



MUSEUMS OF IMPACT

GLOSSARY





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In this glossary we present some key concepts used in the MOI Framework to facilitate its usage. The glossary explains the key concepts in the way that the MOI Framework understands and applies them, but it is not intended to serve as a comprehensive glossary of heritage and museum concepts.

It is beneficial for the self-evaluation process to discuss terms and concepts together, so that the evaluation teams as a whole can understand what they mean in the context of the museum conducting the evaluation.

Actor

An individual, group of persons, organised group or institution that takes an active part in developing, decision-making, and participating in the topics and fields they find relevant, but also take the responsibility for the process.

Audiences

Individuals or groups who use museum services (e.g. exhibitions, digital content, events, programmes), who can also be referred to as 'the public'. Depending on which museum department is involved, different terms describing these individuals are used (e.g. visitors, customers, users, participants) and can be considered synonyms for audiences.

Audience development

A systematically applied strategy aimed at attracting new, previously unreached visitor groups and creating lasting bonds with a cultural institution. In contrast to traditional marketing, which primarily aims to increase the number of visitors, audience development can also aim at the quality of the relationship between the institution and its audiences. In order to attract previously underrepresented communities as future audiences, cooperation with these groups can be launched.

Co-curation

Co-curation is part of the participatory museum design. Co-curation is achieved when a museum is curating its content, programmes or other activities together with individuals, groups or communities in partnership with museum staff.

Collection policy

Collection policy establishes the operating guidelines for the collections and the common principles for cooperation connected to collections. The collection management policy should define the museum's priorities and goals for acquisition, and take a position on the management, use and removal of the existing collections in the museum. The collection management policy is set for a certain timeframe, and can also be called, for example, a collection strategy, a collection plan or a collection programme.

Community

In the MOI Framework, community is understood as self-defining: by valuing and wishing to pass on specific aspects of the cultural heritage, in interaction with others, an individual becomes part of a community. A community can be defined in various ways without necessary references to rigid communities. Such a community may have a geographical foundation, for example, shared humanist values or past historical links. But equally, community may arise out of a common interest.

Museums can work with local and residential communities but also, for example, with communities born out of a common hobby, expertise, way of thinking or acting in online virtual communities. The idea of shared heritage / common heritage encourages museums to work with different communities in defining, interpreting and presenting heritage.

Content

Content is understood in the MOI context as the meaning or idea represented and transmitted by the information carrier. This carrier

can, for example, be a service, object, collection, exhibition or an interpretation. Usually, content refers to the topic, meaning, knowledge or purpose, as opposed to the form.

Customers

See [audiences](#).

Decolonisation

Decolonisation implies becoming aware, both as an institution and as an individual, of the extent to which one's thinking and actions are shaped by colonial patterns and continuities. This may be expressed, for example, in the revision of an institution's collection history and the recognition of personal bias in all aspects of the museum work. It requires an institution to be able to reflect, accept criticism and show humility. Decolonisation processes can never be considered finished. It serves as a utopian ideal to strive for which is subject to a constantly changing culture of remembrance.

Dialogue

Dialogue refers to an open, respectful exchange of ideas, thinking together and familiarising oneself with a matter or action based on the equal participation of people or groups with different backgrounds.

Digital engagement

Digital engagement is the process of communicating and connecting with an *audience* of past, present, and potential customers using digital channels to establish and build strong relationships. In this way, it is a sister to *audience development*, only in the digital dimension of museums.

Green handprint

Green handprint is a positive antithesis to ecological footprint. The footprint focuses on measuring the consumption of natural resources, in other words the disadvantages we are causing to the environment with our actions, while the green handprint approaches the problem through a positive mindset.

Heritage interpretation

Heritage can be defined as property that is or can be inherited. Tangible heritage focuses on a material object whereas intangible heritage includes, for example, songs, dances, customs and traditions. The interpretation approach aims to help audiences interpret and give meanings to natural and cultural heritage. It is often preferred to the term "education", as it emphasises an openness to different perspec-

tives. The term *heritage interpretation* is used in all types of museums. However, it must be viewed with caution, as the intersection of heritage and interpretation offers the potential to legitimise or de-legitimise certain versions of the past.

Impact / impact goals

Impact means any positive changes that resolve or at least address challenges. Impact occurs because of activities that have outcomes; your activities have an impact if they contribute to a desired change for stakeholders or in society.

Impact goals are objectives that the museum has set to define where it wants to have an impact in society and in its communities. These objectives are based on the choices that the museum makes about which societal challenges or problems it wishes to address, change and have an impact on. Impact can also arise from operations with less or no specific goal-orientation. Desired impacts, however, which are goal-oriented, can be developed, monitored, evaluated and communicated.

Knowledge platform

In the MOI context, a knowledge platform or knowledge base is a centralised database or a web service for spreading information and data for audiences or users. Knowledge platforms support collecting, organising, retrieving, and sharing knowledge. An example of a museum-related knowledge platform is the Europeana digital library.

Long-term preservation

Long-term preservation is the process of preserving digital information for several decades or even centuries. It needs to cover the care of the structure, integrity and content of electronic material. Digital preservation is important because it helps ensure that digital information and data will be available in the future. By preserving digital information, we can ensure that future generations will be able to access and use it.

Museum as an enabler

A museum does not always have to be a producer of content and services itself, but can also act as an enabler of the activities of others. A museum can be a platform that helps various communities to achieve something important to them. This means that a museum's operations include the possibility to implement and produce content at the initiative of communities and in cooperation with communities.

Operational environment

The political, societal, legislative, economic, cultural, social, and environmental factors that affect the museum and the society in which it operates. It is important and beneficial for the museum to recognise the general trends of change in society and to be able to analyse and react to these trends from the point of view of its own operations.

Outreach

Outreach is part of a museum's social responsibility process for building relationships with individuals, groups and communities beyond the current or usual services and knowledge that the museum is providing. An outreach profile is connected to the individuals and groups that the organisation has defined as their target audiences, but also to new and specific groups. The term can also be related to new services or activities that go beyond museum walls.

Participatory processes

Participatory processes provide opportunities for engagement and decision-making, to achieve active participation by individuals, groups and communities in and around the museum. The approaches can range from small engagements to major influence, to organisation by participants. See also **co-curation**.

Research

Research is a broad term which embraces notions from academic and scientific research to studies and analytical thinking that museums conduct with their collections, for their exhibitions, pedagogical work, and so forth. It is a process during which new information and knowledge are created through systematic work.

Safeguarding

Action taken to protect different aspects of heritage. This can mean on the one hand safeguarding the tangible heritage against harm and neglect, or transferring the knowledge and skills of intangible heritage. It is most beneficial for museums to plan the safeguarding actions together with the relevant communities.

Services

Museum services include, for example, exhibitions, digital content, educational and other programmes, research and archive services, museum shops (on-site or online), cafés and restaurants. New and existing services can be created and developed together with the audience and should apply principles of sustainable development.

Strategy

The plan to achieve the long-term objectives of the organisation. The strategy consists of objectives, policies and measures that the organisation has agreed on and selected to achieve its objectives. The strategy is formulated for long-term purposes, but with the help of interim objectives and reviews it is possible to make amendments and evaluate any possible needs for change.

Sustainability

Museum operations should have a sustainable basis ecologically, socially, culturally and economically, both in the short and long term. Operations according to the principles of sustainable development are planned and implemented bearing the whole life cycle of products and services in mind.

It is important for every organisation to identify and define the meaning of responsibility and to demand that responsibility is present in all of its operations. An important component for museums to ensure their own sustainability is the ability to diversify everything: funding, staff, audience, programme, content, and so forth.

Links to other relevant heritage and museum-related glossaries:

Europeana Impact Playbook:

https://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana_Professional/Impact/impact_playbook/Impact_Playbook_Phase1_ENG.pdf

Europeana Glossary of Terms:

<https://pro.europeana.eu/page/glossary>

Faro Convention Action Plan Handbook 2018–2019:

<https://rm.coe.int/faro-convention-action-plan-handbook-2018-2019/168079029c>