term physical safety of objects, whether on display or in the collection storerooms.
- 2.8 There must be evidence of research on the museum's collections and a permanent record of research by staff and external researchers relating to the museum's collection must be kept.
- 2.9 Museums need to have a strategy and the means to undertake research projects that are relevant to the needs of the museum and its community and that will enhance its public programmes and services to the public.
- 2.10 In addition to collections research, primary/basic research, oral history research and research into indigenous knowledge systems must be encouraged, especially where this new knowledge is able to improve and expand interpretations of the collections.
- 2.11 Museums must report on new accessions, de-accessions and the state of their collections in their annual report.

## Additional standards

- 2.12 If ownership of the collections is not vested in the governing body of the museum through legislation or through articles of association, prospective sponsors and donors should be informed of the legal status of the collections.
- 2.13 Museums should maintain records of its own institutional history, including newspaper and magazine clippings.
- 2.14 The handling and display of culturally and intellectually sensitive material, e.g. human remains, sacred or religious objects, should be guided by legislation and informed policy.

## Notes on collections management standards

- 2.15 Acquisition and de-accessioning
  - 2.15.1 Guidelines describing the terms and conditions under which donations are accepted or refused must be in place and a register of donations must be maintained together with associated documents, including receipt, signed by the donor, for each object.
  - 2.15.2 Museums should seek to consolidate their themes in a meaningful way so as to reduce repetition as well as competition for scarce collections. However, change should be encouraged when appropriate.
- 2.16 Documentation
  - 2.16.1 Museums require a systematic, efficient and consistent system for recording information about each object in its collection. Basic documentation would be a permanent, hand-written, unalterable record of each object in a bound accessions register with numbered pages. Any alterations made to this register must be signed by the person making the alteration and the reason for the alteration noted. Under no circumstances may the original entry be obliterated from the record.
  - 2.16.2 Every object acquired by the museum is given a unique accession number and the details pertaining to that object are recorded against that number in the accessions register.
  - 2.16.3 The information recorded should include at least the date of receipt, name of / (what is) the object and a physical description, donor/person from whom acquired, provenance and price if applicable.
  - 2.16.4 The documentation of collections, whether manual or electronic, must be modelled on the *Standards for Documenting African Collections* developed by AFRICOM (ICOM, 1996).

- 2.16.5 Library collections must be documented according to international standards of library documentation, e.g. the Dewey Decimal Classification System.
  - 2.16.6 Accession data may be stored in an electronic database as specified by the standards. Printouts may replace a handwritten register provided that they are suitably bound with numbered pages and each page initialled by the responsible staff member.
  - 2.16.7 Groups of systematically arranged, labelled collections of invertebrates sharing the same provenance may be allocated the same accession number.
  - 2.16.8 In the case of archaeological collections, a single accession number may be allocated to a collection of artefacts from one site, level or excavation.
  - 2.16.9 The accessions register must be kept in a fireproof safe when not in use.
  - 2.16.10 There must be two back-up copies of the accessions register, one of which can be used as a working copy. Alterations and cross references may be added in the same manner as for a handwritten accessions register. The other copy, whether an electronic copy or printout, should be stored off the premises in a secure safe. Safety deposit at a bank is recommended.
  - 2.16.11 A permanent register of type-specimens in natural science museums must be kept in addition to the accessions register.
  - 2.16.12 Materials used in the documentation of collections must meet archival standards, e.g. permanent ink, acid-free paper and cards, and archival compact disks.
  - 2.16.13 The recording and documentation of intangible heritage (i.e. traditional or indigenous knowledge) must accord with copyright and intellectual property laws and other relevant legislation.
  - 2.16.14 The movement of collection items, whether it be from storage to exhibition, or research or conservation treatment, forms part of the permanent record of each object in the collection, along with the date and reason for the movement.
  - 2.16.15 Documentation protocols should be subject to an annual audit.
- 2.17 Loans
- 2.17.1 Loans are made only to museums and institutions sharing the same values as museums, not to individuals.

- 2.17.2 Loans must be strictly controlled and a formal loan agreement must be drawn up and signed, in the presence of witnesses, by the responsible officer and the executive head of the museum, as well as the borrower or lender. Updates and extensions should also be formalised in this way. One copy of the loan agreement accompanies the object(s) on loan and must be returned with the loan. The original remains with the lending institution to be retained and bound as a permanent record.
- 2.17.3 It is the prerogative of the lending institution to set standards for the environment and security of objects on loan and to inspect those objects from time to time or insist on a condition report at any time.
- 2.17.4 The loan register should be audited annually.

## 2.18 Conservation

- 2.18.1 Everyone who works in a museum, from the chief executive officer to relief volunteers, must be trained in the fundamentals of preventive conservation. Only staff and volunteers with the necessary knowledge and skills may handle collections.
- 2.18.2 Only staff and consultants with the appropriate specialist skills may conserve or restore a museum object.
- 2.18.3 The decision to undertake radical interventive conservation of a museum object must be guided by policy that is informed by the SAMA Code of Ethics for Conservators.
- 2.18.4 The conservation record, both written and illustrative, forms part of the permanent record of each object in the collection.
- 2.18.5 All museums must have, or have access to, a quarantine facility and all objects must be declared pest-free by a conservator or specialist consultant before being integrated into the collection.

## 2.19 Collections

- 2.19.1 Access to stored collections must be appropriately risk managed.
- 2.19.2 It is not desirable for a permanent work station to be located in a collection store. Separate well-ventilated space should be set aside for a laboratory.
- 2.19.3 Type-specimens must be easily identifiable and, along with special collections of rare, valuable, fragile and sensitive material, must be stored separately in a high security facility.

- 2.19.4 It may be necessary to limit access to special collections, e.g. culturally sensitive material, but this should be guided by informed policy.
- 2.19.5 A routine cleaning and maintenance programme of the stored collections must be developed and implemented to keep collections free of particulate and gaseous pollution, rodents and insect infestation. The cleaning and maintenance programme should make provision for compliance testing and should be subject to an annual audit.
- 2.19.6 Storage facilities for museum collections must meet the following minimum standards:
- Collections must be protected from all heat sources, sunlight and ultra-violet (UV) radiation; generally all sources of UV radiation exceeding 10 micro-watts/lumen or 200 lux must be blocked or screened. The accepted lighting levels for the various categories of material must be observed.
  - There must be some measure of climate control with regard to temperature or humidity in order for daily fluctuations to be minimised. A recommended average would be  $\pm 20^{\circ}\text{C}$  and 50-55% RH.
  - Monitoring and recording of environmental conditions in stores is essential. The registers or recording charts on which this information is recorded must be retained and available for reference and inspection.
  - Collections must be stored using the appropriate support or packaging method in order to protect the various categories of material.
- 2.20 Exhibited collections
- 2.20.1 The same protocols relating to heat sources, sunlight, and ultra-violet (UV) radiation, climate control, monitoring and recording of environmental conditions and materials used to support and/or contain collections that apply to collections in storage, apply to collections on exhibition.
- 2.20.2 It may sometimes be necessary to use facsimile copies or replicas of environmentally sensitive materials in exhibitions, e.g. photographs, books, documents and textiles. Wherever facsimile copies or replicas have been used in an exhibition as a substitute for the genuine item, this must be made known to the public.
- 2.21 Collections used for research
- 2.21.1 It is advisable to scan or copy rare, fragile and special items that are in demand for research purposes in order to prolong their life.

2.21.2 References and photographs of objects in monographs journals and academic papers should form part of the permanent record of each object in the collection.

2.22 Collections of live animals

2.22.1 If live animals are kept in museums, whether for scientific, educational or cultural programmes or for live performances, the ethical and professional standards relating to zoos and aquaria in South Africa must apply.

### **Public programmes and visitor services**

A professional institution is judged by the range, quality and courtesy with which its stated services are delivered to the public. A museum's services are twofold: there is an internal focus on collections – their acquisition and preservation for this and future generations; and an external customer-centred focus on disseminating information about the collections and their context. These services are multifarious: permanent, temporary and travelling exhibitions, formal and informal education services to diverse groups of all ages, outreach programmes to communities who by force of circumstance are unable to visit the museum or who do not visit the museum, popular and scholarly publications, research services and access, including use of a library or archive and information about the collections. Some museums even undertake consultancy services, e.g. environmental impact assessments and technical services, e.g. conservation work. Some of the leading national museums also offer training and skills development in the heritage sector through programmes for staff and volunteers as well as learnerships and internships at post-graduate level.

Dissemination of information to as wide an audience as possible is an essential function of a museum. People-oriented museum services aim to provide opportunities for life-long learning as well as developing physical infrastructure around which community life can be nurtured.

In transforming the public programmes and services at museums the basic standards and transformation indicators in this category concern:

- Equitable and universal access with special attention given to reaching and developing new audiences, notably the historically disadvantaged.
- Participation through consultation with a diverse range of users and potential users to ensure that the services provided meet their needs.
- Inclusiveness through multi-cultural approaches, multi-lingual programmes and diversification of resources.
- Empowerment of staff to provide an efficient and effective service and to respond to change.

### **3. Core standards: services**

- 3.1 Museums must be open to the public and opening hours and services offered must be made known as widely as possible.
- 3.2 Front-of-house staff must have the necessary knowledge and skills to receive visitors.
- 3.3 Museums must consult with a diverse range of users and potential users to ensure that the programmes and services offered are responsive to their needs.
- 3.4 A programme of developing, upgrading and evaluating permanent exhibitions should be initiated in consultation with relevant stakeholders. A maintenance programme for exhibitions should be in place to ensure quality and safety.
- 3.5 An active programme of temporary and travelling exhibitions, talks, demonstrations and special events must be developed to appeal to diverse audiences.
- 3.6 Museums must provide various means for visitors to understand and interpret the exhibitions on display, be it in written, audio or video format or through personal presentations.
- 3.7 Text, labels and audio guides must be available in the languages of the region.
- 3.8 Guided tours of the museum must be available on request.
- 3.9 Basic reference material relating to the collections, exhibitions and local heritage where appropriate must be available to visitors and users of the museum.
- 3.10 Information provided to the public must be based on sound research methodologies.
- 3.11 Museums should seek to explore both indigenous knowledge systems and Western scientific knowledge.
- 3.12 Museums must actively seek feedback from their visitors and users and critically assess their programmes on a regular basis.
- 3.13 Museums must, in consultation with local schools, provide both formal and informal education services to learners. Museums should also be able to provide an ongoing service to educators wishing to use the museum as a learning resource.
- 3.14 Both formal and non-formal programmes offering opportunities for learning and personal development should form part of a museum's regular bundle of services. These programmes should be targeted at, amongst others, out of school youth, the elderly and especially those previously denied access to museum services.
- 3.15 Museums must develop outreach programmes to take their collections and programmes to communities who are unable to visit the museum.

- 3.16 Museums should have a marketing and communication strategy that aims to grow and diversify its audience.

### **Additional standards**

- 3.17 The ideal is mother tongue education services to learners
- 3.18 Museums should actively engage in organising or facilitating the transfer of museological and heritage knowledge and skills to the broader community where the acquisition of this knowledge can contribute towards job creation and economic development.
- 3.19 Guidelines formulated by the South African Heritage Resources Agency must apply in regard to the display of and requests for the removal of human remains and material of sacred significance from exhibitions.

### **Facilities**

The facilities of an institution as well as its physical location have an enormous impact on service delivery. The overriding values in this category are universal access, the health and safety of visitors and staff, as well as a suitably safe environment for collections, of which museums are the declared custodians.

The standards and indicators are directed at the physical needs of staff and users. Emphasis is placed on the provision of accommodation suitable for the functions of the institution and for the provision of educational programmes to all members of the community. Buildings should be regularly inspected and properly maintained and signage should be meaningful to all.

## **4. Core standards: facilities**

- 4.1 The facilities in which a museum is housed must above all, provide a secure environment for the collections both exhibited and stored, suitable space for core activities like collections care, and inviting spaces for educational and other public programmes.
- 4.2 It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure access to the museum premises and to maintain those premises so that they are safe for visitors, exhibitions and collections.
- 4.3 Functions should not be held in exhibition areas and in house museums unless the safety and security of all objects can be assured.
- 4.5 Public areas must be kept clean and hygienic.
- 4.6 Public seating must be provided.
- 4.7 Clean drinking water must be provided.

- 4.8 Public toilets must be provided and kept clean.
- 4.9 Public indemnity notices and warning signs in the official languages of the region must be clearly displayed.
- 4.10 The museum must be sensitive to the special needs of visitors and the governing body must ensure that the physical infrastructure complies with the legal requirements for access for the disabled.

#### **Additional standards**

- 4.11 Museums are encouraged to provide facilities to community organisations for meetings, lectures or other events consistent with the purpose of the museum, provided that adequate security is maintained.
- 4.12 Trade or any other commercial activity taking place in a museum must support the purpose of the museum and all funds raised through such activities must be used to further the aims and objectives of the museum.
- 4.13 Museums may not sell products which incorporate parts of any endangered species, or have been illegally obtained or items which have been disposed of from museum collections.
- 4.14 Museum coffee shops, restaurants and other such facilities where food is handled and served must comply with relevant local, provincial and national legislation regarding health, hygiene and safety.
- 4.15 Facilities where food is prepared or served must be adequately isolated with separate ventilation from the collections to prevent pollution, contamination or degradation of museum objects.

## **SECTION II**

### **Policy framework for museums**

In order to implement the Professional Standards and Transformation Indicators effectively, museums would need to build strategies to achieve these standards into their business and operational plans as well as developing their own policies on a number of key issues. An outline of the kinds of policies that may be required to lead museums towards transformation and service excellence follow.

#### **Governance and museum management**

Vision

Language

Access policy

- Opening hours
- Admission charges

Financial policy

- Income generation (including product development/merchandising)
- Investment
- Procurement with due regard for Black Economic Empowerment
- Consultants and contractors
- Partnerships and sponsors

Human resource policy (covering staffing structure, recruitment, conditions of service, disciplinary and grievance policy, career development, termination)

- Institutional rules and regulations
- Training and skills development
- Volunteers
- Students/interns/learnerships

Marketing and public relations

#### **Collections management**

Collections

- Acquisition and collecting - themes, scope, quality
- De-accessioning and disposal
- Contracts (donations, loans and transfers)
- Documentation (documentation system and data standard)
- Conservation (preventative conservation programmes)
- Access to collections (security and confidentiality)
- Loans
- Replication and copyright

#### Research

- Basic and applied research programmes
- Oral history research
- Indigenous knowledge systems and intangible heritage
- Research papers and publications

#### Library

- Acquisitions
- Information storage and retrieval system
- Access to staff and public
- Loans

#### **Public programmes and visitor services**

- Museum members, subscribers or “Friends”
- Audience research, identifying new audiences
- Media relations

#### Exhibitions

- Long term exhibitions - themes, programme for renewal
- Temporary/special exhibitions
- Travelling exhibitions - programme, production criteria
- Audiences - intellectual access

#### Education and outreach services

- Target audiences/s
- Programmes (formal and non-formal education)

#### Research

- Enquiry service
- Publications

#### **Facilities**

- Capital projects
- Maintenance of premises and equipment
- Universal access
- Leases and contracts
- Institutional health and safety

## **SECTION III**

### **Legislation**

The legal framework in which museums operate:

#### **International law**

UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. The Hague Convention, First Protocol, 1954 and Second Protocol, 1999

UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, 1970

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, 1993

UN Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992

Unidroit Convention on Stolen and Illegally Exported Cultural Objects, 1995

UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, 2001

UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003

#### **SA National Standards**

##### **South African law**

##### **Arms and weapons**

Firearms Control Act, Act No. 60 of 2000 and Regulations

Firearms Control Amendment Act, Act No.43 of 2003 and Regulations

Zoo and aquarium practice, SANS 10379:2005

##### **Arts and culture**

Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities Act, Act No. 19 of 2002

Copyright Act, Act No. 78 of 1978

Copyright Amendment Bill (B93-2000)

Cultural Institutions Act, Act No. 119 of 1998

Cultural Promotions Act, Act No. 35 of 1983

National Archives of South Africa Act, Act No. 43 of 1996

National Arts Council Act, Act No. 56 of 1997

National Council for Library and Information Service Act, Act No. 6 of 2001

National Heritage Council Act, Act No. 11 of 1999

National Heritage Resources Act, Act No. 25 of 1999  
Pan South African Language Board Act, Act No. 59 of 1995  
Public Holidays Act, Act No. 36 of 1994  
South African Geographical Names Act, Act No. 118 of 1998  
The South African World Heritage Convention Act, Act No. 49 of 1999 (and provincial regulations)  
Cape of Good Hope (Province) Museums Ordinance, Ordinance No. 8 of 1975  
Eastern Cape Museums Act, Act No. 7 of 2004 (EC)

#### **Constitutional matters**

Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities Act, Act No. 19 of 2002  
Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996 amended  
Promotion of Access to Information Act, Act No. 2 of 2000 and regulations  
Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, Act No. 3 of 2000  
Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, Act No. 4 of 2000  
Protected Disclosure Act, Act No. 26 of 2000

#### **Education**

National Education Policy Act, Act No. 27 of 1996  
South African Council for Educators Act, Act No. 31 of 2000  
South African Schools Act, Act No. 84 of 1996

# 19

#### **Environment**

National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998 as amended  
National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, Act No. 10 of 2004  
National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act No. 57 of 2003 as amended and regulations  
World Heritage Convention Act, Act No. 49 of 1999

#### **Finance**

Financial Intelligence Centre Act, Act No. 38 of 2001  
Pension Funds Act, Act No. 24 of 1956  
Public Finance Management Act, Act No. 1 of 1999 as amended and regulations  
Municipal Finance Management Act, Act No. 56 of 2003

**Health**

National Health Act, Act No. 61 of 2003

**Labour**

Basic Conditions of Employment Act, Act No. 75 of 1997 as amended and regulations

Compensation for Occupation Injuries and Diseases Act, Act No. 130 of 1993

Employment Equity Act, Act No. 55 of 1998 and regulations

Labour Relations Act, Act No. 66 of 1995 as amended

Occupational Health and Safety Act, Act No. 85 of 1993 and regulations

Promotion and Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, Act No. 4 of 2000

Skills Development Act, Act No. 97 of 1998 as amended and regulations

Skills Development Levies Act, Act No. 9 of 1999

Unemployment Insurance Act, Act No. 63 of 2001 as amended

Unemployment Insurance Contributions Act, Act No. 4 of 2002

Workmen's Compensation Act, Act No. 30 of 1941

**Property**

National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act No. 103 of 1977

**Public Service**

Public Service Regulations, R1 of 5 January 2001

Public Service Act, Proclamation 103 of 1994

## SECTION IV

### Glossary

This glossary includes a selection of words from the current document that may need explanation. It is by no means a definitive dictionary of museology.

**AFRICOM** : International Council of African Museums, a regional committee of ICOM (*qv*).

**Access** : Availability to the public of a museum, its staff, displays and its collections and associated information.

**Accession register** : The permanent un-alterable record of all items in the museum collections listed in serial order in a securely bound paginated book.

**Accession** : An object, artwork or specimen that has been acquired by a museum and registered in a museum collection.

**Acquisition** : An artifact, 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 be accompanied by evidence of valid legal title in the form of a signed document stating source and method of acquisition.

**Advisory board** : A committee appointed by the governing body (*qv*) to advise it on the operation of a museum. An advisory board is not the controlling body.

21

**Alienation** : The process whereby an entry in the accession register is cancelled, followed by disposal of the relevant item in the collection. Also termed de-accessioning.

**Audience** : Museum visitors, clients or users.

**Board of trustees** : The body legally responsible and accountable for setting policy and conducting the affairs of the museum.

**CEO** : See Chief Executive Officer.

**CFO** : See Chief Financial Officer.

**Chief Executive Officer** : The executive head of the museum or chief professional in charge of the museum who may have the title Director, Curator, Accounting Officer, Manager or Secretary.

**Chief Financial Officer** : The person responsible for the day-to-day finances of the museum who may be titled Administrative Officer, Administration Clerk, Bookkeeper or State Accountant.

**Collection** : May be the act of collecting, or will refer to the assemblage of things, artifacts, specimens and records which have been accessioned (qv) and documented by museum staff. Also see Documentation.

**Community** : Groups of people who have, or feel they have something in common. The museum community would comprise trustees, staff, friends, volunteers, donors, sponsors and even visitors. A community may be all the people in a geographical area which may overlap with other communities, based on a wide range of human characteristics such as language or occupation. The community served by a museum is better known as its constituency.

**Conservation** : Keeping from harm, decay or loss. Embraces preservation (qv), restoration (qv), protection as well as preventative conservation (qv) and remedial or interventive conservation (qv).

**Constituency** : The various elements of the public served by a museum and represented on its governing body and special committees.

**Consultation** : A meeting called to seek advice, opinion or assistance, or arranged to stimulate discussion with various parties.

**Contract documents** : Written information pertaining to the agreements between a museum and its staff, partners, sponsors, volunteers, clients and contractors.

**Controlling body** : See Governing body.

**Cultural property** : The material manifestation of the concepts, habits, skills, art or institutions of a specific people in a defined period of time.

**Culture** : The way of life of a society. Material culture constitutes the products of that society. See also Intangible heritage.

**Curator** : A museum staff member or consultant who is a specialist in a particular field of study and who provides information, does research and oversees the maintenance, use and enhancement of collections. Often the name given to the Chief Executive Officer of a museum.

**Data standard** : The agreed manner in which data or information is recorded during documentation of a museum item.

**De-accessioning** : The process whereby entries in the accession register are cancelled and items are removed from the collection. Also see Alienation.

**Display** : The presentation of objects and information for the public. Also see Exhibition.

**Dissolution clause** : A statement in a constitution that provides for survival of collections and allocation of capital in the event that the governing body ceases to exist.

**Diversity** : Refers to the different language groups, cultures, lifestyles and religions that exist in South Africa, hence "Rainbow Nation". Also refers to the huge range of activities that constitute museum work and public service.

**Documentation** : A record of information. The sum total of all the information recorded about the specimens and artifacts in a museum collection. Also see Metadata.

**Empowerment** : The transfer of knowledge, skills and authority to people to enable them to meet personal and professional goals.

**Enabling environment** : Spaces free of threats to physical and intellectual well-being which give people the necessary means to fulfil their ambitions.

**Exhibition** : A temporary or permanent presentation of museum objects, specimens or artworks together with information, in a unifying theme, for the purpose of education and enjoyment of the visitors. Transfer of information is frequently enhanced by use of audiovisuals and computerised interaction.

**Facsimile** : An exact copy especially of writing, printing or pictorial representations produced on similar materials using similar techniques.

**Formal education** : Regular, publicised museum programmes which are usually repeated annually, designed specifically to meet the needs of educators and learners in contrast to all other museum education programmes that cater for different audiences at different levels at different times, sometimes called non-formal education.

**Funds** : Money raised by a museum in addition to the annual subsidy that includes donations, subscriptions, admission fees, sale of products and services, consultancy fees, sponsorships, grants and grants-in-aid, and interest on investments.

**Governing body** : An authority legally responsible and accountable for setting policy, implementing policy, monitoring progress and evaluating performance in all aspects of operation. May be termed a board of trustees, museum council, or management committee.

**ICOM** : International Council of Museums.

**In-service training** : Non-formal training organized by a museum for its own staff on such topics as ethics, collections management procedures, preven-

tive conservation and handling, security precautions and visitor care, and incorporates induction (qv).

**Income** : See Funds.

**Induction** : Introductory training for a new employee or volunteer.

**Institution** : An organisation or public body founded for a specific purpose.

**Intangible heritage** : Is transmitted from generation to generation and is defined as the practices, representations, expressions, as well as the knowledge and skills that communities groups and individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. It is manifested in the following domains: oral traditions including language, performing arts, social practices and rituals, indigenous knowledge systems and traditional craftsmanship.

**Interventive conservation** : Where the conservator intervenes in saving an item from decay and loss through repair, restoration (qv) or reconstruction.

**Loans** : The transfer of property for a fixed period without transfer of ownership.

**Maintenance** : The process of keeping collections, premises, buildings and security systems in good condition; incorporates regular inspection.

**Marketing** : The programmes and techniques associated with developing and promoting a museum to meet the identified needs of the public(s) it serves.

**Members** : Individuals and organizations who pay an annual fee, make a formal contribution or work voluntarily in a museum in an honorary capacity. Also known as Subscribers or Friends of the Museum.

**Metadata** : A term used in documentation to indicate records of information associated with accessioned items such as history, use, research findings, references to publications, conservation; in other words, data about data.

**Mission statement** : An expression of primary purpose or intent; an objective statement of the underlying rationale for the existence of an institution.

**Museum** : Defined as a non-profit making permanent institution in the service of society, and of its development, open to the public which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits for the purpose of study, education and enjoyment the tangible and intangible evidence of people and their environment. (ICOM Code of Ethics 2004).

**Non-formal education** : See Formal education.

**Outreach** : Museum education programmes that are conducted away from the museum for learners or members of the public.

**Performance measurement** : Appraisal of the performance of an employee or institution against agreed objectives and set standards.

**Physically challenged** : Includes all persons whose activities are impaired through lack of limbs or the senses of sight and hearing.

**Policy** : A written statement of intent, a course of action to guide decision-making which flows from consultation with a museum's constituency and is set by the governing body.

**Preservation** : Keeping safe from deterioration and loss; usually involves the use of a chemical reagent or preservative.

**Preventive conservation** : The identification of causes of deterioration and loss followed by the precautions taken to prevent decay or damage. Takes the form of good house-keeping, climate control, physical protection, integrated pest management and exclusion of ultra-violet radiation.

**Principle** : A generally accepted truth or basic rule that guides decisions and conduct.

**Profession** : A calling in the service of the public that requires specialized knowledge and often long intensive training in principles and techniques. A profession sets standards of operation and adopts a code of conduct (ethics).

**Provenance** : Place of origin, source or original context of a museum specimen or object.

**Public relations** : The deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. (The definition used by the Public Relations Institute of South Africa).

**Publicity** : Ways and means of keeping the museum in the public eye.

**Quality** : Denotes excellence and the upholding of high standards in service delivery, especially to meet the expectations of clients.

**Representative** : Comprising individuals who represent different groups or interests as well as the demographic realities that exist in society.

**Research** : Finding new facts or creating new knowledge. Basic museum research is concerned with collections but it should be recognized as essential for excellence in all aspects of museum and collections management. Research is usually consummated in publication.

**Restoration** : Re-establishment or a return to the original state or condition of an artifact or building, a form of remedial or interventive conservation. It involves repair and reconstruction.

**SAHRA** : South African Heritage Resources Agency, charged with the protection of heritage.

**SAMA** : South African Museums Association, founded in 1936 (1975 - 1995 Southern African Museums Association), is a national association for all who work in and contribute to South Africa's museums, galleries and other heritage institutions.

**Stakeholders** : Include members of governing bodies, staff, members, "Friends", subscribers, donors, sponsors, partners, students, funding authorities, volunteers and any person or body in regular relationship with a museum / institution.

**Standard** : A benchmark, criterion, grade or level of achievement, or an accepted model or requirement used in the assessment of performance or quality.

**Title** : Evidence of a right to possession, a document such as a gift certificate, with the signature of the donor with transfers ownership of an object to a museum.

**Type-specimen** : The original specimen from which a species is described in natural science; the specimen which embodies the characters of the species.

**Universal access** : Physical and intellectual access to a museum and its facilities to all people, physical and mental disabilities notwithstanding.

## References

*Accreditation Handbook*, (1-6) compiled by M. Briedenhann and E.A. Voigt 1996. South African Museums Association, Kimberley

*Accreditation Handbook 1 - Introduction to the Grade System*

*Accreditation Handbook 2 - Permanence and Administration*

*Accreditation Handbook 3 - Collections and Collections Management*

*Accreditation Handbook 4 - Public Service*

*Accreditation Handbook 5 - Research and Libraries*

*Accreditation Handbook 6 - Accreditation for Grade 4 Museums*

American Association of Museums. 1992. *Excellence and equity: education and the public dimension of museums*. Washington: Metropolitan Life for the AAM.

*Batho Pele*. White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery. Government Gazette (18340) 1 October 1997.

Code of Ethics for Conservators (accepted at the 54th AGM of the Southern African Museums Association, Port Elizabeth) 1990. *Samantics* (6) July 1990:4

Ethics Committee of the Southern African Museums Association. 1979. *Code of Ethics of the Southern African Museums Association*. Cape Town, SAMA.

Galla, A (comp.) 1997. *Shifting the paradigm; corporate plan of the South African Museums Association*. Pretoria, SAMA.

27

ICOM. 1986. *ICOM Code of Professional Ethics*, Buenos Aires, Argentine. Amended Barcelona, Spain, 2002.

ICOM. 1996. *Handbook of standards: documenting African Collections*. Paris.

ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums. 2004. Revd ed 21st General Assembly, Seoul 2004.

Museums Association. 2002. *Code of Ethics for Museums: ethical principles for all who work for or govern museum in the UK*. London.

Museums Libraries Archives. 2004. *"Access for All" Toolkit; enabling inclusion for museums, libraries and archives*. IMRI, University of Northumbria.

*Professional Code of Ethics of the African Association of Zoos and Aquaria*. Operational Document 2.13.2, March 2004.

SAMA. 2001. *South African Museums Association Constitution*. Grahamstown.

SAMA. 2001. *South African Museums Association De-accessioning Guidelines*. Grahamstown.

SAMA. 2004. *South African Museums Association Guide to the Code of Ethics*. Port Alfred.

South African National Standard: Zoon and Aquarium Practice, 2005.

Wilmot, B.C. and Holleman, W. (eds). 1989. *Professional standards: accreditation handbook for Southern African Museums*. SAMA.







**South African Museums Association**  
**PO Box 2859, Port Alfred, 6170**  
**Tel: 046 624 3087 or Fax: 046 624 3276**

**email: [sama@futurserve.co.za](mailto:sama@futurserve.co.za)**  
**Website: [www.samaweb.org.za](http://www.samaweb.org.za)**