

COMMON CULTURAL HERITAGE POLICY FRAMEWORK 2009-2012

Common Cultural Heritage

Over the years, the Netherlands has developed close ties with a number of countries. Today's Dutch society is the product of a long and sometimes troubled history – a past that can help us gain a better understanding of the present. The same is true of countries whose history intersects with the Netherlands, generating many material and immaterial relics of the past, which are collectively referred to by the term 'common cultural heritage.'

By 'common cultural heritage' we mean relics of a past that the Netherlands has shared with others: buildings and engineering constructions, archives, underwater wrecks and museum exhibits, and intangible heritage. They include heritage in other countries dating from the era of the Dutch East and West India Companies and from Dutch colonialism in Asia, Africa, and South America, as well as heritage deriving from a period of intensive cultural relations such as between the Netherlands and Russia. The term may also include artefacts (including archives) commissioned in other countries and built or supplied by Dutch people. Finally, it includes heritage in the Netherlands of other countries which have had a particularly strong (reciprocal) influence on Dutch culture.

By maintaining, managing, using and highlighting this heritage, we can foster a critical reflection on our past and a mutual understanding of past, present and future. This can strengthen relations and promote cooperation between countries, both bilaterally and multilaterally. The conservation of common cultural heritage can help to strengthen cultural identity, promote socioeconomic and cultural development and raise the profile and quality of the living environment.

Since 2000, common cultural heritage has been a priority in international cultural policy and impressive results have been achieved in various countries. The overall goal of the Common Cultural Heritage Policy Framework is to collaborate on the sustainable maintenance and management of the common cultural heritage, on the basis of reciprocal political and substantive involvement. Efforts will be made to increase knowledge of common cultural heritage, boost substantive and policy-based knowledge exchange, raise awareness and strengthen the local support base.

The collaborative projects which are the product of this policy

- help to strengthen the cultural identity of countries;
- magnify their symbolic significance and create spin-off effects;
- impact other sectors such as employment, tourism and education;
- ensure the future preservation of heritage.

To promote structural cooperation, available resources and capacity are deployed as effectively as possible. To this end, the common cultural heritage policy focuses on a limited number of priority countries, selected on the grounds of their historical ties with the Netherlands, the quantity and diversity of their extant cultural heritage and the importance that their authorities attach to sustainably maintaining and developing this heritage. The priority countries are: Brazil, Ghana, India, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Suriname.

Common Cultural Heritage framework 2009-2012

In their policy letter *Art without Borders* of 16 September 2008 (House of Representatives of the States General, 2008-2009 session, 31 482, no. 17) the Minister for European Affairs, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science and the Minister for Development Cooperation set out their international cultural policy priorities for 2009-2012 and described the instruments at their disposal. The policy described in the memorandum expresses a targeted commitment to common cultural heritage: long-term funding will be made available for this purpose and cooperation agreements will be drawn up with the eight priority countries.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will jointly contribute €2 million a year for common cultural heritage. To stimulate involvement on the part of the priority countries and local parties, half of the available resources (€1 million) will be delegated to the relevant embassies for multi-year projects. The allocation formula for allocating this funding will take into account the special circumstances and potential of the various countries. Efforts will be made to maximise flexibility and the system may be adapted in the future, depending on experience and results. This budget will allow the Dutch embassies to develop common cultural heritage initiatives, thus giving them an important role in implementing this policy. Local organisations which intend to carry out projects – whether or not in collaboration with a party from the Netherlands – can apply to the embassies for funding.

The other €1 million will be earmarked and added to the budgets of the Netherlands' three cultural heritage agencies: the National Archives (NA), the National Service for Archaeology, Cultural Landscapes and Built Heritage (RACM) and the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN). The grant will cover the cost of their equipment, enabling them to create space within their organisation for implementing the common cultural heritage policy. Within their particular field of expertise, the agencies will use the available budget to transfer knowledge, build capacity, raise and stimulate awareness of common cultural heritage, and provide substantive support for projects. In this process they will work with other parties in the field. Funding will be allocated on the basis of the plans drawn up by these cultural heritage agencies; and may be adjusted, subject to the results achieved and the potential for implementing projects.

Budget: criteria and conditions

The following considerations, criteria and conditions will govern how the common cultural heritage budget for 2009-2012 is spent by the Dutch embassies and cultural heritage agencies referred to above:

Common cultural heritage policy targets eight priority countries. In exceptional situations, the budget may also be spent on common heritage in other countries, but only when the activities in question have a direct and logical connection with projects in priority countries. When projects are assessed, special attention will be given to public interest in supporting the activity concerned and promoting local awareness of its importance.

Activities and projects will be assessed against the following criteria (not all of which need to be fulfilled in every case):

- the degree to which the projects relate to country-specific common cultural heritage programmes;
- the extent of knowledge transfer on technical and policy issues (e.g. training courses, exchanges, seminars, workshops);
- their impact on a range of policy sectors (e.g. other cultural disciplines, employment, tourism, education);
- political commitment in the partner country at local and national level, as evidenced in its financial and operational participation;

- reinforcement of the cultural identity of the partner country;
- a definite utilisation plan for the object concerned, including maintenance;
- increase in local knowledge of the common cultural heritage and strengthening of local support;
- opportunities for multilateral cooperation with other priority countries;
- specialist considerations such as cultural significance, uniqueness, representativeness and urgency of the need to take action.

In addition, the following supplementary conditions will apply to projects funded from embassy budgets.

- Grant applications must be submitted by a local organisation which is not dependent on the grant for its financial survival;
- The grant application must be submitted to the relevant Dutch embassy at least three months before the planned start of the project, and in accordance with the common cultural heritage budget template;
- the project will run for a period not exceeding four years;
- The contribution will not exceed 60% of the total project budget, and an appropriate balance of input will remain an important consideration. The contribution will be accorded by means of a contribution agreement.
- An application for a financial contribution can be rejected if the project in question is not in line with the government's policy on foreign relations and development cooperation, as set out in the explanatory note to the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or in other relevant publications or statements.

Programmes and projects

For 2009-2012, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Education, Culture & Science will make cooperation agreements with the eight priority countries. This will be done in accordance with existing MoUs and pending intergovernmental agreements. These will form the basis for country-specific, multi-year programmes for common cultural heritage, the close cohesion of which will serve to make the common cultural heritage policy more focused, more structured and more effective. The two ministries will design and update these programmes in close consultation with the authorities in the priority countries. They will also involve other parties active in this field, within and outside the country in question. To this end, the embassies will draw up lists of ideas, needs and initiatives in the various priority

countries. They will do this jointly with the NA, RACM and ICN, who will draw on their contacts with counterpart organisations and relevant parties for this purpose. The lists will form the basis for the country-specific, common cultural heritage programmes, which will incorporate policy priorities and themes. Project proposals submitted to the embassies will be assessed in accordance with these country-specific programmes and the above-mentioned criteria. They may also tie in substantively and/or financially with activities operated within the Culture and Development programme. In assessing projects, embassies may seek advice from both the above-mentioned government services and from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Education, Culture & Science. The embassies may also, for their part, offer advice to these governmental organisations.

The country-specific common cultural heritage programmes will be drawn up by a coordination group, which will also be responsible for cohesion and monitoring the progress of the activities. The coordination group will be led by the International Cultural Policy Division (DCO/IC) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Cultural Heritage Department (DCE) of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. It will include representatives of the NA, RACM, ICN and the Netherlands Institute for Heritage. As a sectoral cultural institution, the latter will be responsible for supporting the work of the various parties, collating information and fostering collaboration. The coordination group will be responsible for determining and elaborating common themes (such as urban development in historical surroundings and the history of migration), and for aligning the activities of the various government services, whether among themselves or in relation to country-specific programmes.¹ The result should be a matrix model that allows embassy-funded projects to call on one or more government services for substantive support, which comes from their own budgets. The coordination group will also produce and maintain records of the programme planning and draw up an annual overview of the delivery of the policy. This will constitute monitoring of the policy. The International Cultural Policy Division and the Cultural Heritage Department will have the final say on the wording of recommendations made to the ministers and state secretaries involved.

In order to discuss common issues, strengthen cohesion between the country-specific programmes and stimulate multilateral ventures, the coordination group will meet once a year with representatives of the priority countries. At the end of the 2009-2012 period the common cultural heritage policy will be evaluated as part of the qualitative evaluation of international cultural policy referred to in *Art without Borders*.

The results of all these efforts will be made as visible and accessible as possible, notably through the common cultural heritage database, which is currently being developed by the Centre for International Heritage Activities (CIE) and will be managed by the Netherlands Institute for Heritage as from 2010.

¹ The themes of urban development in historical surroundings and the history of migration emerged as common issues during the *Common Cultural Heritage* conference in The Hague, in November 2006.