

ICOM Code of Ethics Third Consultation Analysis Report

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INTRODUCTION.

The purpose of this report is to review and report upon the comments received from the third consultation with ICOM members on the revision of the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*. The purpose of the third review, which took place in the fall of 2023, was to ascertain whether a proposed outline for a revised *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums* met with members' expectations.

The outline consists of five core topics that reorganize the content of the current *Code* and statements that elaborate upon the topics. The outline and statements reflect responses received in the first and second consultations with ICOM members, adding issues that are currently of concern to the museum profession. To focus responses to the outline, ETHCOM posed four open-ended questions and both the outline and the questions, are found in the Appendix to this Report. The questions were **not** designed to ascertain quantitatively the will of ICOM members about their views concerning the proposed outline for a revised *Code of Ethics*. Instead, the questions were created as a tool to focus and facilitate comments from ICOM National Committees, International Committees, Regional Alliances and Affiliated Organizations. In addition, responses were also received from individual ICOM members. This report represents a sampling of comments, particularly those comments that represent new ideas, opinions, expressed concerns that were repeated substantively by a number of responders to the survey.

PART I METHODOLOGY.

The third consultation sought feedback on the proposed outline of the revised Code by posing four open-ended questions. The third consultation was facilitated by holding more than 14 webinars and presentations during the consultative process. Participants during the consultative process provided information and context for the creation and review of the outline.

Specifically, the first question was addressed to illicit answers to all five core principles identified in the outline. The second solicited input about the order of their presentation. The third question asked if any issues were missing in the draft outline and the fourth solicited input about redundancies. Because the questions did not constitute a formal survey but were developed merely as a tool to encourage responses, the results are not quantitative in nature. Response rates and data points were not weighed in preparing this report.

Certain elements were observed in the responses received, which were many. More than 39 national committees responded to the questions in addition to several international committees, regional alliances, and technical committees. The outline and questions were posted on the ICOM website and, as a result, scores of individual members also submitted responses. It is observed that the questions posed were complex and open ended and required a good deal of expertise and discipline to respond to them with precision.

Several ICOM national committees went over and above the expectations of ETHCOM and in addition to answering the four questions, created materials and infographics that assist greatly in explaining and connecting the Core Topics to the Principles found in the current Code. It is observed that these materials may help frame and contextualize ICOM's new Code for its members.

In particular, the infographic, submitted as part of the response received from one national committee, that visually maps connections between the Principles found in the current Code and the Core Topics found in the proposed outline, is especially useful. It should be harvested for use beyond this consultation since it can illustrate legacy and continuity between the current and

proposed new code. A number of responders in this consultation and former surveys expressed concerns that a new code would constitute a break with current standards and values. As mentioned in the first survey report, members continue to express the need to maintain existing precedent. If shared with ICOM members, this infographic could allay fears that ICOM is creating too distinct a break from its past.

Finally, a good number of responders elected to provide general comments on the draft outline as opposed to answering the actual questions and while the general comments do not necessarily respond to the questions posed during this consultation, certain general comments are provided for in this report. This section of the report has been added to ensure that the views of ICOM members are included and taken into account in the consultative process.

The report has been organized to provide answers given to each of the four questions. A section at the beginning captures some of the general comments received that are substantive and relevant. Each question will list relevant responses on a Core Topic by Topic basis. As mentioned above, not every answer received will be listed in the report, but only those that are considered representative of a particular issue. The answers given will be actual quotations or translations from responses received. In certain cases, answers appear repetitive because responders elected to combine comments on multiple Core Topics. In that case, it was necessary to repeat the comments entirely to ensure that the response was contextualized properly. The comments are quotations or direct translation from quotations, because, at this juncture, it is important that ICOM members' responses are filtered as little as possible.

PART II General Comments.

Consultant's Comments:

Members were committed to the consultative process and provided the following views, generally. In particular, some members did not perceive a link between the new definition of "museum" and the proposed outline. Once more, an infographic illustrating how the concepts found in the new definition are carried over into the proposed outline and Core Topics would be especially beneficial.

Responders' General Comments:

“An annexed glossary or complementary document must be included or updated to clarify several of the terms, such as: heritage, intangible heritage, archives, digital collections (point 4). It is considered essential to clarify each of these terms in light of the new definition of museum”.

“The draft is very thorough and well developed. [We] consider it important to emphasize that the Code of Ethics should not be seen as a professional minimum -that is the role of legal standards - but should represent a kind of higher principles”.

“We lack special rules regarding museum behavior to be witnessed during conflicts and wars, as well as principles regarding the sanctioning of violators. The conflicts of the past period have shown the extent of the ethical responsibility of museums and museum workers. We have received several feedbacks that the organization cannot condemn or sanction actions contrary to the Code of Ethics. The new code must provide an answer to these anomalies”.

“At the UNESCO World Conference, Mondiacult 2022, held in Mexico Sep. 2022...150 countries that participated in the conference, adopted the Statement on “Culture as a Global Public Good: A Human-Centered Agenda for Cultural Policies.” The idea of “Culture as a Global Public Good” should be foregrounded in the revised Code of Ethics”.

“Well, it is not at all clear, since there are important aspects of the current code that are not reflected in the proposed scheme. Perhaps it is planned to include these topics at other levels of the final document, but with the information given we cannot know.... We consider that, at a minimum, all the aspects contemplated in the current Code of Ethics should be included in the new proposal”.

“The Code,... should include aspects related to innovation and technology, which have become very relevant, especially after the pandemic”.

“As reported in the introductory text to the revised ETHCOM proposals, it is considered necessary to preface the Code of Ethics with:

- ✓What is the museum vision introduced by the new definition of museum?
- ✓What is a Code of Ethics?✓Whom is it aimed at?
- ✓How is it structured?
- ✓Why were the present topics chosen?
- It is also believed that greater importance should be attached to two topics that constitute the future of museums, either by reserving specific chapters for each one of them or by referring to the future attached guidelines:
 - 1. 1. Contribution to sustainable development. 2. Digital management in museums”

« Other remarks: -The choice of the term “communities” poses a problem in French culture. The term “society” is preferred ».

« The principle “Governance and leadership” could in fact be redistributed in all the other chapters. -More emphasis should be placed on sustainability issues ».

“The digital issue (databases, open content, AI, etc.) raises ethical questions which deserve to be addressed in the new code. The ethics debate evening held on November 13, 2023 on artificial intelligence is a contribution to this reflection.”

“The entire Code of Ethics should correspond to the new definition of the museum, not only that the definition of the museum is written at the beginning [of the outline] and then it is as if the Code of Ethics refers partly to something else”.

“Inclusion is very emphasized, on the other hand, as if expertise is not seen as the basis of the work of museums, the Code of Ethics seems to not sufficiently reflect the function of the museum, it is not primarily about museums. It seems like there is more talk about some cultural centers.”

“It is important to consider that the idea of shared knowledge does not initiate in the Museum, but is multi-directional: What About: knowledge is produced in networks. Museums are not the centers of knowledge, but part of the immense cloud of human culture, and must represent / interpret / reveal such phenomenon in multiple ways.

- As noted above, ICOM’s new definition of a museum should serve as the “lead” into the Code of Ethics.”

“It was noted that the ethical framework lacks guidelines pertaining to the management of scientific collections containing human anatomical specimens, as commonly utilized in medical contexts. Moreover, there appears to be an absence of directives concerning the responsible curation of biological specimens encompassing bacteria, fungi, and viruses (items: 2.5; 3.7; 4.3; e 4.4”

“The ...National Committee examined the five points put forward by ETHCOM and proceeded with their modification and integration based on the following criteria:

- Summary of the proposed concepts, as suggested.
- Clarity of the concepts proposed.
- Reintroduction of some concepts that are still valid in the current Code of Ethics.
- Introduction of the concepts of the new ICOM definition of museums: active participation, (economic, social, cultural) accessibility.
- Replacement of "should" preceding all the choices covered by the code, with a more binding formula for museums and professionals.

The... National Committee suggests adding a short introduction to the new Code of Ethics, which is subdivided into five points, explaining what the Code is, what it is for, who it is aimed at, why it was structured in these five points. We believe that some issues, which concern the future itself of museums, and are challenging for all of them, require a special attention, which can be translated into a specific paragraph of the introduction or into four other dedicated points:

–**sustainability**: museums are called upon to commit themselves, also with a view to interdisciplinary collaboration, to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage, contributing extensively to the sustainable development objectives set by the UN Agenda 2030;

–**digital**: museums are called upon to contribute to the conservation of digital heritage and associated data, for the benefit of society and future generations, and to undertake to manage them responsibly, guaranteeing their safety and the protection of visitors' privacy, in full compliance with copyrights and laws relating to intellectual property in the digital sphere. Similar attention and ethical responsibility should be devoted to the use of AI and future digital scenarios.

–**decolonization**: today the request for heritage stolen from the countries of origin illegally or by virtue of political-military supremacy and the overcoming of colonial prejudices is translated into a process that includes not only the restitution or voluntary repatriation of assets (repatriation), but an overall revisiting of the exhibitions and the storytelling of the preserved heritage. Museums are called upon to reflect on the meaning of cultural institutions, on the methods applied to knowledge classification, on the quality selection systems of collections, with a view to sharing knowledge and mutual understanding.

–**Peace museums**. ICOM is an association of museum professionals, founded in the aftermath of the destruction of the Second World War, intended to promote peace between peoples and compliance with the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, the 1972 UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the 1995 UN Convention on Human Rights. In particular, with reference to sustainability and digital issues, specific guidelines would be useful, similar to those already published by ETHCOM on other topics, involving the international committees competent in these matters.”

“The Code of Ethics should reflect and complete the Museum Definition as adopted in August 2022 in Prague”.

“Virtual is more important than exclusively for the creation of exhibitions. In educational programming, for community reach, etc... So, “virtuality” should be highlighted...Maintain, preserve, and conserve the museum’s collections (and records, both physical and digital). We would argue that a collection -for a museum-is only as meaningful as the records kept by the institution. So, if we do not recognize the need to maintain, preserve and conserve these records, be it physical or digital, we are missing the boat.⁵ Sustainability...”

Part III Answers to Questions

Question 1: Does the proposed outline cover all of the topics that are essential to include in the revised Code of Ethics?

Answers to Question 1 concerning Core Topic 1:

Core Topic 1

A museum’s primary responsibility is to its communities — past, present, and future. These include the communities whose objects it cares for, the communities in which it is located, and the communities that benefit from its activities. To serve society, a museum:

- a. Contributes to the development and strengthening of communities.
- b. Supports the right of everyone to participate in and contribute to cultural life.
- c. Collaborates with the global museum community, encouraging mutual exchange and sharing, developing enduring partnerships and promoting cooperation.
- d. Safeguards and values tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage for the benefit of society.
- e. Guarantees accessibility to all, promotes practices of social inclusion, and respects diversity.
- f. Contributes to the health and well-being of the environment and society.

Responders' Comments

“...the term development could be considered to be eliminated in point 1.1. We don't all share this. It is considered that the following statements should be added to the central themes of the scheme: desire for development. If necessary, ideally it should be classified as sustainable development...”

“In point 1, beyond respecting diversity, it must be explicit that museums must promote it”.

“Principle 1: The responsibility of the museum towards its communities - 79% of respondents think that this chapter is in line with their professional practices - 57% of them think that this should not appear first in the new code. General comments suggest questions about the terminology and the choice of the word “communities” [which is the term] used in Anglo-Saxon culture.”

“Community (The list should be by importance: first, e, d, c, and after a,b,f.)1. A museum’s primary responsibility is to its communities —past, present, and future. These include the communities whose objects it cares for, the communities in which it is located, and the communities that benefit from its activities”.

“Yes, but we think that the creation of collections and their preservation should be one of the main topics. We also miss a notion that museums are places of knowledge –curators and other scientific staff make research of the museum objects, contribute to the knowledge for the good of the society”.

“Dedicate attention to connections with different groups or collectives that relate to the museum, considering the scenario of structural racism and assuming an anti-racist bias and conduct”.

“The outline has sufficiently covered the topics to be included in the revised Code of Ethics. Below are some points for consideration in the review of the revision of the ICOM Code of Ethics or Museums coming from a **Developing Nation** and a state-run museum:

•Respect and support for local communities’ intent/desire to keep their own heritage materials/collections. The museum or building museum collections should not be used to justify acquisition of heritage materials from communities, especially if they express intent to keep and care for these materials.”

“ICOM’s definition of museum should be cited under point 1. As written, point 1 reveals an uneasy transition from “communities” (many, disparate) to one (society.) Recommend reversing this order so that the statement begins with “society” which aligns with ICOM’s definition of museum and provides a smoother, more logical transition. Suggest revising to read “A museum’s primary responsibility is to its society—past, present, and future. Society includes. . . [Existing citation 1 becomes citation 2”.

“Another theme could be exclusively devoted to the question of digitization and the use of artificial intelligence for the promotion of collections (if this is not already taken into account by the Code of Ethics). It is also the time to devote an exclusive theme to intangible cultural heritage in museums. Museums are the ideal space to show the close connection between different heritages – can this be seen under 1(d)?”

“One topic that might be more explicitly addressed is museums’ need to maintain the public trust. The public does trust museums to present research and knowledge about both tangible and intangible culture, nature, and history. Honoring that trust is a core tenet of museums.”

Answers to Question 1 Concerning Core Topic 2:

Core Topic 2

To sustain the trust of the public, museums operate according to professional standards. These entail responsibilities on the part of the museum as well as on the part of the individuals and groups that work in and with the museum.

a. Museums should:

- i. Recruit staff and volunteers that reflect the diversity of the museum’s communities.

- ii. Follow equitable and inclusive practices.
 - iii. Ensure that individuals working for or with the museum have the competencies necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of their positions.
 - iv. Provide for training and support for staff, volunteers, and governing bodies so that they can responsibly carry out their duties.
 - v. Develop and publish explicit expectations for all roles.
- b. The people who work in and with museums should:
- i. Act professionally at all times, demonstrating courtesy, respect, and objectivity.
 - ii. Avoid discrimination.
 - iii. Respect collegial decision making.
 - iv. Maintain the confidentiality of information.
 - v. Disclose any conflict of interest or apparent conflict of interest and refrain from engaging in any activities that might compromise professional responsibilities or the reputation of the museum.

Responders Comments

“Sustainability in all its aspects. More mention of social and environmental sustainability is missing, as is in the definition of a museum.”

“Consideration should be given to exemplifying the types of discrimination that should be avoided (although we understand that it is obvious that it includes all types, for the purposes of documents like this it is important to specify, or define)”.

“Principle 2: Professional standards and practices - 77% of respondents think that this chapter is in line with their professional practices - 57% of respondents think that this principle should not appear second in the code among the comments, we note that respondents are mindful to ensure that founding principles such as the notions of “knowledge of legislation”, “professional responsibility” or the fight against “illicit trafficking” are expressly mentioned”.

“To serve society, a museum: e. Guarantees accessibility to all, promotes practices of social inclusion, and respects diversity. d. Safeguards and values tangible and intangible cultural and

natural heritage for the benefit of society. c. Collaborates with the global museum community, encouraging mutual exchange and sharing. a. Contributes to the development and strengthening of communities. a. Contributes to the development and strengthening of communities. b. Supports the right of everyone to participate in and contribute to cultural life. developing enduring partnerships and promoting cooperation. f. Contributes to the health and well-being of the environment and society.2. Professional Standards(B ii) To be added: avoid discrimination in respecting substantive equality).”

“Secondly, in the paragraph 2, we disagree with the presented form. For us, the museums should recruit the staff according to their competencies at the first place. And without any discrimination. But it is not for the good of the museum if the point one is that we recruit staff, that reflect the diversity. We have nothing against that but if we want to keep a high professional level of the museums the first requirement must be appropriate competencies and education. This should not be at the third place”.

“•Primacy of professional curatorial and museological decisions and work vis a vis collections management (over political authority-based decisions).

•Transparency and consultative decision-making to prevail over collections policy and procedures.

•Museums joining public auctions must ensure that no compromises have been made, no conflict of interests, no gray areas, and, that actions are deeply justified to sustain public trust”.

“Section 2 a iii - This perhaps should be the first point in this section. This also impacts on 5 (I). Here it is necessary to clearly understand that technical competencies are needed. Frequently major donors are added to museum directorships as a reward for donation rather than adding technical expertise and diversity. This has seen personal favorites among their own private collection sources selected as suppliers to various museums with greatly negative outcomes”.

“It is important to highlight that there are points that, due to current working conditions in regions such as Central America, Latin America and the Caribbean; They are impossible to fulfill. Such is the case of point 2, in section 2.b.iii. In Costa Rica, for example, there are no

formal studies in museology or museography, curatorship, etc. So “collegial decision making” simply does not exist.”

Answers to Question 1 Concerning Core Topic 3:

Core Topic 3

3. To fulfill their educational role (including programs, exhibitions, and publications), museums:

- a. Conduct all activities in accordance with their missions.
- b. Preserve the integrity of all information presented.
- c. Collaborate and develop sustained partnerships with communities.
- d. Consult with represented groups.
- e. Recognize and are sensitive to diverse beliefs.
- f. Respect sensitive materials (including ancestral remains, materials of sacred significance, intangible cultural knowledge, etc.) and strive to use them appropriately in virtual or in-person exhibitions, programs, publications, etc.
- g. Promote reflection and knowledge sharing.

Responders’ Comments

“In point 3 on the educational role, diversity and accessibility must be mentioned again. This is related to diversifying programming and serving different profiles within our role as learning institutions”.

“Principle 3 : The educational role of the museum - 83% of respondents think that this chapter is in line with their professional practices - 60% of them agree that this principle should come third. We note that certain terms used raise questions, such as “communities”, “beliefs” (the interpretations of which can diverge and bring up questions) and that it is appropriate for museums to insist on notions of accessibility”.

“In the paragraph 3, we don’t understand what do we mean by: consult with represented groups –for educational role? We can’t imagine how to do so. Of course, we think a lot of our audience

and we receive the feedback and we work with that, but consult with represented groups? Some phrases are a little bit lacking sense: conduct all activities in accordance with their mission?”

“Recommends that facts and realities are interpreted in museums as from a plural perspective, not restricted to the narratives of museum professionals, but incorporating the representations, world views and narratives of different human groups/collectivities”.

“...•that...Presentation, representation and interpretation of heritage materials/ collections are based on research and in collaboration with source communities”.

Answers to Question 1 Concerning Core Topic 4:

Core Topic 4

4. To responsibly steward and safeguard the collections (tangible and intangible heritage, archives and digital collections), museums:
 - a. Create and maintain a collections policy.
 - b. Observe the duty of care/stewardship.
 - c. Follow professional accessioning procedures, including requiring valid title, carrying out due diligence and provenance research, and require thorough documentation.
 - d. Provide for accessibility of collections for research, study, exhibition, and programs.
 - e. Maintain, preserve, and conserve³ the museum’s collections.
 - f. Appropriately store and maintain sensitive materials (including ancestral remains, materials of sacred significance, intangible cultural knowledge, etc.).
 - g. Carry out research to further understanding.
 - h. Create exhibitions, both physical and virtual, long-term and temporary.
 - i. Develop procedures for responsible deaccessioning and disposal, including the return and restitution of cultural objects.

Responders' Comments

“Principle 4: Museum and enrichment of collections - 85% of respondents think that this chapter is in line with their professional practices - 69% of respondents think that this principle should not appear fourth in the code. Among the comments, we note that members prefer that the importance and role of archives, the use of data and the role of research be mentioned be emphasized more strongly.”

“The scope of “Human Remains” extends beyond sacred collections, encompassing scientific, ethnographic, archaeological and artistic objects comprising human anatomical specimens. It is recommended a distinct section should be included, emphasizing the significance of respecting human life within these collections, while acknowledging that this respect pertains not only to religious considerations but also to the broader ethical perspective (items: 2.5; e 3.7).”

“The presentation of Sensitive Materials, including human remains within scientific, ethnographic, archaeological and artistic collections, attends to different professional standards. It is important to acknowledge that accommodating the interests and beliefs of ethnic or religious groups from whom these objects originated might not always be feasible. In this case the main goal is scientific knowledge. In such cases, a nuanced approach is required, characterized by careful consideration, tact, and a profound respect for the universal principles of human dignity that resonate across all cultures (item: 4.2; e 4.3).”

“Section 4 d needs major clarification. Like many researchers relying on museums to provide basic material for research. I have found a great reluctance for a number of museums to make their collections available for research. Some that do place major demands on publishing rights and have actively stolen shared research for the sole publishing and naming by staff and associated entities. There is a necessity to have a clear and unambiguous procedure for such work.”

“•Conservation of collections (whether in exhibitions or in storage) should be considered as a core museum responsibility.”

“...extremely topical issues for museums today like deaccessioning and restitution/repatriation seem to have only a very small place, fitted into one bullet point under Topic 4.”

“It was suggested to consider issues such as team formation and improvement; preparation and coordination of internal and network projects; create and maintain various policies (not just collections) related to educational actions, extroversions actions, among others; work to ensure that the work environment is pleasant, professional and favorable for the execution of projects, programs and actions that integrate all sectors of the museum.”

Answers to Question 1 Concerning Core Topic 5

Core Topic 5

5. To protect the museum’s resources and ensure that the museum operates in a sustainable manner, serving its communities in perpetuity, a museum’s governing body and leadership:
- a. Maintain documentation of the museum’s legal status, not-for-profit nature, and permanence.
 - b. Ensure the fulfillment of the mission statement and objectives.
 - c. Maintain professional standards of integrity and quality.
 - d. Promote museum independence/autonomy⁴.
 - e. Secure adequate human, physical, and financial resources (duty of care).
 - f. Appoint the Director or Head with appropriate professional knowledge and skills.
 - g. Demonstrate mutual respect and ensures clear division of roles among leadership, staff, volunteers.
 - h. Establish written policies for personnel (staff and volunteers), collections, fund-raising, emergency response, and other museum-wide matters.
 - i. Monitor the composition of the governing body so that reflects the museum’s communities and includes individuals with the range of competencies that allow it to support the museum’s mission.
 - j. Commit to transparency in communications — internally (with the director, staff, and volunteers) and externally (with key stakeholders – e.g., core audiences and community members as well as supporters) — and take all contributions into

consideration.

k. Are accountable to the museum's stakeholders and protect against any conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict.

Responders' Comments

"It covers most of the styles of museums [but in our new museums] they started to offer new operation styles when they started to work with private businesses to be more profitable so I wish we should stress on the operation decision to high light great attention to the culture, museum exhibitions not while they are generating money from visitors and offer more to the community."

"Likewise, the specific observation is made that it is necessary to specify that a museum must promote sustainability, beyond the institutional sustainability mentioned in point 5. It is key that it be included and it could be in the first point that addresses the concept to be at the service of society."

"Principle 5: Governance and leadership - 89% of respondents think this chapter is in line with their professional practices - 77% of respondents think this principle should appear fifth in the code."

"Then, paragraph 5: not only should the director have appropriate professional knowledge and skills, but all the employees of the museum."

"Could not emphasize enough on the appointments of Directors/Museum Heads to have the appropriate professional knowledge and skills, otherwise, museum management shall be bottom-up, resulting to disorganized, directionless system with no check and balance."

"More accessibility does not necessarily translate to expansion of coverage of visitorship to the detriment of collections management."

"Other very topical issues like protests within museums and the ethics of accepting sponsorship funds are unusually missing. We note that Principle 7 from the previous Code (namely that

museums must operate in a legal manner) seems to have disappeared. With recent developments around the British Museum thefts, this principle should not be taken for granted.”

PART III Answers to Question 2

Question 2:

Keeping in mind that each of the core topics is of equal weight or importance, does the order of the core topics reflect twenty-first century museum practice?

Consultant’s Comments:

Only one national committee acknowledged that the question included a statement that each core topic was to be given equal weight. About a third of the responses received agreed with the order proposed. Other responses suggested disagreement but rankings suggested were not consistent. Thus, as suggested by the response received from the national committee found below that acknowledged that each core topic was given equal weight, the representation of core topics should be neutral and the introductory paragraphs to a revised Code of Ethics needs to emphasize their neutrality. Perhaps it may be best to alphabetize their order as a way of reinforcing their neutrality.

Responders’ Comments

“National Committee: Arbitrary order does not mean that the first topic is more important than another one. The aim is to cover all possible core topics to include them in the revised Code of Ethics.”

PART IV Answers to Question 3

Question 3: Are there statements that should be added to the core topics in the outline?

Answers to Question 3 Concerning Core Topic 1

Core Topic 1

1. A museum’s primary responsibility is to its communities — past, present, and future. These include the communities whose objects it cares for, the communities in which it is located, and the communities that benefit from its activities. To serve society, a museum:

- a. Contributes to the development and strengthening of communities.
- b. Supports the right of everyone to participate in and contribute to cultural life.
- c. Collaborates with the global museum community, encouraging mutual exchange and sharing, developing enduring partnerships and promoting cooperation.
- d. Safeguards and values tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage for the benefit of society.
- e. Guarantees accessibility to all, promotes practices of social inclusion, and respects diversity.
- f. Contributes to the health and well-being of the environment and society.

Responders’ Comments

“Communities are part of a society and we all make part of a society, we should make something good together to smoothen the borders between communities. To make society friendly to different communities”.

“We propose to include in paragraph 1 subparagraph G the following statement: “Uses all possible media to communicate its attitude and philosophy.”

“See answers to question 1 for comment about public trust.”

“It is considered that the following statements should be added to the central themes of the scheme: desire for development. If necessary, ideally it should be classified as sustainable development enjoy the activities 5. In point 1, beyond respecting diversity, it must be explicit that museums must promote it”.

“We lack special rules regarding museum behavior to be witnessed during conflicts and wars, as well as principles regarding the sanctioning of violators. The conflicts of the past period have

shown the extent of the ethical responsibility of museums and museum workers. We have received several feedbacks that the organization cannot condemn or sanction actions contrary to the Code of Ethics. The new code must provide an answer to these anomalies.”

Answers to Question 3 Concerning Core Topic 2

Core Topic 2

2. To sustain the trust of the public, museums operate according to professional standards.

These entail responsibilities on the part of the museum as well as on the part of the individuals and groups that work in and with the museum.

a. Museums should:

- i. Recruit staff and volunteers that reflect the diversity of the museum’s communities.
- ii. Follow equitable and inclusive practices.
- iii. Ensure that individuals working for or with the museum have the competencies necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of their positions.
- iv. Provide for training and support for staff, volunteers, and governing bodies so that they can responsibly carry out their duties.
- v. Develop and publish explicit expectations for all roles.

b. The people who work in and with museums should:

- i. Act professionally at all times, demonstrating courtesy, respect, and objectivity.
- ii. Avoid discrimination.
- iii. Respect collegial decision making.
- iv. Maintain the confidentiality of information.
- v. Disclose any conflict of interest or apparent conflict of interest and refrain from engaging in any activities that might compromise professional responsibilities or the reputation of the museum.

Responders’ Comments

“Explain the equality to include different demography, languages, colors, abilities, and ages, as I am over 50th I start to feel we have become neglected age no equality also because the

nationalities so some of our colleagues were rejected to attend museum conferences because their nationalities or bank statement while they are looking forward to offer academic paper or grants?”

“But, it would be great that in the case of core topic two-a-1(“Recruit staff and volunteers that reflect the diversity of the museum’s communities”) could be specified and clarified with mentioning such as religion, gender, nationality, disorder, etc. (even if it is not in the outline, but at least in the draft.”

“I think that, given the kinds of ethical situations that have surfaced not too far back, we need to articulate more fully that it isn’t just the working museum professional that needs to practice transparency. My suggestion is that in 2b, that stakeholders including those at the topmost, board members specifically, be made to render transparency instruments as designed by each site/platform, or publicly submit points of conflict of interest between potential programming and their own business interests.”

“Involving minority backgrounds, especially young people, who will develop the regeneration of the museum practice and research. Involving minority backgrounds, especially young people, who will develop the regeneration of the museum practice and research.”

“The main topics are already covered. We could also take into account questions linked to the relationships of museums and professionals with the structures and players of the art market (artists, antique dealers, galleries, collectors, etc.).”

“And to include in paragraph 2 b subparagraph VI the following statement: “Respect the views of the previous and upcoming generations of museum curators, both working nowadays or retired; endorse experience exchange between them and consider their diversity of opinion as the resource of sustainable development; support transmission of professional vision, knowledge and experience from older generations to the younger ones and vice versa.”

“2. Sustainability in all its aspects. More mention of social and environmental sustainability is missing, as is in the definition of a museum. 3. In addition to including diversity and accessibility.”

“It is important to highlight that there are points that, due to current working conditions in regions such as Central America, Latin America and the Caribbean; They are impossible to fulfill. Such is the case of point 2, in section 2.b.iii. In Costa Rica, for example, there are no formal studies in museology or museography, curatorship, etc. So “collegial decision making” simply does not exist. What happens in countries where there are no civil associations or colleges or unions of museum professionals? Perhaps a statement should then be added that encourages obtaining resources or government obligations, NGOs, etc., to achieve optimal compliance with these points. Especially in times of crisis in which there are significant funding cuts that even (and an example is this year) mean that by 2023, very important museums will not even have a budget for exhibitions in this period.”

Answer to Question 3 Concerning Core Topic 3

Core Topic 3

3. To fulfill their educational role (including programs, exhibitions, and publications), museums:

- a. Conduct all activities in accordance with their missions.
- b. Preserve the integrity of all information presented.
- c. Collaborate and develop sustained partnerships with communities.
- d. Consult with represented groups.
- e. Recognize and are sensitive to diverse beliefs.
- f. Respect sensitive materials (including ancestral remains, materials of sacred significance, intangible cultural knowledge, etc.) and strive to use them appropriately in virtual or in-person exhibitions, programs, publications, etc.
- g. Promote reflection and knowledge sharing.

Responders' Comments

“Yes, museums not only promote but make research and contribute to the knowledge”.

“...in point 3, there is also the need to say that museums offer varied experiences for enjoyment. This in addition to the education, reflection and exchange that is mentioned. The important role of enjoyment in the museum should not be underestimated.”

Answers to Question 3 Concerning Core Topic 4

Core Topic 4

4. To responsibly steward and safeguard the collections (tangible and intangible heritage, archives and digital collections), museums:
- a. Create and maintain a collections policy.
 - b. Observe the duty of care/stewardship.
 - c. Follow professional accessioning procedures, including requiring valid title, carrying out due diligence and provenance research, and require thorough documentation.
 - d. Provide for accessibility of collections for research, study, exhibition, and programs.
 - e. Maintain, preserve, and conserve³ the museum's collections.
 - f. Appropriately store and maintain sensitive materials (including ancestral remains, materials of sacred significance, intangible cultural knowledge, etc.).
 - g. Carry out research to further understanding.
 - h. Create exhibitions, both physical and virtual, long-term and temporary.
 - i. Develop procedures for responsible deaccessioning and disposal, including the return and restitution of cultural objects.

Responders' Comments

“Topic 4, line d: I would argue that it is necessary to specify what "programs" are here. Not clear enough (as previously observed). Topic 4, line f: ancestral remains should not be

addressed/referred to as "materials" Topic 4, line h: again, I would like to express the fact that the display of ancestral remains is something that needs to be carefully addressed, and discussed.”

“Yes. Under Topic 4, deaccessioning and disposal need a far more prominent place, as do return and restitution. Each of these should be their own subtopic at the very least. And instead of simply an ethical norm to ‘develop procedures’ on these matters, the Code of Ethics should make clear that these actions can now be understood as being part of normal collections management, rather than exceptional. Also under Topic 4, the ethical norm relating to acquisition should be far more than simply ‘follow professional accessioning procedures’ and ‘not knowingly support illicit trafficking’: a very clear ethical position reflecting international developments needs to be enunciated here.”

“I would like to see something like the following statements added to the respective section:4. To responsibly steward and safeguard the collections (tangible and intangible heritage, archives and digital collections), museums: Collaborate and develop sustained partnerships with communities.”

Answers to Question 3 Concerning Core Topic 5

Core Topic 5

5. To protect the museum’s resources and ensure that the museum operates in a sustainable manner, serving its communities in perpetuity, a museum’s governing body and leadership:
 - a. Maintain documentation of the museum’s legal status, not-for-profit nature, and permanence.
 - b. Ensure the fulfillment of the mission statement and objectives.
 - c. Maintain professional standards of integrity and quality.
 - d. Promote museum independence/autonomy⁴.
 - e. Secure adequate human, physical, and financial resources (duty of care).
 - f. Appoint the Director or Head with appropriate professional knowledge and skills.
 - g. Demonstrate mutual respect and ensures clear division of roles among leadership, staff, volunteers.

- h. Establish written policies for personnel (staff and volunteers), collections, fund-raising, emergency response, and other museum-wide matters.
- i. Monitor the composition of the governing body so that reflects the museum's communities and includes individuals with the range of competencies that allow it to support the museum's mission.
- j. Commit to transparency in communications — internally (with the director, staff, and volunteers) and externally (with key stakeholders – e.g., core audiences and community members as well as supporters) — and take all contributions into consideration.
- k. Are accountable to the museum's stakeholders and protect against any conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict.

Responders' Comments

“Topic 5, line g: in the previous topics there is a clear effort to have communities more engaged with museum activities, etc, and although I understand the emphasis being placed on the museum governing body and leadership, I feel that it is necessary to ensure that communities (leaders, or others) have a place of relevance when it comes to protect museums', its resources, etc. [I see this is considered in line i - maybe the wording in line g) could be addressed, or swap lines.”

“In point 5 a new item could be added: “Promote cooperative relations with institutions (public or private entities) that carry out tasks related to the mission of museums” [Literal c. topic 1 refers only to cooperation between museums and literal c. topic 3 refers fundamentally to collaboration for the educational function.”

“5.To protect the museum's resources and ensure that the museum operates in a sustainable manner, serving its communities in perpetuity, a museum's governing body: Ensure that the museum's communities are represented in the museum's governing body.”

Part IV Answers to Question 4

Question: ETHCOM is trying to reduce the redundancy of the current Code of Ethics. Are these statements in the outline that are redundant? For example, the core topic of education is very closely related to core topic one, communities. Should these be maintained as separate topics or sections in the code or should one be subsumed in the other and why?

Consultant's Comments:

Most of the respondents commented only on the example and the overwhelming response was that “education” and “communities” should remain distinct. Some respondents simply marked their response by stating “ok as is”. Below are a few comments received that went beyond the scope of the example provided for in the question.

Answers to Question 4 Concerning Core Topic 1:

Core Topic 1

- A museum's primary responsibility is to its communities — past, present, and future. These include the communities whose objects it cares for, the communities in which it is located, and the communities that benefit from its activities. To serve society, a museum:
 - a. Contributes to the development and strengthening of communities.
 - b. Supports the right of everyone to participate in and contribute to cultural life.
 - c. Collaborates with the global museum community, encouraging mutual exchange and sharing, developing enduring partnerships and promoting cooperation.
 - d. Safeguards and values tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage for the benefit of society.
 - e. Guarantees accessibility to all, promotes practices of social inclusion, and respects diversity.
 - f. Contributes to the health and well-being of the environment and society.

Responders' Comments:

“The current revised Code of Ethics is divided into five major points, as five categories of focusing on different elements of the museums’ operation. That would leave the Code of Ethics document into three major points. **I would like to highlight the inclusion in the existence of the museum operation. The writing or phrasing should be combined or condensed, or rather simplified to avoid repeating sections that are, just to add on the number of bullet points.** The maintenance of museums’ community includes its staffs and members, therefore major point number I and number II should be condensed.”

“Statement 1.f. Contributes to the health and well-being of the environment and society. Might be edited to read simply, “Contributes to health and well-being of visitors.”

“We would argue against collapsing community and education as this would then put more weight on the collection. Community and education are complementary but not redundant. Education could be renamed Programs to cover the programmatic work of the museum of which education is a part.3d “consult with” is too weak 4h to move to 3.”

Answers to Question 4 Concerning Core Topic 2

Core Topic 2

2. To sustain the trust of the public, museums operate according to professional standards. These entail responsibilities on the part of the museum as well as on the part of the individuals and groups that work in and with the museum.

a. Museums should:

- i. Recruit staff and volunteers that reflect the diversity of the museum’s communities.
- ii. Follow equitable and inclusive practices.
- iii. Ensure that individuals working for or with the museum have the competencies necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of their positions.
- iv. Provide for training and support for staff, volunteers, and governing bodies so that they can responsibly carry out their duties.
- v. Develop and publish explicit expectations for all roles.

- b. The people who work in and with museums should:
- i. Act professionally at all times, demonstrating courtesy, respect, and objectivity.
 - ii. Avoid discrimination.
 - iii. Respect collegial decision making.
 - iv. Maintain the confidentiality of information.
 - v. Disclose any conflict of interest or apparent conflict of interest and refrain from engaging in any activities that might compromise professional responsibilities or the reputation of the museum.

Consultant's Comments

No answers of note recorded.

Answers to Question 4 Concerning Core Topic 3

Core Topic 3

3. To fulfill their educational role (including programs, exhibitions, and publications), museums:
- a. Conduct all activities in accordance with their missions.
 - b. Preserve the integrity of all information presented.
 - c. Collaborate and develop sustained partnerships with communities.
 - d. Consult with represented groups.
 - e. Recognize and are sensitive to diverse beliefs.
 - f. Respect sensitive materials (including ancestral remains, materials of sacred significance, intangible cultural knowledge, etc.) and strive to use them appropriately in virtual or in-person exhibitions, programs, publications, etc.
 - g. Promote reflection and knowledge sharing.

Responders' Comments

“The current revised Code of Ethics is divided into five major points, as five categories of focusing on different elements of the museums’ operation. That would leave the Code of Ethics document into three major points. I would like to highlight the inclusion in the existence of the museum operation. The writing or phrasing should be combined or condensed, or rather

simplified to avoid repeating sections that are, just to add on the number of bullet points. Major point III would stand on its own, as the middle weaving point, which is the whole point of the museum day-to-day operation and purpose, which is to educate the community and preserve its object.”

Answers to Question 4 Concerning Core Topic 4

Core Topic 4

4. To responsibly steward and safeguard the collections (tangible and intangible heritage, archives and digital collections), museums:
 - a. Create and maintain a collections policy.
 - b. Observe the duty of care/stewardship.
 - c. Follow professional accessioning procedures, including requiring valid title, carrying out due diligence and provenance research, and require thorough documentation.
 - d. Provide for accessibility of collections for research, study, exhibition, and programs.
 - e. Maintain, preserve, and conserve³ the museum’s collections.
 - f. Appropriately store and maintain sensitive materials (including ancestral remains, materials of sacred significance, intangible cultural knowledge, etc.).
 - g. Carry out research to further understanding.
 - h. Create exhibitions, both physical and virtual, long-term and temporary.
 - i. Develop procedures for responsible deaccessioning and disposal, including the return and restitution of cultural objects.

Responders’ Comments

“The current revised Code of Ethics is divided into five major points, as five categories of focusing on different elements of the museums’ operation. That would leave the Code of Ethics document into three major points. I would like to highlight the inclusion in the existence of the museum operation. The writing or phrasing should be combined or condensed, or rather simplified to avoid repeating sections that are, just to add on the number of bullet points. Major point number IV and V should be included together as well as they touch upon the resources and

its handling process, which relates to the responsibility of all the stakeholders in the community, therefore adding onto number I and II”.

Answers to Question 4 Concerning Core Topic 5

Core Topic 5

5. To protect the museum’s resources and ensure that the museum operates in a sustainable manner, serving its communities in perpetuity, a museum’s governing body and leadership:

- a. Maintain documentation of the museum’s legal status, not-for-profit nature, and permanence.
- b. Ensure the fulfillment of the mission statement and objectives.
- c. Maintain professional standards of integrity and quality.
- d. Promote museum independence/autonomy⁴.
- e. Secure adequate human, physical, and financial resources (duty of care).
- f. Appoint the Director or Head with appropriate professional knowledge and skills.
- g. Demonstrate mutual respect and ensures clear division of roles among leadership, staff, volunteers.
- h. Establish written policies for personnel (staff and volunteers), collections, fund-raising, emergency response, and other museum-wide matters.
- i. Monitor the composition of the governing body so that reflects the museum’s communities and includes individuals with the range of competencies that allow it to support the museum’s mission.
- j. Commit to transparency in communications — internally (with the director, staff, and volunteers) and externally (with key stakeholders – e.g., core audiences and community members as well as supporters) — and take all contributions into consideration.
- k. Are accountable to the museum’s stakeholders and protect against any conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict.

Responders’ Comments

“The current revised Code of Ethics is divided into five major points, as five categories of focusing on different elements of the museums’ operation. That would leave the Code of Ethics

document into three major points. I would like to highlight the inclusion in the existence of the museum operation. The writing or phrasing should be combined or condensed, or rather simplified to avoid repeating sections that are, just to add on the number of bullet points. Major point number V would be an amalgamation of number I, number II, number III, and number IV.”

“5.c.should go into professional standards.”

“Some of the content in Topic 5, Governing Bodies and Leadership, belong to a separate “Good Practice Guideline” rather than under the heading of museum ethics. Take item f., for example. The rule to “Appoint the director or head with appropriate professional knowledge and skill” might be problematic, because different countries have different systems of assigning positions in their respective cultural institutions.”

Part V Consultant’s Observations and Conclusions

The following list of issues appeared to carry over from previous member consultations and for this reason, it is especially important to be mindful that these issues be addressed expressly when revising the Code:

- Members expressed the need to ensure that revisions be carried out in a measured and deliberate way that ensures that the precedents established under the current code are not abandoned with the introduction of a revised version. Therefore, it is suggested that wherever possible, linkages should be illustrated, for the benefit of ICOM members, between the current code and the new one.
- Members continued to express the need to ensure that the revised Code reflect the principles enshrined in the new definition of “museum”. Again, it is suggested that wherever possible, linkages should be illustrated, for the benefit of ICOM members, between the revised Code of Ethics and the new definition of “museum”.
- A Code of Ethics should not reflect minimum standards which are often instead reflected as legal requirements. Instead, a code of ethics needs to reflect the values of the museum community and museum professionalism. At the same time, the revised Code needs to

reflect a commitment to respect the rule of law. This can be done as part of the preamble to the Code, as recommended in the reports of previous consultations.

- There is an ongoing preoccupation about how the Code may be enforced and the ways by which to hold members accountable. Again, there may be a way to reference accountability as an expectation in the Preamble to the Code.
- A value expressed by many members is the value that museums operate for the benefit of the global public good. Again, this may be a value that can be added to the preamble of the Code.
- Members want to ensure that the terminology used in the revised Code is defined and with precision and that the terminology used translates well.
- Members from developing nations expressed the need to ensure that the Code is sufficiently flexible to reflect global regional distinctions in best practices.
- Members are expressing the need to ensure that the Code reflects the following subjects:
 - a. The primary roles of the museum in research and education
 - b. The need to create ethical practices concerning digital use, the use of technologies and reproduction of museum objects held in collections
 - c. The need to reflect ICOM's commitments to sustainability and to ensure that the principles of decolonization of collections are reflected in a revised Code
 - d. The need to address ethical practices of collections management during human conflict
 - e. The acknowledgement and respect for the role of communities in museum practice
 - f. The role of the Code to define best practices in museum professionalism

Part VI Consultant's Recommendations

It is recommended that ETHCOM review these comments and adjust the outline accordingly. It is recommended that any further member consultations be undertaken with explanatory information that illustrates the connections between the proposed new Code of Ethics and the new museum definition, thereby providing the membership with a measure of comfort that the Code of Ethics is consistent with the values that ICOM expressed in the new definition and

during the process of adopting it. It is also recommended that explanatory information be created in the form of infographics, first illustrating the connections between the values identified in the new museum definition and the Core Topics and then illustrating how the Core Topics in the revised Code of Ethics correspond to the Principles found in the current Code. This will provide a measure of comfort to ICOM members that the values expressed in the current Code are not being abandoned by the revision.

Appendix

Survey Questions

QUESTIONS FOR THE THIRD CONSULTATION OF THE REVISION OF THE ICOM CODE OF ETHICS

The Standing Committee on Ethics (ETHCOM) is pleased to announce its **third consultation** with ICOM membership concerning the revision of the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums **has been extended until 30 November 2023**. ETHCOM invites all National and International Committees, Regional Alliances, and Affiliated Organizations along with their membership to answer the following questions upon the proposed outline of the third consultation of the revision of the Code of Ethics for Museums. For your ease of reference, please click the following link to see the document on the third consultation on the [Revision of the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums — Review of Outline](#) .

With your responses on the outline from the third consultation, ETHCOM will create a draft of the Code of Ethics which will be subject to a consultation in 2024 and will help us ensure that the Code will be useful to museums well into the future!

Please fill in this file with your answers and send it to ethics@icom.museum by 30 November 2023! The respondent's confidentiality will be maintained but the content of the responses will be reflected in a report that will be posted to member space on the ICOM website in early 2024.

Questions for the third consultation of the Revision of the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums:

(Please note that the third consultation has been extended until 30 November 2023)

1. Does the proposed outline cover all of the topics that are essential to include in the revised Code of Ethics?

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2. Keeping in mind that each of the core topics is of equal weight or importance, does the order of the core topics reflect twenty-first century museum practice?

Veillez remplir ce fichier avec vos réponses et l'envoyer à ethics@icom.museum avant le 30 novembre 2023 ! La confidentialité des répondants sera maintenue mais le contenu des réponses sera reflété dans un rapport qui sera mis en ligne sur l'espace membre du site web de l'ICOM au début de l'année 2024.

Questions pour la troisième consultation de la Révision du Code de déontologie de l'ICOM pour les musées

(Veillez noter que la troisième consultation a été prolongée jusqu'au 30 novembre 2023)

1. Est ce que le plan proposé couvre tous les thèmes qui sont essentiels à inclure dans le Code de déontologie révisé ?

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2. Considérant que chacun des thèmes essentiels, à la même importance, l'ordre des thèmes proposés reflète-t-il les pratiques des musées du XXI^e siècle ?

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3. Existe t-il des sujets qui doivent être ajoutés aux thèmes essentiels dans le plan proposé ?

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4. ETHCOM essaye de réduire les redondances qui existent dans l'actuel Code de déontologie. Y a-t-il des sujets dans le plan proposé qui sont redondants ? Par exemple le thème essentiel de l'éducation est étroitement lié au premier thème des communautés. Doivent-ils être maintenus en tant que thèmes ou sections séparés dans le Code ou bien l'un devra-t-il être inclus dans l'autre ?

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2. Teniendo en cuenta que cada uno de los temas centrales tiene el mismo peso o importancia, ¿refleja el orden de los temas centrales la práctica museística del siglo XXI?

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3. ¿Hay declaraciones que deberían agregarse a los temas centrales del esquema?

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4. ETHCOM está tratando de reducir la redundancia del Código Deontológico actual. ¿Son redundantes estas declaraciones en el esquema? Por ejemplo, el tema central de la educación está muy relacionado con el tema central uno, las comunidades. ¿Deberían mantenerse como temas o secciones separadas en el código o deberían incluirse uno dentro del otro y por qué?

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Por favor, complete este formulario con sus respuestas y envíelo a ethics@icom.museum antes del 30 de noviembre de 2023 !

Revision of the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums
Consultation Three — Review of Outline
Introduction

The Standing Committee on Ethics (ETHCOM) is revising the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*, one of ICOM's fundamental documents. The Code is based upon the values that we, as museum professionals, share and that underpin the professionalism of our work. It is important that the revised Code support the work that we do.

The following is an outline of the proposed revision. It is organized around five topics that were developed from feedback that we received during ETHCOM's 2021 and 2022 consultations with ICOM members. Each topic is followed by statements that elaborate upon the topic. The revised Code itself will also begin with a preamble that introduces the document, followed by the museum definition. It will include an appendix that lists the international conventions that are relevant to museums.

Your National and International Committee, Regional Alliance, or Affiliated Organization responses to the outline will help ETHCOM ensure that the Code will be useful to museums well into the future. The respondent's confidentiality will be maintained but the content of the responses will be reflected in a report that will be posted to member space on the ICOM website in early 2024.

Please send your responses to ethics@icom.museum by 31 October 2023.

Core Topics/OUTLINE

1. A museum's primary responsibility is to its communities¹ — past, present, and future. These include the communities whose objects it cares for, the communities in which it is located, and the communities that benefit from its activities. To serve society, a museum:
 - a. Contributes to the development and strengthening of communities.
 - b. Supports the right of everyone to participate in and contribute to cultural life.
 - c. Collaborates with the global museum community, encouraging mutual exchange and sharing, developing enduring partnerships and promoting cooperation.
 - d. Safeguards and values tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage for the benefit of society.
 - e. Guarantees accessibility to all, promotes practices of social inclusion, and respects diversity.
 - f. Contributes to the health and well-being of the environment and society.

¹ See definition in *Dictionary of Museology*, edited by François Mairesse, Routledge: New York, 2023. pp. 79-82 and in *Dictionnaire de Muséologie*, sous la direction de François Mairesse, Routledge: New York, 2023, pp. 122-127.

2. To sustain the trust of the public, museums operate according to professional standards. These entail responsibilities on the part of the museum as well as on the part of the individuals and groups that work in and with the museum.
 - a. Museums should:
 - i. Recruit staff and volunteers that reflect the diversity of the museum's communities.
 - ii. Follow equitable and inclusive practices.
 - iii. Ensure that individuals working for or with the museum have the competencies necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of their positions.
 - iv. Provide for training and support for staff, volunteers, and governing bodies so that they can responsibly carry out their duties.
 - v. Develop and publish explicit expectations for all roles.
 - b. The people who work in and with museums should:
 - i. Act professionally at all times, demonstrating courtesy, respect, and objectivity.
 - ii. Avoid discrimination.
 - iii. Respect collegial decision making.
 - iv. Maintain the confidentiality of information.
 - v. Disclose any conflict of interest or apparent conflict of interest and refrain from engaging in any activities that might compromise professional responsibilities or the reputation of the museum.
3. To fulfill their educational role (including programs, exhibitions, and publications), museums:
 - a. Conduct all activities in accordance with their missions.
 - b. Preserve the integrity of all information presented.
 - c. Collaborate and develop sustained partnerships with communities.
 - d. Consult with represented groups.
 - e. Recognize and are sensitive to diverse beliefs.
 - f. Respect sensitive materials (including ancestral remains, materials of sacred significance, intangible cultural knowledge, etc.) and strive to use them appropriately in virtual or in-person exhibitions, programs, publications, etc.
 - g. Promote reflection and knowledge sharing.
4. To responsibly steward and safeguard the collections (tangible and intangible heritage², archives and digital collections), museums:
 - a. Create and maintain a collections policy.
 - b. Observe the duty of care/stewardship.
 - c. Follow professional accessioning procedures, including requiring valid title, carrying out due diligence and provenance research, and require thorough documentation.
 - d. Provide for accessibility of collections for research, study, exhibition, and programs.

² See definition in *Dictionary of Museology*, pp. 245-248; *Dictionnaire de Muséologie*, pp. 497-501.

- e. Maintain, preserve, and conserve³ the museum's collections.
- f. Appropriately store and maintain sensitive materials (including ancestral remains, materials of sacred significance, intangible cultural knowledge, etc.).
- g. Carry out research to further understanding.
- h. Create exhibitions, both physical and virtual, long-term and temporary.
- i. Develop procedures for responsible deaccessioning and disposal, including the return and restitution of cultural objects.
- j. Do not knowingly support illicit trafficking of natural or cultural heritage.

5. To protect the museum's resources and ensure that the museum operates in a sustainable manner, serving its communities in perpetuity, a museum's governing body and leadership:

- a. Maintain documentation of the museum's legal status, not-for-profit nature, and permanence.
- b. Ensure the fulfillment of the mission statement and objectives.
- c. Maintain professional standards of integrity and quality.
- d. Promote museum independence/autonomy⁴.
- e. Secure adequate human, physical, and financial resources (duty of care).
- f. Appoint the Director or Head with appropriate professional knowledge and skills.
- g. Demonstrate mutual respect and ensures clear division of roles among leadership, staff, volunteers.
- h. Establish written policies for personnel (staff and volunteers), collections, fund-raising, emergency response, and other museum-wide matters.
- i. Monitor the composition of the governing body so that reflects the museum's communities and includes individuals with the range of competencies that allow it to support the museum's mission.
- j. Commit to transparency in communications — internally (with the director, staff, and volunteers) and externally (with key stakeholders — e.g., core audiences and community members as well as supporters) — and take all contributions into consideration.
- k. Are accountable to the museum's stakeholders and protect against any conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict.

Révision du Code de déontologie de l'ICOM pour les musées

³ See definition in *Dictionary of Museology*, edited by François Mairesse, Routledge: New York, 2023. pp. 86-97; *Dictionnaire de Muséologie*, pp. 142-146.

⁴ see ICOM [Statement on Independence of Museums](#)

Troisième consultation - Révision des grandes lignes

Introduction

Le Comité permanent de déontologie (ETHCOM) est en train de réviser le Code de déontologie de l'ICOM pour les musées, l'un des documents fondamentaux de l'ICOM. Le Code est basé sur les valeurs que nous partageons en tant que professionnels des musées et qui sous-tendent le professionnalisme de notre travail. Il est important que le code révisé soutienne le travail que nous faisons.

Nous vous présentons les grandes lignes de la proposition de révision. Elles'articule autour de cinq thèmes qui ont été développés à partir des commentaires que nous avons reçus lors des consultations d'ETHCOM avec les membres de l'ICOM en 2021 et 2022. Chaque thème est suivi de commentaires qui développent le sujet. Le code révisé débutera également par un préambule qui présente le document, suivi de la définition du musée. Il comprendra en annexe une liste des conventions internationales importantes pour les musées.

Les réponses de votre Comité national et international, de votre Alliance régionale ou de votre Organisation affiliée aux grandes lignes que nous vous proposons, aideront ETHCOM à s'assurer que le Code sera utile aux musées à l'avenir. La confidentialité des répondants sera maintenue, mais le contenu des réponses sera reflété dans un rapport qui sera affiché dans l'espace membre sur le site Web de l'ICOM au début de 2024.

Veillez envoyer vos réponses à ethics@icom.museum avant le 31 octobre 2023.

THEMES PRINCIPAUX / APERCU

1. La responsabilité première d'un musée est celle qu'il a envers ses communautés⁵ - passées, présentes et futures. Ceci inclus les communautés dont il conserve les objets, les communautés dans lesquelles il est situé ainsi que les communautés qui bénéficient de ses activités.

Pour servir la société, un musée :

- a. Contribue au développement et au renforcement des communautés.
- b. Soutient le droit de chacun à participer et à contribuer à la vie culturelle.
- c. Collabore avec la communauté muséale globale, encourageant échange et partage mutuels, développant des partenariats durables et promouvant la coopération.
- d. Sauvegarde et valorise le patrimoine culturel et naturel, matériel et immatériel, au bénéfice de la société.

⁵ Voir la définition dans *Dictionary of Museology*, édité par François Mairesse, Routledge: New York, 2023. pp. 79-82.

- e. Garantit l'accessibilité à tous, promeut les pratiques d'inclusion sociale et respecte la diversité.
- f. Contribue à la santé et au bien-être de l'environnement et de la société.

2. Pour conserver la confiance du public, les musées fonctionnent selon des normes professionnelles. Celles-ci impliquent des responsabilités de la part du musée ainsi que de la part des individus et des groupes qui travaillent dans et avec le musée.

a. Les musées doivent :

- i. Recruter du personnel et des bénévoles qui reflètent la diversité des communautés du musée.
- ii. Adopter des pratiques équitables et inclusives
- iii. Veiller à ce que les personnes qui travaillent pour ou avec le musée aient les compétences nécessaires pour assumer les responsabilités de leur fonction.
- iv. Assurer la formation et le soutien du personnel, des bénévoles et des organes directeurs afin qu'ils puissent s'acquitter de leurs tâches de manière responsable.
- v. Développer et publier les attentes explicites pour tous les rôles

b. Les personnes qui travaillent dans et avec les musées doivent :

- i. Agir toujours professionnellement, en faisant preuve de courtoisie, de respect et d'objectivité.
- ii. Éviter la discrimination
- iii. Respecter la prise de décision collégiale
- iv. Respecter la confidentialité des informations.
- v. Déclarer tout conflit d'intérêts ou toute apparence de conflit d'intérêts et s'abstenir de s'engager dans des activités qui pourraient compromettre les responsabilités professionnelles ou la réputation du musée.

3. Pour remplir leur rôle éducatif (y compris les programmes, les expositions et les publications), les musées :

- a. mènent toutes les activités conformément à leur mission.
- b. préservent l'intégrité de toutes les informations présentées.
- c. collaborent et développent des partenariats durables avec les communautés
- d. consultent les groupes représentés.
- e. reconnaissent les diverses croyances et y être sensibles.
- f. respectent les matériaux sensibles (y compris les restes ancestraux, les matériaux à caractère sacré, les connaissances culturelles immatérielles, etc.

4. Pour gérer et sauvegarder de manière responsable les collections (patrimoine matériel et immatériel⁶, archives et collections numériques), les musées :

- a. Créent et appliquent une politique en matière de collections
- b. Respectent le devoir de maintenance/de gestion. Appliquent des procédures d'acquisition professionnelles, notamment en exigeant un titre de propriété valide, faisant preuve de diligence raisonnable et recherchant la provenance, et en exigeant une documentation complète

⁶ Voir la définition dans *Dictionary of Museology*, édité by François Mairesse, Routledge: New York, 2023. pp. 245-248.

- d. Assurer l'accessibilité des collections à des fins de recherche, d'étude, d'exposition et de programmes.
 - e. Entretiennent, préservent et conservent⁷ les collections du musée
 - f. Protègent et conservent de manière appropriée les matériaux sensibles (y compris les restes ancestraux, les matériaux à caractère sacré, les connaissances culturelles immatérielles, etc.
 - g. Effectuent des recherches pour une meilleure compréhension
 - h. Créent des expositions, à la fois physiques et virtuelles, temporaires et permanentes.
 - i. Élaborent des procédures pour une cession et une élimination responsables, y compris le retour et la restitution des objets culturels.
 - j. Ne pas soutenir sciemment le trafic illicite du patrimoine naturel ou culturel.
5. Pour protéger les ressources du musée et veiller à ce que le musée fonctionne de manière durable, au service de ses communautés d'une manière pérenne, l'organe directeur et la direction d'un musée :
- a. Conservent la documentation relative au statut juridique du musée, à son caractère non lucratif et à sa permanence.
 - b. Veillent à la réalisation de la déclaration de mission et des objectifs.
 - c. Maintiennent des normes professionnelles d'intégrité et de qualité.
 - d. Promeuvent l'indépendance/autonomie du musée.⁸
 - e. Garantissent des ressources humaines, physiques et financières adéquates (obligation de diligence)
 - f. Nomment le directeur ou le responsable ayant les connaissances et les compétences professionnelles appropriées.
 - g. Font preuve de respect mutuel et assurent une répartition claire des rôles entre la direction, le personnel et les bénévoles.
 - h. Établissent des politiques de gestion écrites pour le personnel (personnel et bénévoles), les collections, la collecte de fonds, les interventions d'urgence et toute autres questions concernant le musée.
 - i. Contrôlent la composition de l'organe directeur afin qu'elle reflète les communautés du musée et qu'elle inclut des personnes possédant un ensemble de compétences qui leur permettent de soutenir la mission du musée.
 - j. S'engagent à faire preuve de transparence dans leur communication - en interne (avec le directeur, le personnel et les bénévoles) et en externe (avec les principales parties prenantes - par exemple, l'ensemble des publics, les membres des communautés ainsi que les sympathisants) - et respectent leurs contributions.
 - k. Rendent comptes aux partenaires du musée et se prémunissent contre tout conflit d'intérêts ou toute apparence de conflit.

⁷ Voir la définition dans *Dictionary of Museology*, edited by François Mairesse, Routledge: New York, 2023. pp. 86-97.

⁸ Voir ICOM [Statement on Independence of Museums](#)

Revisión del Código de Ética para Museos
Tercera Consulta
Revisión del esquema
Introductorio

El Comité Permanente de Ética (ETHCOM) está revisando el Código de Ética para Museos del ICOM, uno de los documentos fundamentales del ICOM. El Código se basa en los valores que nosotros, como profesionales de museos, compartimos y que sustentan la profesionalidad de nuestro trabajo. Es importante que el Código revisado respalde el trabajo que hacemos.

El siguiente es un resumen de la revisión propuesta. Está organizado en torno a cinco temas que se desarrollaron a partir de los comentarios que recibimos durante las consultas de ETHCOM de 2021 y 2022 con los miembros del ICOM. Cada tema es seguido por declaraciones que elaboran sobre el tema. El Código revisado también comenzará con un preámbulo que introduce el documento, seguido de la definición de museo. Incluirá un apéndice que enumera las convenciones internacionales que son relevantes para los museos.

Las respuestas de su Comité Nacional e Internacional, Alianza Regional u Organización Afiliada al esquema ayudarán a ETHCOM a garantizar que el Código sea útil para los museos en el futuro. Se mantendrá la confidencialidad del encuestado, pero el contenido de las respuestas se reflejará en un informe que se publicará en el espacio para miembros del sitio web del ICOM a principios de 2024.

Por favor envíen sus respuestas a ethics@icom.museum antes del 31 October 2023.

Temas centrales/ESQUEMA

1. La principal responsabilidad de un museo es con sus comunidades: pasadas, presentes y futuras. Estos incluyen las comunidades cuyos objetos cuida, las comunidades en las que se encuentra y las comunidades que se benefician de sus actividades. Al servicio de la sociedad, un museo:
 - a. Contribuye al desarrollo y fortalecimiento de las comunidades.
 - b. Apoya el derecho de todos a participar y contribuir a la vida cultural.
 - c. Colabora con la comunidad mundial de museos, fomentando el intercambio mutuo y compartiendo recíprocamente, desarrollando asociaciones duraderas y promoviendo la cooperación.
 - d. Salvaguarda y valora el patrimonio cultural y natural tangible e intangible en beneficio de la sociedad.
 - e. Garantiza la accesibilidad para todos, promueve prácticas de inclusión social y respeta la diversidad.
 - f. Contribuye a la salud y el bienestar del medio ambiente y la sociedad.

2. Para mantener la confianza del público, los museos funcionan de acuerdo con normas profesionales. Estos implican responsabilidades por parte del museo, así como por parte de los individuos y grupos que trabajan en y con el museo.

- a. Los museos deberían:
 - i. Reclutar personal y voluntarios que reflejen la diversidad de las comunidades del museo.
 - ii. Seguir prácticas equitativas e inclusivas
 - iii. Asegurar que las personas que trabajan para o con el museo tengan las competencias necesarias para cumplir con las responsabilidades de sus puestos.
 - iv. Brindar capacitación y apoyo al personal, voluntarios y órganos de gobierno para que puedan desempeñar responsablemente sus funciones.
 - v. Desarrollar y publicar expectativas explícitas para todos los roles
- b. Las personas que trabajan en y con los museos deberían:
 - i. Actuar profesionalmente en todo momento, demostrando cortesía, respeto y objetividad.
 - ii. Evita la discriminación
 - iii. Respetar la toma de decisiones colegiada
 - iv. Mantener la confidencialidad de la información.
 - v. Revelar cualquier conflicto de interés o aparente conflicto de interés y abstenerse de participar en cualquier actividad que pueda comprometer las responsabilidades profesionales o la reputación del museo.

3. Para cumplir su función educativa (incluyendo programas, exposiciones y publicaciones), los museos:

- a. Conducir todas las actividades de acuerdo con sus misiones.
- b. Preservar la integridad de toda la información presentada.
- c. Colaborar con las comunidades.
- d. Consultar con los grupos representados.
- e. Reconocer y ser sensibles a las diversas creencias.
- f. Respetar los materiales sensibles (incluidos restos ancestrales, materiales de significado sagrado, conocimientos culturales intangibles, etc.) y esfuércese por utilizarlos adecuadamente en exposiciones, programas, publicaciones, etc., virtuales o presenciales.
- g. Promover la reflexión y el intercambio de conocimientos.

4. Custodiar y salvaguardar responsablemente las colecciones (patrimonio material e inmaterial, archivos y colecciones digitales), museos:

- a. Crear y mantener una política de colecciones
- b. Observar la obligación de cuidado/administración

- c. Seguir los procedimientos profesionales de adquisición, incluido el requisito de un título válido, la realización de la debida diligencia y la investigación de procedencia, y exigiendo una documentación exhaustiva.
- d. Proporcionar accesibilidad a las colecciones para investigación, estudio, exhibición y programas.
- e. Mantener, preservar y conservar las colecciones del museo.
- f. Almacenar y mantener adecuadamente los materiales sensibles (incluidos restos ancestrales, materiales de importancia sagrada, conocimientos culturales intangibles, etc.).
- g. Llevar a cabo investigaciones para optima comprensión.
- h. Crear exposiciones, tanto físicas como virtuales, temporales y permanentes.
- i. Desarrollar procedimientos para la desvinculación y eliminación responsable, incluida la devolución y restitución de objetos culturales.
- j. No apoyar conscientemente el tráfico ilícito de patrimonio natural o cultural.

5. Para proteger los recursos del museo y asegurar que el museo opere de manera sostenible, sirviendo a sus comunidades a perpetuidad, el órgano rector y el liderazgo de un museo debe:

- a. Conservar la documentación de la personería jurídica, el carácter no lucrativo y la permanencia del museo.
- b. Velar por el cumplimiento de la misión y objetivos.
- c. Mantener estándares profesionales de integridad y calidad.
- d. Promover la independencia/autonomía de los museos.
- e. Asegurar recursos humanos, físicos y financieros adecuados (deber de cuidado)
- f. Designar al Director o Titular con los conocimientos y competencias profesionales adecuados.
- g. Demostrar respeto mutuo y garantizar una clara división de roles entre el liderazgo, el personal y los voluntarios.
- h. Establezca políticas escritas para el personal (personal y voluntarios), colecciones, recaudación de fondos, respuesta ante emergencias y otros asuntos relacionados con todo el museo.
- i. Supervisar la composición del órgano de gobierno para que refleje las comunidades del museo e incluya personas con la gama de competencias que le permitan apoyar la misión del museo.
- j. Comprométase con la transparencia en las comunicaciones, internamente (con el director, el personal y los voluntarios) y externamente (con las partes interesadas clave, por ejemplo, audiencias principales y miembros de la comunidad, así como simpatizantes), y tenga en cuenta todas las contribuciones.
- k. Son responsables ante las partes interesadas del museo y protegen contra cualquier conflicto de interés o la apariencia de tal conflicto.