

## THE CRITERIA FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT

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### **Abstract**

*Purpose* –The purpose of this study is to identify the criteria for sustainable museums found in reference literature and specified in our research, and to suggest guidelines for museums to follow.

*Methodology* –In our primary research, the criteria for a sustainable museum were interpreted along four pillars, for which in-depth expert interviews were conducted with Hungarian museum professionals. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore the viewpoints, expectations, and perceptions of museum staff.

*Findings* – In terms of environmental sustainability, Hungarian contemporary museums place less emphasis on making the museum building itself more sustainable. However, it is worthwhile for institutions that have long-term plans to become more and more eco-friendly. The issue of economic sustainability is the most problematic for Hungarian museums, which can be greatly improved with an active support community that helps museums either through volunteer work or financially. From a social point of view, one of the most important tasks of museums is to ensure equal opportunities, to reach the widest possible range of people, which is facilitated if the museum can function as a community space that adequately involves museum visitors and if it continuously strengthens its role in education. In terms of cultural sustainability, the responsibilities of museums are collection management, maintaining quality, and artistic vitality.

*Contribution* – We conceptualize and provide a framework for sustainable museums. Through our research, we have contributed to broadening the theoretical background of sustainable museums from the perspective of contemporary art museums.

**Keywords:** sustainable museum, economic, environmental, social, cultural, in-depth interview.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The role of museums in society has changed dramatically since they first appeared over two thousand years ago. Initially, the traditional role of museums was nothing more than presenting cultural, religious, and historical objects to the narrowest, educated social elite, and today it has brought about a change in both its audience and role (Loach et al. 2017).

Smartphones, robotics, big data all greatly influence the lives of society and institutions, which can be a threat to overly conservative institutions if they fail to adapt to trends. In the 21st century, museums also need to adapt and change their role, which can be solved by becoming more of a social institution (Visser 2012).

The purpose of this study is to structure the future of the role of museums in the literature, to identify the basic requirements for sustainable museums. In our primary research, the

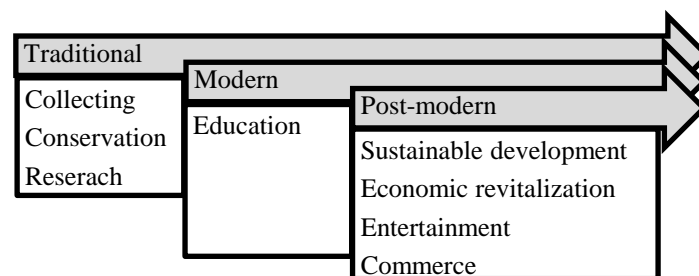
criteria of a sustainable museum for Hungarian contemporary museums was interpreted, for which in-depth expert interviews were conducted with Hungarian museum professionals. Our main research question: *What are the criteria for a sustainable museum?*

At the end of the study, the criteria for sustainable museums identified in the literature and determined by our research were compared, and suggestions were made for the direction of these for contemporary Hungarian museums.

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The basic function of museums is to collect and procure works of art on which all other functions are based. This is followed by conservation, which is essential for present and future generations to see the "materials" collected. The third level is research, which is still part of the traditional role of museums. In the modern approach, education is already emerging as an essential museum function. However, the post-modern perspective already emphasizes the role of museums in sustainable development. (Pop and Borza 2015). However, the changing role of museums does not mean that previous roles are less important, but that new roles need to be built on them, as shown in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1: **Development of museums' function**



Source: Pop and Borza 2015, 10

Nowadays, museums have the professional potential to make them valuable and exemplary actors in sustainable development (Gustafsson and Iijla 2017). Sustainability is built on three pillars: economy, society, and environment, so many authors in the literature also interpret sustainability for museums based on these three pillars (Wickham and Lehman 2015, Merriman 2008), but more and more studies (Lambert et al. 2014) point to the importance of a fourth pillar, the cultural sustainability in museums.

Pop and Borza (2015) explored the factors influencing the sustainability of a museum and its measurability. When sustainability is objectively measured, the size of the museum collections and their organizational structure should be taken into account. The study examines the sustainability of museums in four dimensions: cultural, social, economic, and environmental. In connection with the concept of sustainability, museums generally aim to achieve the greatest possible cultural, social, and economic impact while having a minimal impact on the environment.

- Environmental sustainability means efficient use of resources.
- Social sustainability is best achieved through community involvement.
- Cultural sustainability is primarily about preserving and maintaining the quality of collections.
- Economic sustainability means a balanced and diversified budget.

Based on the model of Pop and Borza (2015), the role of museums' sustainability was rethought along the individual pillars and, new factors related to the sustainability of museums were identified with other references.

### 1.1. Environmental sustainability in museums

In the case of environmental sustainability, we can interpret the role of museums on two levels. On the one hand, as an organization, how much attention is paid to the environment of the museum building and operation. On the other hand, as a museum, a cultural institution, how to raise awareness of the importance of the environment. The organizational sustainability concept focuses on the distribution and utilization of factors such as human and economic resources (Wickham and Lehman 2015), renewable energy usage, water usage, waste management, waste management, vehicle management, or other eco-solutions to the building itself (Adams 2010).

Museums can bring the public closer to the environment through exhibitions (Bedno and Bedno 1999), encouraging conservation, raising awareness of pollution, appreciating and protecting biodiversity, using products efficiently, and minimizing waste (Reeves 2002).

### 1.2. Social sustainability in museums

We identified four main focuses of social sustainability: social responsibility, which is the foundation of all, the achievement of all groups in society, the museum as a community space, and the educational role.

Just (2014) points out that museums around the world are increasingly committed to *CSR* activities such as *community development, inclusion, social and learning coordination*, which is an opportunity, innovation, and a competitive advantage for museums.

In the fast-paced and constant changes of the 21st century, energy should be devoted to harmonizing the role of museums in *meeting the public's expectations, educating and preserving their culture*, necessitated by the exchange and constant transformation of both technologies and ideologies. Furthermore, responding to key, ongoing challenges, such as *being a partner in the development of society, achieving all groups of our society, and differentiating the sensitization of different target groups*, must be addressed (Arinze 1999).

Museums as *community spaces* are emerging as new community centers (Jung 2011). The 21st-century museum is not only an institution but a *living organization* and a social platform that acts as a catalyst for the development of communities. The relationship

between the museum and the visitor is realized through the dimensions of *achievement, interactivity, and engagement* (Tudoricu and Craciun 2017).

Visser (2014) highlights *active communities*, groups that meet regularly and work together, online or offline, according to their common interests, opinions, values.

Museums are capable of attracting people *emotionally and intellectually* and providing social *experiences* (Bodnár 2019). They play an important role in improving people's lives, creating or strengthening communities, reducing crime, and creating a socially inclusive society at the community level (Belfiore and Bennett 2007, Azmat et al. 2018).

### **1.3. Economic sustainability in museums**

The economic sustainability of museums mainly means economic viability, but it is important to complement it with its role in the market, and innovation and technology are also important drivers of strengthening this pillar.

The *economic viability* of museums is made up of public funding, fundraising, own revenue, and other sources of income, and volunteers and volunteer hours are also important components (Adams 2010).

Museums enhance the cultural supply of cities as *cultural attractions*. They are often tools for the economic revitalization of the local community. In many cases, museums attract tourists as primary attractions and extend the stay of visitors to a particular destination, which also leads to economic growth (Trinh and Lam 2016). Museums have expanded their role in the 21st century and have become *key players in heritage and cultural tourism*, as well as *partners for creative and innovative industries* (Gustafsson and Iijla 2017). Museums can contribute to sustainable development by adding economic value to the creative industries of the economy. They contribute to wellbeing, job creation, and employment through innovation, creativity, and problem-solving for regional and local economies (Reeves 2002).

*Quality, prestige, innovation, and price-value rate* have a significant impact on the sustainability of museums. An integrated *market-oriented approach* can be an important driver of innovation and customer value, supporting the findings of Camarero and Garrido (2008) and confirming the need for innovation in this sector (Virto et al. 2017).

*Technology* is not essential to community life, but it can add significantly if used well (Visser 2012). Developments in information and communication technologies provide museums with a much wider market than physical visitors (Gustafsson and Iijla 2017).

### **1.4. Cultural sustainability in museums**

Cultural sustainability is seen as the fourth pillar of sustainable development and can be defined as the consideration, preservation, and demonstration of the tangible and

intangible heritage, artistic production, and knowledge and skills of different social groups, communities, and nations (Lambert et al. 2014).

The cultural pillar is divided into three functions, on the one hand, the sustainable management of collections, on the other hand, the preservation of quality, and the responsibility for the content of art.

One of the primary goals of museums is to disseminate *democratic worldviews*, but it needs to be approached very carefully and does it without conveying political messages to the audience. „*No more silent museums, give some noise.*” Museums also have a mission to support the unity of the world and to campaign for ever-lasting peace among families, communities, and nations (Arinze 1999).

In their research, Gustafsson and Iijla (2017) link the sustainability of the museum with its relevance to the *cultural needs of the community*. However, museums must not only meet the needs that people know and express but also offer them suggestions and ideas that can raise the community's interest in the subject. Museums play an important role in *determining visitors' tastes and preferences*.

In the 2010s, the researchers investigated the visitor as an *active interpreter* who creates an interpretation of the work based on his own experiences, associations, doubts, and identities, making the museum *an open work that the visitor completes* (Lambert 2010).

### **1.5. Summary of literature**

In the model shown in *Figure 2*, elements were identified along the four pillars that could enhance the sustainability of a museum. However, some elements are not clearly linked to a pillar, but rather these factors often increase the sustainability of the museum in two pillars, or even affect all four pillars.

The relationship between the pillars was interpreted based on Pop et al. (2019). The primary function of museums is conserving collections, so they should therefore strive for cultural sustainability as a priority. If the museum does for society, acts as part of society for the sake of social sustainability, it can increase the number of visitors, thereby improving its economic sustainability. By taking action on environmental sustainability, which, as an organization, reduces the use of resources, it can also achieve a more economically sustainable institution by reducing costs.

Figure 2: **Factors of the sustainability of museums according to the literature**

<p><b>Environmental sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Museum operation                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Renewable energy/energy management</i></li> <li>• <i>Water management</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recycled waste/waste management</li> <li>• <i>Building, Eco-building</i></li> <li>• <i>Vehicle management</i></li> <li>• <i>Pollution management</i></li> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• Environmental education</li> </ul>	<p><b>Social sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social responsibility/CSR</li> <li>• Social institution, engagement, increasing wellbeing</li> <li>• Achievement of all groups of society</li> <li>• On-site visitors/<i>on-line visitors</i></li> <li>• Culturally isolated, or peripheral communities - involving, integration</li> <li>• <i>Museum Accessibility - Physical, comprehensively</i></li> <li>• Community space                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living organization - community buildignand development - connection - active communities, Active citizenship/ particiopation - number of volunteers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Community engagement                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagament, interactive</li> <li>• Generating interest</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Educational role                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning activities</li> <li>• Experiential Knowledge Transfer - Visual Education</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Economic sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic viability                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• government funding, other sources of income, fundraising</li> <li>• number of volunteer hours</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Economic actor                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural tourism/cultural attraction</li> <li>• Cultural employment</li> <li>• Economic revitalization of local community</li> <li>• Partner for creative and innovative industries</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Market orientation</li> <li>• Workforce education</li> <li>• Price-value rate</li> <li>• Innovation</li> <li>• Technology</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cultural sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection management                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collection assessment</li> <li>• rate of growth of the collection</li> <li>• proportion of collection for conservation</li> <li>• cultural consevation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Quality                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professionally flawless content and easy to understand</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Artistic vitality                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define visitors' tastes and preferences</li> <li>• Differentiated sensitization of target groups</li> <li>• Disseminating democratic worldviews</li> <li>• Cultural diversity / intercultural dialogue</li> <li>• Cultural skills and knowledge</li> <li>• Creativity and innovation</li> <li>• Meeting the cultural needs of the Community</li> <li>• An open work that the visitor completes, co-creation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Source: Own edition

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The research aims to explore the aspects of the sustainable future of Hungarian contemporary museums with qualitative research. In the fall of 2019, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 Hungarian contemporary art professionals. Professionals have been working in the museum field for a minimum of 5 years, restorer (1), museum educators (3), chief curator (1), curators (4), assistant curator (1), communication specialists (4) museum shop (1). The interview questions were compiled based on our previous researches, museum professional experiences, and relevant literature. The interviews lasted an average of 60-90 minutes, and the digitally recorded audio recordings were typed. During the analysis of the texts, open-source coding revealed relevant topics and compared the results with the relevant sections of the literature.

## 3. FINDINGS

### 3.1. Environmental sustainability

During the in-depth interviews, the professionals see the role and responsibilities of museums in *environmentally conscious* operation and use, as well as in thematic exhibitions and programs. The role of museums in shaping *environmentally conscious visitor attitudes* has also increased on a global scale. More and more museums see it as their mission to explicitly guide their visitors to how they can meet their own needs while preserving the environment and natural resources for the world and future generations. Through their *exhibitions*, contemporary art museums can have an attitude-forming effect even on a wider audience, as their non-didactic messages can have a deeper impact on visitors. *"Contemporary art deals with migration and criticism of capitalism, which is also linked to the climate catastrophe and the global impact of terribly spurred production and the endless exploitation of natural resources. These topics are also present in contemporary art and our curatorial team is currently dealing with a related exhibition concept."* (curator).

The sustainable future has recently become a hot issue for museums in Hungary as Central Europe has now started to sense the importance that if it does not take steps to protect nature, it will soon feel the negative effects. Recyclable materials are increasingly used in museum sessions related to contemporary art, to use less paper and transfer knowledge with a creative and innovative approach. Experts also pointed out that the organization of large-scale international exhibitions involves *the transport of hundreds of artifacts* and the couriers accompanying the artifact, mostly in the form of air transport, which can have a serious impact on the environment on an annual basis.

### 3.2. Social sustainability

Museum educators are trying to meet the needs and expectations of a differentiated group of museum visitors, involving disadvantaged people, making the museum *accessible, both physically and comprehensively*. Today, museum educators are also targeting odd

audiences such as homeless people, people with mental disabilities, and dementia. In the course of the research, museum professionals pointed out that visitor involvement can work well in societies where museum visits have become *part of everyday life*, where the visitor has reference points for the exhibition, so they can be *personally attached* as they will otherwise be uninterested. Museum communication professionals have a major role to play in *generating interest*. Museum educators took the lead in the initiative to address *culturally isolated or socially, marginalized, peripheral communities*. The museum becomes a platform that facilitates the meeting and dialogue of distant cultural groups. The three pillars of the mediating role can be integration, identity, and intellectual content. Museums have always been an intellectual environment, and a great many people have never been to a museum before, or the habit has not come to them: "... *I had students living in deep poverty or living in prison and I think it may also have been interesting that they could simply come into a museum, in such an elitist place, and become part of common thinking.*" (museum educator). Catch-up activities are very important in the museum pedagogy program. In many cases it is possible to get free tickets, there are special sessions where the participants "*are not taking part in a separate session, but meet and talk to the visitors, so the connection is established.*" (museum educator). Museum professionals see the *educational role* of a museum is being able to teach the public things that they can use in some way in their daily lives. Three skills were highlighted that, in their view, could develop *cognitive ability, expressive skill, and tolerance* during museum visits. "*There are a lot of things a museum can get involved in, so on an experience level, it can give people a plus, thereby improving them a bit of training or smartening them.*" (curator).

### 3.3. Economic sustainability

The traditional roles of museum staff have undergone significant change. The responsibilities of curators have changed perhaps the most, with less collection-related work and an increase in their "managerial" and "administrative" responsibilities. In this transitional situation, museum staff are primarily aligned with their *values* and do not necessarily try to meet external expectations. The beliefs and attitudes of employees on issues such as *market orientation, customer value, and innovation* greatly influence the sustainability of museums. Due to the constant withdrawal of funds, museums can usually only plan for the short term, so time has become the biggest enemy of implementing exhibition projects in addition to money. "*The difficulty is that this type of work requires a lot of money because there is not only the concept but also the execution of an exhibition, the purchase of an artifact and the interpretation...*" *In the typical case of dancing with hands tied, we should put together in 2-3 months an exhibition and we do not have time for research, we can roughly estimate how much a project or an exhibition can cost and how to get money for it, but over time the situation has deteriorated a lot, it is becoming more and more difficult to find the source.*" (chief curator). Experts have identified three areas where museums are lagging and need to make significant improvements in the coming period: *innovations* in all museum operations, significant *information technological developments*, and increasing *customer value* through experiential knowledge transfer.



### 3.4. Cultural sustainability

The education and professional knowledge accumulated in the environment of museums can help to answer the big questions of the present. The successful performance of the task of *value preservation* can be a model for other areas as well. Maintaining a *sustainable collection* is one of the basic tasks of museums, which includes the well-thought-out concept of the collection acquisition as well as the continuous development of artworks protection. Museum communication professionals see the biggest challenge in finding a balance between *professionally impeccable content and ease of comprehension*. They see the difficulty of their work in the fact that it is becoming increasingly difficult to meet the expectations of visitors, as they have to provide quality, interesting, fun, and experiential knowledge transfer for visitors with *different background knowledge, motivation, and openness*. According to experts, whoever gets to the museum becomes more open and problem-sensitive, and it is easier to find some solution to their problems. Today, artists also reflect on these factors, they enter the cultural environment through their works, and through this, people can come into contact with the problems or solutions they raise. "*It depends on the institutions themselves how they dare to open up to shaping society.*" (curator). Paradigm shifts with the advent of new museology have influenced the way dialogue takes place between professionals and visitors (Bodnár et al. 2017). Institutions and the professionals in them are increasingly stepping back from the mediating behavior of an autocratic, top-down, one-way culture and approaching the visitor in an active interpretive role who, based on his own experiences, associations, doubts, identity, creates his interpretation of the work, so the museum is *an open work* that the visitor completes. During the interviews, it emerged that museum staff also perceive the responsibility inherent in the impact of culture and the museum on the *image of the country*. "*A minimum of 30% of a museum's visitors are usually made up of foreigners and I think the image a visitor gets in a contemporary museum as a foreigner can judge how open, how progressive the institution, the city, or even the country is.*" (curator).

### CONCLUSION

After literature review, the criteria for sustainable museums could be identified along the four pillars of sustainability which could be the future of museums' role. Most of the elements were also confirmed by the research, however, some were not mentioned by the Hungarian experts, and there are also factors with which the literature could be supplemented (*Figure 3*).

Figure 3: Summarizing the Sustainability Factors of Museums

ENVIRONMENTAL	SOCIAL	ECONOMIC	CULTURAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Environmental awareness</b></li> <li>• Museum operation                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Renewable energy/energy management</i></li> <li>• <i>Water management</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recycled waste/waste management</li> <li>• <i>Building, Eco-building</i></li> <li>• <i>Vehicle management</i></li> <li>• <i>Pollution management</i></li> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• <b>Transport of works of arts</b></li> <li>• Environmental education</li> <li>• Eco-events/exhibitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social responsibility/CSR</li> <li>• Social institution, engagement, increasing wellbeing</li> <li>• Achievement of all groups of society</li> <li>• On-site visitors/<i>on-line visitors</i></li> <li>• Culturally isolated, or peripheral communities - involving, integration</li> <li>• <i>Museum Accessibility - Physical, comprehensively</i></li> <li>• Community space</li> <li>• Living organization - community buildignand development - connection - active communities, Active citizenship/ participation - number of volunteers</li> <li>• <b>Make it a part of everyday life, Personal attachment, Continuity - Visitors from childhood to adulthood, Intellectual medium</b></li> <li>• Community engagement                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagament, interactive</li> <li>• Generating interest</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Artists' contact with the museum visitor</b></li> <li>• Educational role                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning activities</li> <li>• Experiential Knowledge Transfer - Visual Education</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic viability</li> <li>• government funding, other sources of income, fundraising</li> <li>• <i>number of volunteer hours</i></li> <li>• <i>Economic actor</i></li> <li>• <i>Cultural tourism/cultural attraction</i></li> <li>• <i>Cultural employment</i></li> <li>• <i>Economic revitalization of local community</i></li> <li>• <i>Partner for creative and innovative industries</i></li> <li>• Market orientation</li> <li>• Workforce education</li> <li>• Price-value rate</li> <li>• Innovation</li> <li>• Technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection management</li> <li>• collection assessment</li> <li>• rate of growth of the collection</li> <li>• proportion of collection for conservation</li> <li>• cultural consevation</li> <li>• Quality                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>professionally impeccable content and ease of comprehension</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Artistic vitality                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define visitors' tastes and preferences</li> <li>• Differentiated sensitization of target groups</li> <li>• Disseminating democratic worldviews</li> <li>• Cultural diversity / intercultural dialogue</li> <li>• Cultural skills and knowledge</li> <li>• Creativity and innovation</li> <li>• Meeting the cultural needs of the Community</li> <li>• An open work that the visitor completes, co-creation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Shaping the image of the country</b></li> </ul>

Note: italic - only in the literature, bold - appears only in research, normal - appears in both cases  
 Source: Own edition

In the field of *environmental sustainability*, Hungarian contemporary museums place less emphasis on making the museum building itself more sustainable. However, if they are thinking in the long run, it is worthwhile for them to become more and more eco-friendly. They should pay attention to energy, water and waste management. It can reduce maintenance costs which can also be beneficial in terms of economic sustainability. However, the interviews also highlighted two new factors. The environmental impact of transport of art works, for which it would be worthwhile to invent alternative solutions to replace the current air transportation. There is also the term

environmental awareness, which represents the role of environmental sustainability on several levels, from the side of the museum, professionals, and visitors.

Concerning *social sustainability*, the literature clearly emphasizes social responsibility for museums, which is also confirmed in its content by Hungarian professionals, although the term CSR is not used for this purpose. From a social point of view, one of the most important tasks of museums is to ensure equal opportunities, to achieve the widest possible range of people, which is facilitated if the museum can function as a community space, adequately involve museum visitors, including through personal contact with artists, and it continuously strengthens its role in education. Although the Hungarian profession has already recognized the importance of online visitors and its potential, they have not yet focused on this in the framework of its activities. It would be worthwhile to build in the future, as thanks to the development of technology, the range of visitors can be further expanded, which is also an important factor for economic sustainability. The literature is also expanded on this pillar, as the accessibility of social groups is also highlighted at the physical and comprehension level.

The issue of *economic sustainability* is most problematic for Hungarian museums, which can be greatly improved with an active, supportive community that helps museums either through volunteer work or financially. It was not highlighted by Hungarian museum professionals, although it is also important to emphasize that museums are increasingly important actors in cultural tourism and suitable partners for the creative industries. This role should be better highlighted and relied upon to increase economic sustainability.

In terms of *cultural sustainability*, the responsibilities of museums could be divided into three parts. The first is collection management, which also derives from the basic function of the museum. The second is to maintain quality, which is paramount. The easy-to-understand or easier-to-achieve social groups cannot be to the detriment of the profession, as the museum loses its credibility. The most important thing to consider is that to make a professionally impeccable exhibition and make it understandable to the general public by other means. The third factor is artistic vitality, which provides an opportunity to achieve different target groups, shape the tastes of museum visitors, process special, even taboo topics, and co-create with the public. However, the interviews also highlighted an interesting aspect, museums are also shaping the country's image.

Nowadays, museums must be sustainable institutions, as they are part of creating and sustaining sustainable communities, both locally and globally. Partly through the maintenance of collections and partly through their activities for the community, museums can be effective tools for achieving cultural, social, environmental, and economic sustainability. Analysis of the literature reveals that museums need to further develop their services, taking into account different approaches to their audiences. In this view, museums can improve their performance by directing their attention from an internal perspective, based on preservation, documentation, and study, to an external perspective, especially to visitors and the public (Bernardi 2006).

Based on the literature, the criteria of sustainable museums were identified, it was also supplemented by the results of our primary research. The criteria of sustainable museums

for Hungarian contemporary museums were examined and recommendations were made for assigning these directions to Hungarian contemporary museums.

In this study, interviews were conducted only with experts from contemporary museums, which should be extended to other museums. As well as it should be supplemented with demand-side research to see consumer expectations for the sustainability of museums. Gathering and analyzing international experiences and best practitioners could add further directions to our model.

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