



ICOM Statutes

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The French language version of the ICOM Statutes is the official document from which translations must emanate. Questions regarding the official position of ICOM on statutory issue should refer to the French version.

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Introduction

The *Statutes* of the International Council of Museums (hereinafter referred to as "ICOM") is the basic document of the Organisation. The internal Rules of ICOM, and the Code of Ethics define and complete these Statutes

The practices of ICOM must be based on honesty, fairness and mutual respect, as well as service to the international museum community.

The objectives of ICOM are (i) to promote the establishment, development and professional management of museums, (ii) and to advance knowledge and understanding of the nature, function and role of museums.

ICOM establishes ethical standards which must be adopted and respected by museums and museum professionals. It organises co-operation and mutual assistance between museums and between museum professionals. It represents, advances, and disseminates knowledge in museology and other disciplines related to studies in museology and/or the management and activities of museums.

Article 1 – Name, Legal Status, Location, Duration and Fiscal Year

Section 1. Name. The name of the Organisation is the International Council of Museums (ICOM). Use of the name and acronym is restricted to functions authorised by and for the benefit of the Organisation and its members.

Section 2. Legal Status. Established in 1946, ICOM is a non-profit organisation subject to French legislation (the 1901 law on associations) and a non-governmental organisation maintaining formal relations with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and having a consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Section 3. Location. The registered office of ICOM is Maison de l'UNESCO, 1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15, France. The location may be modified by a decision of the Executive Council.

Section 4. Duration of the Mandate. The duration of ICOM shall be indefinite.

Section 5. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year begins on 1st January and ends on 31st December of each year.

Article 2 – Mission and Purpose

Section 1. Mission. ICOM is the international organisation of museums and museum professionals which is committed to the conservation, continuation and communication to society of the world's natural and cultural heritage, present and future, tangible and intangible.

Section 2. Purpose. ICOM establishes professional and ethical standards for museum activities, makes recommendations on such issues, promotes training, advances knowledge and raises public cultural awareness through global networks and co-operation programmes.

Article 3 - Definition of Terms

Whenever used in these Statutes, the following terms, beginning with a capital letter, will bear the meaning defined in this article, without any distinction when used in the singular or the plural.

Section 1. Museum. A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.

Section 2. Institutions recognised by ICOM. The Executive Council, after seeking the advice of the Advisory Committee, may recognise other institutions as having some or all of the characteristics of a Museum.

Section 3. Museum Professionals. Museum professionals include all the personnel of museums, or institutions qualifying as museums in accordance with the definition in Article 3, Section 1 & 2, and training and research institutions which are beneficial to museum activities, having received specialised training, or possessing an equivalent practical experience, in any field relevant to the management and activities of a museum, as well

as independent persons respecting the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums* and working for and with museums, but not involved in promoting or dealing with any commercial products and equipment required for museums and their services.

Section 4. Member in Good Standing. An ICOM member in good standing is a person (or an institution) whose request for membership to ICOM has been accepted under the conditions defined in Article 4, Section 2 of these Statutes, and has paid the annual membership fee (dues) at the time and in the amount determined by the Executive Council.

Section 5. State. For the purposes of establishing National Committees, a State is defined as a self-governing country which is a member of the United Nations or any of its Specialised Agencies, or is a party to the Statutes of the International Court of Justice.

Article 4 – Membership

Section 1. Members. Membership shall be open to Museums, Institutions recognised by ICOM and Museum Professionals, and such other persons or institutions considered to be beneficial for the advancement of the museum community.

All persons eligible for membership shall indicate to ICOM that they wish to become Members, that they accept and will comply with the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums, and shall complete the application form to request membership.

Membership in ICOM shall not be available to any person or institution (including its employees) which trades (buys or sells for profit) cultural property including works of art, natural and scientific specimens, taking into consideration national legislations and international conventions. This disqualification applies to persons or institutions engaged in an activity which could cause a conflict of interest.

Section 2. Approval of Membership. National Committees shall forward the application form and annual subvention of new members to the ICOM Secretariat as soon as possible.

Only Honorary Members, as defined below in Section 3 of this Article, are exempt from this review process. Their candidacy is proposed by the Executive Council to the General Assembly, which decides to accept or reject it, by a simple majority.

Section 3. Categories of Membership.

- i. **Individual Members** – Museum professionals, as defined in Article 3, still working or retired, or other persons who, because of their experience or professional services rendered to ICOM, are eligible to become individual members.
- ii. **Institutional Members** — Museums or other institutions complying with the definition of a museum.
- iii. **Student Members** — Persons enrolled in museum-related academic programmes may be proposed for admission to this category of membership by a National Committee.
- iv. **Honorary Members** — Persons who have rendered exceptional services to the international museum community or to ICOM.
- v. **Supporting Members** — Persons or institutions providing substantial financial or other assistance to ICOM because of an interest in museums and international co-operation between museums.

Section 4. Termination of Membership. Membership of ICOM may be discontinued by voluntary withdrawal or by a decision of the Executive Council for one of the following reasons:

- i. Change of professional status;
- ii. Breach of professional ethics;
- iii. Actions considered to be substantially incompatible with the objectives of ICOM;
- iv. Non-payment of fees after formal notice of the payment due.

Article 5 - Annual Membership Fee

Section 1. Amount and Payment of the Membership Fee. Each Individual, Institutional, Student, and Supporting Member of ICOM shall pay an annual membership fee (dues) at a rate recommended by the Executive Council and approved by the General Assembly.

Every year, the Executive Council shall announce the amount of the annual membership fee for the following year. The National Committee shall forward the membership fees to the Secretariat **by June 30th**, which will process in the month following receipt.

Section 2. Period Covered by the Membership Fee. The annual membership fee shall cover the calendar year in question.

Article 6 - Membership Privileges

Section 1. Membership Card. Individual Members in good standing receive a membership card that grants them special privileges as determined by ICOM.

Section 2. Right to Seek Election. Individual Members in good standing, and representatives of Institutional Members in good standing, can stand for election (i) to the Executive Council (see Article 14, Section 5), (ii) as the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Advisory Committee (see Article 14, Section 3) or (iii) for the elected functions of a National Committee, an International Committee or a Regional Alliance.

Section 3. Designated Representatives. Institutional Members can designate three (3) persons to represent them on National Committees and International Committees, as well as at the General Conference and General Assembly.

Section 4. Student Participation. Student Members may participate in the activities of National and International Committees, and may also attend and participate in General Conferences and General Assemblies, but they may not vote or stand for an office in ICOM.

Section 5. Special Status. Honorary and Supporting Members are entitled to membership rights and privileges but may not hold an elected office in ICOM.

Article 7 - Voting Rights

Section 1. Voting Rights. The voting rights of Individual and Institutional Members at the General Assembly and for the election of the Executive Council are prescribed in the following sections of this Article, Article 10, Sections 2, 3 and 6, as well as Article 14, Section 5, in the case of meetings of the Advisory Committee; members present during voting may not have more than one proxy.

Section 2. Committee Vote. Each National and International Committee has the right to designate five (5) of its members (individual members or designated representatives of institutional members) to vote on its behalf on matters coming before the General Assembly.

Section 3. Affiliated Vote. Each Affiliated Organisation has the right to designate three (3) of its members (individual members or designated representatives of institutional members) to vote on its behalf on matters coming before the General Assembly.

Section 4. Non-Voting Members. Student, Supporting and Honorary Members shall not have the right to vote at the General Assembly of ICOM.

Article 8 - Components of ICOM

ICOM is composed as follows:

- i. General Assembly
- ii. Executive Council
 - President
 - Two Vice-Presidents
 - Treasurer
 - At-Large (ordinary) Members
- iii. Advisory Committee
- iv. National Committees
- v. National Correspondents
- vi. International Committees
- vii. General Conference
- viii. Regional Alliances
- ix. Affiliated Organisations
- x. Operational Secretariat
- xi. UNESCO-ICOM Museum Information Centre

Article 9 - Governance Structure

The primary authority of ICOM resides through its Members.

The Executive Council, composed of officers and at-large (ordinary) Members elected by the General Assembly, is responsible for the managerial aspects of ICOM.

The Advisory Committee, composed of Chairpersons of National and International Committees and Regional Alliances and Affiliated Organisations, has an advisory role to represent its membership in the activities of ICOM.

Article 10 - General Assembly

Section 1. Authority: The General Assembly is the legislative body of ICOM.

Section 2. Members: The General Assembly consists of all individual, student, supporting, and honorary members and the designated representatives of institutional members. Only individual members and representatives of institutional members who have been designated as voting delegates by National Committees, International Committee and Affiliated Organization in accordance with Section 1, 2, and 3 of Article 7 have the right to vote at the General Assembly of ICOM.

Section 3. Meetings :Ordinary General Assembly - The General Assembly will hold an ordinary session at least once a year at the time of the annual meeting of the Advisory Committee.

The quorum for an Ordinary General Assembly is a simple majority of the number of members present, or members with the right to vote represented by a proxy (the number of proxies per member is indicated in the Rules of Procedure). If this quorum is not reached, the General Assembly will be convened again in the same location within twenty-four (24) hours at the latest. Whatever the number of members then present, the General Assembly has the power to deliberate. The decisions of an Ordinary General Assembly are taken by a simple majority of the members present.

The Ordinary General Assembly makes decisions on recommendations from the Executive Council (i) on changes to the conditions on application for membership.

The Ordinary General Assembly elects members of the Executive Council (*Article 11, section 1 and Article 14, section 5*)

The Ordinary General Assembly meets at least once a year, within six (6) months after closure of the fiscal year, to rule on the accounts.

The Ordinary General Assembly will meet in triennial session, on the same dates and in the same place as the triennial General Conference, as described in Article 20 of this document.

Extraordinary General Assembly - The Executive Council, on the recommendation of the President, can convene an Extraordinary General Assembly to adopt amendments to the *Statutes* and items of importance proposed by the Executive Council and/or the Advisory Committee, as well as by National and International Committees and/or Regional Alliances and Affiliated Organisations. The decisions of the Extraordinary General Assembly are taken by a two-thirds majority of the members present and represented.

The Extraordinary General Assembly has the authority to amend all aspects of the *Statutes*.

List of Participants - An attendance sheet will be signed during every General Assembly by the members who are present and by representatives having received a proxy. The Chairperson reviews the attendance sheet and guarantees its accuracy.

Minutes - A report on the deliberations and decisions of each Assembly will be prepared by the Director General and approved by the President. Copies or extracts are made available to members in an electronic or printed version.

The Minutes must indicate the date, place and agenda of the meeting, the mode of convening, the names of the members present and represented, the documents and reports submitted for discussion, a summary of the debates, and the texts of the resolutions with the results of the votes.

Section 4. Official invitation to the assemblies

The Executive Council establishes the agenda of the General Assembly and convenes the Assembly at least thirty (30) days before the date fixed for the meeting. The meetings of the assemblies will take place at UNESCO, 1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15, France, or in any other location indicated in the official invitation.

I) An official invitation is sent at least thirty (30) days before the date of the meeting by the Director General to all the members of ICOM composing the assembly.

II) An announcement is published in *ICOM News*, or on the Web site of ICOM.

The official invitation includes the date, time and place of the meeting, as well as the agenda of the assembly.

Section 5. Authority of the President.

The President of ICOM chairs the General Assembly. If the President does not wish to exercise this function, one of the two Vice-Presidents shall chair the General Assembly.

Section 6. Vote. During the sessions of the General Assembly and notably during the election of the Executive Council, each National and International Committee has the right to appoint five (5) of its voting members (individual members or representatives of institutional members) to vote in its name on questions subjected to a decision of the General Assembly. Similarly, each Affiliated Organisation has the right to appoint three (3) of its voting members (individual members or representatives of institutional members of ICOM), under the same conditions.

Article 11 - Executive Council

Section 1. Organisation. The Executive Council is the decision making body of ICOM. It consists of not less than nine (9) and not more than fifteen (15) elected members, as well as the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee as an *ex-officio* member.

The members of the Executive Council are elected by the Ordinary General Assembly and serve a three (3)-year term of office. Members of the Executive Council Bureau and At-large (ordinary) members may serve two (2) consecutive terms, if elected. An At-large (ordinary) Member of the Council may subsequently be elected as an officer of the Council. No person may serve more than four consecutive terms as a member of the Executive Council.

The President chairs the Executive Council. When the President is unable to fulfil his or her elected term, the Executive Council will select one of the Vice-Presidents by a simple majority to act as President until the next election. When a Vice-President is unable to complete his or her term, the Executive Council will select one of the At-Large (ordinary) members by a simple majority to act as Vice-President until the next election. The time spent as Vice-President by an At-large (ordinary) member shall not count against his or her time as an elected officer. If an at-large (ordinary) member is unable to complete his or her term, the position shall remain vacant until the next election.

Persons elected to the Executive Council shall not hold additional offices within ICOM unless authorised to do so by the Executive Council.

Section 2. Meetings. The Council shall meet in ordinary session at least twice a year. One of these meetings shall be held on the occasion of the annual Ordinary General Assembly, at the same time and place.

Section 3. Duties of the Council. The Executive Council ensures the good management of ICOM.

It oversees the various resources of ICOM (financial, human, intellectual and technical) and their development.

It safeguards ICOM's reputation, international esteem and public regard.

It recommends an amount for the membership fees to be approved by the General Assembly.

Section 4. Quorum and Majority. The quorum for a meeting of the Council shall be a simple majority of the members.

The Executive Council takes its decisions by a simple majority.

Section 5. Committees. The President, with the approval of the Executive Council, may appoint standing committees, task forces, and working groups, and define their duties.

Unless re-appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Council, membership in committees, task forces, and working groups ceases in the year following the triennial elections of the Executive Council.

Article 12 - Bureau

The Bureau consists of the following:

- a President
- two Vice-Presidents
- a Treasurer

The President is elected by the triennial General Assembly for a three (3)-year term of office and can be re-elected for a second term of the same duration. The President sets the strategic orientations for the activities of ICOM in its capacity as an international organisation representing museums and museum professionals. The President represents ICOM in all civil acts. The signature of the President binds ICOM in agreements with third parties. The President convenes and chairs the meetings of the General Assembly and the Executive Council.

The two (2) Vice-Presidents are elected by the triennial General Assembly for a three (3)-year term of office and can be re-elected for a second term of the same duration. The Vice Presidents carry out the functions and tasks assigned to them by the President, they provide any assistance required by the latter and, in his/her absence, convene and chair meetings.

The Treasurer is elected by the triennial General Assembly for a three (3)-year term of office and can be re-elected for a second mandate of the same duration. The Treasurer establishes the guidelines necessary for the financial policy of ICOM, in collaboration with the Director General, for the approval of the Executive Council, examines the financial results of ICOM, and reports periodically to the Executive Council and the Advisory Committee.

The Bureau of the Executive Council (composed of officers) may address urgent issues and provide ad hoc solutions. All actions taken by the Bureau will be reported to the full Executive Council at the earliest opportunity, with an explanation of the emergency and the subsequent action.

Article 13 - Auditing of Accounts

At its annual meeting, the Executive Council shall appoint a qualified person or organisation as auditor of ICOM and fix the emoluments.

The person or organisation appointed as auditor will draw up an annual report on the accounts of ICOM.

Article 14 - Advisory Committee

Section 1. Organisation. The Advisory Committee is the advisory body of ICOM. It consists of the Chairpersons (or their appointed representatives) of National and International Committees, Regional *Alliances*, and Affiliated Organisations.

Section 2. Functions of the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee advises the Executive Council and the General Assembly on matters concerning the policies, programmes, procedures and finances of ICOM, and may propose amendments to the *Statutes*. It advises on matters and activities in the general interest of ICOM, as

recommended by the Executive Council. The activities of the Advisory Committee shall be reported to the General Assembly for approval at its next meeting.

Section 3. Officers. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Advisory Committee shall be elected by the membership for a three-year term of office. Advisory Committee officers may serve two consecutive terms.

The Chairperson of the Advisory Committee shall convene and chair the meetings of the Committee, and shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the Executive Council, as the Elections Officer of ICOM and finally, as an *ex officio* member of the Board of all Regional Alliances.

Section 4. Annual Meeting. The Advisory Committee meets at least once a year in ordinary session, on the same date and at the same location as one of the Executive Council meetings.

Section 5. Candidates for the Executive Council. Candidates for election as officers and ordinary members of the Executive Council of ICOM may only be nominated by National or International Committees. Each nomination must be accompanied by a letter signed by the Chairperson of the National or International Committee and endorsed by another Board Member **on behalf of the nominating committee** confirming endorsement of the candidate.

Section 6. Voting by proxy. A member of the Advisory Committee (other than the Chairperson) may be represented by another member of ICOM at a meeting of the Committee, but no person may hold more than one (1) proxy.

Section 7. Quorum and Majority. The quorum for a meeting of the Advisory Committee shall be one-half (50%) of the members present and represented by proxy. If this quorum is not reached, the Advisory Committee shall be convened again at the same place within twenty-four hours. Whatever the number of members then present, the Advisory Committee has the power to deliberate. The Advisory Committee decisions are taken by a simple majority of the members present and represented.

Article 15 - National Committees

A National Committee, composed of all the members of ICOM resident in a State, may be authorised by the Executive Council to represent the interests of museums and the museum profession and to organise the activities of ICOM in that State. National Committee activities will conform to the Rules for National Committees.

Article 16 - National Correspondents

Where no National Committee exists in a State, a member of ICOM may be designated by the Executive Council to be the National Correspondent of ICOM for that State.

Article 17 - International Committees

An International Committee may be authorised by the Executive Council to implement programmes and activities, and to serve as a channel of communication between members of ICOM with similar scientific and professional interests. International Committees' activities will conform to the Rules for International Committees.

Article 18 - Regional Alliances

A Regional Alliance may be authorised by the Executive Council to serve as a forum for the exchange of information and co-operation between National Committees, museums and museum professionals in the region. The activities of Regional Alliances will conform to the Rules for Regional Alliances of ICOM National Committees.

Article 19 - Affiliated Organisations

The Executive Council may grant affiliated status to an international organisation composed of at least two-thirds of museum professionals or museums, as defined in these *Statutes*, on condition that one-half of the members of the organisation become members of ICOM within one year. Affiliated Organisations' activities will conform to the Rules for Affiliated Organisations.

Article 20 - General Conference

Section 1. Triennial Meeting. ICOM shall hold a General Conference every three years.

Section 2. Resolutions. The General Conference may propose resolutions arising from its discussions for consideration by the General Assembly.

Article 21 - Operational Secretariat

Section 1. Role. The Operational Secretariat, consisting of the Director General and other staff members of ICOM, is the operational centre of ICOM. It evaluates and initiates programmes, handles membership files, records and manages finances, and protects and promotes the identity of the Organisation.

Section 2. Operations. The Director General is the Chief Executive Officer employed by ICOM and is responsible to the Executive Council for the efficient and effective management of ICOM, the resources required for ICOM's functioning of the Organisation and the daily operations of the Secretariat, as well as for the promotion of the interests of ICOM and communications with its members, committees, task forces and working groups. In day-to-day matters, the Director General reports directly to the President of ICOM.

Article 22 - UNESCO-ICOM Museum Information Centre

Section 1. Administration. The UNESCO-ICOM Museum Information Centre is administered by ICOM. It offers documentation and archival reference services to ICOM members and UNESCO staff.

Section 2. Staff and Resources. The Director General shall be responsible for the UNESCO-ICOM Museum Information Centre, and shall provide such staff and resources as the Executive Council deems necessary for the functioning of the Centre.

Article 23 - Income and Disbursements

Section 1. Income. The financial resources of ICOM consist of the following:

- i. subscription fees paid by the Members,
- ii. income from ICOM assets and activities,
- iii. grants and private donations, received directly, and contributions from the ICOM Foundation,
- iv. payments received within the framework of contractual agreements for services rendered by ICOM.

Section 2. Disbursements. Expenditure of ICOM funds may be made only in accordance with the annual budget prepared under the guidelines established by the Treasurer and approved by the Executive Council.

Article 24 - Languages

Section 1. Official Languages. English, French, and Spanish shall be the official languages of ICOM, and each may be used at ICOM meetings.

Section 2. Other Languages. The General Assembly may adopt other languages provided the costs of doing so are met by the Members.

Article 25 - Policies and Rules of Procedure

Section 1. Adoption of Policies. The Executive Council shall adopt, and may amend, such Policies and Rules as are required to give effect to the provisions of these *Statutes*.

Section 2. Rules of Procedure. The General Assembly and the Advisory Committee shall adopt, and may amend, its own Rules of Procedure. The General Conference shall adopt its own Rules of Procedure.

Article 26 - Relations with Other Organisations

Section 1. UNESCO. ICOM shall maintain consultative relations with UNESCO.

Section 2. ICOM Foundation. ICOM shall maintain a special partnership with the ICOM Foundation, which supports the work of ICOM.

Section 3. Other Partners. ICOM may establish working relations with such international organisations as may be deemed appropriate.

Section 4. Participation of Other Organisations. ICOM may invite representatives of international organisations with which it has established official relations to participate in its General Conferences *and other meetings*.

Article 27 - Validation and Amendment

Section 1. Implementation. These Statutes shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the General Assembly.

Section 2. Official Document. Since ICOM is registered in France as an Association governed by the 1901 law, the French-language version of these *Statutes* shall be the official document on which all future translations are to be based.

In the event of litigation or misunderstanding, the French-language *Statutes* shall be the reference for the purposes of clarification.

Section 3. Amendments. The Executive Council, the Advisory Committee, National and International Committees, Regional *Alliances*, and Affiliated Organisations may propose amendments to these *Statutes*.

Article 28 – Dissolution

Section 1. Authority for Dissolution. Members of ICOM may decide to dissolve the Organisation through a decision taken at an Extraordinary General Assembly by a three-fourths (75%) majority of the Members present or represented.

All Members must be duly convened, in compliance with Section 4 of Article 10.

Section 2. Assets of the Organisation. Any assets owned by ICOM at the time of dissolution shall be transferred, in consultation with UNESCO and in accordance with the provisions of the French 1901 law relating to associations, to an organisation having similar aims to those of ICOM.