

AIMA Strategic Plan 2016-2020

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**Revision to 2011-2013 AIMA Strategic Plan
drafted 19 July 2011 by Debra A. Reid (based on the 2008-2010 plan)**

INTRODUCTION

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) expects each affiliated organization to develop a strategic plan that supports the direction charted in the ICOM Strategic Plan, modified every three years. The General Assembly of the International Association of Agricultural Museums (AIMA) approved the 2008-2011 AIMA Strategic Plan at the organization's 15th Congress in 2008 in Serbia. This plan reflected the ICOM effort to collect, preserve and interpret intangible as well as tangible artifacts. Members of the AIMA presidium discussed the strategic plan at the 2006 conference of the Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and created a working draft at the 2006 Fall meeting of the AIMA Presidium in Ottawa, Canada. The membership approved this plan at the 2008 AIMA Congress in Serbia.

The 2011-2013 AIMA Strategic Plan reflected the ICOM initiative to “face the challenges and seize the opportunities of a fast-changing museum landscape.” To that end, ICOM adopted the following strategic objectives to guide activities during 2011-2013:

- Increase membership value and transparency for ICOM members
- Develop museum and heritage expertise
- Strengthen ICOM's global leadership in the heritage sector
- Develop and manage resources to implement the Strategic Plan effectively

Several objectives AIMA identified in its 2008-2010 Strategic Plan remain relevant given these ICOM goals, and given the need to remain vital as agricultural museums respond to the “fast-changing museum landscape” and to a fast changing world population that remains dependent on agriculture generally (food, specifically) and as food remains at the center of international political debate. AIMA must become more proactive in supporting museums dedicated to public education of agricultural history as public funding for such museums seems uncertain and as the relevancy of agricultural museums' research and interpretation has increased.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIMA, an affiliate of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), exists to serve agricultural museums (including museum of agricultural technology, the food industry, forestry, horticulture, viticulture, fishing, hunting and other agricultural servicing and processing industries), as well as open air museums and museums that have large agricultural departments or collections and research workers engaged in this field.

AIMA promotes cooperation between this array of museums by aiding the exchange of exhibitions and exhibits, encouraging governing bodies to sustain support, making detailed recommendations for collecting and documentation, and providing a vehicle for the exchange of information on exhibition techniques and didactics. AIMA seeks to stimulate research and

exhibition activity so museums interpret not only the development of agricultural production but also changes in the work and way of life of the rural population (the social background) over time. In this sense, AIMA intends to extend the work of agricultural museums to cover research, collection and the representation of agricultural development up to the present day, and through so doing to make an educational contribution - especially in the so far less developed countries.

AIMA intends to extend cooperation with FAO and other international organizations in agriculture. By these means, AIMA is anxious to support the objectives of ICOM in emphasizing the "important part played by the museums and the museum profession in every community as well as in becoming better acquainted with and mutually understanding the nations." (ICOM - Statute 1974, section 111, Art. 7).

AIMA'S CORE VALUES

AIMA acts upon ICOM's core values:

- commitment to the conservation, continuation, and communication to society of the world's natural and cultural heritage, tangible and intangible
- recognition of human creativity in all its manifestations, and its value to all parts of society in interpreting the past, shaping the present, and mapping the future
- recognition of intellectual, cultural and social diversity, and respect for difference, as forces for cross-cultural understanding and social cohesion
- professional development, training, mentoring, exchange of expertise and mutual assistance among networks of museum personnel
- professional conduct, observance and promotion of ICOM's Code of Professional Ethics
- encouragement and particular support for museum work and heritage initiatives that are multi-lingual, inter-disciplinary, multi-faceted, or cross-cultural; or linking disparate people, countries and regions
- community education and skills-diffusion as an integral part of capacity-building, contributing to sustainable development according to varying socio-cultural needs
- publication and dissemination of information in support of ICOM's objectives
- democratic values, communication, and service orientation promoted throughout ICOM as an organization
- engagement with public issues of social change, and active participation in debates on arts, culture and heritage impacting on the work of museums and museum professionals
- joint action with partner organizations, and projection of ICOM's work and values internationally

AIMA OBJECTIVES

1. Promote cooperation between various categories of agricultural and rural life museums (including those relating to agricultural techniques, food industries, forestry, viticulture, fishing, hunting, and other service or transformation industries in agricultural production, as well as open air museums), as well as among archives, collections, researchers, specialists and enlightened amateurs in these fields.
2. Promote and encourage all initiatives that aim to interest experts, connoisseurs and museums towards research, exhibit activities, and public engagement.

3. Promote and encourage international cooperation enabling better knowledge of museography in agriculture, collection sciences and representation of the development of agriculture up to today.
4. Promote and encourage all initiatives aiming at improving the training of young people, in particular exchanges and knowledge transfer.
5. Promote development of training and educational material about agriculture and rural life.
6. Promote cooperation, on the local and international levels in all technologies linked to museology, conservation and restoration of collections of objects linked to agriculture.
7. And, more generally, promote and encourage all action aiming at improving the image of agriculture, its sciences and history, on the international level.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN FOR STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020

External environment:

External circumstances conditioning the creation and development of agricultural museums including a world-wide demographic shift from rural to urban and from agricultural to more industrial environments. This has decreased first-hand experience with rural and agricultural history and theoretically reduces public interest in agricultural museums. This, in turn, reduces the numbers of staff with first-hand experience in agriculture and rural life.

1. The ICOM objective “develop museum and heritage expertise” seems critical to design and implement agricultural museum collecting and programming, and to all other AIMA “external circumstances.”
2. Growing suburban and urban audiences (disassociated from rural life, but keen on direct experiences with natural and agricultural environments) offer potential for agricultural museums to demonstrate relevancy for traditional and
3. Funding crises affect stability of public institutions.
4. Changing attitudes toward chemicals and bioengineering in agriculture affect public perceptions of agriculture in general, and can affect interest in agricultural history.
5. Intangible cultural heritage preservation and interpretation can engage traditional animal husbandry and crop growers and build bridges between contemporary agricultural practices and modern audiences.
6. Evolution of the museum profession as it relates to agricultural museum operations [exploration of new technology for social networking, etc.; evolution of museum profession and museum standards (ethics; strategic plans; public good); research techniques (generating information), and interpretation and public programming (sharing information)]
7. Address issues that affect decisions about contemporary collecting of agricultural and ecological/environmental heritage.
8. Promotion of best practices in museum profession including adherence to ICOM Code of Ethics and international exchange of information collection and dissemination.

Internal environment:

1. AIMA has dues-paying membership, and while the number attending the triennial congress dropped during 2000s, the number began growing during 2010s.
2. AIMA has succeeded in offering a triennial congress since its inception in 1966.
3. Communication with AIMA members has been regular and dynamic since 2011 Congress in Romania.
4. AIMA has a website to deliver information to members and interested parties. AIMA created a digital communication/social media network of practice in 2016.
5. AIMA needs to continue growing its membership base, promote services to members and interested parties, and develop additional partnerships.
6. AIMA is developing the roles and responsibilities of Executive Committee members and Networks of Practice to serve the agricultural and rural museum community.
7. AIMA needs to further develop relationships with other related international organizations, such as the European Open Air Museums Association; the Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums; Experimental Archaeology, etc. AIMA has the intention to reach out to the Society for Folklife Studies, the Folklore Society, and other research institutions, and the Rural Museums Network, the Federation of Agricultural Museums and Rural Heritage, and other national museum organizations related to agriculture and rural life, etc.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR AIMA, 2016-2020

Objective 1: AIMA facilitates the exchange of information internationally to develop agricultural and rural museum and heritage expertise.

Objective 2: AIMA is pro-active in recruiting members and providing relevant services for heritage documentation, preservation, and interpretation.

Objective 3: AIMA promotes the role and importance of agricultural and rural museums in global context.

Objective 4: AIMA identifies and manages resources to implement the Strategic Plan effectively.

Strategic Objective 1: AIMA facilitates the exchange of information internationally to develop agricultural and rural museum and heritage expertise.

Anticipated results between 2016-2020 (in priority order)

- a. Partner with an AIMA institutional member to host a triennial international congress.
- b. Publish proceedings of the congress.
- c. Maintain an electronic presence.
- d. Continue to develop networks of practice.

Action Plan for Strategic Objective 1

1. Select the location and date of the next congress (CIMA) well in advance so it can be announced during the CIMA. (2017 – Tartu, Estonia and environs; 2020 – determine location in 2017)
2. Select a congress theme for CIMA 19 (2020) that responds to external environment challenges.
3. Prepare a synopsis of the CIMA 19 theme to generate discussion and ideas.
4. Solicit written proposals from museums and institutions wanting to host future congresses and encourage AIMA meetings around the globe.
5. Develop a template for proposals for CIMA 18 (2017).
6. Form scientific committee to assist in setting the CIMA program, reviewing submissions, vetting articles for Proceedings and other publications.
7. Assist in distribution of CIMA Proceedings and other AIMA communications.
8. Encourage members and external experts to write articles for AIMA communications.
9. Publish newsletter and distribute to members and other interested parties.
10. Maintain accurate and current list of active members and interested parties.

Strategic Objective 2: AIMA is pro-active in recruiting members and providing relevant services for heritage documentation, preservation, and interpretation.

Anticipated results between 2016-2020 (in priority order)

- a. A list of membership categories, benefits and fees.
- b. An account to facilitate international electronic payments.
- c. The Secretary General will maintain the membership list and list of interested parties and will send renewals.
- d. An electronic newsletter published no less than once per year to maintain communication.
- e. Review member needs by evaluating Congresses and encouraging feedback on membership services.

Action Plan for Strategic Objective 2

1. Regular review of AIMA Statutes to ensure the organization remains relevant to members.
2. Review AIMA membership database; survey attendees at CIMA 18 (2017) to build database.
3. Involve Executive Committee members in identifying museums and individuals that could be targeted for membership.
4. Review membership categories, benefits, and dues for General Assembly approval at CIMA 18.
5. Standardize renewal dates for annual and triennial dues payments, and procedure for sending renewal notices.
6. AIMA partners with an AIMA institutional member to host CIMA and promote the Congress and assist as useful.

Objective 3: AIMA promotes the role and importance of agricultural and rural museums in global context.

Anticipated results for 2016-2020 (in priority order):

1. Raise profile of AIMA and agricultural and rural museums around the world.
2. Ongoing monitoring (environmental scan) of status of agricultural and rural museums around the world.

Action Plan for Objective 3:

1. Communicate with the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and with other international organizations dedicated to agriculture, food and rural life.
2. Communicate with officials in countries with agricultural and rural museums about their value to public education.
3. Reach out to nations not currently included in the Executive Committee (Euro- and North American-centric) to expand global membership.
4. Seek venues for triennial congresses that further international exchange.

Objective 4: AIMA identifies and manages resources to implement the Strategic Plan effectively.

Anticipated results for 2016-2020 (in priority order)

1. Review the role of Executive Committee members to fulfill AIMA objectives.
2. Identify roles and responsibilities of Executive Committee members to implement Strategic Plan, review and refine regularly.

Action Plan for Objective 4

1. Set targets for membership development
2. Executive Committee reviews recommendations set forth by Networks of Practice.
3. Designate individual executive committee members as liaisons with Networks of Practice to help facilitate work of the network and report to the Executive Committee.

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