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**REPORT
ASSOCIATION
STEERING**

COMMITTEE

EXAMPLES of museological
innovation and initiatives
that improving quality,
engaging an audience, cost
and efficiency

English edition,
24 January 2014

TRIED-AND- TESTED PARTNER- SHIPS

**REPORT BY THE
ASSCHER-VONK II
STEERING COMMITTEE**

EXAMPLES of museological cooperation and initiatives aimed at improving quality, reaching an audience, cost-cutting and efficiency

TRIED-AND-TESTED PARTNERSHIPS

In the autumn of 2013, the Netherlands Museums Association in cooperation with the Association of National Museums produced this report containing lessons learned about inter-museum cooperation in the Netherlands. The report lists examples of cooperation and new initiatives in the Dutch museum sector. It is important in times of economic uncertainty to continue to deliver a top-quality museum experience. Moreover, it is important that museums show society what they are doing and what they are achieving for the common good. One way to do so is to form partnerships - whether between museums or with organisations outside the museum or even cultural sectors.

Museological cooperation focuses on making collections more visible, managing museums more efficiently or cutting costs in museums. It is about achieving higher quality and sharing or securing museological knowledge. Furthermore, it is about reaching new audiences and attracting more visitors. This report looks at different types of cooperation and is intended to be used for educational and inspirational purposes.

The outcome of this report shows that, more than anything, cooperation is about people, about connecting people with similar aims. It is also clear that imposed cooperation is often doomed to fail. Having chaired NEMO for the last 3 years, I realise that our experiences are not unique within Europe. Yet I believe the results of this report might be useful to museums and colleagues in other European countries, particularly at a time of diminishing funds and when the contribution museums make to society is being questioned. With this in mind, the Netherlands Museums Association and NEMO have joined forces and had part one of this report translated into English. We hope to inspire and motivate colleagues all over Europe who are striving to maintain their high-quality work and to keep their cultural heritage accessible in their countries.

Siebe Weide

Chairman NEMO/Director Netherlands Museums Association

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THE PATH TO THE FUTURE FOR MUSEUMS: OBSERVATIONS BY THE ASSCHER-VONK II STEERING COMMITTEE

It has already been said in *Musea voor Morgen* (museums of tomorrow):

“Greater attention is required for cooperation and synergy, in the interest of the museum audience and society.”¹

In publishing its follow-up to that report, *Tried-and-tested Partnerships*, the Asscher-Vonk II steering committee charts examples of cooperation and initiatives in the museum sector which have been developed with a view to ensuring the continued provision of high-quality art and culture in changing times. Our main objective is to provide you, Dutch museums, with a picture of the many aspects of museological cooperation. In order for you to learn from them, to inspire one another. The objective is also to show society what museums are doing in this respect and what they are achieving.

This report was possible thanks to input from many of you, who took the trouble to tell us about the examples of which you are proud or to discuss them with steering committee members. The steering committee is extremely grateful for all the input from the museum sector.

As a steering committee, we are pleased to share with you the picture which has emerged over the past six months. First of all, it is clear that the museum sector is full of vitality and new initiatives. Museums have something to offer. There is no reason at all to be downcast about the future. There are, however, a few matters which require attention.

¹ *Musea voor Morgen*, Asscher-Vonk advisory committee, 30 September 2012

THE PATH TO THE FUTURE FOR MUSEUMS: OBSERVATIONS BY THE ASSCHER-VONK II STEERING COMMITTEE

Sharing knowledge

Museums have a great deal of knowledge and experience at their disposal, but sharing this knowledge, the most primary form of cooperation, still occurs too infrequently and is poorly organised. This is a shame, as museums could learn a great deal from one another and it is efficient if not everyone has to start from scratch on things. The associations could play an even greater role in this than they already do. We hope that this report will also contribute to improved knowledge sharing.

Ad hoc and sustainable cooperation

When asked, nearly all museums replied that they cooperate on a daily basis. A frequently-heard remark was “I wouldn’t be able to put together a single exhibition without cooperation”. It is true: no exhibition would be possible without cooperation with Dutch and foreign lenders, restorers, university and academic institute researchers. This type of — ad hoc — cooperation is very familiar to museums and is both extremely valuable and productive. It creates intensive alliances and contacts. It often also yields more structural relationships.

As a steering group, however, we were chiefly interested in other, more sustainable alliances. Cooperation which is aimed at improving the visibility of collections, at more efficient operations or at cost-cutting, at improving quality or reaching a wider and/or new audience. We came across many examples and also noted that a great deal is being developed. The benefits will be reaped in the near future.

We note that a shift is underway from ad hoc cooperation to more structural types. Most museums are utterly convinced that cooperation on content benefits quality and are prepared to invest in it. The added value of organisational cooperation is sometimes questioned. Yet it is obvious to the steering group that the joint organisation of e.g. back office tasks can in some cases lighten the burden on individual institutions, cut costs and above all enable them to deliver higher quality.

THE PATH TO THE FUTURE FOR MUSEUMS: OBSERVATIONS BY THE ASSCHER-VONK II STEERING COMMITTEE

Administrative cooperation/mergers

Administrative cooperation involving full integration up to the level of the board of directors, management board and supervisory board currently chiefly occurs when subsidising authorities impose this, usually combined with cost-cutting. Mergers are rarely welcomed, as museums often like to retain their autonomy. There is a clear trend within municipalities to place cultural institutions of all types under a single administrative umbrella. This can lead to positive results, but sometimes fails to achieve the desired effect. The steering committee believes that mergers are by definition not essential to achieving sound cooperation and may be counterproductive in practice, e.g. where the culture within the organisations differs too widely. The conditions for successful mergers therefore need to be better investigated.

There are certainly opportunities to be grasped, e.g. where individual institutions are too small and possess too little power to function properly independently. The retention of an individual profile is important here. We would like to invite museums to consider types of administrative cooperation, with museums or other cultural institutions, which yield economies of scale, but which avoid the pitfall of loss of identity.

International cooperation

It is noticeable that in the case of international cooperation museums mainly gave examples of exhibitions and one-off projects. Dutch museums are rightly proud of how they have positioned themselves on the international stage over the past few decades and created active networks. Joint exhibition projects with foreign partners have become accepted *good practice*. Yet structural cross-border cooperation could be expanded further, with project-based contacts as a starting point. Museums could also take greater advantage of European Union subsidies. In *Musea voor Morgen* the associations were advised to combine their expertise on this to allow institutions to obtain advice and support. It would also be useful, especially for smaller and medium-sized museums, to chart which institutions actively participate in which international networks.

THE PATH TO THE FUTURE FOR MUSEUMS: OBSERVATIONS BY THE ASSCHER-VONK II STEERING COMMITTEE

Museums and municipalities

We encountered innumerable examples of museums which actively participate in city marketing and tourist packages – often with other cultural institutions – or which are taking on a new role in regional development and urban regeneration. A museum is often the best showcase a municipality could wish for. Museums are often of inestimable value to a city or town's image. Municipalities would therefore do well to involve them as partners in their own development and promotion. There are many opportunities for both parties. Municipalities have the option to encourage local, fruitful types of cooperation, using all the resources they have available, such as accommodation, spatial policy, legislation, subsidy terms and conditions and programmes on content. It is obviously sensible for institutions to be involved in this from the start. The report also contains many examples of successful types of cooperation with business.

To close with a quotation from one of your colleagues:

“The spirit of the times fosters cooperation. The problems we face as museums are related to the size of each individual museum. You can no longer make it alone.”

Irene Asscher-Vonk (chair)
Pieter Geelen
Manfred Sellink

c 1 INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2012, Dutch museums set up a major, joint initiative. Commissioned by the Netherlands Museums Association (NMV) and the National Museums Association (VRM), a committee² was installed, chaired by emeritus professor Irene Asscher-Vonk, tasked with investigating how best to consolidate the museum sector. The key question was:

What are the options for improving cohesion, intensifying cooperation and expanding the museum audience?

The committee was installed at a time of huge uncertainty within the museum sector. The national government had just announced sizeable cuts for government-funded museums. Museums funded by municipalities and provinces found themselves in the same situation. A number of museums had recently been forced to close due to a lack of funding. The then State Secretary of Culture, Halbe Zijlstra, announced a fundamental review of the future of the museum sector and to this end requested advice from the Council for Culture.

In this climate, the museums wished to determine their own direction and retain control of the sector's future. On 30 September 2012, the Asscher-Vonk committee published its recommendations under the title *Musea voor Morgen*. The report's main message was that museums should work together in order to be in a better position to face the future. These recommendations were embraced by the boards of the two museum associations. As an initial act of endorsement, it was decided to merge the two associations. This process is now at an advanced stage. The merger will be a fact as of 2014.

² In addition to the chair, the steering committee comprised Maarten Doorman (philosopher and professor at the University of Amsterdam) and museum directors Sjarel Ex (MUSEUM BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN), Edwin van Huis (NATURALIS), Kees van der Meiden (TWEENTSEWELLE), Wim Pijbes (RIJKSMUSEUM), Axel Rüger (VAN GOGH MUSEUM), Marjan Scharloo (TEYLERS MUSEUM), Manfred Sellink (MUSEA BRUGGE) and Benno Tempel (GEMEENTEMUSEUM DEN HAAG).

c 1 INTRODUCTION

‘Strength through cooperation’

Musea voor Morgen received widespread support, not just among the museums themselves, but also from the national government. As its name suggests, the recent policy memorandum by the new Minister of Education, Culture and Science (‘Strength through cooperation’, 10 June 2013) aligns itself with the Asscher-Vonk committee in devoting a great deal of importance to museological cooperation.³ The national government is to make available an additional budget of two million euros a year to encourage cooperation. The minister aims to actively involve the museum sector, in this case the two museum associations, in developing the criteria for the new scheme. This active role by the associations is important recognition for the direction adopted by the sector with *Musea voor Morgen*.

Asscher-Vonk II steering committee

The two associations decided on a follow-up for *Musea voor Morgen*, aimed at encouraging cooperation. To this end, in January 2013 a steering committee was installed comprising IRENE ASSCHER-VONK (chair), PIETER GEELLEN (Turing Foundation, co-founder of TomTom) and MANFRED SELLINK (Musea Brugge, formerly member of the Asscher-Vonk steering committee).

³ The minister’s policy document places the emphasis on, among other things, collection mobility, education, reaching a new audience and developing talent. Shortly before, the Council for Culture had also published its recommendations, entitled *Ontgrenzen en verbinden. Naar een nieuw museaal bestel (Removing borders and connecting. Towards a new museological sector)*, 31 January 2013.

c 2 REPORT OBJECTIVE

The Asscher-Vonk steering committee's objective was to develop a common outlook and agenda on behalf of the two associations and in doing so make a strategic contribution to the social and political debate. The basis for this was laid with *Musea voor Morgen*.

The Asscher-Vonk II steering committee's task was to register and encourage museological cooperation. This report fulfils this task.⁴

At the start of its activities, the steering committee established the following framework.

Cooperation is defined as: contributing to a common result by means of joint effort from a museum and a fellow museum or other party (such as educational, other cultural institutions, business or the audience). The cooperation must be repeatable and aim for a sustainable result in at least one of the following areas:

- more profitable operations by cutting costs or increasing revenue
- shared and/or guaranteed museum knowledge
- increase in audience reach via wider and/or new audience
- greater visibility of the collection

⁴ Please see annex 1 (page 47) for the task.

c 2 REPORT OBJECTIVE

Museums already cooperate with one another frequently and possess a great deal of knowledge and experience. There is often no time or opportunity to make that experience explicit and share it, however much willingness there may be to do so. This means that opportunities are missed. The steering committee's main wish was to register good examples and *lessons learned* and give them back to the sector. This became a broad, but undoubtedly incomplete, inventory of types of cooperation and other initiatives which the museums themselves thought worth submitting, because they are proud of them, because these initiatives have been proven to work and because they contribute to their social mission. The report also describes the current state of affairs for policymakers, administrators and other involved parties.

The steering committee set to work as follows. Via the associations, an appeal was made to members to submit interesting examples of cooperation.⁵ This yielded a flood of responses via E-mail. In some cases, the museums were approached to submit examples or use was made of publications in the media. In addition, the chair and members of the steering committee visited a large number of museums, all of which were inspiring.⁶ This was sometimes at the invitation of the museum itself, sometimes at the request of the steering committee itself. The information from these discussions has also been included in part II of this report.

⁵ On 14 June 2013 a short video clip was also placed on the museum associations' websites, in which a number of museums presented their projects.

⁶ Please see annex 2 (page 48) for a list of the steering committee's discussion partners.

c 3 EXAMPLES FROM MUSEUM PRACTICE

The steering committee distinguishes four themes:

1. **LOWER COSTS, HIGHER REVENUE,
GREATER EFFICIENCY**
2. **SHARING KNOWLEDGE, JOINING FORCES**
3. **WIDER AND NEW AUDIENCE**
4. **GREATER VISIBILITY OF COLLECTIONS**

For each theme, each section gives a general description of the type of cooperation submitted by museums and analyses its significance. We always refer to one or more noteworthy example. Numbers refer to these and other examples which relate to the same theme and which are described in the second part of this report.

The structure of each section is: which opportunities and benefits did the museum envisage with respect to this specific theme in relation to:

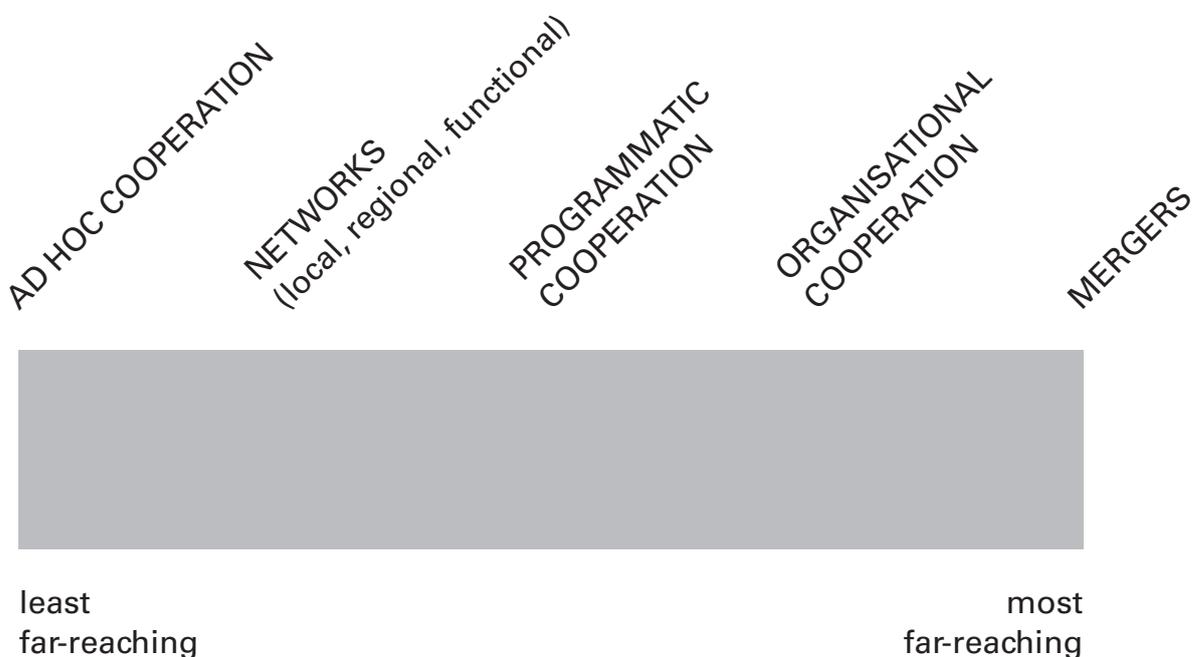
1. **COOPERATION WITH MUSEUMS,
CULTURAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS**
2. **COOPERATION WITH BUSINESS**
3. **OTHER**

Category 3 'other' deals with other types of initiatives or other partners. Each chapter closes with a brief summary.

3.1 TYPES OF MUSEOLOGICAL COOPERATION

The examples the steering committee encountered demonstrate varying degrees of museological cooperation. Five types are described in the figure below; with the exception of mergers, they cannot always be strictly demarcated and occasionally overlap. **Incidentally, far-reaching types** of cooperation are no better or worse than **less far-reaching** or ad hoc cooperation. It all depends on the objective the cooperation must serve and how it is put into practice.

Types of museological cooperation:



3.1 TYPES OF MUSEOLOGICAL COOPERATION

AD HOC COOPERATION

Ad hoc cooperation includes all types of non-structural cooperation, such as within the framework of projects and exhibitions, also internationally. Ad hoc cooperation occurs at all museums and is a completely normal part of museum practice. Structural alliances sometimes arise from ad hoc cooperation. Ad hoc types of cooperation are beyond the scope of this report, however valuable they may be. The steering committee's focus was after all focused on types of cooperation which are repeatable and sustainable.

NETWORKS

Networks are more or less formalised alliances between museums which have something in common. This may be their location (local, regional) or the type of collections they manage or their specific objective (functional networks). Networks are chiefly aimed at the exchange and coordination of e.g. activities, knowledge and expertise. Networks may evolve into types of programmatic or other cooperation.

PROGRAMMATIC COOPERATION

Programmatic cooperation includes the many types of non-ad hoc cooperation on content which museums enter into with one another and with third parties. Programmatic cooperation means making arrangements on objectives regarding content and the input the partners make to this end. In some cases, joint activities are housed in a separate trust, resulting in organisational cooperation as well.

ORGANISATIONAL COOPERATION

Organisational cooperation involves museums conducting specific tasks jointly at an organisational level or having them conducted by other museums or organisations or companies which are better equipped for the tasks. This can vary from a limited type of cooperation, e.g. personnel administration or joint ticket sales, to far-reaching types of cooperation, such as sharing a building or visitor facilities. Within this category, the museums always retain their own profile and administrative autonomy.

3.1 TYPES OF MUSEOLOGICAL COOPERATION

MERGERS

Mergers are the most far-reaching type of cooperation. In this type, a new organisation is created with a single board of directors, management board or supervisory board. The museum personnel are housed in the new legal entity. Mergers differ in the extent to which the individual components or locations retain their own brand/identity. Mergers may involve exclusively museums or different types of institutions, such as a library or an arts centre. The mergers the steering committee came across were mostly imposed by subsidising authorities and often prompted by cuts.

3.2 LOWER COSTS, HIGHER REVENUE, GREATER EFFICIENCY

The topic of cost-cutting is highly relevant in tough economic times, witness the very large number of responses received on this topic. Cost-cutting is not always a popular topic, because it is often associated with scrapping activities and imposing cut-backs. However, there are tried-and-tested ways of continuing to do the same at a lower cost or delivering higher quality on the same budget.

The examples demonstrate that museums themselves successfully adopt many initiatives in this respect.

Relatively few museums submitted initiatives of how to increase revenue through cooperation. This is perhaps logical. Each museum does its best to increase its revenue and to raise funds, especially at a time when subsidies are being cut and the government is making tougher demands on the percentage of the museums' own revenue. The interests of the museum are central here. Other institutions are often viewed as competitors. Yet we have seen here that this does not have to be the case.

3.2 LOWER COSTS, HIGHER REVENUE, GREATER EFFICIENCY BY COOPERATION WITH MUSEUMS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Managing collections together in joint storage facilities

Storage facilities are expensive, as are the personnel who work there. No museums submitted examples of stricter selection or the disposal of stored collections as a way to cut costs. The steering committee believes this is remarkable, but it is beyond the scope of this report. It is clear that the current method of collection storage is not always cost-effective — even in the eyes of the sector itself. Some museums allow smaller museums to use their storage facilities. This is purely aimed at the efficient use of suitable storage space. Yet it is sometimes more far-reaching.

In the province of Friesland, the four provincial museums ⁸ and the archives have developed plans to create joint and sustainable storage facilities, which are completely 'climate-passive'. The costs for running this low-energy and low-maintenance building will be half the current costs. The collections will be combined and managed by a single organisation. The country council has agreed to the centre's construction. The new centre is expected to be completed in 2015-2016. As a result, the museums will have to reduce the physical size of their stored collections by about 20%.

Together with the RIJKSMUSEUM and the NETHERLANDS OPEN AIR MUSEUM, the CULTURAL HERITAGE AGENCY OF THE NETHERLANDS is conducting research into joint sustainable storage facilities, which other collection managers could join in the future.

⁸ THE FRIES MUSEUM, FRIES SCHEEPVAARTMUSEUM, NATUURMUSEUM FRYSLÂN, FRIES LANDBOUWMUSEUM AND THE FRISIAN HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CENTRE

3.2 LOWER COSTS, HIGHER REVENUE, GREATER EFFICIENCY BY COOPERATION WITH MUSEUMS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Purchasing collections jointly

Talks with representatives of art museums demonstrate that it is increasingly usual for art and other museums to make joint purchases rather than compete against one another. Funds encourage this.⁹ Together the museums agree on splitting the costs for management and conservation and on which museum displays the object when. MUSEUM BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN, for example, recently purchased works by German artist Thomas Huber together with the CENTRAAL MUSEUM. The two museums have each acquired one work from a series of two pieces. The two pieces are currently on display in Rotterdam. In the spring, the paintings will be exhibited in Utrecht. This cooperation is laid down in a contract.

Hire in support functions from another institution

The same support tasks generally need to be conducted in small museums as in the large ones, while the financial basis and expertise for this are limited. Some organisations are better able to conduct specific tasks than others thank to their size or expertise. A growing number of museums are therefore opting to buy in tasks such as IT or HR from fellow institutions, enabling them to obtain higher quality at the same or even a lower price.

Sharing facility management services/organisational cooperation

Museums are increasingly opting to share specific services with one another or other cultural institutions. This is considerably simpler if they share premises. It may be cheaper to share sales points, visitor and catering facilities, to have a shared production office for exhibitions, to arrange building maintenance jointly or to combine commercial and rental services. TWENTSEWELLE and RIJKSMUSEUM TWENTHE share their caretaker and mobile telephone service and the MUSEUMS IN LEIDEN are to set up a joint back office for IT.

⁹ The Mondriaan Fund, for instance, states in its Ad Hoc Purchases regulation: "Applications submitted by two or more parties are viewed in a positive light. An assessment is made of whether the cooperation in this plan contains added value."

3.2 LOWER COSTS, HIGHER REVENUE, GREATER EFFICIENCY BY COOPERATION WITH MUSEUMS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Salary administration and security are also suited to cooperation. Museums often outsource salary administration: doing so together with other museums which apply the same collective labour agreement cuts costs, as larger quantities are involved. The museums located around Museum plein in Amsterdam have shared an incident room for many years. This enabled them to organise higher-quality security.

In its most far-reaching form, sharing services and facilities leads to a full-scale organisational merger.

Joint procurement

It is cheaper to purchase specific services and materials jointly. These include cleaning services, office items, energy and security. The Netherlands Museum Association has drawn up sample procurement terms and conditions for its members. Smaller museums which are individually unable to obtain favourable terms and conditions can certainly profit from these. The JEWISH HISTORICAL MUSEUM, for instance, purchases environmentally-friendly energy together with fifteen cultural institutions and one diamond merchant, which together form the 'PLANTAGE AMSTERDAM'. The DRENTHE DIRECTEUREN OVERLEG (directors board) buys cleaning services, IT, office items etc. for the participating museums. There is also cooperation in sharing printing and distribution costs for leaflets and other promotional material. Joint procurement does not have to be organised just with fellow institutions, but can also be done with the municipality or companies.

Obtaining advice from colleagues on estimates and tenders

It is worth testing estimates and contracts among colleagues. The knowledge this yields simplifies the process of negotiating with providers. The obligation to put out tenders is a huge burden for many museums. "The tendering process is a huge amount of work, an enormous burden on our organisation. We only have one HR officer who has to do everything." (Nicole Delissen, STEDELIJK MUSEUM AMSTERDAM) It may also be worth paying third parties to conduct a tendering process or asking a fellow institution with experience of this to help. Some museums are even large enough to employ people specifically to put out tenders. Hiring in external expertise or making use of expertise at a fellow museum may initially be more expensive, but it usually more than repays itself.

3.2 LOWER COSTS, HIGHER REVENUE, GREATER EFFICIENCY BY COOPERATION WITH MUSEUMS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Flexible deployment of personnel

The new Stichting DEFENSIEMUSEA (Ministry of Defence museum foundation) is to centralise administrative and support tasks and deploy personnel flexibly at the four locations, solving staffing level problems without having to hire in additional personnel. This is possible due to personnel being housed in a single foundation. Personnel from PRINCE WILLIAM V GALLERY and THE PRISON GATE MUSEUM/HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF THE HAGUE are also to be deployed in the two organisations.

Joint approach of sponsors and authorities

Three top cultural institutions (ROYAL PICTURE GALLERY MAURITSHUIS, ROYAL CONCERTGEBOUW ORCHESTRA and NEDERLANDS DANS THEATER) have set up a charity in the United Kingdom (DUTCH MASTERS FOUNDATION), which aims to interest wealthy Dutch residents of London in their activities. The institutions can generate a much higher profile together than they can individually. The charity was self-sufficient within a year of its creation.

3.2 LOWER COSTS, HIGHER REVENUE, GREATER EFFICIENCY RECOMMENDATIONS BY MUSEUMS FOR CUTTING COSTS

RE-AWARD LONG-TERM CONTRACTS

Re-examine existing client-contractor relationships, such as cleaning, security and the safety, health and welfare service. Can it be done differently?

“We had used the same cleaning service for a long time. We had a good relationship, but we repeated the tendering process and thanks to the crisis were able to obtain much better prices. We did the same with our temporary staff, especially some guards who worked via temping agencies. The salary administration has also recently been outsourced. We are reviewing whether we can share with this fellow institutes. It involves considerable sums.”

— J. Cahen, director JEWISH HISTORICAL MUSEUM

NEVER REQUEST JUST ONE ESTIMATE.

Ask advice from colleagues on what are considered to be ‘normal’ sums; they are often quite open about this.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR ESTIMATES AND TENDERS.

A request for estimates or putting out tenders is labour-intensive and specialist work. Bringing in professional assistance often yields so many benefits that museums should not allow themselves to be put off.

ASK FOR A DISCOUNT WHEN ACCEPTING AN ESTIMATE.

Encourage the organisation to think in a more business-like fashion. For example, have all budget holders take a course on negotiation. The STEDELIJK MUSEUM AMSTERDAM asks all employees to apply business principles when purchasing services and goods. Not everyone enjoys negotiating with what are often long-running business partners, but all employees are proud if they succeed in closing a better deal. The general director at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam recommends never allowing such success to go unnoticed, but to ‘celebrate’ it with the rest of the company.

3.2 LOWER COSTS, HIGHER REVENUE, GREATER EFFICIENCY VIA COOPERATION WITH BUSINESS

Conducting tasks on behalf of companies

It happens occasionally: a company transfers the management of an art collection to a museum. This was the case in Schiedam, where SNS handed its art collection to the STEDELIJK MUSEUM SCHIEDAM to manage. The museum receives an annual fee from SNS for the management and exposure of the collection. Of course both parties benefit from this.

Finance activities together with companies

When financing exhibitions, the COBRA MUSEUM is to appeal to its own Business Club, to which 26 companies are affiliated which have close ties with the museum. From NRC Handelsblad, 17/18 July 2013: "The financing model which arose out of brainstorm sessions with the club is called Cobra Entrepreneurs. Companies which feel attached to the museum commit to a blockbuster of international allure. They each invest 25,000 euros and use their networks to generate publicity for the exhibition and attract visitors. Companies help themselves to earn back the invested sums... "The aim is that we really do work together," explains Ottenhof (director of COBRA MUSEUM). "We take the financial risk together, but also share the opportunity to set up a fantastic exhibition with international allure."

Bring companies into the museum

If a company possesses knowledge essential to a museum, one option is to take over the company. For years, NATURALIS has worked with ETI Bioinformatics, a small company which specialises in developing software products and services for biodiversity informatics. Since 2013, ETI Bioinformatics has been a part of the museum: cheaper and beneficial to quality.

Sponsoring in kind

A company with which you do business could be a good candidate for sponsoring, especially if that company can contribute by offering a discount on its own invoices. The STEDELIJK MUSEUM AMSTERDAM, for instance, offered its insurance company the position of chief sponsor for a major exhibition in exchange for a substantial discount on the insurance premium for the exhibition.

3.2 LOWER COSTS, HIGHER REVENUE, GREATER EFFICIENCY OTHER

Outsourcing tasks

It is usual for museums to outsource security, but cooperation or sharing costs with local companies, such as jewellers, is a less well-known type of cooperation and in fact brings additional benefits. The ZUIDERZEE MUSEUM in Enkhuizen has outsourced its security and uses an external incident room in Eindhoven as a back-up. Cooperation with neighbouring companies furnishes a security guard who can provide physical assistance if required.

Conducting tasks under in-house management

It is sometimes cheaper to conduct tasks in-house than to hire in a company. The FRANS HALS MUSEUM switched to printing exhibition catalogues itself and selling them in-house and in nearby bookshops, a task which had been outsourced to an external party for many years. In fact it proved to be a profitable formula.

Using volunteers and internship students

Museums, especially the smaller ones, have always been run to a greater or lesser extent using volunteers who love the museum. Over the past few years, as a result of the economic crisis, it seems that the nature of volunteer work has changed. There is huge potential among highly-educated people who cannot find paid work and who seek a meaningful way of spending their time and gaining work experience. Of course there are also objections to using volunteers insofar as they replace paid work, but the trend is unmistakable. Museums make use of volunteers, also to conduct tasks that would otherwise not be conducted. The JEWISH HISTORICAL MUSEUM, for instance, uses volunteers to man areas the museum was previously unable to. The Digital Monument to the Jewish Community in the Netherlands was even set up entirely using volunteers. The STEDELIJK MUSEUM AMSTERDAM also views its 40-plus internship students from universities and colleges of higher education as a major source of labour productivity.

Re-using exhibition materials

Museums incur costs for temporary exhibitions. High costs. After an exhibition has finished, an exhibit may find a new function at a different museum or it is possible to make an extra exhibit for a fellow museum at only a small additional cost.

3.2 LOWER COSTS, HIGHER REVENUE, GREATER EFFICIENCY OTHER

Funds encourage entrepreneurship

It is worth allocating a prominent position to entrepreneurship and earning capacity in subsidy applications, as funds take these into consideration when deciding on awarding subsidies. The DUTCH NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES was awarded a subsidy for a restoration project for mummy sarcophagi, partly because the restored sarcophagi were a means for the institution to raise more revenue. Restored sarcophagi are easier to transport and the museum can make money out of them in the future. That little touch of cultural entrepreneurship was appreciated by the fund in question.

Getting the public involved: crowdfunding

A new type of fund-raising which museums are increasingly turning to is crowdfunding.

Crowdfunding is an alternative method for financing projects. In most cases, entrepreneurs go to the bank to borrow money. Crowdfunding is conducted without the intervention of financiers and instead creates direct contact between the investors and entrepreneurs. The internet plays a major role here. See for instance the website www.voordekunst.nl. Anyone can invest in a project via this website. The idea behind it is that lots of private individuals can invest a small sum of money and that when added up these small investments can finance the entire project.

DORDRECHT MUSEUM used this method to finance the purchase of *View of Dordrecht* by Jan van Goyen (1651). Via the 'Give Dordrecht its view back' crowdfunding campaign, the museum involved business and inhabitants in the acquisition of Van Goyen's masterpiece. The campaign not only raised money, but ensured greater familiarity with DORDRECHT MUSEUM'S name and higher visitor numbers.

Tapping into other subsidy sources

In the current climate there are large number of people claiming unemployment benefit. Municipalities seek projects where they can house job-seekers in order to improve their job prospects. MUSEUM DE 5000 MORGEN in Hoogeveen makes use of a municipal unemployment scheme. It deploys about fifteen job-seekers, for whom it receives 30,000 euros. The director: "I use them for tasks that I otherwise cannot do or for which I have no money." The benefits agencies are also often prepared to supervise these job-seekers.

3.2 LOWER COSTS, HIGHER REVENUE, GREATER EFFICIENCY IN SUMMARY

Cooperation in support and facility management services is not just cheaper, it also benefits quality. Larger museums enjoy economies of scale from which smaller museums can benefit.

Joint storage facilities cut costs and are efficient; these can yield many benefits.

Purchasing collection pieces together is a promising strategy. Excellent arrangements can be made on practical aspects.

The museum sector itself possesses a great deal of knowledge of all aspects of operations. Museums could use one another's expertise much more than is currently the case.

Approach companies not just for non-recoverable sums, but also discuss the options for joint investment and earning a return.

It is worth searching beyond familiar subsidies and e.g. looking at employment subsidies.

3.3 SHARING KNOWLEDGE, JOINING FORCES

Cooperation benefits the quality of museological task execution, as knowledge, expertise and networks are combined. This enables the museum to perform better than it would individually and often also yields higher quality at the same price.

Many examples demonstrate this.

3.3 SHARE KNOWLEDGE, JOIN FORCES BY COOPERATION WITH MUSEUMS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Cooperation on programme content and projects

Museums have related collections and can combine their knowledge. Or museums have related or similar themes and can complement and enrich one another. Or museums are located in the same region and serve the same audience. The background for cooperation on content can vary enormously.

The STICHTING NEDERLANDSE NATUURHISTORISCHE COLLECTIES (Dutch natural history collection foundation) is an example of an alliance in which sharing knowledge and developing joint programmes are major objectives. AMSTERDAM HERITAGE MUSEUMS, an alliance between AMSTERDAM MUSEUM, MUSEUM WILLET-HOLTHUYSEN, ONS' LIEVE HEER OP SOLDER MUSEUM and the CROMHOOUTHUIZEN/BIBLICAL MUSEUM, jointly develop audience programmes and bring together people and resources from the organisations; cooperation as a growth engine, which evolves out of the content and is based on a framework agreement signed by all the parties.

Cooperating in education

In the field of education, there are many examples of cooperation between museums and educational and social institutions. Some museums work structurally with art colleges, such as the ZEEUWS MUSEUM with the Willem de Kooning Academy, others with universities and educational partners. MUSEUM JEUGD UNIVERSITEIT (youth university museum), an initiative of the Netherlands Council for Social Development, is an example of long-running, successful educational cooperation between Leiden University, a large number of museums, media partner Kidsweek and SHELL. The RIJKSMUSEUM, the STEDELIJK MUSEUM and the VAN GOGH MUSEUM work together with the University of Amsterdam on a professionalisation project for tours, with the support of SNS Reaal. The University of Amsterdam is starting doctoral research on this subject. There is also close cooperation in training professionals for the museum sector between the VU University Amsterdam, the University of Amsterdam and eight museums¹⁰ which offer internships for the Conservation and Museum Studies master's degree programme.

¹⁰ THE RIJKSMUSEUM, VAN GOGH MUSEUM, STEDELIJK MUSEUM AMSTERDAM, TROPENMUSEUM, CENTRAAL MUSEUM UTRECHT, BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN MUSEUM, GEMEENTEMUSEUM DEN HAAG AND KRÖLLER-MÜLLER MUSEUM

3.3 SHARE KNOWLEDGE, JOIN FORCES BY COOPERATION WITH MUSEUMS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Connecting knowledge and networks

Many examples concern bringing together multi-disciplinary knowledge from different quarters. Entirely new institutes are sometimes created as a result. In the Ateliergebouw, for instance, the RIJKSMUSEUM, the University of Amsterdam and the CULTURAL HERITAGE AGENCY OF THE NETHERLANDS have housed their knowledge of conservation and restoration and their training, research and practice in a single location for some time. NATURALIS recently merged with two university institutes (NATIONAL HERBARIUM OF THE NETHERLANDS and the ZOOLOGICAL MUSEUM AMSTERDAM) to form the NATURALIS BIODIVERSITY CENTER. Non-institutional knowledge clusters or centres are more common, such as around costume collections: eight museums which hold the most important costume collections have united to form Modehuis NL. Cooperation is also created in research projects, such as that of the ROYAL PICTURE GALLERY MAURITSHUIS with TU Delft and the University of Amsterdam into new methods of research into change processes in oil paintings. Museums also create relationships with academia via endowed chairs or lectorates.

3.3 SHARE KNOWLEDGE, JOIN FORCES VIA COOPERATION WITH BUSINESS

Business as a knowledge partner

Museums and business can sometimes be valuable knowledge partners. One example is the ROYAL PICTURE GALLERY MAURITSHUIS, which has entered into a long-term partnership with SHELL. SHELL is the chief sponsor of the museum's expansion. In addition, the parties have initiated the 'Partners in Research' project, aimed at research into genre paintings, especially those of Jan Steen. SHELL provides researchers and equipment to this end from its high-quality laboratories.

Opening up job market prospects

The NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM developed an educational programme on ports, aimed at preparatory vocational secondary education pupils. It did so together with 22 port companies which are facing declining interest in the port sector as a profession. The programme enabled a large number of young people to learn about this sector of the job market via their schools.

The connection with the creative industry

Depending on their collections, museums can create interesting connections (including commercial ones) with the creative industry, one of the Netherland's best sectors. Traditional craft museums such as the TEXTIELMUSEUM and the NATIONAL GLASS MUSEUM work on a structural basis with art and other degree programmes, artists, designers and business in exchanging knowledge, training, innovation and industrial design.

One notable example is the TEXTIELMUSEUM'S TextielLab, which in fact is the continuation of the research department of the former textile industry in Tilburg. The activities in the Lab are largely open to the public. Exceptionally high-quality textile products are manufactured there and are often marketed commercially. The Lab works with artists, designers and architects from the Netherlands and abroad. The museum organises expert sessions and has set up an international training programme for the most talented students from European degree programmes.

3.3 SHARING KNOWLEDGE, JOINING FORCES IN SUMMARY

The museum sector is increasingly seeing the creation of alliances and networks between institutions with similarities with regard to collections and knowledge, aimed at conducting research together or developing joint programmes.

Partners from outside the museum sector can bring additional knowledge which enables museums to provide higher quality. Those partners may be companies, but also social organisations, universities and educational institutes, educational experts and media organisations.

The creative industry is fast-growing and can offer new, commercially-interesting opportunities for some museums.

3.4 WIDER AUDIENCE, NEW AUDIENCE

Attracting a larger audience is a question of linking the correct programmes and activities to smart marketing and communication. Museums often view each other as competitors in this; they are all fishing from the same pond. The examples demonstrate that you sometimes end up with a bigger catch if you fish together.

Many museums also have the ambition to reach a new audience, groups which would not normally visit a museum. Authorities often expect this of museums. They are funded by public money and must therefore be accessible for a wide audience. Yet all museums will agree: reaching a new audience is the toughest challenge. It requires a great deal of extra effort, it generally yields little additional revenue, but all the more social goodwill.

3.4 WIDER AUDIENCE, NEW AUDIENCE BY COOPERATION WITH MUSEUMS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Collective promotion and coordination of programmes

Museums which operate in the same town, city or region or manage the same type of collection sometimes opt to advertise together, set up a joint website or develop joint audience campaigns. It is possible to generate much more publicity together than individually. TOPKASTELEN, for instance, an alliance of seven important Dutch castles, organises its advertising together. In Amsterdam's Plantage district, an alliance was created by sixteen cultural institutions in order to turn it into a tourist area, with a joint website and many joint activities. Under the name MUSE-UMKRING PEELLAND museums in the region conduct joint advertising, coordinate activities and have set up a joint website. Cooperation can also be interesting with a view to attracting national and international tourism. Institutions with limited knowledge and networks would do well to take advantage of those institutions which do have the knowledge in-house. (Please also see below: Tourist packages).

Combined tickets and discounts

Selling tickets which give access to more than one museum and/or give visitors a discount if they visit more than one museum in the alliance: although this has not been investigated systematically, there is sufficient evidence that this works. Many museums sell combined tickets. For example, the museums located around the Hofvijver in The Hague have started selling the Hofvijver Passe-Partout, a combined ticket at an advantageous price for all the affiliated museums. Selling combined tickets has another benefit: since the JEWISH HISTORICAL MUSEUM merged with the HOLLANDSE SCHOUWBURG and the PORTUGUESE SYNAGOGUE, a single ticket is sold which is valid for all the locations. This has increased visitor numbers by 15% and led to a sharp rise on the top-50 lists of tourist organisations. An alternative is to ask a fellow museum to give each visitor a discount voucher for your museum; a method of benefiting from visits to fellow museums without incurring high additional costs.

3.4 **WIDER AUDIENCE, NEW AUDIENCE BY COOPERATION WITH MUSEUMS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS**

Tourist packages, city marketing and theme years

Museums are players in a fast-growing leisure market and have to compete with other institutions for the favours of visitors, national and international. Competition is fierce. Cooperation in tourist packages and city marketing puts museums in a much better position for this. In Amsterdam, the affiliated Amsterdam museums present themselves jointly to tourists wherever possible; a combined day ticket was agreed between Amsterdam Marketing and the transport companies and this works. "In 2012 Amsterdam Castle MUIDERSLOT received over 20,425 foreign visitors, that's double the number within two years."

Some museums see themselves as the hub in their town or city's tourist network. The GEVANGENISMUSEUM in Veenhuizen organises tailor-made cultural day packages. MUSEUM HET VALKHOF is to arrange the programming on behalf of all parties in the Valkhof quarter, which is destined to become the main tourist attraction of Nijmegen. Events and theme years, in close cooperation with municipalities, are ideal vehicles for museums for their activities, such as the Twente Biennial, Couperus Year, Peace of Utrecht or Huygens Year. These attract a great deal of publicity and connect cultural and other parties in the town or city via packages which appeal to the public.

Municipalities and museums are already important partners. This sometimes also leads to structural forms of consultation and agreements. The initiative by The Hague municipality is remarkable in this respect. Under the name *Haags Perspectief*, the municipality and museums in the city plan to create broad and intensive cooperation within the framework of joint themes, education, festivals and research.

Wider/new audience via unexpected combinations

It can sometimes also be quite simple; by developing a product together, it is possible to link a museum audience to the audience of another cultural institution. The combination also yields a different experiential value which arouses curiosity and brings in a new audience. $1+1=3$. The NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES and DE APPEL THEATRE COMPANY, for instance, combined an exhibition on Greek mythology with a theatre marathon on Heracles and a tour route with running commentary recorded by actors from De Appel.

3.4 WIDER AUDIENCE, NEW AUDIENCE BY COOPERATION WITH MUSEUMS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Approaching schools together

Cooperation in approaching education using joint programmes is becoming the norm. It fits in with government policy and works more effectively than an individual approach. Cooperation enables museums to respond better to schools' needs and to offer a cohesive educational programme. The museums in The Hague, for instance, participate in a Culture Menu, in which everything is arranged for the schools from a central point, including transport to the museums. Eight museums in Dinkelland opted for a similar approach, with a range of museum options for all groups, including transport by coach to the museums located at some distance from one another in the rural area.

Cooperation with partners which offer access to a new audience

Almost all museums seek a new, young audience. One way of achieving this is to enter into a partnership with parties which can open the doors to young people, such as festivals, universities or colleges of higher education. The MUSEUM DE FUNDATIE entered into partnerships with Deltion College Zwolle and the Lowlands summer festival. Under the name Deltion-fusions, it organised exhibitions on campus and together with Lowlands the museum buys large outdoor art which is exhibited both at the Lowlands festival site and in the sculpture garden at KASTEEL HET NIJENHUIS. The Museum Nights, such as the one in Leiden in conjunction with the Leiden student association, create a completely different, hip atmosphere for museum visits and attract a new, young audience.

Cooperation with partners to reinforce social imbedding

Museums sometimes develop activities or receive specific groups because they see this as their social task. One example is Museum Friday, an initiative by the affiliated museums in Utrecht in conjunction with AxionContinu care institution, which enables adults with disabilities to visit museums in Utrecht using special transport facilities and under supervision. Or the GEMEENTEMUSEUM DEN HAAG, which in conjunction with community organisations invites inhabitants of the city's districts to visit the museum for free and arranges transport. And if people cannot or do not wish to come to a museum, the museum can also come to them. Museums sometimes set up exhibitions in care homes and community centres. One unusual example here is the 'Museum for a day', a show-and-tell session by the affiliated museums in Utrecht for care homes, using objects from the collection.

3.4 WIDER AUDIENCE, NEW AUDIENCE VIA COOPERATION WITH BUSINESS

Museums on location

Museums also exhibit outside their own premises, at unexpected locations where there are lots of people, such as metro and railway stations, airports, companies or public buildings such as town halls or hospitals. The objective in doing so can vary widely. It is often chiefly an excellent way to promote an institution and to make a wide audience acquainted with what the institution has to offer. One example is NEMO, which, following in the footsteps of the RIJKSMUSEUM, has opened a presentation at Schiphol Airport.

3.4 **WIDER AUDIENCE, NEW AUDIENCE OTHER**

Cooperating with broadcasters

Many museums have already found their way to Hilversum, the home of Dutch broadcasting, and developed programmes together with the publicly-funded broadcasters, which by definition enable them to reach as wide an audience as possible. This can increase visitor numbers, as concluded by AMSTERDAM MUSEUM, which saw its audience increase partly due to the 2012 *De Gouden Eeuw* (The Golden Age) series.

3.4 WIDER AUDIENCE, NEW AUDIENCE IN SUMMARY

The collective promotion of museums, joint ticket sales and offering discounts is a sensible strategy, certainly for smaller museums in more limited regions.

Participating in tourist packages is far preferable to working the tourist market individually.

Museums would do well to work with city marketing in order to promote their town or city.

In the case of locations which are less easily accessible, or for groups such as senior citizens and school pupils, linking access to the museum to a transport package by coach or train works.

3.5 GREATER VISIBILITY OF COLLECTIONS

It remains a provoking fact: the larger part of Dutch museums' collections is in storage. After all, museums also have a duty to store objects, not everything has to be or can be exhibited. Yet sometimes collection items which lead a passive existence in storage facilities could form the centrepiece in another museum. In such cases, museums can exchange or lend objects long-term to fellow museums. Insofar as practical obstacles hinder this, these need to be removed.

There are also ways to show the audience more of the enormous wealth of museum objects, e.g. via theme websites or presentations on location.

3.5 GREATER VISIBILITY OF COLLECTIONS BY COOPERATION WITH MUSEUMS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Digital exposure

The internet is of course an excellent opportunity for showing audiences collections. Most museums already have some or all of their collections on their websites. A further step here is at the level above institutions' collections, by theme. This can link collections and show them in different contexts. One example is the 'knowledge sites' on Delftware or Asian ceramics, whereby different museums with related collections work together. Another example is the recently-launched Mondriaan site (www.mondriaan.nl), an alliance between the GEMEENTEMUSEUM DEN HAAG and the Netherlands Institute for Art History. An additional benefit is that knowledge is also generated via digital interaction with the audience.

A sustainable, digital infrastructure is required to cooperate effectively digitally, a kind of 'road system', to which museums can be connected. The Europeana portal has been developed at European level to this end. The CULTURAL HERITAGE AGENCY OF THE NETHERLANDS is working together with the NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR SOUND AND VISION on infrastructure for the Dutch museums which become connected to it (DiM-CoN, Digitale Museumcollectie Nederland). The objective is to promote knowledge on Dutch collections and simplify the exchange of collections between museums.

Transferring collections

Museums sometimes physically transfer objects to fellow museums on long-term loan or as property when these objects are better shown to their advantage in a different collection. The FRIES MUSEUM transferred its ceramics library and the het DUTCH RESISTANCE MUSEUM its paper collections on the Second World War to the FRISIAN HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CENTRE. This forms part of more far-reaching cooperation between the institutions. Another example is BEELDEN AAN ZEE, which opened an annex at Kasteel het Nijenhuis (MUSEUM DE FUNDATIE). Transferring parts of a collection is a sensitive topic and not yet a common occurrence, yet it can be highly appealing to the audience.

"We have a couple of pieces by Dutch surrealists in our collection. It would be logical for these pieces to go to the Centraal Museum, as Utrecht is the only location where the surrealists were really active. A few years ago we created a Francis Bacon Room together with the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Van Abbe Museum and Stedelijk Museum. Unfortunately, two of the museums retrieved their paintings and they are now in storage. Here in The Hague we could create a room full of Bacons. Unique in Europe."

— Benno Tempel, GEMEENTEMUSEUM DEN HAAG ¹¹

¹¹ From the 2012 Netherlands Museums Association Annual Report

3.5 GREATER VISIBILITY OF COLLECTIONS BY COOPERATION WITH MUSEUMS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Exchanging objects

In order to simplify the exchange of objects, the GEMEENTEMUSEUM DEN HAAG recently launched the *Zwerfkeien* (boulder) project, a platform on which museums which, for instance, only possess one object by a top artist can exchange this object for a solitary object in another museum which better fits within the museum's collection.

Temporary transfer on closure

It has become good practice to exhibit a collection at fellow museums when a museum closes for renovation or new construction. As an example, over 120 objects from the ROYAL PICTURE GALLERY MAURITSHUIS are being exhibited in a separate wing of the GEMEENTEMUSEUM DEN HAAG. To this end, the two organisations have entered into a close partnership and are sharing knowledge and expertise.

Collection mobility and insurance

The discussions with museums highlighted the many obstacles museums face in lending objects. The high cost of insurance plays a major part here. This was already mentioned in *Musea voor Morgen*. "To simplify collection mobility, museums will have to ease their mutual requirements for lending objects and for handling fees as much as possible."

It is also the museums themselves which put up insuperable financial obstacles for their fellow museums. Moreover, subsidising municipalities often make insurance mandatory, which prevents museums from entering into loan procedures easily. *Musea voor Morgen* referred to the report and website *Lending for Europe* (www.lending-for-europe.eu), which has inventoried all the options for mobilising collections. Nevertheless, the steering committee notes that the practice stubbornly persists and advises the sector itself — museums and their management and/or supervisory boards — to place the topic on the agenda and to get this moving, in conjunction with municipalities and other owners. The topic should also be discussed during administrative consultations with the Association of Provincial Authorities (IPO) and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG).

3.5 GREATER VISIBILITY OF COLLECTIONS IN SUMMARY

Digital exposure is an excellent and practical method of displaying collections to both the public and professionals. This requires the coordination of digital systems.

The physical transfer of collections could be more valuable to the audience if objects are taken out of storage or new, interesting presentations are created. If museums are prepared to do this, the practical issues can generally be solved.

The insurance issues surrounding lending are an obstacle to collection mobility. It is chiefly up to the sector itself to take steps on this, in close consultation with the authorities involved.

c 4 MUSEUMS ON COOPERATION

What makes cooperation successful?
But also: when does it not work and
what has a counter-productive effect?
We always put these questions to
our discussion partners. Some of
their answers are given below.

Success factors

“Cooperation arises in receptivity and partnerships. You actually have to do things together, not outsource them, but most importantly do it yourself and leave your own mark on it. Commitment is the key word.”

“As directors, you have to set an example, but the people below you have to implement it. Professionals such as curators occupy a separate position in the organisation and are often not that focused on cooperation. You have to get past that, because you cannot use a caste of professionals when providing a service.”

“You need a concrete objective to be able to cooperate. There has to be a clear picture of ‘shared benefit’, whether economic or in content.”

“It helps if you have someone heading it who is responsible for the cooperation project and is the point of contact for external contact with authorities and business.”

“Cooperation starts with people who get along well.”

“Contact and communication are essential, this creates trust and an atmosphere of ‘wishing one another well’.”

c 4 MUSEUMS ON COOPERATION

“Make commitment concrete, make it clear what the contribution is from all the partners in the partnership, with respect to personnel and finances, and lay that down in writing.”

“Create joint social activities, create times for looking at content in greater depth, refer to one another openly and keep communicating clearly back to your organisation.”

Obstacles to partnership

“One obstacle to partnership is short-sightedness and being too focused on yourself. Museums do not exist for themselves but for society. Your own interests are really a tricky concept in this respect. The interests of the audience must come first.”

“Administrative cooperation between museums subsidised by different authorities is tricky and sometimes impossible due to the different demands made by the authorities. Authorities also have to want to work together.”

“Cooperation between over-heterogeneous organisations often does not work well. Partners need to have a similar culture and the same objective.

c 4 MUSEUMS ON COOPERATION FINALLY

Cooperation is created in all kinds of ways. Sometimes due to pressure from above, e.g. by subsidisers who impose a merger. Sometimes from the bottom up, by parties who find one another in a common goal. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution. Mergers imposed top-down and complicated processes can sometimes lead to excellent results. And bottom-up cooperation can become stranded due to a lack of obligation. It is noticeable that cooperation is chiefly the work of people and that the organisation of contact could well be the key to it — from simple things such as a shared staff canteen where everyone can meet and enjoy a cup of coffee, or the organisation of joint discussions about the work at all levels in the organisation to setting up teams, programme committees and cross-organisation alliances. External pressure may help, but it is never enough. The will and energy for cooperation must come from within. And then the most beautiful things can be created.

c 5 WHAT NEXT

Musea voor Morgen demonstrated that museums have to raise their game. The report predicted:

“An individual museum out for itself will not survive in an increasingly competitive climate. To this end, museums will have to cooperate more and particularly more structurally.”

This fact formed the focus for the Asscher-Vonk II steering committee in inventorying the many types of museum cooperation. This report demonstrates that Dutch museums are in flux and cooperate in many different ways, with one another and with other organisations and companies. It shows what museums are proud of and what has proved to work in practice. The report contains examples which could inspire others. It pinpoints where there are opportunities for the future. The associations trust that the examples described in this report will be imitated.

Of course this does not mean that our job is done. This report is a significant interim step. The associations have promised the Minister of Culture a final report in October 2014 on the results of the process which has been started (Cooperation Agenda).

The associations would like to take the next steps in consultation with the sector. They will therefore actively distribute this report among members and discuss it with them. The report will also be brought to the attention of politicians, the national government and other authorities. It could contribute to developing the criteria for the scheme to encourage cooperation which the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science wishes to develop in conjunction with the sector.

Musea voor Morgen included ten recommendations¹² for museums, authorities and associations. Some recommendations, such as cooperation, visibility of collections and a wider and new audience, have obviously been addressed in this report. Other recommendations do have the attention of the associations but are not dealt with here.

¹² *Musea voor Morgen*, Asscher-Vonk advisory committee, 30 September 2012, page 47/48

c 5 WHAT NEXT

In order to retain control of the steps which must be taken in the framework of both the Cooperation Agenda and the further elaboration of *Musea voor Morgen*, there will be a follow-up which deals with some topics in more detail. The associations foresee inclusion of the following themes:

- reinforcement of the social lobby
- policy formation and practice in collection mobility (in relation to e.g. lending objects and insurance)
- consultations with authorities aimed at creating an Administrative Agreement
- improved links between museums and education

The intention is to develop the models for cooperation described in this publication into a practical manual of do's and don'ts for cooperation.

The Netherlands Museums Association, as the merged association will be known from 1 January 2014, will draw up a strategic plan together with the steering committee, hoping to inspire the museum sector over the next year in taking the next step.

a 1 ANNEX
THE TASK OF THE ASSCHER-VONK II
STEERING COMMITTEE

The two boards tasked the steering committee with:

1. Encouraging and inventorying types of museological cooperation, as described in the report *Musea voor Morgen*, by:
 - inventorying appealing and repeatable examples of cooperation of which the museums themselves are proud
 - coming up with ideas for cooperation
 - to this end approaching museum directors personally
 - organising inspiration sessions, at which the inventory of examples can serve as a source.
2. Drawing up a report that provides members with concrete advice on using resources effectively and creating support, particularly among politicians. The report contains an analysis of the types of cooperation which can serve as an example and inspiration and lists examples from practice.

This report must be completed as of 1 October 2014.

a 2

ANNEX

**A LIST OF DISCUSSION PARTNERS OF THE
 ASSCHER-VONK II STEERING COMMITTEE**

Andreas Blühm, Director	GRONINGER MUSEUM	22-01-2013
Jouetta van der Ploeg, Director	STADSMUSEUM ZOETERMEER	19-02-2013
Jet Bakels and Eric de Jong, curator and endowed Professor of Culture, Landscape and Nature: Advisor of the renovation plans.	HET GROOTE MUSEUM (ARTIS)	07-03-2013
Marie-José Grotenhuis, interim Director	REMBRANDTHUIS	12-03-2013
Paul Spies, Director	AMSTERDAM MUSEUM	28-03-2013
Ralph Keuning, Director	MUSEUM DE FUNDATIE	23-04-2013
Rik van Koetsveld Financial Director (incumbent) and Adriaan Donszelmann, Financial Director (successor)	VAN GOGH MUSEUM	25-04-2013
Joël Cahen and Liesbeth Bijvoet, Director and Financial Director	JOODS HISTORISCH MUSEUM AMSTERDAM	02-05-2013
Annemies Broekgaarden, Head of Visitors and Education	RIJKSMUSEUM AMSTERDAM	02-05-2013
Marian van Dijk, Director	SLOT ZUYLEN	10-05-2013
Wim Reijnders, Director	MARKIEZENHOF	13-05-2013
Gerk Koopmans, Director	NATUURMUSEUM FRYSLÂN	27-05-2013
Nicole Delissen, Head of Collection & Presentation	STEDELIJK MUSEUM AMSTERDAM	06-05-2013
Karin van Gilst, Financial Director	STEDELIJK MUSEUM AMSTERDAM	07-05-2013
Edwin Jacobs, Director	CENTRAAL MUSEUM	21-06-2013
Michel van Maarseveen, Director	PALEIS HET LOO	12-06-2013
Marco van Baalen, Director	HAAGS HISTORISCH MUSEUM EN DE GEVANGENPOORT	23-07-2013
John Leek, Manager of Education	NEDERLANDS INSTITUUT VOOR BEELD EN GELUID	30-07-2013
Willem Bijleveld, Director	HET SCHEEPVAARTMUSEUM	05-08-2013
Errol de Werdt, Director	TEXTIELMUSEUM	07-08-2013
Stijn Schoonderwoerd, Director	RIJKSMUSEUM VOLKENKUNDE LEIDEN	22-08-2013
Charles de Mooij, Director and René Pingen, Director	HET NOORDBRABANTS MUSEUM en STEDELIJK MUSEUM 'S-HERTOGENBOSCH	14-08-2013
Eric Wetzels, Director	CENTRE CÉRAMIQUE / NATUURHISTORISCH MUSEUM MAASTRICHT / KUMULUS	28-08-2013

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