
Overview of Museum Indicators

**C-COVES: Creating a Collaboration for
Ongoing Visitor Experience Studies**

Museum of Science: Boston

August 7, 2013, Rev. Dec. 4, 2013

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Agenda

- A. The need for indicators to measure visitor outcomes
- B. The need to do this collaboratively among peers
- C. Contextually embedded indicators: The VE in the museum, and the museum in its community



Perspective Disclosure

- ◆ Museum Management
- ◆ Institutional Planner
- ◆ Museum Field Research
 - Operating Data
- ◆ Collaborator
- ◆ Passion inspired by Dr. Roger Nichols
(MOS Director 1984 – 87)



MOS: Field Change

Source: ASTC 2013; MOS 1988/9 Budget

	1988/9	2012
Budget	\$25M	\$56M
CPI Adjusted	\$49M	\$56M
Earned Revenue	74%	62%
Support Revenue	26%	38%
Evaluation Staff	0	12
Attendance	2.2M	1.6M



A

The need for indicators to measure visitor outcomes

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Visitor Data

Direct Research

- ◆ Survey Responses
- ◆ Observed Behavior
- ◆ Comment Cards

Operating Data (Tix System)

- ◆ \$ Spent
- ◆ Time Spent

- ◆ Effort Spent

Automated Research

- ◆ Parking Dwell Time
- ◆ Carpet Wear
- ◆ Sensor/RFID Systems



What do Visitors Want?

Existing Research Framework

- ◆ Hood's Visitor Interests
 - ◆ Scott's Value System
 - ◆ PISEC: Family Learning Needs
 - ◆ Falk's Identity & Motivation
 - ◆ MOS Typology
 - ◆ Rand: Visitor's Bill of Rights
 - ◆ Doblin Group: Compelling Experiences
-



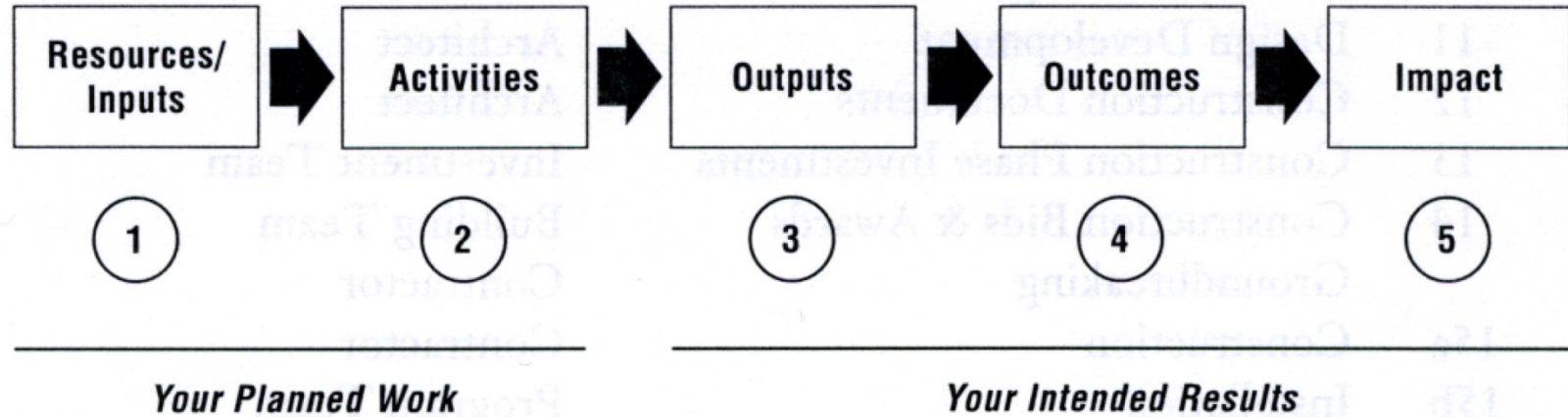
Museum Indicators of Impact and Performance (MIIP 0.1)

1003 Indicators from 48 Sources

- ◆ Intentional Purposes
 - ◆ Guiding Principles
 - ◆ Resource Indicators
 - ◆ Activity Indicators
 - ◆ Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
 - KPIs that may indicate value
 - ◆ Perceived Values
-



Kellogg Foundation Logic Model



Measurements

Outcomes

(Individuals - Qualitative)

VS.

Impacts

(Societal – Quantitative)

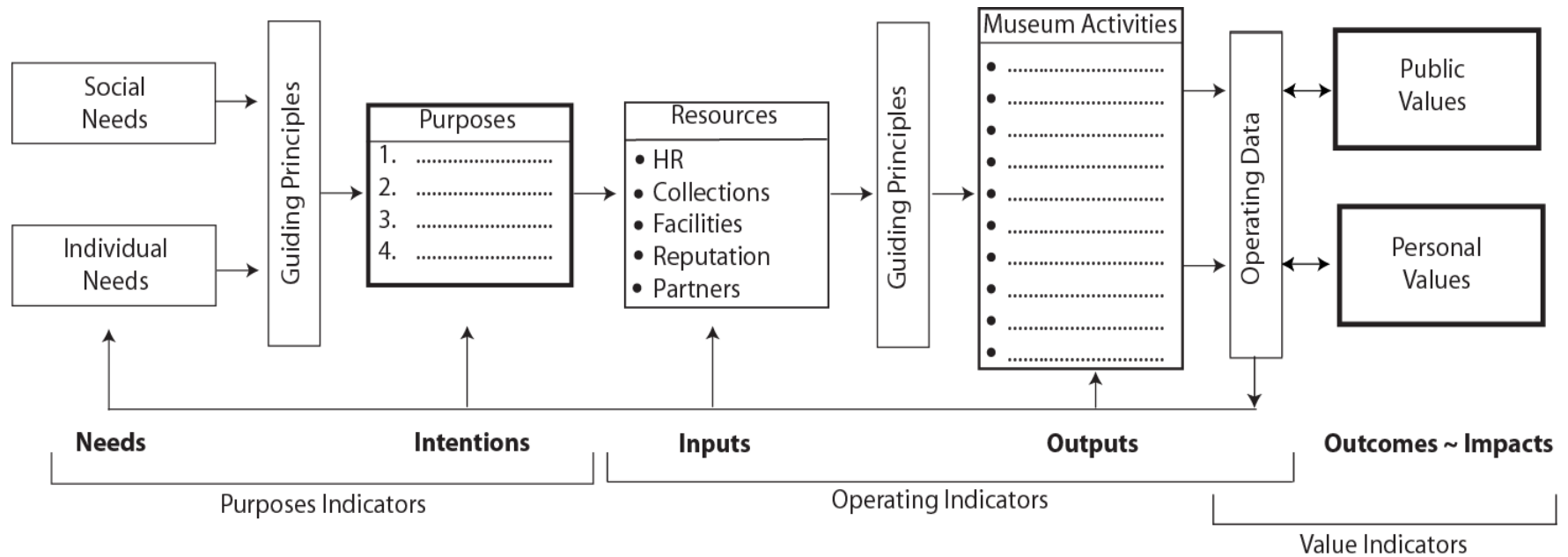


Measurements

**Individual Outcomes
and
Community Impacts
are collectively
Perceived Values**



Museum Logic Model



Visitor Experience Funding

Multiple sources; multiple masters

- ◆ Admissions
- ◆ Affiliated Spending (Gift, Café, IMAX, etc.)
- ◆ Public Funds
- ◆ Corporate Funds
- ◆ Sponsorships
- ◆ Grants
- ◆ Donations/Endowments
- ◆ In-Kind & Volunteer



Did the [visitors] get what they wanted?

Did the museum get what it wanted?

And, was the transaction mutually beneficial?



Need for Indicators

- ◆ To guide efforts to meet the museum's purposes
- ◆ To guide efforts to meet the world's purposes
- ◆ To support the museum's economic sustainability
- ◆ To do science – to create new knowledge



B

The need to do this
collaboratively among peers



GOAL:

A Shared Menu of Indicators so
we can learn from each other



Benefits of Sharing

- ◆ Reality check – How are we doing?
- ◆ Best practices: Evolution
- ◆ Peer reviews/comparables
- ◆ Foundation of a professional field
- ◆ Basis of Scientific Research
- ◆ Accountability metrics
- ◆ Accepted evidence of worth



What to Share?

- ◆ Data Field Definitions All museums
- ◆ Collection Methods Same scale museums
- ◆ Indicators & KPIs Similarly purposed museums
- ◆ Selection of Indicators Same scale and purposes (peers)
- ◆ Instruments By research project



Potentially Meaningful VE

Indicators

- ◆ Repeat use by experts
 - Membership renewals
 - Teachers repeats
- ◆ Net promoter score
- ◆ Net repeater score
- ◆ Dwell time/Gallery SF (Serrell's indicators)
- ◆ Tourist/Resident
- ◆ Avg. age trends
- ◆ Teen volunteer hours



Standardization is Political

- ◆ Eventual market adoption (e.g.; Serrell's Time & Tracking)
- ◆ Fiat by funding agencies (e.g. NSF, CDP)
- ◆ Association leadership (e.g. GSCA & DIGSS 1.1)



Resistance

- ◆ “Indicators may stifle creativity”
- ◆ “Museums are too different” to make standards meaningful
- ◆ “Expert judgment is better than indicators”
- ◆ “We have what we need already”
- ◆ Hard to invalidate historic data trends



Urgency of Need

- ◆ Need evidence of impact to attract funding
- ◆ Need to be more competitive for visitor time share
- ◆ Need to increase speed of responsiveness to faster societal change
- ◆ A healthy economy needs STEM & 21st Century work skills
- ◆ Our supporters now want accountable evidence



C

Contextually embedded indicators:
The VE in the museum, and the
museum in its community

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The Purposes Framework

Museum Operating Data Standards (MODS 1.0)

- ◆ Serving as a center for lifelong learning
- ◆ Partnering with formal education
- ◆ Creating quality of life and value for the community
- ◆ Contributing to heritage preservation
- ◆ Serving as places of memory
- ◆ Creating economic value



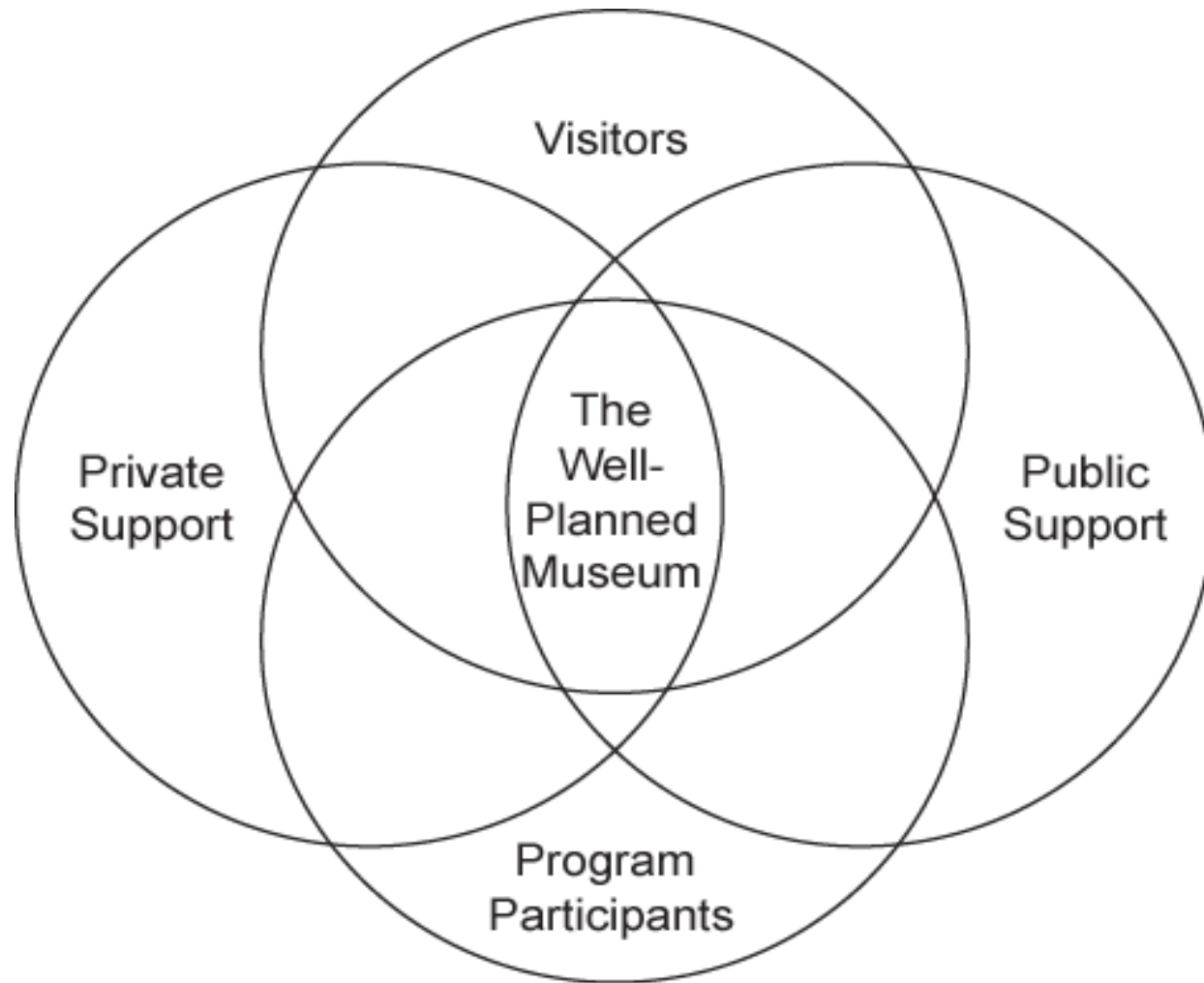
MOS: Purpose Shift

Source: ASTC 2013; MOS 1988/9 Budget

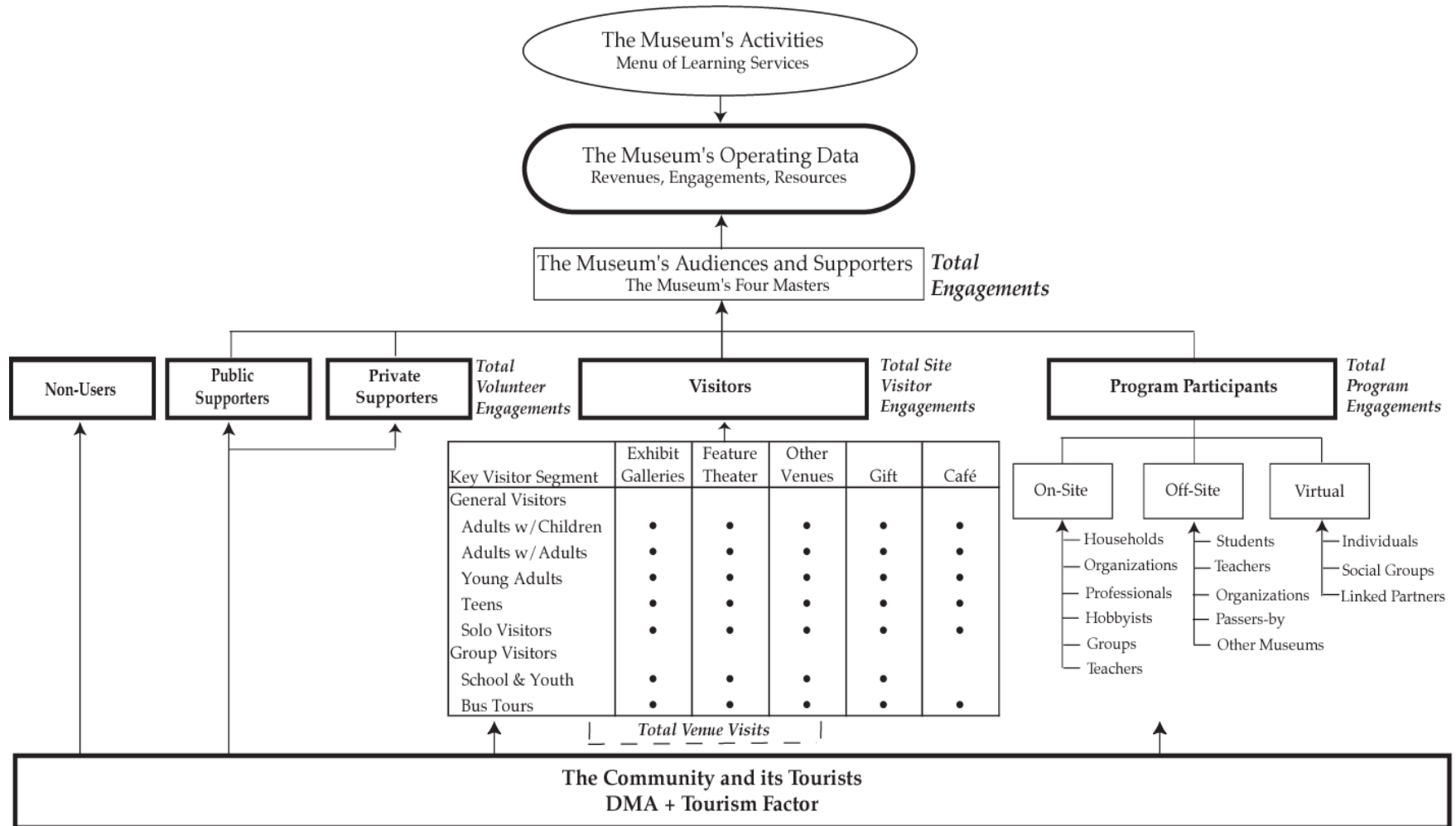
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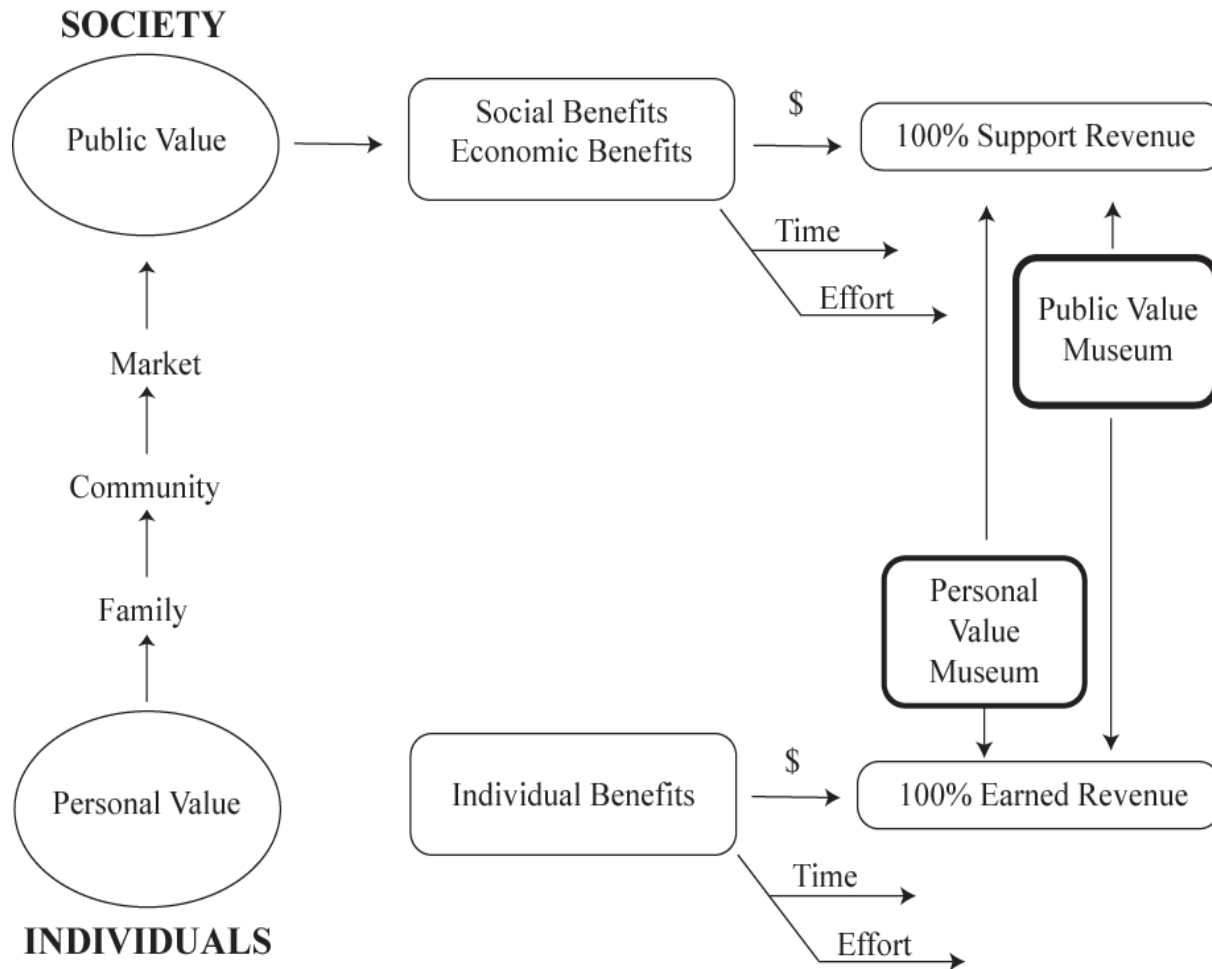
Servant of the Four Masters



Audience/Engagement Diagram



Purpose and Business Model



MOS: Business Model Shift

Source: ASTC 2013; MOS 1988/9 Budget

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