A THREE-LEGGED APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY

Measures for creating more resilient inventories through Het Inventarisatietraject

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1 Introduction

In 1906, Cotton des Houssayes spoke to the significance of an intelligently and methodically arranged library stating, “Of what utility would be the richest treasures if it were not possible to make use of them” (44). Similarly, the importance of a well-organised inventory at sites of cultural creation cannot be overstated; the impact of such organisations and creators can be increased manifold through a catalogue of everything they have created and where to find it. Yet often, cultural creators often do not have the knowledge and tools they need to create such inventories. This is the rift that Het Inventarisatietraject seeks to bridge.

Het Inventarisatietraject (HIT) is a two month course for four cultural institutions and creators looking to tackle their archival inventory in order to prepare for either moving, transferring, digitising, or making public their archives. HIT provides participants written resources, a week-by-week structure, and access to archival coaches who can help guide them through the learning process. A collaboration by Netwerk Archieven Design en Digitale Cultuur (NADD) and Podiumkunst.net, the trajectory aims to help participants from the performing arts, design, and digital culture sectors create an inventory structure fitted to their institution's needs.

NADD is a partnership of over 40 partners committed to Dutch design heritage, and demonstrating the value of archiving and developing design and digital cultural heritage in a contemporary society. Podiumkunst.net is a network of six consortium partners from the performing arts sector; by working towards connecting and making accessible performing arts archives, Podiumkunst.net aims to ultimately create a “digital overview of the Dutch performing arts heritage”[1] (Over Ons). Though separate organisations, both are united by their goal of creating resilient digital cultural heritage through growing supportive networks and sharing innovative perspectives and expertise. Within their own fields, each organisation works towards creating accessible heritage archives that may allow for further creative reuse.

HIT had its first run from October to December 2023, however it was not the first collaboration by NADD and Podiumkunst.net. The trajectory is an offshoot of Het

[1] Quote translated from Dutch

Archieftraject, a five-month course primarily focused on policy planning for archiving based on a long-term vision. HIT emerged as a response to a recognized need during the archive trajectory, where both networks identified a demand for a shorter, hands-on trajectory specifically focused on practical inventory creation[2]. Currently, both courses are modular and can be completed independently without prior knowledge or participation in the other. These trajectories are intended to be the first steps in the archiving process for cultural creators and institutions.

The problem arises due to the fact that although the trajectory is the first step, the participants' journey towards well maintained archives and inventories is a long one.During HIT, participants are offered dedicated attention and support to facilitate their growth, however post-course they resume working unassisted. The transition to bearing sole responsibility for making progress can be a hard one. While HIT aims to maximise development within the limited duration, it is not a sufficient time frame for completing the work. Hence the focus remains on imparting essential tools and knowledge for continuing independently. Though participant work within the trajectory is crucial, equal consideration must be given to their efforts after. The inventories resulting from HIT must be sustainable for participants to carry on their own.

In this report, the term sustainability refers specifically to organisational sustainability; the inventory initiative's ability to endure, adapt, and remain viable over time. Participants leaving the trajectory capable of continuing their work in the face of challenges and changing circumstances is crucial for HIT's overall impact and value. To realise a long-term return on the resources invested by NADD and Podiumkunst.net, participants must complete their inventories. HIT not only needs to consider sustainability but must prioritise it immediately.

My research project aims to investigate the current sustainability of participant inventories and accordingly advise HIT on how they can make improvements. As such, I arrive at the research question and sub-questions that shape this project.

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[2] The structure of the two courses involves a delicate 'balancing act': a lengthy commitment might deter participation, but a condensed timeframe may not be sufficient for participants to make the knowledge their own. Managing these expectations before the trajectory begins can sometimes pose a challenge.

MRQ: *What measures must be taken to improve the sustainability of inventories created through Het Inventarisatietraject?*

SQ1: *What are the current archival best practices for sustainability most relevant for HIT participants?*
SQ2: *What are the main threats facing the sustainability of participant inventories?*
SQ3: *How impactful are HIT's current strategies for sustainability?*

This report begins by delineating the theoretical framework from which I conduct my analysis; defining sustainability within the context of this project and elaborating on the Three-Legged Stool model that provides the dimensions of organisation, technology, and resources within which I frame my report. This chapter also reviews current best practices for sustainability in archiving. Following which I elaborate on the methods used to conduct this qualitative research; interviews with HIT participants and alumni of Het Archieftraject, coupled with findings from daily observations during my internship. The next chapter evaluates the current state of sustainability in the trajectory, identifying the primary threats faced by participants and assessing the current measures taken by HIT. The final chapter of this report culminates with a set of nine measures recommended on the basis of these findings.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Defining Sustainability

Sustainability is the key concept for this research, however defining the term is often perceived contentiously due to its broad range of applicability. (Ramsey; Fenlon et al.). Jeffery Ramsey posits that the problem with sustainability lies with taking a definitional approach at all; citing the impracticality of expecting a singular definition to prove relevant across diverse contexts. He acknowledges the desire to delineate the scope of the term as a means of building theory. He contends that in the context of sustainability, where meaning is derived from use, context must precede definition and anything otherwise is an attempt "to legislate prior to practice" (1085). Therefore, before I define sustainability within the parameters of this investigation, I must first provide the relevant context.

Het Inventarisatietraject is a course aimed at helping participants process their organisation's inventories. Guided through the trajectory structure by archival coaches, participants work towards identifying, describing, locating, and organising their records and collections; creating an intuitive structure that helps facilitate their organisation's creative mission. HIT's goal is to help participants develop accessible and resilient inventories that allow them to preserve both artistic works and business administration with ease. The more long-term aspiration of NADD and Podiumkunst.net is to establish a Linked Open Data infrastructure interlinking the participants, enabling cross-collection queries in the cultural heritage domain.

HIT serves as a course tailored for 'culture-producing institutions' (CPIs), a term intentionally kept broad by NADD and Podiumkunst.net. The primary criteria for a CPI is the cultural creation within the performing arts, design, and digital culture sectors. The inclusiveness of this term opens up HIT to a diverse and broad applicant pool. Participants are selected by the HIT team[3] on the basis of their motivations for signing up; they do not need prior knowledge or financial ability to participate. Not only is the course fee, but CPIs also receive compensation for participating. HIT commits itself to being accessible by lowering the barriers to entry that may otherwise hinder an organisation from joining.

[3] The team of employees of NADD and Podiumkunst.net working on HIT.

Since this report will frequently mention the participants' inventories and archives, it's crucial to clarify the distinction. The term ‘archive’ encompasses the entirety of a CPI's collections and records, while ‘inventory’ specifically pertains to the comprehensive catalogue of objects within the archive along with their corresponding metadata. While the practice of inventorying may vary in different environments, within the context of HIT the inventory is “a means to repository all existing materials of any format, born-digital and analog, including new incoming acquisitions and the like.” (Prud’homme & Compton 1).

The two key processes of archival inventorying, description and arrangement, are often approached independently; however, a systematic method of inventorying that recognises their interdependence results in a more refined and accessible catalogue (Berners & Haller). Since this assertion was made in 1984, technological advancements have caused archival processes to become more intricate, yet description and arrangement remain foundational to the inventory. This view also guides the inventory approach of Project TRACKS, a Belgian online toolkit crucial to HIT’s structure. It divides the inventorying process into two equally vital aspects:

- *Ordering;* The location of objects & documents and their arrangement into a logical structure for accessibility.
- *Description;* The maintenance of contextual information for an organisation.

As such the trajectory follows a two-phase structure; the first phase, ‘Gross Inventory’, involves mapping out the major parts of the inventory and their locations, while the subsequent 'Series Level' phase organises items into productions, projects, exhibitions, or seasons and provides descriptions for each title. During the trajectory participants are briefly introduced to item level description, however to ensure participant goals remain achievable within the time constraints, HIT does not tackle this in depth.

This research necessitates a definition of sustainability that bridges organisational and archival aspects, given the undeniable impact of both the CPIs’ existing organisational structure and their lack of archival expertise on the sustainability of their inventories. A central challenge to the longevity of HIT’s efforts is that participants, non-archival

organisations doing in archiving, lack the necessary knowledge background needed to survive the threat of shifts in technology, resources, and structure (Fenlon et al.). As such, given the context of this project, my definition of sustainability draws from the fields of archiving, organisation management, and library and information science (LIS). Here, sustainability is defined as the strategic arrangement of people, work practices, technology, and resources to ensure the continuation of the inventory initiative over time, while maintaining standards and adding value.

2.2 The Three-Legged Stool Model

This research approaches the analysis of sustainability in HIT through the lens of the Three-Legged Stool Model for Digital Preservation formulated by Nancy McGovern and Anne Kenney. This model uses the metaphor of a stool to argue that the three ‘legs’ of any good digital preservation program are organisational infrastructure, technological infrastructure, and resource frameworks. McGovern and Kinney argue that the resilience of a preservation program is reinforced through a balance between the three components. Though initially made for their digital preservation workshops at Cornell University in 2003, McGovern and Kinney's model remains relevant in the face of an evolving and dynamic field. This can, in large part, be attributed to its holistic approach. Rather than solely focusing on the technological aspects of sustainability, the model incorporates management-oriented dimensions of organisation and resources. The model defines the three distinct dimensions while also embracing the overlap caused by the manner in which they rely on each other to function.

This holistic approach is precisely what led me to choose McGovern and Kinney's model for my research. While I considered other recent frameworks, they did not prove as relevant. Eschenfelder et al.'s literature review on sustainability in digital cultural heritage identified non-comprehensive frameworks prevalent in research. Sustainability is often superficially mentioned or, when deeply explored, confined to the author's specific project boundaries. The three-legged stool metaphor's simple yet comprehensive nature suited the analysis of beginner inventory sustainability. For the purposes of my research, this model is easy to implement as I can discuss sustainability under three overarching themes that would be easy for any CPI to understand without prior archival knowledge. However, that is not to say that the model can only prove useful for absolute beginners; its scalability accommodates inventories at various development stages, offering insightful analysis at every level of detail. Moreover, its continued relevance is evident in inspiring research projects on sustainability as recent as 2019 (Baucom; Langley; Halvarsson et al.).

Based on the website[4] for the Digital Preservation Management workshops the definitions of each of the three legs of the stool as follows;

[4] https://dpworkshop.org/dpm-eng/eng_index.html

- *Organisation*; This component deals with establishing what are the requirements and parameters of an organisation's digital preservation program. It requires an explicit definition of their mandate; the level of their commitments and the nature of their responsibility. Usually expressed in the form of a policy framework', this dimension of the program can be expressed in the form of action plans & strategies, internal documentation and protocols, OAIS compliance, administrative workflows, risk assessment, and procedural accountability.

- *Technology*; This component defines how the digital preservation requirements are fulfilled. This leg stresses the importance of developing an adequate technological platform that can sustain the program in the face of evolving needs and challenges. This dimension deals with decision-making regarding the technological standards, as well as strategies for monitoring and assessing the continued relevance of these standards. The technological infrastructure also extends to the human element that impacts its successful implementation and maintenance. In McGovern's words, this leg "combines hardware, software, formats, storage media, networks, security measures, workflows, procedures, protocols, documentations, and skills, both technical and archival" (*A Digital Decade*).

- *Resources*; This component focuses on determining which resources are required for the development and maintenance of the preservation program. Without an adequate resource framework, the organisational and technological infrastructure of a program cannot be sustained. It is the resource dimension that enables the program to be able to meet its goals and deliver its promised output. The resource base extends from the financial components like budget plans & sustainable funding to more varied resources like time, institutional interest and commitment, staff skills and knowledge.

I use the three-legged model to not only shape my analysis but also how I fragment my findings; the discussion of best practices, threats to sustainability, current measures, and final recommendations is broken down into sub-sections corresponding with each leg of the stool.

2.3 Best Practices in Sustainability

Networked Approach: Distribution & Decentralisation

Networks, and networked approaches, comprise a number of different best practices within the organisational dimension. Distributed digital preservation allows for the decentralisation of responsibility, risks, and resource demands (Trehub et al.). By creating strategic partnerships, institutions can pool resources to reduce the costs and increase expertise (Eschenfelder et al.). One such strategy is Annet Dekker's 'Networks of Care', a transdisciplinary and non-hierarchical preservation strategy; wherein a collaborative preservation effort can be sustained as an evolving process through distributing governance amongst actors guided by their shared goals, legal frameworks, or policy. The LOCKSS (Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe) program developed at Stanford University is another such networked strategy. Originally developed in the late 1990s as a software application, LOCKSS has grown into a program, a community, and a widely accepted archival principle (LOCKKS Program). Ensuring the sustainability of digital collections by mitigating risks of natural or man-made disasters or other system failures, a LOCKSS network disperses copies of files across multiple geographically distanced preservation nodes.

Standardisation of Metadata, Formats, and Software

Standardisation is one of the most widely accepted best practices for improving sustainability, though there are varying opinions on which standards are the best to follow. Built on the principle of uniformity, the benefits of standards can only be reaped when they are implemented well, hence they require organisation-wide compliance. The standardisation of data structure, values, content, and format can help "ensure quality, consistency, and interoperability" (Gilliland 3). Standardisation as a practice can also be interpreted as choosing 'standard' or generic software; the best option for smaller organisations as they allow for greater interoperability, lower costs, and have a lower risk of obsolescence (Jan). Technological decisions always have both beneficial and restrictive effects on the sustainability of a preservation program (Eschenfelder et al.). Ultimately, organisations must make well-thought out choices regarding standards on the basis of their current needs as well as the future use-case they've envisioned for their inventory. By

adopting metrics for assessment, organisations can regularly monitor deterioration of their collections and the relevance of their standards (Eschenfelder et. al). Standardisation is especially important in the context of HIT, given that the interoperability of participant inventories is fundamental to the LOD infrastructure NADD & Podiumkunst.net are working towards.

More Product, Less Process

'More Product, Less Process' (MPLP) is a framework originally put forth by Mark Greene and Dennis Meissner in order to help archivists get ahead of processing backlogs. This approach calls for reevaluating traditional arrangement and description activities, instead opting for a more minimal approach. MPLP prioritises providing access to collections through describing "minimally at the collection or series level." (Colwell 77-78) and in doing so, reducing the financial or labour resources required. For some organisations, like the Brooklyn Historical Society, the MPLP approach has proven a successful method for catching up with the past in the face of limited resources (Colwell). Others have researched the scalability of the MPLP model for the inventory, theorising a 'More Inventory, More Access' approach (Prud'Homme & Compton). While others have criticised it for sacrificing quality and professionalism, leading to inadequate description and arrangement that archivists are unlikely to ever have the time or inclination to return to (Attar; Phillips). Both the successes and the criticisms of MPLP are significant; ultimately MPLP proves most valuable when adapted to bridge the gap between realistic goals and idealistic visions (Anchor).

3 Methodology

This report is the culmination of the research conducted from September 2023 until January 2024, during my time interning with Het Inventarisatietraject. The aim of this research project is to offer practical measures for improving the sustainability of the inventories created through HIT. Given this trajectory aims to help CPIs create inventories on their own terms, as well as the subjective nature of sustainability, I felt qualitative research would be best suited for finding measures that work with the needs and experiences of the participants. In devising my methodology, an early obstacle I faced was the fact that I was working on the first ever iteration of HIT; as such I could not access any past data on this trajectory, and I was working with a small participant pool. Advised by my supervisors, I extended my horizon to also include alumni from Het Archieftraject; although the predecessor of HIT worked towards a different end goal, it shared a common format for working with non-archival CPIs that there were still useful insights to be gleaned from its alumni.

The main method of data collection employed in this investigation was semi-structured interviews; in total, I conducted three sets of interviews. The first, with the alumni of Het Archieftraject, aimed to investigate the level of success they had in implementing their archive plan after the trajectory; providing insight on the actual challenges to sustainability the CPIs are actively facing. The second interview conducted was with the participants in the first week of HIT; the aim of this interview was to understand their aims and motivations for the trajectory, as well as discuss any potential concerns or challenges they predicted. The final round of interviews with the participants were conducted at the end of the trajectory, where we discussed the progress they made in the two months and their experience doing the trajectory. I prompted them to reflect on their first interviews answers, to compare how their current view lined up with their initial expectations; the interview gave them an opportunity to give their feedback, express if or how their concerns have changed, and what are their plans for maintaining their inventories going forward. In addition to the interviews, I also took regular notes based on my day-to-day observations as an intern; my findings were regularly discussed with my supervisors during weekly meetings. My role as an intern allowed me the opportunity to actively participate in the running of the trajectory; I attended meetings, coaching sessions, and contributed to creating other resources for the trajectory. The data collected was first analysed thematically; I identified all the points

pertaining to sustainability, both positive and negative, that came up regularly. Next these findings were categorised into and analysed specifically through the framework of the three-legged stool. This approach to analysis was, in part, inspired by how McGovern & Kinney, the creators of the model, used it to conduct their analysis in *The Five Stages of Digital Preservation*.

A few limitations I encountered in this method were the phrasing of the interviews to match the knowledge level of the CPIs and the subconscious impact my role as an intern may have had on the feedback I was given. My pool of interviewees consisted entirely of participants from non-archival backgrounds, while this provided the added insight of how an 'outsider' understands the archival work being done in the trajectory, it did limit the depth of discussion I could engage in. Their unfamiliarity with certain concepts often required me to first contextualise what I meant before they could provide me an answer; in this sense, I impacted their interpretation of my questions, rather than being able to get their unaltered perspective. However, considering HIT is geared specifically to this demographic, it is avoidable. Additionally, I was also cognisant that my research was done within the capacity of an intern at NADD & Podiumkunst.net. While I tried to make sure the subjects felt comfortable speaking with me candidly, letting them know that their criticisms would be welcome as they would only serve to strengthen my research, I was still approaching them from an institutional position; hence I am aware that they may have subconsciously held back their full feelings in our conversations.

4 Evaluating the Current Sustainability of Het Inventarisatietraject

This chapter will evaluate the current sustainability of participant inventories in HIT. Using the three-legged stool model as a framework, I will begin by outlining the main threats to resilience within each dimension. Following which I will briefly discuss the participant profiles created to help CPIs understand how certain characteristics of their organisation may impact the sustainability of their inventories. Finally, I will evaluate the current measures HIT has in place to improve sustainability; again, I will do so through the lens of the three-legged stool, discussing what is done well in each dimension, as well as where there is room for improvement. The analysis of this chapter is based on the data collected through interviews with the HIT participants and the alumni of Het Archieftraject, my notes from daily observations during the trajectory, and my examination of the final inventories produced by all four participants.

To maintain their privacy, the four participants of Het Inventarisatietraject are referred to simply as ‘Participant X’ and so forth. Similarly, the alumni from Het Archieftraject are referred to as ‘Alumni Y’.

4.1 Threats to Sustainability

The Problem With The ‘Practical’ Approach

Being ascribed the label of the ‘practical’ trajectory has some heavy implications on the sustainability of the inventories being created through it; due to participants devoting a majority of their focus on actually doing the inventorying, they do not give much thought to planning for what comes after. However, planning is not an inherently impractical activity; within the context of sustainability there is more than just policy planning. My analysis revealed that although participants have a good idea of the organisational challenges they will face, they have not planned any actionable steps towards mitigating them.

In discussion with participants, a key challenge they predicted was *struggling with prioritisation* of the inventory after the trajectory. All four participants joined HIT with a shared motivation due to a long-standing desire to tackle their inventory, which they previously could never dedicate time to prioritise. They felt that the structure of the trajectory would provide them the “stok achter de deur” that they needed[5]; a sentiment affirmed by ‘Alumni A’, a 2021 Het Archieftraject alum. At the time of their participation, the pandemic had halted their productions and there was a lot of internal motivation for undertaking the archive project. However since returning to regular operations, the archives have once again taken a backseat.

Another challenge, particularly in addressing backlog, is the *absence of deadlines* after the trajectory. In exit interviews, participants expressed concerns about sustaining momentum without the trajectory's structure; while they were all aware of this threat, none had taken any tangible measures to alleviate this stress, possibly because there were no explicit expectations. Here another alumni, Alumni B, exemplifies the positive impact of even basic deadlines on sustained effort. Though the implementation of their action plan is not complete, its success is evident. The participant attributes this success, majorly, to task breakdowns and self-imposed deadlines set during the trajectory. Every Monday, she collaborates with the studio heads in archiving sessions where they gradually process the backlog. Initially hesitant about the enrollment in Het Archieftraject, her bosses are now beyond glad that she did; they eagerly anticipate their weekly sessions to see their archive develop.

This brings me to another threat to sustainability that is subtler, only becoming noticeable long-term; the potential loss of motivation to keep going if there are *no measurable results*. Alumni C from Het Archieftraject 2022 highlights this concern, stating that not having a creative end product associated with his archive hinders his commitment and interest in doing the work. He is a graphic designer, and one of the few ‘one-man organisations’ to have participated in any of the trajectories; he believes that having a creative outcome, such as an exhibition or a book, at the end of the archival plan would significantly boost his inclination to invest effort.

[5] A Dutch phrase that came up quite often in my conversations with the participants. To have a ‘*stok achter de deur*’ translates to having ‘a stick behind the door’, implying a looming threat that can serve as motivation.

Another threat I identified through observing the participants' work was a *poor division of responsibilities,* even though they acknowledged the impracticality of handling the inventory alone. In the initial interviews, participants unanimously agreed that managing the entire backlog alongside other job responsibilities would be challenging. Yet by the exit interview, none had devised actionable plans for sharing the workload. It became apparent that all participants intended to remain primarily responsible for the inventory, without considering contingency plans in case they leave their position or are unable to keep up with the workload.

This oversight may stem from participants' anxiety about the *difficulty of garnering their coworkers' support*. From the initial interview to the trajectory's conclusion, there was substantial discussion about how to encourage coworkers to adopt the devised inventory system. The challenge involved teaching coworkers the new system and persuading them of its value. Despite being told of the value of knowledge-sharing documents, this remained a distant prospect for the participants by the trajectory's end. However, once coworkers become familiar with the new structure, they become far more aware of its value. Despite struggling with keeping momentum, Alumni A is still glad to have participated in Het Archieftraject; the trajectory helped them establish a basic archival structure that the team can keep in mind as new documents are created. As things have become easier to find, they are certain they "would not want to go back to the old way of doing things."[6]

Technological Confusion

Building on top of the lack of planning in the organisational dimension, the sustainability of participants' inventories is further threatened by the implementation of the technology. For the most part, none of the participants indicated any real struggle with understanding the various topics being discussed during the trajectory; however, their main concern lay with the prospect of shifting their entire CPI's functions to a standardised technological infrastructure in the coming months. Moving from one system to another threatened a level of confusion that the participants felt created a risk of losing information due to oversight.

[6] Quote from interview with Alumni A

The first aspect of this confusion was brought up by all four participants during my initial interview with them; they all voiced that their inventories were *dispersed across multiple technologies* and their immediate concern was locating everything. This was an especially laborious task for Participant A and Participant B, two CPIs that have had a network of contributors beyond just their core team; due to the regular flux of people joining and leaving the network across multiple projects, there is an even higher number of external hard drives, cloud servers, and laptops that need to be traced in order to locate everything. In order to improve the resilience of their inventory, extra measures will need to be taken to ensure that future collaborations are not similarly spread out across technological platforms.

This leads to the next potential threat, *the transitory period* for the new system; moving away from the 'old way of doing things' can be a confusing process if all stakeholders are not properly informed on the change. This threat became apparent through my conversation with Alumni A, who recounted that they had some difficulties in getting the rest of their coworkers to understand and follow the archival policy they created during Het Archieftraject. As there was never an 'official' switch to the new system, it took people some time to catch up. A technological infrastructure is only useful when it is being used; if the transitory period drags out for too long, participants risk weakening their technological platform. This ties back to the importance of training coworkers on the inventory structure.

Even after the transitory period, the resilience of the inventories can still be under threat if the CPIs' *lack uniform recordkeeping practices*. Considering that the crux of technological best practices for sustainability boils down to standardisation, it is imperative that everyone involved at an institution is following the right processes for their daily tasks. Given the challenge that tackling backlog already poses, participants need to reduce the added burden of discrepancies. Keeping in mind the criticism of MPLP, where authors Attar and Phillips discuss the unlikelihood of archivists returning to enrich processed files, it can equally be inferred that it will be just as unlikely that participants will be going back through their coworkers' work to trace mistakes and amend them.

Everything Costs Something

The threats to sustainability stemming from the resource framework are perhaps self-evident, as every aspect of the inventory involves costs, whether monetary,

labour-related, or knowledge-based. Given that the cultural heritage sector is familiar with financial precarity (Eschenfelder et al.), participants are prepared to encounter such challenges. Coming from the same sector, NADD & Podiumkunst.net are also limited in offering support against resource-oriented threats. CPIs already receive a small stipend for participation, but the HIT team cannot provide additional financial assistance. Interviews confirmed that participants were aware of this, and recognised that securing more revenue streams would be ideal, but acknowledged the more realistic concern should be reducing costs.

The long-term *cost of physical storage* for 3D objects posed a challenge for Participant A and Participant C, both having collections with sculptures, props, and costumes. Despite both CPIs having devoted archival storages, they realised that long-term maintenance of these objects would be unfeasible both financially and, in the case of vulnerable materials, physically. During the exit interview, they expressed interest in opting for a non-custodial route for these items. Since Participant A was already aware of this threat at the start of the trajectory, they had already begun talks with the Amsterdam Museum regarding transfer. However, Participant C only began considering it at the end of the trajectory and hence were only beginning to scout their options. If participants are not made aware of the cost associated with ongoing maintenance they risk over-committing (Eschenfelder et al.).

Another missing resource comes in the form of *lacking manpower*; during the trajectory all four participants, to varying degrees, worried about having insufficient time to complete their inventory themselves and lacking available labour to share the burden with. This point of contention surfaced frequently during the trajectory; and in one instance caused some misinterpretation regarding the role of the archival coaches during the sessions. Participants were vocal regarding their need for hands to help them get through the ‘grunt work’ for their inventory. Given that finding time for the inventory amongst other priorities already posed a large challenge and the stress that came with involving coworkers, the participants worried about how they would tackle the more menial and repetitive data entry.

Building on top of the prior threat, another concern for the participants was the *uneven distribution of expertise*. Unlike the organisational dimension, this does not pertain to knowledge regarding how the inventory works, but rather the contextual knowledge about

the collections needed for description. Certain tasks cannot be delegated to just anyone, requiring specific insights only few in the organisation possess. For Participant D, considering their role in archiving a niche subculture that can only be contextualised by those privy to graffiti practices, the participant felt that he would not be able to ask his colleague for help in description. The bigger risk here came from the fact that, during the first interview, the participant did not feel very inclined in investing time in training his colleague because ultimately he'd still have to finish the tasks. By the trajectory's end, he held firm that his colleague wouldn't be able to do the contextual tasks; but he had opened up to delegating preparatory tasks and felt more certain in distinguishing between the two.

4.2 Participant Profiles

My interviews with the participants of HIT showed that they possessed a substantial awareness of the key areas most problematic for maintaining their inventory. However my observation of their approach to the trajectory revealed that they were still incognisant of the extent of the impact of these threats. One of the key outputs of my research was the creation of a 'participant profile' for HIT to provide CPIs at the outset of the trajectory so that they may begin the process of self reflection required to identify how certain characteristics of their institution will impact sustainability.

This version of the participant profile identifies four key characteristics of the CPIs on the basis of the data collected throughout the research. These are attributes of the participating CPI that cannot be changed; their relevance to participant's sustainability concerns can be traced throughout my research data. For each characteristic, I identify two sub-characteristics that function as either end of the spectrum that the participants could fall under. I must state here that my findings were limited to the current participant pool, but as the trajectory continues more research can be conducted to evolve the profiles as needed. The profile is not intended for strict categorisation of participants, but rather to open dialogue based on which points resonate with them. For each sub-characteristic, the profile highlights the strengths and weaknesses in the context of sustainability, in order to help participants identify potential opportunities and threats. This chapter uses a condensed 'overview' version of the participant profile, the full version with detailed explanations for the benefit of participants can be found in Appendix C.

Participant Profile			
Custodial Arrangement	Organisational Structure	Planned Use-Case	Archival Experience
Non-Custodial	Hierarchical Institution	Use-Case	No Prior Experience
Custodial	Networked Organisation	No Use-Case	Prior Experience

Figure 1: Table of participant profile characteristics

The four characteristics identified for the participant profile are as follows;

Custodial Arrangements: The extent to which the participant plans on keeping custody of their collection. This can range from entirely non-custodial to full custody or somewhere in between. This characteristic has major implications on resource demands and legal considerations.

Custodial Arrangement	
Non-Custodial	**Custodial**
Strengths • May open up access to the partner's resources & expertise • Shift responsibility for upkeep & safety • Reduce storage and maintenance costs • External deadlines can help provide structure & motivation. *Weaknesses* • Slow & bureaucratic process • Potentially lose access or authority over collection • Requires additional processing of collection in regards to rights & privacy prior to transfer • Must follow custodial organisation's standards & structures	*Strengths* • Choose your own standards & arrangment structure • Retain access to and control of collection • Avoid additional legal processing for transfer • Set deadlines according to internal organisational timelines *Weaknesses* • No external support • Progress entirely dependant on internal motivation • Maintain responsibility over upkeep & safety • Increases costs associated with maintenance & storage

Figure 2: Custodial arrangements sub-characteristics overview

Organisational Structure: How the internal system of activities and authority of a CPI is structured. The structure of a CPI can range from that of a hierarchical institution to a networked organisation. This characteristic will impact the implementation of the inventory structure, as the participant's process for making changes will look different.

Organisational Structure	
Hierarchical Institution	**Networked Organisation**
Strengths • Designated roles & responsibilities • A stricter top-down approach to authority • Defined chain of command for accountability • Clear team structure *Weaknesses* • Coworkers main role & tasks may take precedence • Changes must come from above • Departmental rigidity • Expertise limited by hired roles	*Strengths* • Interconnected & flexible approach • Shifting roles that adapt to needs of CPI • Bottom-up decision making based on expertise rather than authority • Find experts when needed *Weaknesses* • Constantly reteaching protocols as people join • Blurred lines of accountability and responsibility • Lacks strict lines of command • Over reliance on external expertise

Figure 3: Organisational structure sub-characteristics overview

Planned Use-Case: Whether or not the CPI has a defined intention for how their inventory will be used. This characteristic will have consequences on the development of the inventory structure as an intended outcome will impact the participants' approach to the arrangement of their inventory.

Planned Use-Case	
Use-Case	**No Use-Case**
Strengths • Guides decision making processes. • Helps set milestones goals & project planning • Demonstrates value to stakeholders *Weaknesses* • Risk of losing data unrelated to the use-case • May also lead to a very narrow vision • May limit inventory structure to a singular outcome	*Strengths* • Allow room for speculation, creativity, & multiplicity • Freedom to adapt to stakeholders interests as progress is made *Weaknesses* • Structure may remain too formless & vague. • Harder to decide where to start the project. • Stakeholders may not understand at outset • Ambiguity may make inventory difficult to plan & execute

Figure 4: Planned use-case sub-characteristics overview

Archival Experience: Whether or not the CPIs have any established inventory practices and the extent of the participant's foundational knowledge. CPIs can either have some prior experience or none. This characteristic can impact the learning experience both during, and after the trajectory.

Archival Experience	
No Prior Experience	**Prior Experience**
Strengths • Beginner milestones can be achieved quicker • Starting as a blank slate can provide a fresh perspective *Weaknesses* • Locating everything for inventory much harder • Risk of feel overwhelmed by information overload	*Strengths* • Familiarity with archival concepts reduces information overload • Starting inventory from a less disorganised state *Weaknesses* • Increased confusion during transition to new system • Improving upon an existing inventory may feel like redundant work • Coworkers may need to unlearn poor record-keeping practices

Figure 5: Archival experience sub-characteristics overview

4.3 What HIT Does Right: Current Measures & How to Improve Them

While there isn't a specific week or meeting devoted to the topic of sustainability, HIT does take measures to build resilience into the participant's inventories as well as their learning experience. This section identifies these measures, dividing them into and discussing them through the three components of McGovern and Kinney's model. The analysis illustrates how each measure contributes to the sustainability of the inventories, as well as their potential shortcomings.

Organisational Infrastructure

The Vragenlijst

Participants fill in a document at the beginning of the trajectory with eight questions that prompt them to start thinking about their inventory at large. These questions cover inventory objectives, archivable materials, accessibility plans, and potential uses. While HIT is supposed to be the more practical counterpart to Het Archieftraject, this questionnaire is one of the steps taken to ensure that the policy planning is not entirely overlooked. Answering these questions allows participants to reflect on their CPI's long-term goals for the inventory and its impact on future archival policies. The list is meant to be a living document that participants revisit and update as they progress through the trajectory so they may see their answers develop as they learn. My interviews revealed that while the participants did not go back and update their answers on the document itself, the Vragenlijst had its intended effect as they all did continually refer back to these questions in their own time. Although a policy plan is not the intended output of HIT, the impact of the Vragenlijst could be enhanced by explaining how participants could use their answers to guide priorities in their inventory, add specific metadata, and create future policy.

Group Meetings

All four participants are invited to three group sessions with the HIT team and the archival coaches at the beginning, half-way point, and end of the trajectory. The meetings are meant to be a moment for the HIT team to share general information about the trajectory while also giving the participants an opportunity to get acquainted with one another, share their progress, and ask general questions. My exit interviews revealed that all four participants

responded very well to these sessions. The participants enjoyed how the meetings built a sense of camaraderie around doing the trajectory together; as well as enjoying the opportunity to see each other's progress as a means of motivating themselves to do better. The consensus amongst all four was that not only would they have enjoyed more meetings during the trajectory, but they'd also be interested in joining any future meet ups the HIT team hosts as means of keeping themselves accountable to continue working.

Technological Infrastructure

Basis Sheet

The Basis Sheet is a template containing columns for the minimal level of metadata participants would need to fill in for a functional inventory. The item-level metadata fields chosen for this template are based on the criteria of the 'Factsheet Basisregistratie van Objecten' devised by Erfgoedhuis Zuid Holland. This standard ensures that objects registered within an institution's collection meet the minimum information requirements. Similar to the MPLP approach, this template aims to assist CPIs starting from scratch during HIT, allowing them to address their vast backlog without feeling overwhelmed by it. The template also includes additional metadata fields for series-level arrangement and individuals involved. To improve its usability, the HIT team offers a pre-filled version as an example participants can refer to. Based on feedback from participants of Het Archieftraject, the HIT team offers two versions of the template, one tailored to performing arts CPIs and another for design and digital culture. The only context where the template may not prove useful is for CPIs planning on transferring custody of their collections, as they would need to adhere to the standards and requirements of the destination institution; but this is dependant on the specific context of their transfer process, and the HIT team is equipped to advise them accordingly.

Another sustainable attribute of the template is its spreadsheet format, which is both free and easy to use. Participants can start using it immediately due to their familiarity with the software, without the burden of training coworkers on new technology after the trajectory. In fact, using recognisable generic software may make it easier for participants to recruit coworkers to work on the inventory. Overall, the template is one of the most practical

resources offered during the trajectory, and if adapted well, participants can continue using it for their inventory indefinitely.

However, it is essential to adapt the template as the inventory process is never one-size-fits-all. Depending on the CPI's specific needs, the basis sheet may be missing vital data fields. Although participants are encouraged to make changes to the sheet as per their needs, not many seem to have done so. Their hesitance to customise their template is to be expected given that they are all considerably new to the inventory process and do not yet know what is relevant to them until they encounter it elsewhere. As such, providing more guidance in exploring other kinds of metadata can be useful. Like the MPLP approach, the template serves as an easy starting point, but maintaining quality and long-term usefulness, as well as avoiding the stress of returning to enrich processed collections, necessarily requires customisation of the template. The HIT team must pay attention to modifying the basis sheet, as it can have immense consequences on the quality and longevity of participants' inventories.

LOD URIs

Within the basis sheet, efforts are made to incorporate linked open data into the inventories of participants. The template includes columns where participants can link URIs of various actors or works within their inventory. The concept of LOD was introduced right at the outset of the trajectory at the opening meeting where I observed the participants show a genuine interest and ask insightful questions to understand it better. The responsibility of further educating the participants falls on the coaches. While it is good that HIT introduces the idea of connecting collections so early on, to encourage participants to consider interoperability from the start, the actual implementation of LOD requires significant development. Looking at the final inventories shows that barely any URIs were filled in; during the coaching sessions I realised this was due to the lack of existing URIs for actors and works in the participants' inventories on Wikidata or RKDartists, the two databases they were recommended. Consequently in order to include URIs, participants would have had to create their own, which is a challenging skill to learn, especially for beginners constrained by the time limit of the trajectory. Nevertheless, it is a skill that participants should eventually acquire as linking databases would enrich their inventory through increased interoperability and discovery (Niu).

Resource Framework

Archiving Coaches

During the trajectory, archival coaches provided by HIT visit the CPIs and guide the participants through the various stages of the inventory process. Three out of four participants stated that the one-on-one access to the coaches was the aspect of the program they were most looking forward to. The main objective of these sessions is to yield a productive back-and-forth that improves the learning experience; as participants ask questions, show their progress, and discuss challenges, the coaches are able to offer their expertise, correct any mistakes, and point them to relevant resources.

The purpose of the archival coaches is not merely to show participants how to complete immediate tasks, but also ensure active learning and a comprehensive understanding of the inventory process. Consequently, the coaching can improve the resilience of the CPI's inventory initiative; the resource framework pertains to more than just sourcing funds and labour, it also includes the development of necessary skills. Equipping participants with foundational knowledge and critical thinking skills allows them to tackle new challenges effectively in the future.

The only shortcoming in the current set-up of the coaching sessions is the definition of the role of the coach. Some participants expressed that, as beneficial as the sessions were, they sometimes felt uncertain about what they can or should ask the coach. Initially, a few participants had misconceptions about the coach's role and expected them to do the inventory work alongside them. Although this issue was resolved early on, it could be prevented in the future by explicitly outlining the coach's responsibilities at the start so that participants may align their expectations appropriately.

Project TRACKS

The Project TRACKs website is the main reading material offered to participants; to prevent them from getting overwhelmed, participants are given links to specific pages matching the different phases of the trajectory. The Project TRACKS toolkit includes not just information on how to archive, but also additional practical resources, checklists, and forms to simplify

the process. During the interviews, the consensus amongst the participants was that the website provided easy to understand information; yet none of them made extensive use of the resource during the trajectory, either due to lack of time or motivation, or simply due to forgetting about it. Instead, they preferred spending their time filling in their spreadsheets, and saving any questions for coaching sessions. Nevertheless, the Project TRACKS toolkit has the potential to be a valuable resource for participants, especially after the trajectory ends and coaching sessions are no longer available. The HIT team can take steps to encourage regular use of the website during the trajectory to help participants familiarise themselves with the resource, increasing the likelihood of them returning for specific information when needed in the future

5 Recommendations

This chapter concludes this research by providing nine recommendations for improving the sustainability of participant inventories. These recommendations are the culmination of my research into the current best practices for sustainability, my analysis of the main threats to participant inventories, and my evaluation of the current measures in place. I do my best to honour the one-size-does-not-fit-all approach that HIT embraces by recommending measures that navigate and respect the multiplicity of approaches participants may take during the trajectory. Additionally, these measures aim to be scaliable to the participant pool HIT caters to; ensuring accessibility to individuals with varying levels of expertise. Navigating a delicate balance between effectiveness and simplicity to ensure that the proposed sustainability measures resonate with both beginner participants and the broader network, allowing for successful implementation across multiple proficiency levels. While there are more approaches to sustainability that could eventually be taken, this research argues for the value of "good enough efforts" (Baucom 5); sustainability will always be a matter of "making an ever evolving effort to keep up with your organisation's current needs and continually planning for future circumstances." These measures are based on the research conducted during the first rendition of HIT, as the trajectory develops better measures can and should be implemented.

Given the holistic approach of the Three-Legged Stool Model and its emphasis on a balance within a digital preservation program, I wanted to ensure that my measures reflected that. The three facets of the recommendations I felt needed to be equal were the division of responsibility, the level of investment, and which 'leg' of the stool they dealt with. Responsibility here is defined not only by who has the power to implement a measure, but also who has the main duty to do so; the division of responsibilities for the measures are between the HIT team, the participants, and a collaborative effort between the two. Investment, in this context, relates to the level of resources a measure requires, including time, effort, and money.

The investment levels of my measures are classified as low, medium or high. Measures with the lowest level of investment can be implementable by the next iteration of HIT, whereas the medium level recommendations may need a bit more work to be ready.

Recommendations with a high level of investment are intended to be more aspirational long-term goals that require not only resources but also a level of research to achieve. While my research was able to identify the need for these measures, the exact procedure for their implementation fell out of the scope of this project. Hence, in this chapter I pose them as a point of future interest, without providing the exact parameters of their execution.

Finally, in order to ensure the balance between each 'leg' of the stool, I have formed three measures for each dimension; the organisational, the technological, and the resource. These three measures are then further distributed by responsibility and investment, so that each leg of the stool is being contributed to by all parties, and at all levels. A visual depiction of this responsibility-investment matrix can be found in Appendix E.

5.1 Recommendations for HIT

Practical Informational Resources

My first recommendation for the HIT team is the provision of more practical knowledge resources to participants; creating simple documents that lay out basic archival information participants need but may not already possess. This recommendation fits within the resource dimension as it would contribute to the knowledge pool of the participants. After the trajectory, these documents would be beneficial not only to refer back to, but also as a training tool[7]. Given that both NADD and Podiumkunst.net have the necessary archiving knowledge, the creation of the resources would not take a high level of investment in terms of time or money.

Below I have listed a few of the practical resources explicitly asked for by the participants. However this recommendation is not limited to just the following;

- *Glossary of Terms*; A list of definitions of basic archival terminology that participants will encounter when working on their inventory.

[7] Specifically in the context of my other recommendations; *Interns and Volunteers* and *Embedding The Inventory*

- *Types of Rights*; A list of the types of rights CPIs would need to consider in their inventories, specifically in the legal frameworks of Dutch performing arts, design, and digital culture.
- *Safe Storage Checklist*; A checklist of storage specifications participants must consider to reduce deterioration risks and improve the preservation and conservation of their physical and digital materials.
- *Email Archiving Guide*; A step-by-step instruction in how to archive emails from the most common emailing platforms (Gmail & Outlook)
- *List of File Formats*; A comprehensive list of the most common formats of different digital file types (ie. images, videos, audio files etc.), along with recommendations of formats best suited for avoiding obsolescence.
- *Archive Examples*; Multiple examples of well maintained archives from the performing arts, design, and digital culture fields.

Although many such resources can be found on online toolkits, like Project TRACKs, they are often hidden amongst multiple different web pages which, as discussed in the evaluation, participants are unlikely to browse. Encouraging regular use of Project TRACKs would still be valuable, but by providing their own resources the HIT team would help avoid information overload by breaking down many different complex processes and concepts into easier-to-digest formats.

More Examples

HIT can improve participants' understanding of the technological elements of their inventory by providing more examples as a reference point. During my visits to the CPIs I realised that participants responded very well to the filled-in basis-sheet, as it illustrated how they would go about filling in their own collection. Additionally, throughout the trajectory they regularly brought up the Pina Bausch archives[8], which was used as one of the two exemplary archives by the HIT team during the first group meeting; they were able to use the website as an inspiration, as well as a point of comparison for their own collection. During coaching sessions, having examples to refer to made it easier for them to ask what they must do to

[8] https://www.pinabausch.org/archives

reach the same level. However, these benefits can be expanded upon by providing more variety of examples. The examples filled in the basis-sheet are brief and a bit abstract when removed from the context of the rest of their collection. The Pina Bausch archive is only accessible as a public-facing website, so it provides no details regarding the technology that has constructed it behind the scenes.

The examples chosen must have variety. Allowing participants to understand what internal inventory interfaces can look like on different catalogue management software; it can provide an idea of the multiple levels of metadata processed by different institutions. Access to more detailed databases that use LOD URIs and RDA vocabulary can also help provide a more concrete understanding of what NADD and Podiumkunst.net eventually want to create with their collections.

This recommendation will require a slighter higher level of investment on HIT's part. If NADD and Podiumkunst.net reach out to the partners within their networks to provide these examples, costs can be kept low. However, the outreach may take some time and effort by the team. The partners providing these examples will need to know the exact parameters of access before an agreement is made. A few examples of details that need consideration include;

- Manner of Access (ie. On-location; Screenshots; Intranet)
- Frequency of Access (ie. One-time; During Trajectory; After Trajectory)
- Which Collections
- Privacy & Copyright

Goal-Oriented Meet-Ups

The HIT team can work towards creating a network for alumni by organising voluntary goal-oriented meet ups that encourage enduring work towards their archive. In interviews, all participants were in agreement that the group meetings were beneficial to their efforts; seeing the other inventories' progress not only motivated them to continue their work, but also held them accountable to finishing tasks by specific deadlines. The meetings would not only allow the HIT team to stay in touch with the participants, but also allow participants to stay in touch with each other. This recommendation will aid in the organisational

dimension of sustainability; the creation of a network amongst the alumni will create an accountability measure in their commitment to the inventories. The participants responded positively to the prospect of such meetings after the trajectory as well; the only stipulation they added was the need for the meeting to have a goal they need to work towards, as this would make their motivation more actionable. In order to account for alumni being at different stages of their inventory process, I advise the meet-ups to be based around relevant but broad goals; alumni who find the decided goal applicable to their inventory can then choose to sign up. A few examples of such goals include;

- Complete processing the series folder your team is currently working on.
- Complete item-level description for one folder of your choice.
- Complete digitisation of your most recent project

The reason that this recommendation falls within the high investment category is two-fold; the first reason is the cost, organising these meet-ups will require time, staff, and a budget, while the second reason is more abstract in nature. Before this recommendation can be implemented, NADD and Podiumkunst.net will need to deliberate and define the limits of their authority over alumni; when discussing this suggestion with my supervisors, they posed a concern regarding how they would approach setting goals for participants after they have graduated the trajectory. As such, before beginning to organise any meetings, the HIT team would need to deliberate internally on their level of responsibility when organising these meet-ups. Nonetheless, I maintain that creating an alumni network would be worth the effort as it would ultimately prove beneficial for NADD and Podiumkunst.net's final goal as well. Given its two month duration, HIT is meant to help participants start their inventories, not finish them; but if the ultimate goal is to work towards a LOD infrastructure, then the HIT team must take at least some measures to keep up with participants' progress.

5.2 Collaborative Recommendations

Milestone Plan

A collaborative measure for improving the organisational sustainability would be to add a milestone plan as an intended output of the trajectory. Currently, the primary outputs expected of the participants are the basis-sheet, filled in to the best of their ability, their

series level descriptions, and a general to-do list[9]. By adding an element of forward planning, HIT can help participants set up a structure to continue their work, while remaining 'practical'. Borrowing from project management strategy, the milestone plan would include setting up SMART[10] goals; creating small steps that help participants track their progress, and hence improve motivation, while also creating a schedule to keep them going after they leave the structure of the trajectory. Following in the example set by Alumni B, participants would be able to take a strategic approach to tackling their backlog; breaking down their work into manageable project workflow, that details the sequence of tasks to be completed, can help prevent feeling overwhelmed. Participants could break down milestone goals into smaller sub-tasks, as well as assign personnel responsibility, estimate time required, set calendar deadlines, and even track dependencies if relevant. As such, the milestone approach could also act as a contingency plan. If distractions or other projects cause the inventory progress to lapse after the trajectory, participants would have a plan of action they could use to pick up where they left off; they would simply need to shift deadlines according to their restart date. This recommendation can be implementable by the next iteration of HIT itself; the only requirement for adding this to the trajectory would be to provide a template project plan for participants to fill in. A filled in sample of this template can be found in Appendix D

Interns & Volunteers

The participant's need for labour can be addressed through a collaborative effort for finding interns or volunteers. All participants, at some point during the trajectory, voiced that they would benefit from having an intern or volunteer to help them do the more time-consuming basic tasks of processing (ie.: digitising documents, administrative metadata input). As one participant phrased it in their first interview, "Time is money. And everything costs too much time, especially from the most expensive people." NADD and Podiumkunst.net can contribute by using their network connections to help find people interested in helping. Since the HIT team is already situated within the archival sector, they have the reach needed to find people in the right places, as well as the industry-standing to endorse the CPIs. This could include asking network partners, posting call-outs on their various online platforms, or forming connections at the relevant academic institutions.

[9] A general overview of remaining tasks without detailed deadlines
[10] Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound

However, it is important that the division of responsibilities be explicitly stated here; the main contribution on HIT's part would be to use their industry reach to help find the interns and volunteers. While, the management, training, and potential stipend for any personnel would be the responsibility of the CPI. As such, this recommendation falls within the medium investment category; HIT would invest time and effort in reaching out to willing applicants, and participants would shoulder the rest of the cost and responsibilities.

Additionally, HIT must also contribute by educating participants on how to make the most of their interns or volunteers. The first thing participants need to understand is whether they need an intern or a volunteer; what is the difference between the two roles, and what are the legalities surrounding both[11]. While interns usually cost money, volunteers do not need compensation. Internships are meant to be a learning experience, hence interns cannot only be assigned menial work without any academic component. Alternatively, volunteers do not have similar limitations. However, interns, especially archival students, would be more adept at tackling complex problems in the inventory; by facilitating their research, CPIs would be able to find solutions for niche obstacles standing in the way of their archive. As such, volunteers seem to be a better match to the needs for the current four participants; however, that is not to say that future participants may not be better suited to have an intern. Another second thing HIT will need to educate participants on is the best practices for management in order to see any return on investment. Based on research by Inês M. Ferreira, and my own experience as an intern, I have listed a few key factors in managing archive volunteers & interns.

- *Training;* Educating them on the institution's inventory process, structure, and standards is necessary for quality work. Clear instruction manuals help prevent mistakes.
- *Management;* Designating an authority figure can provide a clear chain of command, improve channels of communication, and increase accountability. Supervision also helps maintain quality of work.
- *Well-Defined Role;* Providing a written task description and transparency in expectations can help produce better results.

[11] Rules for interns can be found at https://business.gov.nl/regulation/work-placement-interns/
Rules for volunteers can be found at https://business.gov.nl/regulation/working-volunteers/

- *Team Integration;* Incorporating volunteers and interns into the team and the running of the inventory prevents them from feeling like outsiders, which boosts morale and motivation (two very important factors for voluntary work).

Improve Implementation of LOD

As it stands, the implementation of LOD principles in HIT needs to be developed; at this time, participants are introduced to LOD concepts at a very introductory level without much additional push to incorporate it in their inventories. This struggle is understandable given that the function of HIT is to be a practical introduction to inventorying; the two-month trajectory must prioritise teaching in participants the basics before it can find time to tackle matters as advanced as LOD. Considering it is a topic too complicated to learn during HIT, it is highly unlikely that participants will be able to undertake learning this skill in their own time. Given the criticism that archives using an MPLP approach do not often return to further enrich their data, NADD and Podiumkunst need to ensure that LOD standards are incorporated into participants' inventories from the start. This recommendation falls within the last investment category as it will likely take a long time as well as LOD expertise to find a workable solution. Additionally, this recommendation is a collaborative one as HIT would necessarily require the input of participants from non-archiving backgrounds to test that the approach is understandable for beginners. For CPIs with no prior knowledge of linked data even the most basic elements of LOD, like URIs, can be intimidating. It is vital that the presence of LOD in HIT strikes the balance between meeting archival standards and being comprehensible to those outside the archival sector.

5.3 Recommendations for Participants

Planning A 'Big Switch'

A simple but effective technological recommendation for participants to implement is to plan an official 'switch' to the new inventory system they devise during the trajectory. In doing so, participants could avoid periods of confusion, where materials can get damaged or lost due to poor integration; this is especially important for bigger CPIs. Regardless of whether the new inventory process is replacing an old one, or if it is filling a prior gap, it is vital that an official change is made and all stakeholders are informed. The technological strategies and systems are only as good as their implementation; as Nancy McGovern observes, "Working with and around technology demonstrates that the people part—technology as a sociotechnical system—is the hardest part of technology" (*Archives, History, and Technology* 11) . The switch does not need to be an expensive transition, it can be scheduled according to what makes sense with the organisation's internal calendar; what it would require is institution-wide cooperation, which may prove tricky. In addition to informing all relevant parties of the date of the switch, participants would need to ensure that their coworkers are also given the necessary information needed to work with the new system.[12] Though it may take a bit of planning and communication on the participants' part, the benefits are worth the effort; having the entire CPI get on board with the new technological infrastructure from day one would only serve towards strengthening its place in the organisation in the long run.

Embedding The Inventory

From an organisational perspective, the most important recommendation I can give the participants is to take active steps towards embedding the new inventory process into their CPI. The participants must make the inventory a fundamental part of their organisation (Corrado). This includes;

- *Raising Awareness;* All relevant stakeholders must be made aware of the new inventory. (ie. Coworkers; Management; Artists; Freelancers; Investors; Partners; Community)[13]

[12] Can be supplemented by *Practical Informational Resources* and *Embedding The Inventory*
[13] Works in tandem with *Planning A 'Big Switch*

- *Support from Higher Up;* Stakeholders in positions of power must be shown the value of the new inventory system to secure their support for its implementation.
- *Sharing Knowledge;* Participants must externalise the knowledge they gained during the trajectory. The structures and standards they decided on during HIT must be recorded in the form of manuals, guides, or protocols that can easily be disseminated amongst coworkers.
- *Good Record-Keeping Practices;* Coworkers and management must be taught the necessary habits that make the inventory processes easier.
- *Delegation of Responsibility;* If the size of CPI allows it, participants must involve the relevant coworkers in executing the milestone plan and maintaining the inventory.
- *Succession Planning;* Participants, especially those tasked with sole responsibility of their inventory, must make a plan for the handover of not only their role, but also their expertise, should they ever leave their post.

Essentially, embedding the inventory is a way of ensuring that the participants of HIT are not the only ones liable for keeping it alive and running. Implementing this recommendation involves the creation of not just knowledge products, but also a policy framework. While the practical approach of HIT is a launchpad to get the ball rolling, participants will eventually have to invest time and effort into defining their inventory policy. This will not be an expensive process, but certainly a time-consuming one; however it is crucial for the sustainability of their inventory. At most, HIT can outline the necessary steps to take and perhaps provide some examples of the kind of policy documents they would need to produce. But the ultimate responsibility of implementing this recommendation lies entirely in the hands of the participants. Given that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to inventorying, such can also be said for embedding the inventory; the process will always look different depending on the CPI's organisational infrastructure. In the case of hierarchical institutions, this process may prove to be a little easier (especially with support from management); whereas for networked organisations the process will require ongoing attention as new members join and leave.

“Activating The Archive”

The final recommendation for participants is to consider ways in which they can “activate the archive”[14] (Paalman et al.) in order to feed back into their resource framework; activating the archive, here, means stimulating the creative potential of the CPIs collections. Once their inventories have reached a certain level of completion, CPIs can consider revisiting their past and “activating” items from their collection as a way to inspire new cultural projects in the present. Doing so would offer the CPIs two benefits. The first being that a reuse project would help engage stakeholders and showcase the relevance of the inventory, hence making it a valued product or service; this could lead to increased support in both policy and budget. An early example of this can be seen in Participant C’s interest in featuring in the Rotterdamse Dans Archief encouraging them to sign up for HIT. The second benefit depends on the form the activation of the archive takes; projects like books, exhibitions, or documentaries may bring in added revenue, which could then be put back into funding the archive. This is an idea inspired by my conversation with Alumni C, who mentioned that working on a creative project would help motivate him to restart his inventory effort. The reason this falls into the high investment category is due to the long-term effort it would require; the inventory would most likely need to be much further along. Potentially, certain legal considerations would need to be made in case of copyright or privacy. The relevance of this recommendation is also entirely dependent on whether or not the CPI plans on maintaining custody of their collections. Ultimately, this is an idea HIT can pitch to participants, as an inspirational goal, but the interest in implementing it must come from the CPI.

[14] This was a phrase used by Alumni C in his interview. Although activating the archive in Paalman’s original context is associated more with social impact, He made use of the concept from a creative perspective.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Acknowledgements

While this research has been my undertaking and the measures recommended are my own, none of it would have been possible without the support of a number of people. I would like to extend my gratitude to all the people who have supported me through this project. Thank you to my supervisors, Brigitte Jansen & Guido Jansen, for their guidance, weekly feedback and words of encouragement. I would like to thank all five of the participants for their cooperation and enthusiasm for my research. I would also like to thank the alumni for their willingness to find time and share their experiences with me. This has been an inspiring project to have been a part of, and I sincerely hope my time spent at Het Inventarisatietraject has made a positive impact on the resilience of the inventories to come.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Alumni Interview

1. Where is your archive now? How far have you gotten since the trajectory ended?
2. What were the most significant challenges in creating your archive and then regularly keeping up with the work?
3. How well do you think the Actieplan you created during the trajectory has been implemented?
4. What kind of work process are you usually in charge of in your role at your organisation? Do you think the skills of your role have been an asset to your archiving work?
5. Who is currently involved in the management and upkeep of your archive? If you were the only employee to participate in the archive trajectory, did you have to pass on the information you learned to your teammates?
6. There is a lot of information out there on how to start archiving, what was your institution's motivation for joining the archive trajectory instead of doing it yourself?
7. It has been some time since you participated in the trajectory.
    a. What lessons/tips/advice from the trajectory still resonate with you?
    b. Alternatively, what things have you come across now that you have not discussed during the trajectory?

Participants Opening Interview

1. There's a lot of information on DIY archiving out there, how come you didn't undertake this on your own?
    a. What do you think we can provide that you couldn't have done on your own?
2. Where do you see your inventory when the Inventarisatietraject is done? • How much do you expect to (or, indeed, want to) complete?

    a. What are the most important things you'd like to see done first?

3. What do you foresee being the hardest thing you'll have to tackle during this trajectory? (Example: Item locations, LOD, descriptions)

4. For your institution and its mission, what do you think are the most important aspects of your inventory to complete? (Example: metadata, cataloguing, categorising into series)

5. What do you think is going to be the biggest challenge about actually completing your inventory?

    a. Is the challenge more time-bound or resource-oriented?

    b. What role do you think the people in your institution will play?

6. After your inventory is complete, what do you see being the biggest challenge to sustaining it over time?

    a. What do you think would be useful resources to address these challenges?

7. After the trajectory, how are the inventory work processes going to be distributed within your institution?

    a. Who is going to be tasked with the upkeep?

    b. Are there any systems for maintenance in place?

    c. Will you be sharing the knowledge you have gained from the trajectory? Or will there be a single person designated for the task of inventory management?

Participants Exit Interview

1. How was your overall experience in the trajectory?

    a. What were some things you liked or didn't like? Is there something you felt was missing from the experience?

2. How was your experience with the coaching? What impact did it have on your work?
    a. Is there some way we could improve the experience with the coaches specifically?
3. Other than the coaches, what did you think of the resources you were offered by us?
    a. Useful / Easy to Understand /Overwhelming?
    b. Did you struggle to use them somehow?
4. Did you like the meetings with the other participants?
    a. Did you feel talking with others was helpful even if they were from a different sector?
5. Could you briefly describe where you are at in the inventory process at the end of the two months? And are you happy with where you are ending the experience?
6. Did you meet the goals you set at the beginning of the trajectory?
    a. If YES: Have you set new goals to pursue from here on out? Have you thought about how you would work towards them?
    b. If NO: Do you feel the goals you set at the beginning of the trajectory were feasible? Would you change them in any way?
7. Do you have a plan for what comes next in the Inventorying process for you?
    a. Are there any milestones you are working towards? A structure you've set to keep working? Making a reference document? Sharing what you've done here with your coworkers?
8. Do you think you are graduating from this trajectory with the tools you need to keep the work going?
    a. Is there anything you feel we could provide that we haven't yet?
    b. What do you think you will miss the most from this trajectory as you continue forward?

9. What are your biggest concerns with taking this project forward on your own?
    a. Have you considered the possibility of not being able to continue this effort? What then?
10. How likely would you be to either come back for further check-ins or be involved in some kind of online effort to stay in touch regarding progress?
    a. Do you think this would help?

Custodial Arrangement	Organisational Structure	Planned Use-Case	Archival Experience
Non-Custodial	**Hierarchical Institution**	**Use-Case**	**No Prior Experience**
Strengths • Expertise from collaborative relationships can lead to new insights and learning. • May open up access to the partner's resources. • Reduces resource demands by passing on maintenance, storage, safety, and upkeep responsibilities to the custodial partner. • Requires a smaller team from each organisation. • External deadlines from partnering organisation can help provide structure and motivation. *Weaknesses* • Requires adherence to the custodial organisation's standards and structures. • Collaboration can be a slow and bureaucratic process that may affect motivation of team over time. • Handing over custody affects ownership and rights of the collection; it must be considered whether access is being lost and who must be consulted. • Collection may undergo an appraisal procedure based on the custodial organisation's own interests and motivation; decisions of what they choose to keep will have lasting effects on the collection.	*Strengths* • Teams and departments with designated roles helps know who to turn to for help. • Working with a set team reduces redundant work; coworkers need to only be trained on processes once. • Assigned responsibilities allow for an easier accountability process for mistakes or misplacements. • A recognised chain of command makes implementing changes easier; team leaders can use their authority to disseminate new decisions or procedures. *Weaknesses* • Teams and departments with designated roles can affect urgency of tasks; coworkers will also have their own tasks that take precedence over the inventory. • In strict top-down structures new changes and procedures cannot be implemented without support from managers; getting approvals can slow down or interrupt urgent work. • Departmental rigidity can reduce the number of coworkers allowed to take responsibility for projects, regardless of availability or interest. • Available expertise and knowledge limited by hired positions.	*Strengths* • Inventory process is driven by a goal that can help guide decision making processes. • Provides clarity in terms of setting a project task pathway. • Helps set clear milestones that can increase team motivation. • Can be used to demonstrate the value of the project to stakeholders and potential revenue streams; increases level of investment into the project. *Weaknesses* • Can limit the inventory with a single focus; may leave no room for other goals and uses to organically crop up during the process. • May lead to the creation of a rigid inventory structure that facilitates only one outcome. • Risks items losing contexts that are deemed unrelated to the use-case. • May lead to over-investment of resources into one aspect of the inventory at the expense of others (eg: specific software; hiring niche expert; prioritising public access over internal arrangement etc.)	*Strengths* • Blank slate prevents confusion; reduces need to unlearn old practices or replace any previous organisation-wide archiving protocols. • Beginner milestones can be achieved quicker; seeing results can lead to increased motivation amongst team and increased confidence from stakeholders. • Novelty of project may increase team's curiosity; opportunity for productive dialogue and creative brainstorming without the limitations of how the inventory 'should' look. *Weaknesses* • Risk of information overload; too much knowledge in too short a time frame may be overwhelming. • Unreasonable expectations for progress during the trajectory can affect confidence in abilities; anticipate a learning curve for any new skill. • Resistance to change amongst coworkers; possibility that some on the team may not see the value of implementing an archival system if there has never been one in place before. • Gross inventory in phase 1 is made harder by the lack of a prior recordkeeping system.
Custodial	**Networked Organisation**	**No Use-Case**	**Prior Experience**
Strengths • Allows for more flexibility in choosing inventory standards that best fit needs. • Freedom to structure inventory according to internal logics and uses. • Remain in charge of appraisal decisions. • Retain access to and control of collection. • Prevents additional legal workload of consulting subjects and authors for obtaining consent prior to transfer. • Allows for a project pace that match internal organisational timelines. *Weaknesses* • Retain responsibilities of upkeep, safety, storage space & maintenance; increases resource and knowledge demands. • Maintaining steady progress depends entirely on internal motivation. • Project may require involvement of whole team due to no external support; coworkers' lack of knowledge, interest, or time can impact progress.	*Strengths* • Allows a level of flexibility to add and remove members to the network as needs for expertise or skills arise. • Decentralise authority over implementing changes; decisions can be made based on knowledge rather than leadership role. • Bottom-up decision making can help prioritise the inventory needs; room to explore new ideas based on project requirements rather than just established approaches. *Weaknesses* • Revolving door of network members means constantly reteaching protocols as people join. • Lines of accountability and responsibility become blurred; increased risk of having to hunt down people who have left the network which can be time-consuming or even impossible. • Increases reliance on external expertise; reduces the need or opportunity for team to learn new skills affecting their independence overtime.	*Strengths* • Allows for flexible thinking and a speculative process of imaging all that the inventory could be and achieve. • Freedom to move with the motivations of the team; enthusiasm for the project can be maintained by letting people lead with ideas that interest them. • Increases multiplicity in the archive; may improve the contextual information retained in the inventory. *Weaknesses* • Risks the inventory structure remaining too formless and vague. • Can make it hard to decide where to start the project. • A lack of guidance and clarity on timeline can lead to a loss of motivation amongst the team. • Parts of the project can be forgotten and remain incomplete without a sequential task pathway. • Makes it harder to demonstrate the value of the archive to stakeholders; increases difficulty in petitioning for more resources.	*Strengths* • Any lever of familiarity with archival processes and jargon reduces potential for information overload. • Not starting from scratch reduces the level of work initially required during phase 1 of the trajectory; having any level of archival system in place decreases the extent of location and organisation work required at the outset. • Avoid having to convince coworkers to start doing something new; the team is already used to having to engage in some kind of recordkeeping protocol. *Weaknesses* • Inevitable confusion during initial implementation of new standards and structure; expect to face increased mistakes during the transition. • Disseminating better practices requires team to unlearn 'bad recordkeeping habits'; coworkers may require convincing to adopt new protocols in place of 'how things have always been done'. • Improving upon an existing inventory may feel like repetitive work; redoing prior efforts makes it harder to see results which may affect motivation.

Custodial Arrangement	
Non-Custodial	**Custodial**
Strengths • Expertise from collaborative relationships can lead to new insights and learning. • May open up access to the partner's resources. • Reduces resource demands by passing on maintenance, storage, safety, and upkeep responsibilities to the custodial partner. • Requires a smaller team from each organisation. • External deadlines from partnering organisation can help provide structure and motivation. *Weaknesses* • Requires adherence to the custodial organisation's standards and structures. • Collaboration can be a slow and bureaucratic process that may affect motivation of team over time. • Handing over custody affects ownership and rights of the collection; it must be considered whether access is being lost and who must be consulted. • Collection may undergo an appraisal procedure based on the custodial organisation's own interests and motivation; decisions of what they choose to keep will have lasting effects on the collection.	*Strengths* • Allows for more flexibility in choosing inventory standards that best fit needs. • Freedom to structure inventory according to internal logics and uses. • Remain in charge of appraisal decisions. • Retain access to and control of collection. • Prevents additional legal workload of consulting subjects and authors for obtaining consent prior to transfer. • Allows for a project pace that match internal organisational timelines. *Weaknesses* • Retain responsibilities of upkeep, safety, storage space & maintenance; increases resource and knowledge demands. • Maintaining steady progress depends entirely on internal motivation. • Project may require involvement of whole team due to no external support; coworkers' lack of knowledge, interest, or time can impact progress.

Organisational Structure	
Hierarchical Institution	**Networked Organisation**
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Planned Use-Case	
Use-Case	**No Use-Case**
Strengths • Inventory process is driven by a goal that can help guide decision making processes. • Provides clarity in terms of setting a project task pathway. • Helps set clear milestones that can increase team motivation. • Can be used to demonstrate the value of the project to stakeholders and potential revenue streams; increases level of investment into the project. *Weaknesses* • Can limit the inventory with a single focus; may leave no room for other goals and uses to organically crop up during the process. • May lead to the creation of a rigid inventory structure that facilitates only one outcome. • Risks items losing contexts that are deemed unrelated to the use-case. • May lead to over-investment of resources into one aspect of the inventory at the expense of others (eg: specific software; hiring niche expert; prioritising public access over internal arrangement etc.)	*Strengths* • Allows for flexible thinking and a speculative process of imaging all that the inventory could be and achieve. • Freedom to move with the motivations of the team; enthusiasm for the project can be maintained by letting people lead with ideas that interest them. • Increases multiplicity in the archive; may improve the contextual information retained in the inventory. *Weaknesses* • Risks the inventory structure remaining too formless and vague. • Can make it hard to decide where to start the project. • A lack of guidance and clarity on timeline can lead to a loss of motivation amongst the team. • Parts of the project can be forgotten and remain incomplete without a sequential task pathway. • Makes it harder to demonstrate the value of the archive to stakeholders; increases difficulty in petitioning for more resources.

Archival Experience	
No Prior Experience	**Prior Experience**
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Appendix D: Milestone Workflow Project Plan Template

Below is an image of the template, originally created as a spreadsheet.

Milestone Workflow - Project Plan

Goal	Task	Responsibility	Est. Duration	Deadline	Dependancies
Complete inventory of 2010 event photos	Take gross inventory	Peter	3d		N/A
	Digitise physical photos	Peter	1w		Gross inventory completed
	Arrange into correct event folders	Femke	2d		Physical photos digitised
	Fill technical metadata	Peter	2w		Arrangement complete
	Complete event folder-level description	Femke	1w		Arrangement complete
	Fill item-level alt-text	Femke	3w		Arrangement complete

Appendix E: Recommendation Matrix

		Responsibility		
		HIT	**Collaborative**	**Participant**
Resource Investment	**Low** Immediate	Practical Information Resources	Milestone Plan	Planning A 'Big Switch'
	Medium Short Term	More Diverse Examples	Interns & Volunteers	Embedding The Inventory
	High Long Term	Goal-Oriented Meetups	Improve Implementation of LOD	Activating The Archive

Key: Resource Measure | Organisational Measure | Technological Measure