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Sida Review

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Review of Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Development, a Programme of Museum Cooperation in Southeast Asia (MuSEA)

Final Report

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November, 2011**

**Assignment performed by:
Stefan Dahlgren
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Final Report

Review of Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Development, a Programme of Museum Cooperation in Southeast Asia (MuSEA)

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Acronyms

DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of OECD)
MuSEA	Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Development – a programme for Museum Cooperation in Southeast Asia
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMVK	Statens museer för världskultur (National Museums for World Culture)
ToR	Terms of Reference

Executive Summary

For seven years – 2005 to 2011 – major museums and ministries of culture in the three Indochina countries Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam together with Swedish Museums for World Culture were engaged in a programme for development of the role of museums in society and institutional capacity building with financial and professional support from Sweden. This report summarises the end-of-programme review that was carried out during September 2011.

The programme has its fundament in the objective of poverty alleviation. The overall objective of MuSEA is: "*Working with communities to identify and strengthen local cultural heritage and making it visible and accessible in society, thus promoting poverty alleviation.*" The programme is characterised by a unique combination of implementation methods. The review concludes that it has been largely successful and provides important lessons learned for the future.

The programme has four areas of intervention: *capacity building* (training through 15 workshops in different museology subjects and the creation of a professional network of museum specialists); *mediation* (education and learning aimed at visitors; a travelling exhibition to convey information); *research* (collection and preservation of artefacts and more intangible kinds of information, also regarding contemporary issues and marginalised groups in society); *exhibition* (all museums collaborated in the creation of a travelling exhibition, "Stories of the Mekong – Challenges and Dreams", as a capacity building exercise and a means in itself, which has been shown at six locations in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos and will finally be displayed in Stockholm).

A *participatory* way of working was essential from the beginning. The project proposal and the later work plan did not come from the implementation partner as a ready-made package but were developed together with the museums in the region in two separate workshops and an intervening feasibility study. Related to this was the relatively slow but steady *pace of implementation*, allowing all parties to digest and apply new information before proceeding with the next step.

The review concludes that the programme is *relevant* as one way to contribute to poverty alleviation in view of the wider definition of poverty, which includes culture and identity as essential components of well being and the museums potential to highlight marginalised groups.

Most of the concrete goals – outputs in evaluation terms – have been met. The number of workshops and the number of professional staff involved has actually exceeded the goals. Particularly important was to expand the research aspect of the museums and handle the challenges of information collection around contemporary issues. A more mixed picture is shown regarding the ability to directly reach the groups in society that the exhibition concentrates on, where it was less successful. Based on the extensive reporting by the programme, interviews and observations we conclude that the program was *effective* in fulfilling its objective, bearing in mind the limitations in reaching the overall objectives.

The review also concludes that four factors in particular will contribute to a reasonable degree of *sustainability* of the programme's achievements: the organisations involved are stable and showed openness in engaging through the programme; a network of individuals and organisations have been established; the overall objective provides a direction for a future role of the museums; and the way the programme has been implemented, through strong participation and ownership, active learning and immediate application of knowledge increases the likelihood that the experiences are kept alive.

1. Introduction

For seven years – 2005 to 2011 – major museums and ministries of culture in the three Indochina countries Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam together with Swedish Museums for World Culture were engaged in a programme for development of the role of museums in society and institutional capacity building with financial and professional support from Sweden. This report summarises the end-of-programme review that was carried out during September 2011.

In the programme document the overall objective of MuSEA is: *"Working with communities to identify and strengthen local cultural heritage and making it visible and accessible in society, thus promoting poverty alleviation."*

In financial terms the programme was terminated by the end of 2011 but in practice it will end during Spring 2012 when the exhibition "Stories of Mekong" - an important feature in the programme - will be displayed at the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm.

The programme is characterised by a unique combination of objectives and implementation methods as well as experimentation and an ambition to redefine how museums can play a role in contemporary society.

The review concludes that it has been largely successful and provides important lessons learned for the future.

1.1 This report

This review report presents and discusses the findings from the review with the emphasis on what has been learned during the field trip and compilations of data retrieved from the annual reports. Conclusions are presented together with a discussion on the achievements in chapter 6. The end of the report has some lessons learned and recommendations for the future.

The description of the programme is kept short. The reporting to Sida has been very comprehensive and detailed and it seems unnecessary to repeat most of the "raw data" that are easily available in those annual reports¹. In addition an internal mid-term review² was submitted to Sida at the end of October 2009 where achievements during the first three years are summarised and commented upon.

¹ A size limit for practical reasons of 15 pages for this report is a further argument to not include previous reporting.

² MuSEA: Deltidsutvärdering Sida 081029.

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2. The assignment

The Terms of Reference (annex 1) indicate several purposes for the review. The overall purpose is to "get a deeper understanding of the...results in relation to the objective of Swedish development cooperation, i.e. help create conditions that will enable poor people to improve their lives and to find the most effective and efficient forms of Swedish development cooperation".

In this formulation is a hint of the intervention logic for the programme, which the team assumes is roughly this: through better knowledge of their role in the society, its roots and how it has evolved, communities and individuals, particularly among the poor and people with limited power, will be better equipped to improve their well-being and their ability to influence circumstances that govern their lives. The objective of MuSEA narrows the way to do this and makes this somewhat more concrete; it says the programme shall be

"Working with communities to identify and strengthen local cultural heritage and making it visible and accessible in society".

The programme is also based on the assumptions, expressed in the logical framework analyses carried out during the start-up phase, that "cultural heritage institutions play an important role in social developments and have a social responsibility" and that "the cultural heritage institutions are a powerful arena in reaching out to communities, and may function as a forum for exchange and information".³

As the team understand the ToR the review should not question the fundamental assumptions behind this intervention logic and its relevance. To do this would indeed be a very large task that is well beyond the resources made available for the review. It would be a research project in itself that touches on larger issues around cultural policy. Instead the review should rather try to find out how well this intervention logic has worked for the programme.

The requested assessment of *impact* in relation to poverty alleviation, which the ToR (question 2a) requests, was impossible to do in a direct way. We could not find evidence (with one exception) of increased awareness in the communities that is likely to have been achieved or supported through the activities of the programme, and this is hardly possible in any case.

Overall, we perceive the set of questions in the ToR to be relevant, but not all were possible to address given the resources available. The team therefore assumed and also expressed in the Inception Report to Sida that these questions were presented to provide overall guidance rather than constituting a strict list of issues to be covered in-depth.

2.1 Method

The review was carried out by Indevelop under Sida's Framework Agreement for Reviews, Evaluations and Advisory services on Results Frameworks. The review team comprised Mr. Stefan Dahlgren as Team Leader and Ms. Ny Luangkhot, Vientiane, as National Evaluations Expert. Ny Luangkhot participated only in the Laos part of the review.

The review is based on several kinds of sources: *interviews* with people involved with the design and the implementation of the programme, *documents* such as annual reports and exhibition reports, and *visits* to some of the 'stories' that constitute the exhibition. The *exhibition* itself, visited in Luang

³ MuSEA Working Document 2006-06-07, p 17

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Prabang where it is displayed during Autumn 2011, as well as the HIV/AIDS exhibition at the Museum of Ethnography in Hanoi, may be seen as a fourth kind of source. At the exhibition in Luang Prabang interviews were held with some of the *visitors* and views expressed through the '*wish tree*' were analysed.

The interviews were made largely during a ten-day tour to Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia during September 2011. The six locations where the exhibition have been shown and the main museums that were part of the programme were visited.⁴ At three of these places we had the opportunity to visit the stories that constitute the basis for the exhibition; the weaving school close to Vientiane, a fish farm in An Giang province, Vietnam, and a Cham community (the learning story in the exhibition) north of Phnom Penh.

With the exceptions of statistics on the number of visitors, visitor surveys and information on participation in the various programme activities the conclusions and lessons learned are based on qualitative data, e.g. softly structured interviews aimed at picking up a variety of opinions and experiences. It was not possible to carry out any kind of statistical survey among e.g. participants, museum staff and culture policy makers or people represented in the various stories. Although the method used had obvious limitations the team believe that the rather high consistency in the answers makes it likely that the review captured valid and reliable information.⁵

⁴ The itinerary is in appendix 3.

⁵ In the normal manner for this kind of review or evaluation, with a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data, the information from different sources would be compared and accuracy and reliability assessed, bearing in mind the risk for biased information in interviews and the annual reporting. As said in section 4.2 the visitor statistical data and surveys turned out to be less useful than expected as indicators of effects from the programme.

3. The MuSEA programme

3.1 Background

The official name of the programme is "Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Development" with the subtitle "Programme of Museum Cooperation in Southeast Asia" and the acronym MuSEA. Its conception seems to have been the result of a number of beneficial circumstances that appeared within a short period around 2004:

1. The programme for cooperation in the sector of culture and media projects between Vietnam and Sweden was coming to an end and the bilateral funds were reduced. There was, thus, a need to find new ways for cooperation. Partly building on previous, fairly successful museum support a new pilot project for support to museums started. It proved, however, less viable and was eventually terminated, also due to the later decision to change the mode of cooperation with Vietnam.
2. The new Swedish strategy for SE Asia included a cultural cooperation component but no concrete proposal was yet available.
3. Some years earlier the four Swedish museums focusing on the world outside Sweden were merged into one umbrella organisation, while still remaining separate physical entities. The new organisation, The Swedish National Museums of World Culture (SMVK⁶), consists of four museums, each with a different focus and different profile, but they all have the same task from the government formulated in this mission statement: *The National Museums of World Culture wish to contribute to the use of cultural heritage as a positive force in the promotion of sustainable global development.* As part of its mission the organisation looked for various ways to establish international cooperation and initiated a discussion with Sida on how those museums could contribute.

A fourth contributing factor may be the fact that in Hanoi the Museum of Ethnography, opened in 1996, already had, according to interviews, an interest in engaging in contemporary issues, which was rather different from the focus on history and archaeology that had so far dominated museums in Indochina. Later this interest was manifested in temporary exhibitions about e.g. "Street vendors in Hanoi" and "HIV/AIDS".

The discussions between Sida and SMVK were fruitful and it was agreed that SMVK should develop a programme proposal for support to museums in South East Asia, concentrating on museums in Indochina, i.e. Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. This was carried out in close cooperation with museums in the region in the form of two workshops, the first in Phnom Penh in April 2005, and the second in Hoi An in Vietnam in April 2006.

The outcome of these efforts was two documents⁷, which, with minor revisions, constitute the plan for the programme. The programme proposal, dated January 2006, was the result of the first workshop and later preparations by the museums in the region and SMVK. During the second workshop a rather detailed work plan was agreed that spanned the period 2006-2010.

An agreement was signed in mid-March 2006 between Sida and the SMVK for a four-year programme, which was later extended to the end of 2011.⁸

⁶ In Swedish: *Statens museer för världskultur*, thus the acronym SMVK

⁷ – Program proposal, Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Development 2006-01-19

– MuSEA Working Document 2006-06-07

⁸ With an additional, no-cost extension it will end in late Spring 2012

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3.2 Components of the programme

Participants in the programme are SMVK in Sweden and the following museums in the region:

Cambodia: National Museum of Cambodia, Angkor National Museum, Documentation Centre of Cambodia, Toul Sleng Museum, Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts;

Laos: Lao National Museum, National Museum of Luang Prabang, Institute for Cultural Research, Ministry of Information and Culture;

Sweden: National Museums of World Culture; Museion, University of Gothenburg

Vietnam: Museum of Ethnology, National Museum of History, Ministry of Sports, Education and Tourism, An Giang Province Museum.

The programme has four areas of intervention⁹:

- capacity building
- mediation (education and learning aimed at visitors)
- research
- exhibition

It is in relation to these areas of intervention that the expected results and indicators have been formulated. The activities within MuSEA cross over several of these areas simultaneously, but for the sake of clarity, they are here presented thematically, corresponding with the MuSEA working document.

The concrete activities of the programme were four: the 15 workshops, the professional exchange programme, the scholarships, and the creation and display of the exhibition. One may add the meetings of the Steering Committee and the Exhibition Experts as well because they are presumably essential in building and maintaining the professional network.

Already at the outset the work plan comprised the essential parts of the programme and not much has been changed during the lifetime of the programme. A few workshops have been added, the exhibition took a little longer time to create than expected and the time frame was extended by one year. For a rather complex programme like this, with many organisations and actors involved and where participation is a fundamental feature this is a quite a feat, in particular since it has kept well within the budget limits.

3.3 Salient features of the programme

Although the whole programme can be seen as an effort in capacity building, care was taken to separate "pure" training from museology related activities. *Mediation* is about the roles of the museum in society and how it interacts with the people it is intended to serve; *research* is of course how museums are engaged in collection and preservation of artefacts and more intangible kinds of information; and the *exhibition* is in this case both a method to enhance the capacity building and an end in itself as one way to 'transmit' interesting information to the audience.

The *participatory* way of working has been essential from the start. The project proposal and the later work plan did not come to Sida from the implementation partner SMVK as a ready-made package but were developed together with the museums in the region in two separate workshops and an intervening feasibility study. This was of course facilitated by the fact that participants are all professionals in their field of work.

⁹ A diagram in the programme documents presents the interrelationships between the components. It's also in the ToR, Annex 1. Review of Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Development, a Programme of Museum Cooperation in Southeast Asia (MuSEA)

Related to this was the deliberately slow but steady *pace of implementation*, allowing all parties to digest and apply new information before proceeding with the next step. Judging from the interviews the participants (individuals as well as museums) did not feel overloaded. During the last two years perhaps the implementation speed was somewhat increased with several workshops and the added work with the travelling exhibition, but this seems not to have caused any problems.

4. Implementation

4.1 The workshops

A number of workshops, usually two each year, and in total around fifteen workshops (depending on how these are counted) have served as the main implementation mode of the programme. They varied very much in subject matter and also in purpose. Common for all is that they made it possible to build and to preserve cooperation and influence among the institutions and individuals that were, and still are, engaged in the programme. Four of the workshops were aimed at local heritage institutions.

4.2 The exhibition

More or less at the outset it was decided that an exhibition should be produced as part of the programme. Also its theme – life of ordinary or disadvantaged groups of people along the Mekong River – was decided on very early.

The 'function' or rather functions of the exhibition were formulated from the start: it would contribute to the overall objective of poverty alleviation; it would help widening the role of museums from concentrating mainly on the past to show also contemporary society and highlight interesting or problematic issues; it would make it possible for museum staff to apply different ways of working and develop new knowledge from other activities in the programme; and it would emphasise common experiences and facilitate cooperation, by having the Mekong, which flows through all three participating countries, as a theme. Likewise, the format – to show a variety of different aspects of life along the river in what later became the 'stories' – and to produce it as a travelling exhibition were decided early on.

The work was much more than just to produce the physical exhibition with its screens, objects, etc. It involved *research* into conditions of people along the river, collection of objects that would be typical and useful for telling a story, and not least, to develop forms for *interaction* with visitors to the exhibition (sometimes the term education is used). Several of the programme's workshops had this interaction as the subject, either in very concrete ways or on a broader level.

The idea of having a *travelling* exhibition was part of the capacity building, with the aim of making it possible in the future for the museums to create their own exhibitions and reach out to audiences far from the main cities or to schools. Staffs from the 'receiving' museum were sent to assist and learn when the exhibition was dismantled and packed at the previous location and also staffs were sent to the next museum to share their experience. This was also important because the exhibition had to be physically adapted to the space available at the next place. The interviews indicate that this was much appreciated and an essential part of the learning.

Interaction with visitors takes several forms. One striking and very popular feature is the 'Wish Tree', a stylised tree at one end of the exhibition where the visitors are invited to write down his or her wishes or dreams on a piece of paper. Visitors are also invited to write comments or observations in a visitors' book. Some of those wishes or dreams written in gold on red paper are hung on the tree and can be read by other visitors.

A beautiful, multicolour, 75 page catalogue is an important part of the exhibition together with a short brochure. To make the content of the exhibition accessible for those who cannot make a visit a poster exhibition was produced, showing the main stories on a number of A3 size posters. It has been distributed widely, mainly to schools.¹⁰

¹⁰ It was not possible for the review to follow up on this method of outreach.

4.2.1 Visitor statistics

The table below shows the number of visitors during the exhibition period at each respective museum.¹¹ Because the *Stories of the Mekong* exhibition was usually shown in the main museum building, it is not possible to separate visitors that came only for the Stories exhibition. Unfortunately visitor statistics were not collected in the same way everywhere and therefore comparisons are difficult. In addition, documentation does not indicate (with one exception, Siem Reap) changes compared to previous years.

What is possible to see from the figures is that an impressive number of visitors had the opportunity to see the exhibition. The participating museums attract many foreign visitors, mostly tourists, which constitute a substantial share of the visitors but at least in Hanoi domestic visitors dominated. The National Angkor Museum in the Siem Reap reports a considerable increase – 30 percent – in the number of visitors compared to the same period the previous year, and attribute this increase to a very active advertising campaign in local media, on tourist maps, etc. All museums considerable effort into showing the exhibition to local schools and museum education staff engaged school visitors in various activities to better understand the exhibition.

Table 1 Visitor statistics

Category	Hanoi *		An Giang *		Phnom Penh *		Siem Reap ****		Vientiane *****	
	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign
Adults	29 589	38 413			13 861	17 386			(68 247)	(87 744)
Children	17 396	146								
Students	26 651	104	**4 728				1 166			
Schools										
Locals							79			
Visitors	115 311		5 755		31 247***		12 838		(155 991)	

* Data from MuSEA Annual Report 2010, Annex 1. The Annual Report 2009 says 180 000 visitors in Hanoi during three months but this may be preliminary figures. Some figures do not add up to the total at the bottom for reasons not explained in the source material.

** "from 56 schools". At another page the Annex says 4 895 children from 53 schools.

*** Including students and teachers from some neighbouring provinces.

**** Data from Report Travelling exhibition, The Angkor National Museum. The 79 visitors are from the area close to Siem Reap.

***** Data from statistics sheet obtained at the National Museum, NB! The figures are for the *entire year of 2010* and not only for the Stories of Mekong exhibition period.

Because of the differences in the reported number of visitors and lack of comparable data the review cannot, except in the case of Siem Reap, draw conclusions about the 'attractiveness' of the exhibition to visitors. The museum staff in Siem Reap are of the opinion that the increase in numbers show that there is potentially a great interest in learning about contemporary life, not only about antiquities, at least among the tourists which constitute the majority of visitors there.

4.2.2 Visitor surveys

Some visitors at each location were invited to fill out a questionnaire about their the views on the exhibition. The surveys were partly carried out as a training exercise and in order to introduce visitor surveys as a means to better understand the reactions and expectations by visitors. At the time of this review the surveys have only been partly compiled or analysed in a report or tables with replies¹². Reports or compilation of answers were available from Hanoi, Vientiane and An Giang. The number of

¹¹ Luang Prabang is not included since the exhibition was still underway when this report is written.

¹² The programme coordinator has informed the team that the plan is to present all the surveys during the concluding programme workshop, which will probably take place in connection to the final show of the exhibition in Stockholm during Spring 2012.

respondents varies: 338 in Hanoi, 542 in An Giang, and 103 in Vientiane. Since the number of visitors is quite small in relation to the reported total number of visitors (see above) and the reports have no information about how the respondents were selected, we conclude that the answers are not statistically representative. Nevertheless, they provide a range of opinions that should be useful for future work on exhibitions.

The questionnaire had nine fixed-answer questions and two open-ended questions. Only the Hanoi survey report has information from the open-ended questions and they show many different opinions. Of the 212 people who gave a response to the last question "Did you learn anything new?" fifty wrote that they now had a better understanding about the people who live along the Mekong River and had learned much about cultural traditions among the people there. Virtually no one mentioned the problems and challenges in daily life that some of the stories try to bring forward; culture and traditions are what most visitors apparently see in the exhibition. The majority of the questionnaires show that the visitors appreciated the exhibition, that the level of information was good, that photos and pictures, followed in rank by objects, were considered the most valuable ways to inform, that the coconut, weaving and traditional medicine stories may have gained most interest (but there is a big spread of preferences), and that a guided tour was very useful¹³.

4.3 Professional exchange and scholarships

During the course of the programme six scholarships, two from each of the participating countries, and aimed at a Masters degree in museology were made available to staff at the institutions in the programme. The training took place at the University of Goteborg in Sweden and included periods of internships at museums in Sweden or elsewhere. Three of the students followed the training from 2006 to 2008 and three from 2008 to 2010. All six students completed their studies successfully.

At the time of the review four of the six graduates have left their previous employments. One was employed by the Unesco office in Hanoi soon after returning from the studies and he is still working in the area of cultural heritage. One of the graduates at the Documentation Centre is now working for the genocide tribunal in Phnom Penh, the other graduate from DCC has recently started a career as free-lance journalist trying to concentrate on cultural affairs, and the fourth has just left the museum sphere for employment elsewhere in government administration.

If scholarships are seen as an investment in the affiliated institutions' capacity building one may see these career changes as a loss for the 'system'. However, the positive aspect in these cases is that most of the graduates evidently had the opportunity to work for a period in their previous positions, thereby using their knowledge and presumably sharing some of the experiences with colleagues. In one case the completion of the Masters course coincided with a promotion. The knowledge gained during the Masters studies was very useful in the new post, according to our interview, and could be immediately used to the benefit of the institution. Two of the four, the Unesco employee and the journalist, obviously intend to stay in the same cultural sector, and the work for the Tribunal is in principle limited in time and the person may return to work directly with cultural heritage issues.

Part of the 'in-programme training' was the *professional exchange programme*. It was a kind of internship system where persons from one institution worked for a period of time (normally ten weeks) in one of the other countries in order to exchange ideas and contribute with his or her specialised knowledge. It was also a part of the work with the exhibition. Originally it was intended to include six rounds of exchange but in the end only three people participated: one person from Laos worked at three museums in Hanoi (Museums of Ethnology, History and Revolution); one person from

¹³ Section 5.3 below provides some additional visitor response information from Luang Prabang.

Cambodia worked at the Museum of Ethnology in Hanoi; and one person from Museum of Ethnology in Hanoi worked at the National Museum in Phnom Penh.

All three submitted extensive accounts of the visits and the reported experiences were overall very positive and useful. In addition to the exchange program there were occasions when staff from one institution during short visits assisted another institution. This was mostly in relation to the work with the exhibition.

4.4 The Steering Group and the Exhibition Experts Group

In line with the participatory approach all major decisions in the programme have been taken by a Steering Group (SG), which consists of two members from each participating country, including Sweden. The SG was formed immediately after the work plan was accepted it has usually met in connection to the workshops, i.e., twice or three times a year. There have been frequent contacts between the meetings as well. Later, a separate Exhibition Experts Group (EE) was formed to take care of the design and considerations related to the exhibition. It comprised partly the same people as the SG but also some people working more or less exclusively with the exhibition. In practice, the SG and the EE meetings were sometimes held at the same time and it became a merged SG/EE group. Experts from Sweden were often present at the EE meetings as well.

The conclusion from the meeting minutes and from the interviews was that these two groups, especially the Steering Group, were, and still are, of great importance for the smooth running of the programme. The coordination office in Sweden has naturally had an important role but it has largely executed decisions made by the SG and not fallen into the trap of dominating or steering the work of the SG.

Judging from the minutes, considerable time at the meetings was used to reflect on experiences from the latest show of the exhibition and from completed workshops.

4.5 Participation

It was emphasised in the work plan and care was taken by the SG to ensure that all three countries in the region would both share the workload and have the same level of benefits from the programme. Workshops, SG meetings and the display of the exhibition were all distributed fairly equally between the Indochina countries (with the exceptions of one workshop in Sweden and one in Manila). This has apparently worked well and no opinions against this principle were mentioned during the interviews; rather the opposite: some of the interviewees mentioned that changing places made it easier to get acquainted with and to understand the other institutions and the specific country environments.

The team has looked more closely into participation of individuals in various activities, their affiliation and country of origin. The simple method was to use lists of participation in workshops¹⁴ and Steering Group and Exhibition Experts meetings and count the number of attendance¹⁵. First we can see that participation, counted as attending at least one workshop or SG meeting, is distributed fairly equally among the three countries: in Cambodia 26 persons participated in one or more events, in Laos 24 and in Vietnam 21, in total almost 70 persons have participated in the training or the development of the programme. Based on information during interviews, which described local involvement, it is likely that one hundred staff at the core institutions have been reached by the programme.

¹⁴ Not including the workshops that were targeted at people and institutions other than the programme's museums and institutions.

¹⁵ The lists were not absolutely complete and there may be a few omissions, but it is the general picture that is of interest.
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The participation of Swedish museum staff and experts are not included in the figures below. Around 25 people from the Swedish Museums of World Culture participated in the workshops and other activities, which is considered to have substantially contributed to staff learning and widening of the knowledge about the environment around museum work in the region.

Including the ministries of culture in each country, participants have been affiliated to 12 institutions (14 if two local museums are included). The participants were from the following institutions:

Table 2 Participants in workshops and meetings

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Number</i>
Cambodia National Museum, Phnom Penh	11
Lao National Museum, Vientiane	10
DCC, Phnom Penh	8
Museum of Ethnography, Hanoi	8
Ministry of Culture, Vientiane	7
Ministry of Culture, Hanoi	5
Institute for Cultural Research, Vientiane	4
An Giang Museum, Long Xuyen	3
Historical museum, Hanoi	3
Ministry of Culture, Phnom Penh	3
Provincial museums, Vietnam	2
National Museum, Luang Prabang	2
Museum of Genocide, Phnom Penh	1
Angkor National Museum, Siem Reap	1
Total	67

Looking at individuals, we found that there is a group of approximately ten persons, largely belonging to the SG who, together with the coordination office, form a core of the programme. They have attended most of the events with a few exceptions. Three people in this group, each coming from one of the three countries, stand out as having attended all events with only one or two exceptions. Next is then what may be seen as an outer group, comprising around a dozen persons, who often attended the various events but not at the same high frequency. Finally there is a large group of individuals who participated in one or two of the workshops and maybe one or two of the other meetings.

One conclusion is that the programme managed to reach quite a large number of individuals whilst at the same time maintaining a core group that has probably been essential to sustain the spirit of the programme and form a functioning network. This conclusion may be seen as rather a hypothesis but it is corroborated by some interviews where the informants emphasised the important contact with certain core persons.

5. Findings from the field trip

The field trip comprised visits to six museums, interviews with a number of people engaged in the programme, and visits to three of the nine 'stories'. In Luang Prabang the team interviewed some of the visitors to the exhibition and analysed the wishes from the Wish Tree.

Annex 4 has summaries of a selection of the interviews and provides examples of typical answers and opinions.

5.1 Interviews with museums

The general opinion at the museums about the programme was very positive. These were the six main findings from the interviews, mentioned in nearly all individual interviews and group discussions:

- The programme is successful. It had contributed much to the capacity building at the museums.
- The knowledge and experiences that had been brought up at the various workshops were relevant and useful.
- The exhibition was a very good method for capacity building and it was also an important contribution to the cultural heritage in the countries.
- The programme brought up important aspects of the role of the museums.
- The possibility to work with colleagues from other countries and exchange experiences was considered particularly valuable.
- The programme was run very well and the way it was organised and the way the coordination office worked was much appreciated.

Few things were considered negative or less successful. The most common critical remark was that that the time for the display of the exhibition, three months in each place, was perhaps too short.

5.2 The stories

The team had the opportunity to visit three of the nine stories. The selection was made by the local museums and the determining factor was accessibility in consideration to the limited time available.

The *weaving school* outside Vientiane tells a story about on-going changes in Laotian society by pointing out how the traditional weaving that is normally (or perhaps ideally) done within each household is being replaced by commercial, ready-made products. This may be seen as a disruption of traditional values, but for the weaving school the change also provides an opportunity, albeit on a modest scale, to create jobs and stimulate profitable self-employment for young women. At our visit very few women were being trained and most of the active weavers and seamstresses were in fact employed by the school to produce textiles and garments for export, mainly to Japan. Thus, the story only indirectly related to marginalised groups but indicates nevertheless an acute problem. There are apparently also other complications related to silk production that were not included in the story.

It is difficult to judge in what way this story contributes to the overall objective. There is no definable community to relate to and the people we met were hardly aware of the school's involvement with the exhibition. Probably it fits in with the programme's objective by bringing up issues that most visitors from Laos and probably from the entire region can relate to and reflect on. Weaving is

considered an essential part of cultural heritage in Laos, probably more so than in most other countries in the region, and the disappearance of such skills would be a substantial loss.¹⁶

The *learning story* brought us directly into what seemed a very active community with obvious self-awareness. The leaders in this Muslim village, about an hour's travel north of Phnom Penh, struggle to maintain their Cham minority identity through teaching their language to young people and spreading knowledge about the Cham script, none of which is taught in the state school.

Even if only a few in this Cham village had seen the exhibition, most seemed to know about it and were aware that the community features there. The impression at our visit was that in this case the exhibition had directly contributed to boost self-awareness and identity.

The *fishing story* was not possible to visit directly. Instead we visited one of the many small fish farms along the Mekong River in An Giang province that currently constitute an alternative to traditional fishing with nets and for many either replace or complement growing rice or vegetables. The fisherman we met still retained his rice farm on a large island in the river but considered fish farming as an important way to raise his and his family's income. His fish was mostly sold at markets but also to canning industries. He saw no immediate problem with selling the fish or any obvious risks like infection or illnesses. His explanation was that fish farming in flowing water avoids the problems that affect big ocean-based and coastal fish farms. Also here the story apparently illustrates changes in society where fishing is being transformed from fishing for subsistence or for selling at a small scale at local markets to being part of the larger society.

These brief visits could only provide impressions but they confirm that the stories in the exhibition are relevant for meeting the programme's objective. They also demonstrated that the exhibition has managed to capture essential aspects of contemporary society. One remaining question is how far the museums will be able to use these and similar stories to contribute to the overall, development objective. Another is in what way an exhibition like this is able to directly influence the wellbeing of communities.

5.3 Visitors' comments in Luang Prabang

At the time of the team's visit the exhibition had been on display for approximately three weeks. A visitor's book provided the opportunity to write comments on the exhibition and there were just over one hundred comments, 95 from foreigners and seven by Laotians. The comments were quite short but largely positive and most called for more similar exhibitions. We include them in Annex 4 of the report in order to show examples of responses to the exhibition by local visitors and to complement the visitor surveys in section 4.2.2 but there is no way to confirm if they are statistically representative.

¹⁶ See e.g. Mary F. Connors: *Lao Textiles and Traditions* (Oxford University Press 1996; 2001), p 71
Review of Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Development, a Programme of Museum Cooperation in Southeast Asia (MuSEA)

6. Discussion and conclusions

Applying the five DAC evaluation criteria relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, which are used in the ToR for the review with further specification in a number of questions, we will try to determine if the programme has met its goals. First, we look briefly at the objectives.

6.1 The objective

The programme is anchored in the objective of poverty alleviation. That is part of all Swedish development cooperation and was a prerequisite for the programme in the Strategy for regional cooperation.

Given the form of the programme and its implementation approach, there are obvious problems to convincingly link this development objective to what actually happens in the programme. This problem is reflected in a number of slight variations in the formulation of the objective that are presented in the documentation. There are hints in the documentation and in some comments in the interviews that the programme objective would be to directly influence the situation for the communities involved with the Stories of Mekong exhibition. It would of course have been excellent to have achieved this. Perhaps a direct influence may be detected in one of the stories but as an objective it is hardly attainable. If the objective instead is understood as directed to museums and their ways of working, it is more realistic.

The most frequent wording of the programme's objective, quoted also in the introduction of this report and also possible to meet, is:

"Working with communities to identify and strengthen local cultural heritage and making it visible and accessible in society, thus promoting poverty alleviation."

6.2 Relevance

The communities that the objective refers to should be marginal or disadvantaged in one way or another, meeting the established wider definition of poverty, which includes not only economic poverty but also political and cultural poverty, e.g., lack of power and lack of access to benefits from the larger society.

There is no doubt that groups that meet this definition are included in the stories that constitute the main visible results of the programme. In addition, there is a potential to further expand application of the concept, e.g., in what has already been done by the Museum of Ethnography in Hanoi with its excellent exhibition about HIV/AIDS in Vietnam.

Although the chain of links may look long between poverty alleviation as a major, societal goal and the efforts by a number of museums it is quite clear that *the overall, development objective has shaped the direction of the programme*. It could otherwise have become simply another training effort. Having this challenging objective has presumably stimulated creative thinking among all who have been involved in programme activities.

Given that museums are recognised as having the potential to increase awareness about marginal groups and that the programme has showed a viable way to do so, our *conclusion* is that the programme is relevant as one way to contribute to poverty alleviation.

6.3 Effectiveness

Whilst assessing relevance answers the question of whether we are doing the right thing the effectiveness criteria is about whether we are doing things right and if the programme has achieved its intended outputs and outcomes.

We have already discussed how the objective should be understood and concluded that at least in the short or medium term it could not be taken literally for this programme. Instead the programme has chosen to follow a more indirect path towards the overall objective, along which path the role of the museums should change or be enhanced in the direction of dealing with contemporary issues and that the museums' capacity to fulfil that role is the immediate objective.

The *societal dimension* – poverty alleviation – was included from the beginning. It was indeed a prerequisite for the support by Sida but provided a fruitful challenge to the programme and the reason for the choice of content of the workshops and the content and design of the exhibition.

Most of the concrete goals – *outputs* in evaluation terms – have been met¹⁷. The number of workshops and the number of professional staff involved who have received training in one form or another and engaged in qualified practical work with the exhibition have actually exceeded the goals. Particularly important was the expansion of the research aspect of the museums and handle the challenges of information collection around contemporary issues.

The programme has also to a considerable degree reached out to institutions and organisations outside the museum sphere. In certain locations an impressive number of visitors have seen the exhibition and responded to it, for example through the wish tree or through the educational activities. The opening ceremonies were considered useful by the museum staff for engaging the media to inform about the exhibition and to highlight the museum's potential role to local and national authorities¹⁸. The effects of this are difficult to assess within the limits of the review.

A more mixed picture is shown regarding the ability for the museums and in particular the exhibition to reach the groups in society that the exhibition concentrates on. With the possible exception of school children, the visitor statistics give no indication that people from those parts of society visited the exhibition and the museum staff confirm that they are in general unlikely to visit museums. If the exhibition is seen as a means for raising awareness in precisely these groups it was probably not effective. It is true that people from the stories were invited, but only a few attended. If raising awareness (or the like) is a direct goal it may be so that an exhibition like the Stories of Mekong is a good solution, but museums are less suitable venues. Instead an exhibition may have to go to the visitors in public places, such as bus stations or markets.

And, indeed, a very interesting and highly relevant exhibition was produced (now also accessible on Internet), which included research and collection, visualisation (and its equivalent in sounds and moving pictures) and all the practical aspects of handling a travelling exhibition. The interviews were unanimous in their appreciation of the exhibition as a capacity building method.

The gender awareness in the Programme was high. The internal goal related to gender issues was met according to the annual reports: in almost all activities the number of participants were equal between men and women. One of the early workshops in the Programme had the theme "Gender,

¹⁷ We refer to the Annual Reports 2006-2010 from the programme and the mid-term review from 2009 corroborated by what was learned from the field visits and the interviews.

¹⁸ Reports from the museums from the show of the exhibition in each place. Available through MuSEA's coordination office. Review of Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Development, a Programme of Museum Cooperation in Southeast Asia (MuSEA)

Identity, Stereotypes and the Role of the Museum". Important is also that the selection of the exhibition Stories seems to have no obvious gender bias.

Through the exhibition and its related activities the programme contributed to the general objective for the museums to preserve cultural heritage regarding all parts of society and including contemporary everyday aspects as well. Based on the extensive reporting by the programme, interviews and observations we *conclude* that the program was effective in fulfilling its objective, bearing in mind the limitations in reaching the overall, development objective of poverty alleviation.

6.4 Efficiency

Efficiency or cost-effectiveness is a notoriously difficult aspect to assess in many kinds of development projects, largely because the 'product' is usually unique and there is consequently no obvious point of reference to relate costs to.

One way to judge efficiency is to look at the original budget and how it was used. Most of the concrete goals were reached and some of them were exceeded. Although the programme was extended by one year, no additional funds were needed. In fact, the original budget was not fully used. The reason is partly a favourable development of the exchange rates¹⁹, which in reality increased the available funds by more than ten percent over the years, but it seems that care was nonetheless taken to keep costs at reasonable levels.²⁰

Another way to assess efficiency would be to calculate some kind of 'unit cost'. As we assumed above approximately 70 people have directly benefitted from training and other kinds of active involvement and development of the programme and the number may be as high as 100 persons. Dividing the 13 million SEK that the project in the end will use with 70 or 100 gives a figure of around SEK 186,000 per person or in the latter case SEK 130,000 per person. That would be the 'unit cost' from a very simple perspective. Is this high or low or reasonable? The questions could also be: had it been possible to achieve the goals in another, less expensive way? Using the 'unit cost' method one would have to look at the different kinds of expenses and determine whether the price for the different components were right or worth their costs. In this case we assume that, because of the unique programme approach, it would have been difficult to find the right combination of partners at considerably lower costs. No firm answer is possible without further investigation, which is outside the scope of the review.

When looking at budget utilisation alone, we *conclude* that the programme has been cost-effective; not all money was used and yet the work plan goals were largely reached.

6.5 Sustainability

Will the experiences, knowledge and attitude change from the programme be retained by the individuals involved and, more importantly, by the organisations that are partners in the programme?

Our observations and findings during the review lead us to conclude that the following four factors contribute to make this likely:

¹⁹ The Sida financial agreements are always in Swedish currency. Since implementation costs are most often in other currencies the funding partner thus takes the risks and, in the present case, the possible advantages from variations in exchange rates.

²⁰ Correspondence between Sida and MuSEA made available to the review shows that the coordination office was well aware of the need to keep costs low.

- the organisations involved are stable and have at the same time shown openness in engaging by the programme;
- a network of individuals and organisations have been established that make the knowledge easier to retain and less vulnerable to changes in staff or organisations;
- the overall, development objective, although unrealistic in the short run, provides a direction outside the organisations/museums, that helps to define the means;
- the way the programme has been implemented, through strong participation and ownership, active learning and immediate application of knowledge, increases the likelihood that the experiences are kept alive.

Since the programme is very much about stimulating what we may call 'systems change' or institutional enhancements, the stability of the organisation, mainly museums, is essential. Most of the partner museums have existed for a long time, have an essential function in the society and are likely to remain in operation for a foreseeable future. Also the fact that they are not dependant on donor funding for their core function contributes to sustainability.

The partly new network, comprising of both individuals and museums in the region and in other parts of the world, seems to function well. It will be fairly easy to maintain with today's communications. The high frequency of interaction within especially the 'core' of the programme contributes to overcoming the obstacles of getting in touch. Contributing factors are the increased knowledge of English among many of the individual participants and the fact that several participants from Laos and Cambodia already know Vietnamese. (This language was used a secondary language on many occasions to facilitate discussions).

The fact that the programme was regional rather than bilateral with high interaction among participating members has probably very much diminished the negative effects of the withdrawal of the donor in a conventional project, where the donor normally is both funding partner and 'change agent'. In this case the national institutions in the region have the opportunity to continue to support each other.

It may be an idealistic view but observing the way the overall, development objective has influenced the direction of the programme and the content of the exhibition the team *concludes* that having this far-reaching objective or 'vision' will help in keeping the programme's 'messages' alive.

The way the programme was run is perhaps the most important factor for the sustainability of the knowledge, experiences and conditions for widening of the museums' role in society.

As already mentioned, a major feature of the programme is that it has been implemented in a highly participatory way from the outset. The negative consequences may have been a high workload on the principal actors, in particular on the Steering Group during periods, and an extended time frame for the implementation, but the benefits seem to have offset such problems to a high degree.

The programme does not reflect the conventional picture of capacity building in development cooperation sphere where one part provides the knowledge and the other part listens. Instead it was implemented in all the participating countries by professionals, who are usually well motivated and interested in continually using new knowledge. Also it worked in several ways that complement and support each other: the workshops, the exhibition, scholarships and professional exchange and interaction through the Steering Group.

A weakness in the implementation from the sustainability point of view may be the fact that the exhibition apparently relied to a large extent on advice from Sweden. It is not possible for the team to judge the chances to find competent designers in the region at a reasonable cost but if the future work at the museums is to include temporary and also travelling exhibitions, the design aspect may be a risk.²¹

The fact that the pace was fairly slow, particularly in the beginning, is likely to improve sustainability since the implementation seems to have taken what is usually known as 'absorption capacity' into account and acknowledged that the individual participants would have their normal tasks to carry out in addition to being engaged with the programme.

We *conclude* that all these factors will contribute to a reasonable degree of sustainability of the programme's achievements.

6.6 Impact

Again we return to the question about which level of objectives we should apply. We already ruled out the long-term poverty effects from the realistic objectives and look only at effects directly related to the programme, but regarding impact we must include overall, development objectives as well. Impact is about long-term and lasting effects and it is of course linked to sustainability.

Museums are important in most societies but they are perhaps not generally seen as the institutions that are in the forefront of bringing about changes in society. The programme document has a more modest ambition regarding society. It is about being more inclusive and strives to show all aspects of the cultural heritage and also works in a more interactive way with marginalised and so far less visible of society. As such they have the potential to influence and contribute to desirable changes.

If the previous conclusions were correct we believe that it is possible that the programme will have an impact and lasting effects regarding the overall objectives but in an indirect way by widening the role of the museums to include issues in contemporary society.

²¹ On the other hand, the pictures, which constitute an essential part of the exhibition, were produced by a Laotian photographer; the curator was from Vietnam and the educator from Cambodia.

7. Lessons learned

The following general lessons may be learned from the programme's design and implementation (not listed by order of importance):

- A regional programme may have an advantage over traditional bilateral programmes since there are connections between all partners that complement each other. It may also reduce problems at the end of a programme when donor support ends and increase the likelihood of achieving sustainability.
- The programme strongly confirms the importance of ownership by all partners.
- Capacity building normally takes time and the present programme's success indicates that it may be better to start slowly than to begin too ambitiously.
- The programme mixed various forms of training and exchange of experiences, which seems to have been a successful form for capacity building.
- The fact that the exhibition was both a capacity building feature and an end in itself proved to be extremely valuable. It has most likely increased the chances that knowledge and competence are retained by individuals and partner institutions as well as chances for sustainability of the professional network created between museums and staff members.
- The overall, development objective of poverty alleviation may have been looked upon as difficult to attain at the outset but it obviously provided a direction for the programme and most likely stimulated a creative discussion and development of the role of museums.

8. Recommendations

It is difficult for the team to propose recommendations for the future since the programme is about to be terminated and the Sida funding will end. Nevertheless, we submit the following recommendation to the participating institutions:

- Review existing policies, strategies and work plans at different levels to find out how it would be possible to include experiences from the programme into such documents and thereby facilitate that the effects are sustained.

Annex 1. Terms of Reference

Terms of reference for the review of Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Development, a Programme of Museum Cooperation in Southeast Asia (MuSEA)

1. REVIEW PURPOSE

Sida is evaluating relevant parts of its regional Asia programme portfolio in order to get a deeper understanding of the medium- and long-term results in relation to the objective of Swedish development cooperation, i.e. *help create conditions that will enable poor people to improve their lives*, and to find the most effective and efficient forms of Swedish development cooperation.

The first purpose of this review is to provide an objective assessment of the design, implementation and results of the programme. Sida would like to verify development results and draw conclusions from the MuSEA experience, to be used in future portfolio analysis as well as in Sida's reporting to the Swedish government.

The second purpose is to obtain a deeper understanding of how museums and cultural heritage institutions in Southeast Asia can proceed in their attempts to become viable vehicles for poverty alleviation, by advocating cultural diversity and cultural equality, and by providing useful spaces for intercultural dialogue. It is expected that the review will feed into on-going processes of organizational learning and eventually have a useful impact on practice, but the evaluation itself is not intended to be directly used in decision-making.

The third purpose is to provide the programme and its coordinating function within National Museums of World Culture (SMVK) with a solid basis for its final report to Sida.

2. INTERVENTION BACKGROUND

In mid-March 2006 Sida and the SMVK signed an agreement for a four year programme involving museums in Cambodia, Laos, Sweden and Vietnam²². The agreement was based on a proposal developed together by the main stakeholder institutions during a one-year feasibility study including a LFA-workshop.

In order to create a solid framework, the initial phase of MuSEA started off with a second LFA-workshop that mapped the different roles and prerequisites for each institution by gathering information on visitor's profiles, target groups and educational activities. Based on a clear idea of conditions and interests, a theoretical framework was developed and implemented through workshops on gender and identity issues and the social roles and responsibilities of museums. Parallel to the theoretical work, staff trainings have been organized in IT and English language, along with professional exchanges in order to provide museums with the skills and tools necessary to implement theoretical perspectives through educational programs and outreach activities. The travelling exhibition that concludes the program is intended to be a concrete result of the mix between theory and practice.

The programme was developed in response to the previous Swedish regional strategy²³, which included cultural cooperation as a prioritized cooperation area (together with rights of ethnic

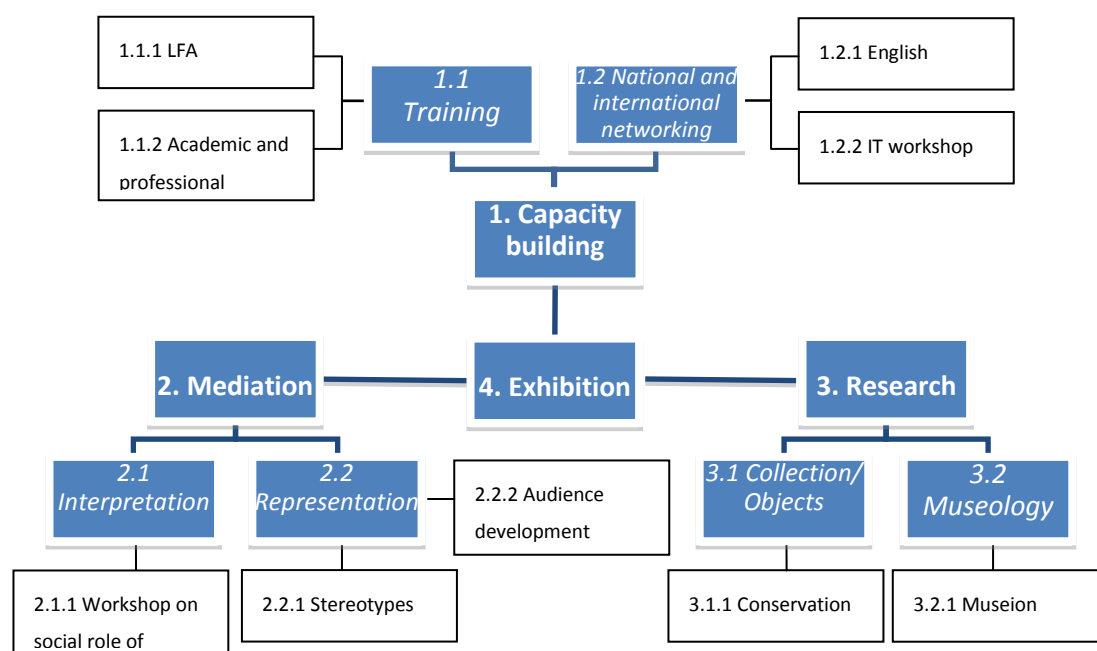
²² Cambodia: National Museum of Cambodia, Angkor National Museum, Documentation Centre of Cambodia, Toul Sleng Museum, Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts; Laos: Lao National Museum, National Museum of Luang Prabang, Institute for Cultural Research, Ministry of Information and Culture; Sweden: National Museums of World Culture; Vietnam: Museum of Ethnology, National Museum of History, Ministry of Sports, Education and Tourism, An Giang Province Museum

²³ Strategy for development cooperation with parts of South-East Asia January 2005 - December 2009

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minorities, women's and children's rights and others), and explicitly mentioned museums/cultural heritage as a subsector to which efforts should be focused. During implementation of the programme (September 2010) Sweden has adopted a new regional strategy²⁴.

The overall objective of MuSEA has been formulated as ***Working with communities to identify and strengthen local cultural heritage and making it visible and accessible in society***. The programme has had four areas of intervention, each containing two focuses. It is in relation to these areas of intervention that the expected results and indicators have been formulated. The activities within MuSEA cross over several of these areas at once, but for the sake of clarity, they are here presented thematically, corresponding with the MuSEA working document.



2.1 Travelling exhibition

The travelling exhibition - *Stories of Mekong - challenges and dreams* - constitutes both an end and a means to the programme. It represents a concrete manifestation of the programme, but also a practical method of using obtained skills in order for museums in the region to reach out to communities in their work, thus promoting the overall objective of poverty alleviation as identified in the programme proposal. In order to finalize the exhibition all other areas of intervention are included; capacity-building, mediation and research. The exhibition will be inaugurated during the lifespan of the programme, but will continue to be displayed well after the programme has ended. The preliminary plan for the display is as follows:

Hanoi (National Museum of Ethnology):
An Giang (An Giang Museum):
Phnom Penh (National Museum of Phnom Penh):
Siem Reap (Siem Reap National Museum):
Vientiane (Lao National Museum):
Luang Prabang (Luang Prabang National Museum):
Stockholm (Museum of Ethnography):

November 25 2009 - end of February 2010
 April 2010 - end of June 2010
 August 2010 - October 2010
 November 2010 - January 2011
 April 2011 - June 2011
 Aug 2011 - Oct 2011
 Feb 2012 -

²⁴ Samarbetsstrategi för det regionala utvecklingssamarbetet med Asien med fokus på Sydostasien t o m den 30 juni 2015 (not translated into the English language).

3. STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

There are five categories of stakeholders that are expected to be part of the review:

1. Individuals within the communities and groups targeted to benefit from the programme
2. Museum visitors/audiences of the travel exhibition
3. Professional individuals within museum and cultural heritage institutions in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam designing and implementing the programme
4. The coordinating organization, SMVK and the national coordinators in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam
5. The funding agency, Sida

These ToR have been drawn up by Sida in consultation with category 4.

The review shall touch base with all five categories with focus on category 1 - in order to assess impacts and categories 2 and 3 - in order to assess outputs and outcomes of the programme.

The assignment includes a mission to the region to meet a selection of Asian stakeholders and to record the audience receipt of the travelling exhibition.

A draft report shall be presented to Sida and to the implementing partners via SMVK. The final report shall be disseminated to Sida, the Embassy of Sweden in Bangkok, Hanoi and Phnom Penh, the implementing partners and the Ministries of Culture in Cambodia, Laos, Sweden and Vietnam.

4. ASSIGNMENT AND REVIEW QUESTIONS

The review shall:

1. Summarize, list and analyse:
 - a. **Impacts** (positive and negative, planned and unplanned) that reasonably can be attributed to the programme.
 - b. The most important **outcomes** of the programme.
 - c. The most important aggregate **outputs** of the programme.
2. Find out whether MuSEA has achieved its overall goal and expected results described in the programme application and working document. This means that the following questions shall be answered:
 - a. Is it reasonable to believe that the visibility of the identified beneficiaries, i.e. immigrant communities, indigenous peoples, rural communities, women and children has been improved as an effect of the programme and has this led to empowerment of individuals within these groups?
 - b. Has robust capacity within the implementing partners been established?
 - c. Will, by then end of the programme, 20 key staff from the implementing partners, equally divided between the 4 countries (50% women) have sufficient methodological and communication skills in order to reach out to communities?
 - d. Will there, by then end of the programme, be an active and sustainable network of professionals at the implementing partner organisations?
 - e. Have the six Master graduates been able to use and reproduce the knowledge gained at the Museum, Gothenburg University?
 - f. Have the travelling exhibition objects been published in form of brochures, books, etc. so that they have been of an advantage for the communities from where they come?
 - g. Will, by then end of the programme, materials/exhibits have been handed over to communities/public and will contact have been established between the travelling exhibition team and communities/public?

- h. Has the quality of collections management and technical skills in conservation/preservation databank management been improved?
 - i. Will, by then end of the programme, skills in museology have been improved and have these skills come to use for the benefit of local communities and audiences?
 - j. Will, by then end of the programme, the travelling exhibition have been successfully shown in the 4 countries and has it contributed to strengthening of local cultural heritage and made it visible and accessible in society?
3. Assess the relevance of MuSEA and the different programme components:
 - a. Has MuSEA been relevant in relation to the needs of beneficiaries and target groups in Southeast Asia?
 - b. Has MuSEA been relevant in relation to the relevant Swedish strategies and policies?
 - c. Has the production-based mode of learning, using the travelling exhibition both as an end and as a means been relevant? Does this mode of learning have potential in other development interventions where improved capacities are anticipated?
 - d. Has the workshop mode of creating learning opportunities been relevant? What alternatives could have been used?
 4. Find out whether MuSEA has been designed and implemented in an efficient and cost-effective way;
 - a. To what extent was the programme an independent host country initiative?
 - b. To what extent have implementing partners in Asia had possibilities to influence the planning and implementation of the programme?
 - c. To what extent have these partners been prepared to invest their own resources in the programme?
 - d. Have the Steering Committee, the Programme Coordination Office at SMVK, the National Coordinators in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam and the exhibition team embodied an adequate and feasible programme organization?
 - e. Have the scholarships for Master studies at Museion, Gothenburg University, been cost-effective?
 - f. Have the costs (both for administration and programme activities) of the programme been reasonable in relation to the results
 5. Other issues/questions:
 - a. Regionality: To what extent has the regional aspect of the programme been of an added-value, as compared with bilateral interventions?

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS

The review shall provide a summary of achieved results (clearly separating output, outcome and impact levels) as well as the most important lessons learned. The production-based mode of learning is of particular interest.

The review shall provide constructive advice on how the results and lessons learned can be used by the implementing partners, the Governments of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam and by Sida in its bilateral and regional development cooperation in the near and medium-term future. When providing such recommendations the review shall consider the existing strategies for Swedish deployment cooperation with Cambodia, Laos²⁵, Vietnam²⁶ and regional Asia.

²⁵ Swedish development cooperation with Laos is being phased out by 2011

²⁶ Swedish development cooperation with Vietnam is being phased out through selective cooperation by 2013

7. METHODOLOGY

It is up to the reviewer(s) to decide appropriate research methods. The chosen methods shall be described and justified in relation to possible alternatives in the final report. As mentioned under 3. Stakeholder involvement it is required that the review also reflect the voices of end-beneficiaries of MuSEA.

In the programme proposal the programme partners envisaged that much internal effort would be put into assessing the impact, sustainability and effectiveness of the programme, with regard to the overall objective poverty reduction. In order to measure progress a number of indicators and the links between them were established. Both objective measures (visitor statistics, participation in program activities, etc.) and subjective measures, where involved actors rank activities within the programme (capacity building and its implementation in outreach activities) were considered.

MuSEA's own monitoring & evaluation framework shall be assessed and used as a basis for the review. The visitor surveys conducted to systematically capture the audiences' reactions to the travelling exhibition are of particular interest.

Since the program started, annual progress reports have been delivered for the years 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. Together with Sida it was decided in early 2008 not to initiate the planned external mid-term review of the programme. It was assessed that the more interesting results information would not be available until the joint travelling exhibition had been produced and displayed. In addition, SMVK has produced an internal results assessment of the programme up to mid-2008 as a basis for Sida's overall results assessment for the regional programme in Asia.

8. BUDGET

Sida has allocated a maximum amount of SEK 300.000 for this review. This amount shall embrace the fees of maximum 6 weeks work (of which 2-3 weeks in Asia) and reimbursable costs, including costs for interpretation and translation. MSVK and programme partners have during implementation of the programme developed knowledge of professional interpretation and translations services, and could be consulted on these matters if necessary.

9. WORK PLAN AND SCHEDULE

In order for the review to capture results of the entire programme and yet record stakeholder reactions to the travelling exhibition first hand, it will be conducted well before the programme actually ends 31 December 2011. The field visit should preferably be conducted in connection the display of the exhibition at the Luang Prabang National Museum. In order to assess outcome and impact, the mission shall visit target groups in local communities, who are intended to be empowered as an effect of the programme. The field visit in Asia should last 2-3 weeks. SMVK in Gothenburg should also be visited.

1 week is set aside for preparations, 1 week for interviews of stakeholders in Sweden and for telephone, e-mail interviews with stakeholders in Asia, and 1 week for reporting, including presentation of findings to Sida.

10. REPORTING

The report shall be written in the English language and should not exceed 15 pages, including an executive summary, but excluding annexes. Since it is anticipated that the report will be used in reporting to local authorities and as a learning document for the participating institutions, it shall be translated into Lao, Khmer and Vietnamese.

The consultant shall adhere to the terminological conventions of the OECD/DAC Glossary on Evaluation and Results-Based Management as far as possible. The consultant shall consider the report format presented in Annex B of Sida's manual for evaluation of development interventions *Looking Back, Moving Forward*.

A draft report shall not later than 30 September 2011 be submitted to Sida and SMVK for comments. Approximately two weeks after submission, the draft report shall be presented and discussed at a meeting at Sida HQ. After having received comments in writing a final report shall be submitted to Sida, with copies to SMVK and the implementing partners, not later than 28 October 2011.

11. REVIEW TEAM

The review team shall consist of a consultant with excellent review/evaluation skills and relevant background in international development cooperation. The consultant shall possess excellent knowledge of cultural development. The consultant shall also have solid knowledge of Swedish development cooperation policy. Experience from working in democracy and human rights context in Asia is an advantage.

The consultant may sub-contract local expertise for review, translation or other administrative purposes.

It is an absolute requirement that the reviewer(s) shall be independent of the reviewed activities and have no stake in the outcome of the review.

Annex 2. Persons interviewed for the MuSEA review

Cambodia

Ms. Sam Thida, National Museum of Cambodia, deputy director
Mr. Tes Chheoun, National Museum of Cambodia, head of exhibition
Mr. Chea Sambo, National Museum of Cambodia

Mr. Chhan Chamroeun, Angkor National Museum, Siem Reap
Ms. Sorphea, Angkor National Museum
Mr. Sorphorn, Angkor National Museum

Mr. Ouk-na Knhour Kay Toam, leader of the Imam Sann community
Members of the Imam Sann community
Mr. Karl-Anders Larsson, Embassy of Sweden, Phnom Penh

Laos

Ms. Phetmalayvanh Keobounma, Lao National Museum, deputy director
Ms. Vilayvanh Sihachak, Lao National Museum, head of research-Exhibition
Mr. Khamseng Keoasa, Lao National Museum, educator
Ms. Vanpheng Keopannha, Luang Prabang National Museum, director

Mr. Thongsasayavongkhamdy, Ministry of Information and Culture, Dept. of National Heritage, Director-General

Ms. Sengmany Vongsipasom, Houey Hong Vocational Training Centre for Women, manager
Employees and participants at weaving course, the Houey Hong Vocational Training Centre

Vietnam

Ms. Le Thi Minh Ly, Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, Dept. of Cultural Heritage, deputy director
Prof. PhD Nguyen Van Huy, Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, senior advisor
Mr. Pham Van Duong, Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, curator

Mr. Ngo Quang Lang, An Giang Cultural, Sport and Tourism Dept., deputy director
Mr. Duong Ai Dan, An Giang Museum, director
Ms. Duong Thi Minh Lieu, An Giang Museum, deputy director
Ms. Huynh Thai Van, An Giang Museum
Ms. Nguyen Van Muoc, An Giang Museum

Mr. Khu Luu Niem Bac Ton, My Hoa Hung village, An Giang province, fish farmer
Ms. Ngo Thi Phuong Dung, Embassy of Sweden, Hanoi, programme officer

Sweden

Dr. Karl Magnusson, National Museums of World Culture, int. cooperation manager
Ms. Katarina Stigwall, National Museums of World Culture, programme coordinator

Mr. David Holmertz, senior programme officer, Regional Team for Southeast Asia, Sida
Ms. Lillemor Lindh, former senior programme officer, DESO-Culture & Media, Sida

Annex 3. Itinerary

Sunday 11 Sep

Ny Nuangkhot meets staff at Luang Prabang National Museum. Interviews with visitors and collection of data (Wish Tree & visitors' book)

Stefan Dahlgren Departure from Stockholm

Monday 12 Sep

SD Arrival to Luang Prabang. Visit to the Exhibition.

Interview with Vanpheng Keopannha

NL Continues interviews and compilation of comments

Tuesday 13 Sep

Team discussions. Travel to Vientiane

Wednesday 14 Sep

Meeting with staff at the National Museum in Vientiane

and Mr. Thongsasayavongkhamdy, Ministry of Culture & Fine Arts

Visit to the Weaving Story outside Vientiane.

Thursday 15 Sep

Meeting with staff at the National Museum in Vientiane

SD Travel to Hanoi

Friday 16 Sep

Meeting at the Ministry of Culture in Hanoi

Visit to the Embassy of Sweden in Hanoi

Saturday 17 Sep

Visit to the Museum of Ethnology in Hanoi

Sunday 18 Sep

Travel from Hanoi to Long Xuyen, An Giang province

Monday 19 Sep

Meeting at An Giang Provincial Museum

Visit to the Fishing Story near Long Xuyen

Tuesday 20 Sep

Travel (by boat on the Mekong River) to Phnom Penh

Wednesday 21 Sep

Meeting at the National Museum, Phnom Penh

Visit to the Learning Story outside Phnom Penh

Thursday 22 Sep

Visit to the Embassy of Sweden in Phnom Penh

Travel to Siem Reap

Friday 23 Sep

Visit to the Angkor National Museum, Siem Reap

Travel to Bangkok and Sweden

Annex 4. Interviews & Wish Tree responses

Below are short summaries from some of the interviews. (See also section 5.1 and 5.3 above.) They do not cover everything that was said but highlight or illustrate some typical opinions and suggestions that were brought up.

In *Vientiane* there was a general agreement that the programme had provided more than expected at the outset. It provided useful staff training on various subjects: IT and illegal trading of artefacts was mentioned as well the English language training and the scholarships. Upon returning the scholarship holder had been able to share his knowledge with others at the museum and to teach at the university in Vientiane and the School of Fine Arts.

The most important contribution by the programme was cooperation with the other countries. The end of Sida funds would create problems with such contacts: "all such things need funding". The regional cooperation has provided opportunities to exchange knowledge and experience.

It was also pointed that all countries and partners had equal opportunities to influence the programme. There was not any sense that the Swedes decided about everything. "Yes, certainly the region had influence."

Were there negative views, for instance the length and the costs? "Five to six years is not a long time since capacity building takes time. It has not squeezed out other activities at the museum since everything was planned and with the time schedule we could avoid clashes." The time for preparation may have been short since few of the staff had much experience from research and collection and preservation of objects.

The positive opinion about the programme was confirmed by the Cultural Ministry's representative, who pointed out that the results and the standard was high in relation to the situation in Laos, where museums of any significance had been established very late in comparison to neighbouring countries. The preparations for a museology curriculum at the National University of Laos have been influenced by this programme. The programme has been important to develop the role of the museums and to show "a new image of what a museum can be".

At the museum in *Siem Reap* much of the opinions expressed above was echoed. The exhibition was particularly important in this place since much of the visitors come to look at the temples but they know nothing and learn very little about "the real culture of the people" because the opportunity to do that is not there. The director calculated that in comparison to the usual number of visitors to the museum during the high season, which is 3-400 per day, the exhibition caused an increase by 30 percent. This was largely due to intensive marketing, e.g. by advertising on the free maps to all tourists, before and during the show of the exhibition in Siem Reap.

Regarding possible influence in poverty alleviation the director said, "The people in the countryside probably believe that their situation is not interesting at all. The exhibition may contribute to the insight that their situation is important and that their culture is something to retain and protect." A couple of his colleagues meant the exhibition gave them the opportunity to work with "real material" and referred to the everyday objects that were in the exhibition and that some could be use and tried out like different kinds of dress. Another pointed out that the exhibition assumes that everyone can read and that is not the case among many of the poorest people. A new exhibition in the future that is aimed directly to the poor must take this into consideration and put more

emphasis on pictures, sound etc. Also better information may be needed about many of the objects in such a complicated collection in order to make it possible for the guides to answer all the questions from visitors. Perhaps a separate guide for the guides should have been produced.

The group discussion at the National Museum in *Phnom Penh* centred partly about what was special with the programme: "It is a new way of working, very different from how a historical museum normally works", particularly that today's objects were collected and not historical artefacts. The introduction of research was a novelty for the museum, which previously did not have a section or department for this. The most important aspect of the programme was to learn to work with today's issues and thereby also with the future and how you can share knowledge about other cultures in the neighbouring countries. Every meeting and all the workshops brought useful knowledge.

Everyone agreed that working manner of the programme was good and it went ahead slowly in order to guarantee that everyone was on board and understood what should be done. "Katarina"²⁷ really made that everyone understood, and was able to handle the problems with language and the new concepts." In particular the exhibition was "a great experience". It took a lot of time and "sometimes we had to use the lunch break or evening to be able to complete the exhibition" but it was generally considered to be worthwhile.

The background and origin of the programme was brought up at the discussion in *Hanoi*. It was obvious that the Swedish emphasis on dealing with marginal groups and to bring forward problematic issues in contemporary society went well with opinions at the Museum of Ethnography regarding the role of museums. It was said that the opinions about this shift or expansion of the role of museums differed initially among the participating museums but this may have been due to uncertainty at the beginning about ways and means and how to carry this out in practice rather than disagreement about the overall objectives.

The following is a translation of some of the comments by Lao visitors:

²⁷ The name of the Programme Coordinator av SMVK in Sweden

11.09.11 :

As a Lao citizen living in Luang Prabang I am very glad visiting this exhibition demonstrating the culture²⁸ of Mekong because it is a different and presents varieties of livelihood in each country. I feel that our Lao country also has a livelihood's wealth in natural resources and I wish to see this kind of exhibition again.

10.09.11 :

On behalf of teachers from the Child Development Centre in Luang Prabang, I am thankful and glad to visit the exhibition because it develops the thinking and the learning of children from this exhibition. The children are excited visiting it; they see the different ways of presentation and different logistics used for presentation. Many thanks for this interesting exhibition organized for all to see it.

8.09.11 :

Very good that we make visible the importance of livelihood culture, and it is good because it is exposed to foreigners to know about our local culture.

8.09.11 :

Luang Prabang, as ancient Lao Lane Xang, has beautiful scenery, simply livelihood style of people combined with the unique specific architecture's style. Culture, traditional practices, living style of local people are charming which attract to seek for. (A Lao proverb is given describing the beauty of Luang Prabang).

The team also looked at the 'crop' from the Wish Tree. There were 183 cards and they turned out to quite personal and to be quite private dreams and wishes but some are actually comments on the exhibition. In relation to the exhibition they can be said to provide an opportunity for interaction, thereby perhaps making the contents of the exhibition more close to their own reality.

One should probably see the Wish Tree more as a part of the exhibition and not a channel for commenting upon it. In any case it has not been fully used by the programme and the museums. The team was informed that the plan was that wishes from one place should be compiled and shown at the next location for the exhibition. That was only done for Hanoi but not for the subsequent places. This was a lost opportunity to increase the interaction between the visitors and the exhibition.

The analysis of the wishes shows that at least in Luang Prabang there are clear religious connections and the wording is related to Buddhism, indicating that these wishes are important for the following reasons:

- (1) Luang Prabang people have strong believes in Buddhism, each time they make their wish they think of Buddha; and say "sa thou sa thou sa thou"; in the cards they call the holy strengths in the universe to help in making their dream become true;
- (2) The trees where visitors hang the dream cards on represent the holy tree that Buddhist people respect.

²⁸ The English name of the exhibition in "The Stories of Mekong" in Lao it is translated "The culture of Mekong region" (Culture = Ariyathamn);

- (3) It is felt from reading the Dream cards that people do wish their dream to be true, therefore some cards give their full name as some Buddhists also do when they make their wish.
- (4) The palace of King has been a holy place for people so when they could make their wish at this venue again they do believe that it is a specific opportunity for them;
- (5) The colour of the cards “red” is believed to bring luck to people;
- (6) They beg that their wish to become true in this life and in next life.

A sample of the wishes from the Wish Tree:

- I want the holy tree to promote love of people to culture forever, I want to see everything is preserved for ever;
- I wish the next generation to see and recognize the beautiful culture;
- I wish to see the country has security, development, and civilized gradually;
- I want to study tour for exchanging knowledge for developing my country; for my own learning;
- I want to have my own trading shop;
- I wish the country to be without the oppression, solidarity and harmony;
- I wish to be a well known successful business lady if I do business, to be big leader if I work in state system, to be rich if I do the trading;
- I wish Lao people, Lao country to be full of happiness, full of knowledge, of capacity, of wealth, and full of sustainable ancient culture;
- My concern is that I have a fear of cold war which current exists with China;
- I want to be rich for helping the poorer;
- I wish to have money for taking my parents to medical service when they are sick;
- to have big house, to have cars of specific brand;
- to pay off the debt of family;
- to see Lao people preserve the ancient culture and natural resource;
- to see next exhibition exposing the products made by Lao wisdom e.g. woven clothes, bamboo woven as home handicraft items that Lao people use in daily life but leaders do not perceive this need;
- now the Mekong is at risk, natural resource are damaged, I want to keep Mekong as river of culture for ever;

One hypothesis from this is that analyses of the Wish Tree 'dreams' may show variations that would reveal aspects of local realities and that this in turn could inspire future exhibitions and research into local conditions for daily life.



REVIEW OF CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, A PROGRAMME OF MUSEUM COOPERATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA (MUSEA):

For six years major museums and ministries of culture in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam cooperated with Swedish Museums for World Culture in MUSEA, a programme for development of museums and their role in society. This report is the end-of-programme review carried out in September 2011. The review concludes the programme was relevant to the overall objective of poverty alleviation, which includes culture and identity and the museums' potential to highlight marginalised groups. It was effective in fulfilling its purpose, although with limitations in reaching the overall objective. Contributing factors to the sustainability of the achievements are: the organisations involved are stable; a professional network is established; the overall objective provides direction for a future role; and the programme was implemented through strong participation and ownership.

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