

**Unofficial translation**



**Lao People's Democratic Republic  
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity**

**The Government**

**No.: 159/GOL  
Vientiane Capital, 28 May 2015**

**DECREE  
*On*  
Museums**

- Pursuant to the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic No. 02/NA, dated 06 May 2003;
- Pursuant to the Law on National Heritage No. 44/NA, dated 24 December 2013;
- Pursuant to the Proposal of the Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism No. 340/MoICT, dated 02 April 2015.

**The Government hereby issues a Decree:**

**CHAPTER 1  
General Provisions**

**Article 1      Objective**

This Decree defines principles, regulations, and measures on the management, monitoring, and inspection of museums so that the incorporation and operation of museums will be a system for collecting artifacts and antiquities which are uniquely cultural, historical, and natural symbols and evidence of the country with the aim of preserving, protecting, rehabilitating, developing, and using museums in a useful way; raising the awareness of Lao citizens to love their nation and national traditions; and creating the necessary outlook and other factors needed to secure national sustainability for the future.

**Article 2      Museums**

A museum is a place for collecting, maintaining, preserving, and exhibiting cultural, historical, natural, scientific, and social artifacts in order to disseminate information on the historical background, bravery, and diligence of our ancestors, the richness of Laos, and to serve research, education, study tours, and tourism, both domestically and internationally, on a non-profit basis.

### **Article 3      Definitions**

Terms used in this Decree shall have the following meanings:

1.     **Art science museum** refers to a museum subject included in an education system;
2.     **Electronic museum** refers to the use of advanced technology in the museum;
3.     **Museology** refers to the study of artifacts, with all procedures duly in accordance with scientific principles;
4.     A **curator** refers to a person who is employed in an art science museum;
5.     An **archeologist** refers to a person who works at surveying, prospecting, and excavating antique objects, archeological sites, and other such work;
6.     **Exhibition room** refers to a place for exhibiting artifacts or products to serve society which is not organized based upon the museum system;
7.     **Historical monument** and **Cultural Hall** refer to places for exhibiting artifacts showing the excellence and bravery of national heroes, heroines, and ancestors to be displayed and disseminated not entirely in accordance with the museum system;
8.     **Artifacts** refers to objects protected within a museum;
9.     **Museum artifacts** refers to original artifacts;
10.    **Artifact group** refers to objects derived from a common source;
11.    **Artifact set** refers to components of objects belonging to the same class;
12.    **Temporary exhibition** refers to the exhibition of artifacts inside and outside a place for a period of time;
13.    **Permanent exhibition** refers to a systematic exhibition in a museum;
14.    A **museum service user** refers to a local or foreign person, a legal entity, or an organization that uses museum services.

### **Article 4      Government Policies regarding Museums**

The Government has the following policies on museums:

1.     To encourage and promote local and foreign individuals, legal entities, and organizations to contribute to the incorporation of museums in accordance with applicable laws and regulations in order to ensure equal rights to operate their museums;
2.     To promote and develop museums to be widely established, sustainable, and of high quality by training and recruiting employees and providing items such as budgets, vehicles, equipment, and advanced technology;
3.     To facilitate museums duly incorporated in accordance with applicable laws and regulations to operate their museums countrywide and internationally.

### **Article 5      Principles for the Operation of Museums**

The operation of museums shall comply with the following principles:

1.     To ensure the characteristics of the nation, advancement and public;
2.     To ensure the original historical, cultural, scientific, and modern structure of the museum;
3.     To ensure the provision of useful information for the public to study, review, and research, and to contribute to human resource development;
4.     To ensure a high-quality standard of service to the public;
5.     To keep secrets of artifacts.

**Article 6      International Cooperation**

The state promotes regional and international liaison and cooperation by exchanging technical lessons, information, science, and technology regarding museums; competing for financial aid to develop museums to be modern and of high quality; and complying with contracts or conventions to which Laos is a party.

**Article 7      Scope of Application**

This Decree applies to domestic or foreign individuals, legal entities, or organizations that operate museums in the Lao PDR and in foreign countries.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Types of Museum**

**Article 8      Types of Museum**

Museums are divided into the three following types:

1. A state-owned museum consists of a national museum, an authority museum, a historical monument, or a local museum;
2. A collective museum;
3. A private museum or historical monument.

Each type of museum has the same purpose and duties but differ in terms of organizational structure, personnel, status, size, and target.

**Article 9      National Museum**

The national museum refers to a country's museum which is established at a central level as a place to collect, gather, study, review, research, register, preserve, exhibit, and disseminate information on valuable and distinctive national artifacts.

**Article 10      Authority Museum**

An authority museum refers to a place to collect, gather, exhibit, and preserve valuable and noticeable artifacts of authorities such as a national defense authority museum, a public security authority museum, a scientific and technology museum, and others.

**Article 11      Local Museum**

A local museum refers to a place to collect, exhibit, and preserve valuable and distinctive artifacts from a specific locality.

**Article 12      Collective Museum**

A collective museum refers to a group's museum duly established in accordance with laws and regulations as a place to collect and gather collective information about objects derived from study, exploration, prospecting, and donation to be protected, preserved, managed, and exhibited in the museum and to serve society in terms of study, review, and research, to be carried out in accordance with the technical principles of museology and to be exhibited and disseminated domestically and internationally.

### **Article 13     Private Museum**

A private museum refers to a museum belonging to a person or legal entity duly established in accordance with applicable laws and regulations as a place to collect and gather information on objects of a person or a group of people derived from study, exploration, prospecting, and donation, to be managed, studied, researched, preserved, and protected in accordance with the technical principles of museology and to be exhibited and disseminated domestically and internationally, such as the silk cloth museum, the museum of Luangprabang ethnic textiles, and others.

### **Article 14     Historical Monuments, Cultural Halls, and Exhibition Rooms**

A historical monument or cultural hall is duly established by a person, a legal entity, or an organization in accordance with applicable laws and regulations as a place to collect art displaying the excellence and bravery of heroes, heroines, and ancestors, to be exhibited and disseminated in accordance with the museum system.

An exhibition room is organized by a person, a legal entity, or an organization as permitted by an Information, Culture and Tourism authority in accordance with its management level in order to disseminate art and serve society, and is not organized in accordance with the museum system.

## **CHAPTER 3 Museum Activities**

### **Article 15     Museum Activities**

Museum activities as per the museological system are as follows:

1. To study, explore, excavate, prospect, review, and research artifacts and associated contents;
2. To preserve, protect, and register artifacts;
3. To exhibit its art and artifacts in many forms;
4. To disseminate and study, and to facilitate guided tours;
5. To simulate or create new artifacts.

### **Article 16     Study, Exploration, Prospecting, Excavation, Research, and Review of Artifacts**

Study, exploration, prospecting, excavation, research, and review refers to the study of initial information prior to the collection, prospecting, and excavation in order to research information on artifacts which are part of our valuable cultural, historical, and natural heritage.

A study of contents refers to the writing, compiling, and provision of information, the explanation of contents, and the valuation of artifacts.

### **Article 17     Preservation, Protection, and Registration**

Preservation, protection, and registration refers to the management and protection of artifacts from damage, ruin, and deterioration, the renovation of artifacts to their original condition, and the protection of artifacts from theft and destruction by natural disasters.

#### **Article 18      Organization of Exhibitions**

The organization of exhibitions refers to the design and installation of artifacts in accordance with their structure and purpose or the use of color, lighting, and audio systems in accordance with museological standards.

#### **Article 19      Dissemination, Study, and Guided Tours**

Dissemination, study, and guided tours refers to services in terms of printing and providing electronic materials, visiting, explaining contents, question-and-answer services, and provision of information for review of artifacts which are part of the cultural, historical, and natural heritage contained in a museum to local and foreign members of the public.

The organization of activities on significant days is to convince the public to visit museums and publicize museums to the public.

#### **Article 20      Simulation of Artifacts**

The simulation of artifacts refers to making a copy or reproduction of artifacts with the same shape, features, dimensions, design, decoration, and other characteristics as the original artifacts.

### **CHAPTER 4 Establishment of Museums**

#### **Article 21      Conditions for Establishment of Museums**

The establishment of a museum shall fully comply with the following conditions:

1. To have a plan and budget to serve technical objectives or construction;
2. To have a suitable place in order to avoid problems such as flood, pollution, traffic jams, and construction sites;
3. To have a building with a museological system for which Laos is the subject;
4. To have valuable and distinctive artifacts as representative of our cultural, historical, and natural heritage;
5. To have qualified and capable staff with technical, museological, archaeological, and other relevant scientific knowledge;
6. To have modern security tools and vehicles;
7. To have a warehousing system to ensure basic sustainability for valuable objects.

#### **Article 22      Submission of Application for the Establishment of a Museum**

A person, a legal entity, or an organization wishing to establish a museum shall submit an application and supporting documents to the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism on a given printed form.

The required documents consist of:

- An application;
- An organizational structure;
- An article of association;
- A curriculum, an identity card, or a family book; a criminal record certificate No. 3 for an applicant; and a certificate of land use right, a land title, or a land use right for the place in which the museum will be established.

**Article 23      Consideration of Application**

After receiving an application and supporting documents in full, the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism must review and consider those documents within 90 days from the date of receiving the application. If it is found that the application and supporting documents are correct and fully meet conditions, a license for the establishment of a museum will be issued. If an applicant does not fully meet conditions or submits incomplete documents, the applicant shall be notified within fifteen days.

**Article 24      Amendment or Closure**

An amendment to museum details shall be made in case of a change of name or museum address, and a museum owner shall submit a request for permission to the Information, Culture and Tourism authority at the appropriate management level to consider the request within fifteen working days from the date of receiving the application.

Closure of a museum shall occur if a museum owner fails to continue operating the museum or a business license is withdrawn due to violation of laws and regulations. In case of closure due to failure to operate the museum, the museum owner shall notify the Information, Culture and Tourism authority in writing at the appropriate management level for consideration within seven working days from the date of closure.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Organizational Structure of Museums**

**Article 25      Organizational Structure of Museums**

The organizational structure of a museum consists of:

1. An owner of the museum or exhibition room;
2. A director and a deputy director of the museum;
3. Staff or a curator of the museum;
4. A partner of the museum.

For a person's, legal entity's, or collective museum, personnel shall be recruited appropriately.

**Article 26      Museum Owner**

A museum owner is a person, a legal entity, or an organization licensed to operate a museum.

A museum owner shall have the following rights and duties:

1. To stipulate the direction and operational plan of the museum;
2. To organize, supervise, inspect, create conditions for, and facilitate the operation of the museum;
3. To apply for the establishment, amendment, or closure of the museum;
4. To appoint, transfer, or remove a director and a deputy director;
5. To liaise with domestic and international relevant parties regarding museum activities;
6. To issue internal regulations for the museum and to stipulate fees for service users of the museum and other service charges;

7. To summarize and report on the operation of the museum to relevant authorities that supervise the museum on a regular basis.

#### **Article 27 Director and Deputy Director**

A director and a deputy director are appointed by a museum owner provided that a director is the person who supervises overall museum activities.

A deputy director is a director's assistant who is in charge of technical and administrative work based upon task delegation and who functions as acting director when a director is unavailable to conduct his/her duties.

#### **Article 28 Criteria of Director and Deputy Director**

A director and a deputy director shall meet the following criteria:

1. Have permanent residence in the Lao PDR;
2. Be a minimum of 18 years of age;
3. Have certain museological knowledge or have received training regarding museum work, archaeology, and history;
4. Have knowledge, passion for the job, and capability in general management, knowing how to use a computer and being fluent in a specific foreign language;
5. Have at least a medium vocational education;
6. Be of good health.

#### **Article 29 Rights and Duties of Director**

A director of a museum shall have the following rights and duties:

1. To review and clarify the directions and operational plan of the museum and submit them to the museum owner for consideration;
2. To plan for or create a project to allocate, study, explore, prospect, excavate, preserve, and disseminate information on antiquities;
3. To create an organizational structure, to train staff, and to manage the assets of the museum;
4. To draft and review internal museum regulations and submit them to the museum owner for consideration;
5. To liaise with relevant local and foreign parties regarding the operation of the museum as agreed by the museum owner;
6. To summarize and report on the operation of the museum to the museum owner on a regular basis.

#### **Article 30 Museum Staff**

Museum staff consist of a curator and employees who work in a museum. The rights and duties of museum staff are stipulated in the articles of association of the museum.

#### **Article 31 Museum Partner**

A museum partner refers to a part-time employee who has experience in museum work and receives a wage and other incentives from the museum.

The rights and duties of museum partners are stipulated in the articles of association of the museum.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Prohibitions**

#### **Article 32 Prohibitions for Service Users of a Museum**

Service users are prohibited from:

1. Taking objects and tools in and out of the museum without permission;
2. Destroying or damaging museum artifacts;
3. Misusing the museum in violation of laws and regulations;
4. Slandering or distorting the facts relating to the performance of their duties by a museum curator or staff;
5. Establishing a museum without permission and violating other regulations of the museum;
6. Hiring an outside tour guide to guide and explain about museum materials;
7. Carrying out other acts that violate laws and regulations.

#### **Article 33 Prohibitions for Museum Staff or Curators**

Museum staff or curators are prohibited from:

1. Taking artifacts in and out of the museum without permission from the museum owner;
2. Destroying or damaging museum artifacts;
3. Misusing the museum in violation of laws and regulations;
4. Disclosing confidential information without permission;
5. Collecting fees or service charges at a rate in excess of that provided for in applicable laws and regulations;
6. Using donated funds, technical fees, or service charges without permission;
7. Taking or conspiring with others to take artifacts for sale, transfer, or exchange or giving them to others as personal gifts without permission;
8. Carrying out other acts that violate laws and regulations.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **Responsibilities on Museum Work**

#### **Article 34 Responsibilities of the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism**

The Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism shall have the following responsibilities:

1. To stipulate policies, create strategic plans, and enact legislation on museums;
2. To study direction and policy and disseminate laws and regulations on museums and other applicable laws and regulations;
3. To supervise, encourage, monitor, and inspect museums to comply with a plan, a program, or a project;
4. To permit and register the establishment of museums under its supervision;
5. To develop personnel in terms of museology;



6. To inspect the implementation of plans, projects, laws, and regulations on museum management as well as contracts and international conventions to which Laos is a party;
7. To inspect amendments at the request of a person, a legal entity, or an organization relating to museum activities countrywide;
8. To enumerate the numbers of all kinds of artifacts;
9. To act as a center for liaising with regional and international museums;
10. To summarize and report on the operation of museums to the government on a regular basis;
11. To perform other obligations and duties in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

**Article 35 Responsibilities of a Division of Information, Culture and Tourism**

The provincial and capital Divisions of Information, Culture and Tourism shall have the following responsibilities:

1. To clarify laws, regulations, plans, and projects of the Ministry to be its regulations, plans, programs, projects for implementation;
2. To survey, collect statistical data, register, and permit the establishment of museums within its scope of responsibility;
3. To study and disseminate directions, policies, laws, and regulations on museum activities;
4. To supervise and encourage the district and municipal offices of Information, Culture and Tourism in the operation of museums;
5. To inspect the implementation of plans, projects, laws, and regulations on the management of local museums as well as contracts and international conventions to which Laos is a party;
6. To inspect amendments of local museum activities at the request of a person, a legal entity, or an organization;
7. To liaise with relevant parties in the management and implementation of local museum activities;
8. To summarize and report on the operation of local museums to superior authorities;
9. To perform other obligations and duties in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

**Article 36 Responsibilities of the Office of Information, Culture and Tourism**

The District and Municipal Offices of Information, Culture and Tourism shall have the following responsibilities:

1. To comply with laws, regulations, plans, and projects on museum activities;
2. To survey, collect data, and make a list of museums under its scope of responsibility;
3. To study and disseminate directions, policies, laws, and regulations on museum activities;
4. To inspect the implementation of plans, projects, laws, and regulations as well as requests from a person, a legal entity, or an organization relating to museums located in its district or municipality;

5. To liaise with relevant parties in the management and implementation of museum activities;
6. To summarize and report on the operation of museums to superior authorities;
7. To perform other obligations and duties in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

**Article 37 Responsibilities of Village Administrative Authority**

The village administrative authority shall have the following responsibilities:

1. To manage and protect museums within its scope of responsibility;
2. To survey and make a list of museums under its scope of responsibility and report this to superior authorities;
3. To summarize and report on the operation of museums to superior authorities on a regular basis;
4. To perform other obligations and duties in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

**Article 38 Responsibilities of other Authorities and Local Administrative Authorities**

Ministries, ministry-equivalent bodies, and local administrative authorities at each level have responsibilities to technically liaise and cooperate with museums and other relevant works.

**Article 39 Museum Association**

The Museum Association is a professional museum organization or an organization of curators whose establishment is licensed by relevant state authorities, whose duties include acting as a center for contact, liaison, and coordination of activities between museums; studying, gathering, and protecting the legitimate rights of its members; and attending to the performance of directions, policies, laws, and regulations on museums, including exhibition rooms.

The rights and duties of the association are stipulated in the internal regulations of the Museum Association.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **Financial Resources, Logo, and Seal of State-owned Museums**

**Article 40 Financial Resources of State-owned Museums**

Funds of state-owned museums are derived from:

- The state budget;
- Technical service provision;
- Contribution of societies, persons, legal entities, or organizations, international grant aid, and others.

**Article 41 Management and Use of Funds of State-owned Museums**

The management and use of funds of state-owned museums shall comply with the purpose, objectives, and regulations issued by the Ministry of Finance.

**Article 42      Logo and Seal**

State-owned museums and authority museums have their own logos issued by the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism.

Each type of museum has its own seal to serve official affairs but an exhibition room has no seal.

**CHAPTER 9**  
**Final Provisions**

**Article 43      Implementation**

The Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism is assigned to coordinate with relevant parties to effectively implement this Decree.

Persons, legal entities, and organizations shall acknowledge and strictly implement this Decree.

**Article 44      Effectiveness**

This Decree is effective from the date of signature and fifteen days after posting on the Lao Official Gazette.

Any regulations and provisions that contradict with this Decree shall be canceled.

**The Government of the Lao PDR**

**The Prime Minister**

*[Signature and seal]*

**Thongsing THAMMAVONG**