The Museum Impact Toolkit (MIT)

Creating and evaluating social and societal impacts

Jeroen Nawijn, Ellen de Groot, Eugenio van Maanen, Esther Peperkamp,

Dorus Hoebink, Frederike van Ouwerkerk, Dineke Koerts, Harald Buijtendijk, Jeroen Klijs

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Background

The Museum Impact Toolkit (MIT) is the end result of the *SIA RAAK-Publiek 2019 'Radar voor het Stadsgevoel'* project. The MIT was developed under the management of Breda University of applied sciences (BUas) and in cooperation with Museum Gouda, Musea Zutphen, Stedelijk Museum Breda and Hoebink Onderzoek & Advies.

The MIT can be used by (city) museums and other cultural institutions as a practical tool to determine their strategy, or to obtain guidance for socio-cultural policy and to make projects more impactful in the short term.

Explanatory Notes on Terminology (I)

'Social and societal impact' in the MIT refers to a change in society, the museum, or another party, as a result of one or more activities of the museum.

The 'short term' is a period of up to one year at the most. The 'long term' is, in principle, a period of more than one year. The exact long-term effects are often difficult to determine, as activities succeed each other, partners also develop activities, and society is subject to change.

Three types of actors are distinguished in the MIT: museum, partners, and the public.

Explanatory Notes on Terminology (II)

The 'museum' means the museum from which the impacts are studied. This will usually be a city museum, regional museum or national museum.

'Partners' are defined as the other partners within the city, region or country. This will primarily be government agencies, funds, and other cultural institutions.

The 'public' are the residents of the city, region, or country, as well as the other visitors.
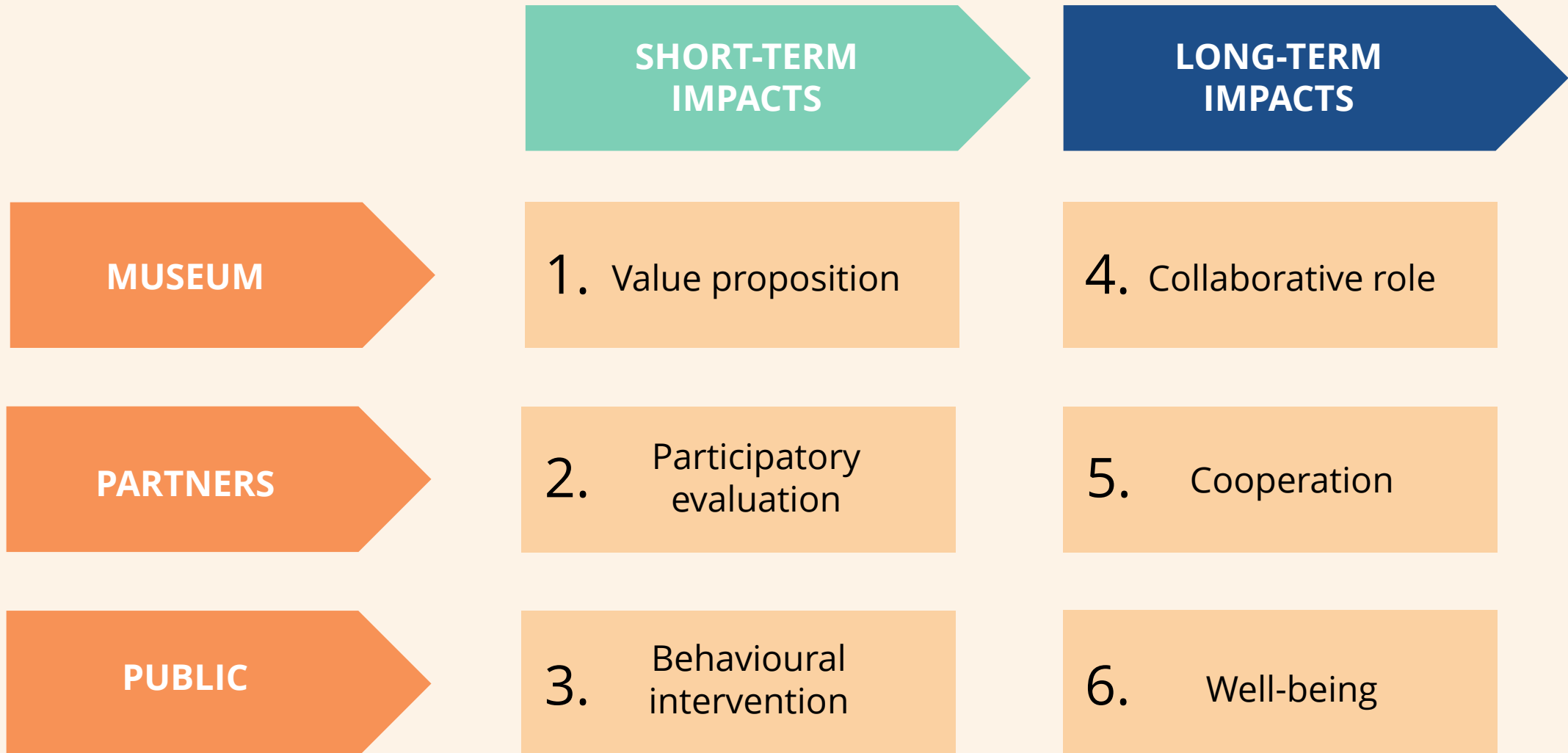
Museum - Short term

1. Value proposition

The basic idea is to demonstrate the 'fit' between the museum's function (museum profile) and the demand (actor profile).

The most likely actor, in this case, is a municipality, but it can also be a company, cultural institution, or fund.

The use of the Value Proposition Canvas urges prioritisation; it offers monitoring and coordination possibilities and takes the city's context into account.

Museum - Short term

Tasks. What does the municipality want to get done?

Gains. What positive outcomes are desired in this process?

Pains. What are the obstacles or problems in this process?

Museum's functions. What is the museum's profile?

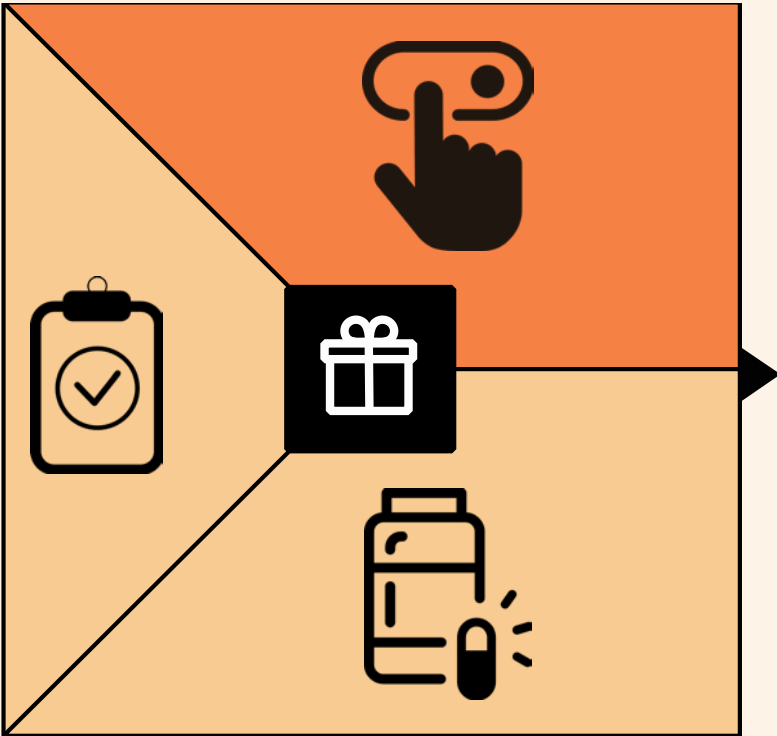**Pain relievers.** What pains can the museum alleviate or eliminate?

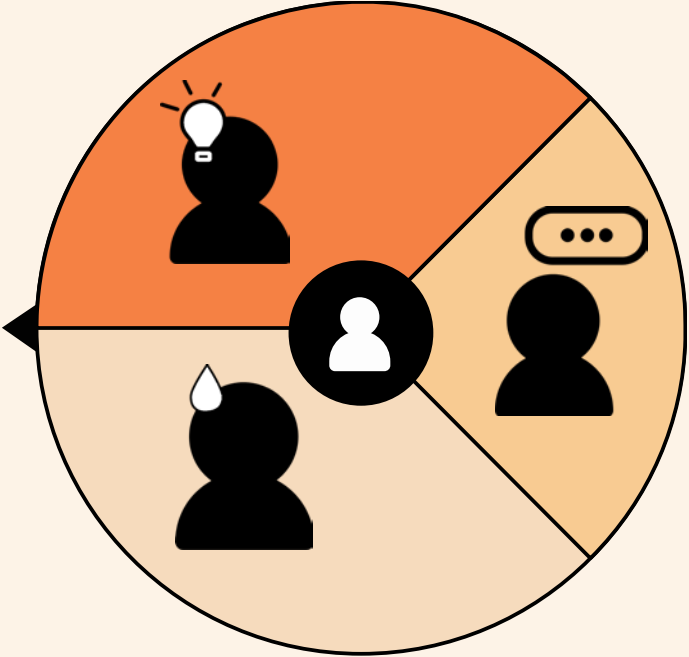**Gains creators.** How can the museum contribute to gains?

FIT: What is possible and what is not?

Value Proposition Canvas

Partners -

**Short term**

2. Participatory evaluation

The Participation Ladder makes it possible to evaluate the degree of participation, by linking museum activities to a rung on the ladder. This makes the degree of participation in the city transparent for everyone. The higher one climbs the ladder, the more intensive and integrated the form of participation becomes between the parties. Control, decision-making, and responsibilities are increasingly shared.
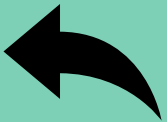
Participation Ladder

Collective
At the collective level, the museum is mainly a coach. The museum advises, facilitates, and supports.
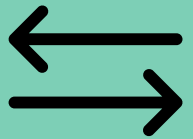
Collaborative
At the collaborative level, the museum is primarily a partner. Decisions are made in consultation, through respect and consensus.

Reflective
At the reflective level, the museum is mostly an inquisitive (investigative) moderator. The museum asks for advice or input from others.

Educational
At the educational level, the museum is mainly a traditional teacher. The museum informs and explains.

3. Behavioural intervention

To achieve directly measurable results in terms of social and societal impacts, evaluation through behavioural interventions among the public takes place. The principle is to entice the public to behave in a way that leads directly to measurable social and societal impacts. The Behavioural Intervention Matrix provides guidance in giving concrete shape to such interventions.
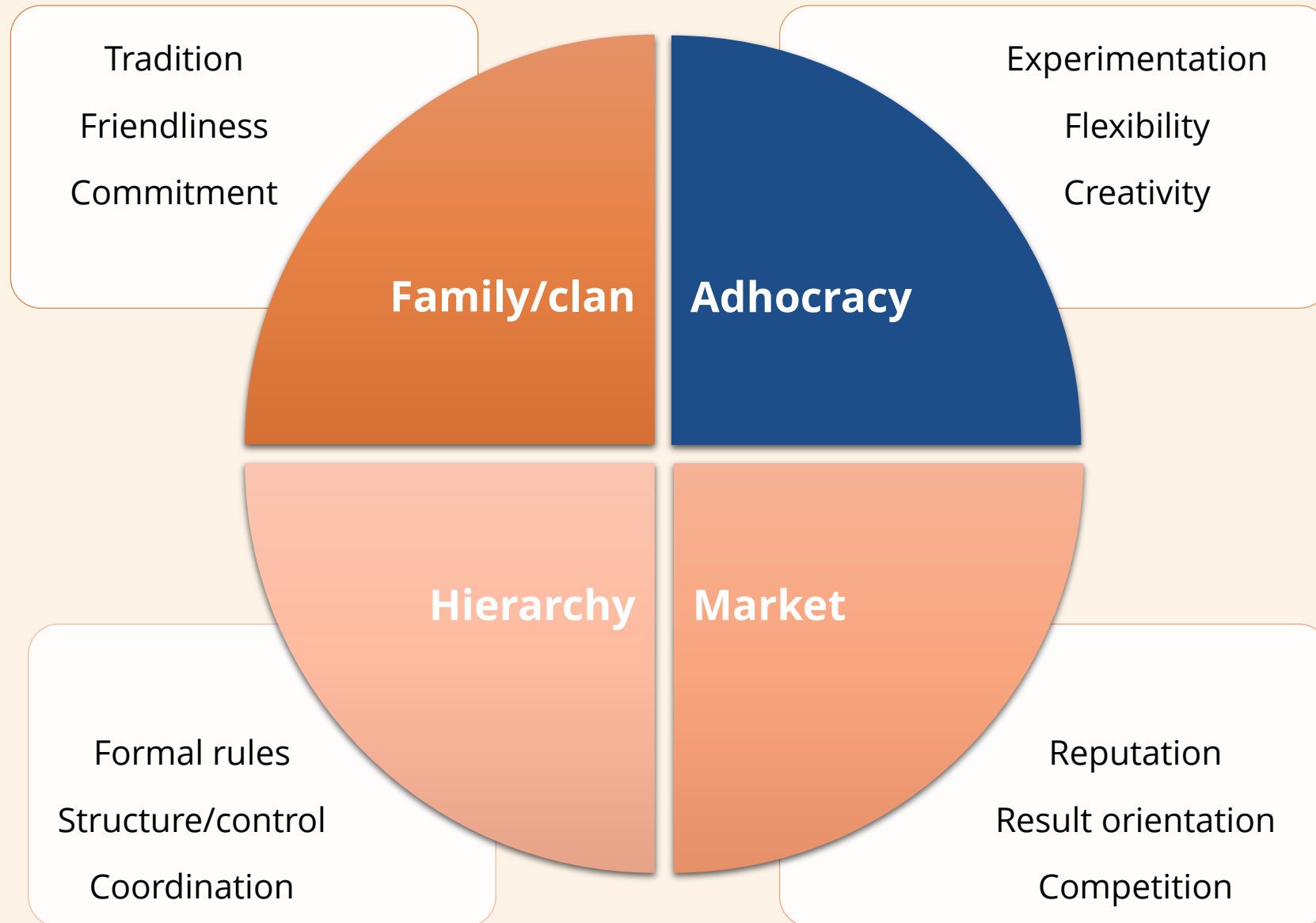
Behavioural Intervention Matrix

	Intervention		Visitor	Social and societal impact	
Type	Contents		Desired behaviour	On whom	Type
Live quote	On a wall, visitors write their responses to questions written on this wall by museum staff		Visitors reflect and participate	Museum, society	Cognition and emotion
Donation	Visitors are asked to make a donation to the museum and/or a foundation related to the purpose of the exhibition		Visitors make donations	Museum, partner institution	Monetary
Ticket	Visitors are offered the opportunity to buy tickets for an event in the near future, related to the purpose of the exhibition		Visitors buy tickets and attend the event	Partner institution, society	Behaviour
...	...		...	...	...
...	...		...	...	...
...	...		...	...	...

Museum –

Long term

4. Collaborative role

Collaboration can take place in different ways. In order to succeed in generating social and societal impacts, the organisation will have to take the form of an adhocracy, according to the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) model. This means that the museum's most important core values should be: experimentation, flexibility, and creativity.

OCAI model

Tradition
Friendliness
Commitment

Experimentation
Flexibility
Creativity

Family/clan **Adhocracy**

Hierarchy **Market**

Formal rules
Structure/control
Coordination

Reputation
Result orientation
Competition

Partners –

Long term

5. Cooperation

Cooperation between the city's or region's partners is of major importance. In this process, it is crucial to define the ambitions accurately, to weigh up the interests correctly, to make sure the mutual relationships run smoothly, and to organise the process properly. The Reflection on Cooperation 'discussion picture' offers support in this process. For each component (ambitions, interests, relationship, process), the conditions that need to be met in order for cooperation to flourish in the long term are listed.

Reflection on Cooperation

Ambitions
- Challenging
- Realistic
- Widely known

Explanation
…

Interests
- Openness about individual interests
- The right balance between investments in time, money and resources
- There is added value in cooperation

Explanation
…

Relationship
- Constructive feedback
- Partners' behaviour contributes to mutual trust

Explanation
…

Process
- Clear distribution of roles
- The right balance between attention for process and attention for results

Explanation
…

Public –

Long term

6. Well-being

Measuring long-term impacts is a task of the government. The role of the (city) museum is putting such measurements on the agenda through a *Stadsmonitor*. Examples of such *Stadsmonitors* are the 'Utrecht Monitor' and the 'Wijk- en buurtmonitor' of 's Hertogenbosch. These city monitors reveal changes over time, both at city and neighbourhood level.

The activities of cultural institutions can be linked to the monitor data. As a result, it is possible for the correlation between activities of cultural institutions and social/societal impacts to be demonstrated. Relevant concepts may be: cohesion, the degree of connection with the city and tolerance; in short, various forms of well-being within society.

Sources

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Credits

Authors
Jeroen Nawijn
Ellen de Groot
Eugenio van Maanen
Esther Peperkamp
Dorus Hoebink
Frederike van Ouwerkerk
Dineke Koerts
Harald Buijtendijk
Jeroen Klijs

Design
Marta Donarska