
[BULK] SUSTAIN April 2026 News and Activity Report

From ICOM Sustain Secretary <secretary.sustain@icom.museum>
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April 2026 News and Activity Report

SUSTAIN has been busy since the successful sessions, workshop and IC Day during ICOM's 27th General Conference in Dubai (November 2025).

- Submission of SUSTAIN's 2025 international committee report to ICOM
- Submission of SUSTAIN's 2025 Financial report and 2026 Budget to ICOM
- Receipt of ICOM SAREC's appropriation to SUSTAIN for 2026 activities.
- Support for two successful SAREC applications submitted by NATHIST and ICOM-SEYCHELLES. SUSTAIN has dedicated its 2026 Young Member Grant to support participation in the ICOM-SEYCHELLES project. Watch for future communication about both of these projects.
- Planning SUSTAIN's 2026 Conference (see more about that below).
- Membership growth to 303 individuals, 17 institutions, and 1066 interested individuals as of 26 April 2026.
- Service as ICOM's liaison to [Culture for the Planet](#), self-described as "a global community of practice that advances a coordinated, evidence-based sustainability transition in the arts and cultural sector."
- Ongoing strategic use of resources to fulfil SUSTAIN's work during its three-year probationary period as a new ICOM International Committee, and transitioning as of March 2027 to the next three years.

- Planning for SUSTAIN's 2026 General Assembly including preparation for the next board election during early March 2027.

The SUSTAIN board undertakes this work in addition to their own professional commitments that relate to fostering sustainability in museums.

We need membership engagement to ensure successful completion. Specifically, would you be interested in:

- Shadowing SUSTAIN's current treasurer
- Submitting content for SUSTAIN's News and Activity Reports (book reviews, exhibit reviews, program reviews, research reports, etc.)
- Serving on a publications committee to help prepare the publication documenting IC day submissions presented at Dubai
- Other ideas to ensure that SUSTAIN is a member-driven international committee

Please email the SUSTAIN secretary at: Secretary.Sustain@icom.museum

SUSTAIN 2026 Conference: Museums for Our Futures: Sustain, Adapt, Regenerate

SUSTAIN is pleased to announce plans for its 2026 Conference, delivered in hybrid format. This format will ensure exchange, collaboration and encounters across the globe, all essential for ICOM's work, while modeling a resource-efficient approach in the context of the current climate crisis.

The ICOM SUSTAIN Annual Conference 2026 will explore the evolving role of museums and cultural institutions in addressing the intertwined challenges of climate emergency, biodiversity loss, and social transformation.

Aligned with the theme of the International Museum Day 2026, "*Museums in a Divided World*", the conference recognizes the urgent need for museums to act as spaces of dialogue, connection, and healing in increasingly fragmented societies. In this context, the proposed lines of *Sustain, Adapt, and Regenerate* are framed not

only as conceptual approaches, but as pathways for concrete solutions, proposals, and practices that actively respond to the concerns raised by ICOM this year.

By fostering exchange across disciplines and geographies, the conference seeks to generate actionable insights and collaborative strategies that empower museums to bridge divides, strengthen social cohesion, and contribute to more just, resilient, and regenerative futures.

Under the theme “**Museums for Our Futures: Sustain, Adapt, Regenerate**”, the conference invites museum professionals, ICOM Members, cultural practitioners, researchers, and policymakers to engage with three interconnected lines of thought:

SUSTAIN

Focusing on sustainability and sustainable development, this track addresses how museums maintain and preserve cultural and natural heritage while improving operational practices, technical facilities, and environmental commitment, including sustainable development activities.

ADAPT

Responding to the climate emergency, this track explores climate action, risk management, institutional transformation, climate leadership, and the role of museums in fostering community resilience and collective responses to climate change and climate justice.

REGENERATE

Moving beyond sustainability, this track embraces regenerative approaches that aim to repair and restore ecological and social systems. It includes perspectives on reconciliation, social cohesion, ecological thinking, and the integration of diverse knowledge systems, including Indigenous and community-based approaches to envision other possible futures.

Conference Format

The conference will take place online as a distributed global event on **19 November 2026**. The event will unfold across different time zones and different languages available, enabling global participation over 16 to 24 hours on that calendar day.

Call for Participation

ICOM SUSTAIN invites submissions for:

- Academic papers
- Practice-based presentations
- Case studies

Artistic or experimental interventions
Workshops or interactive formats for the hubs

Interdisciplinary and cross-cutting approaches are strongly encouraged.

Application Specifications

If you are interested in participating, please submit the following (Deadline 31 May 2026). Format their application with 12 point font, 1 inch margins and save the complete document as a PDF. Email to: Secretary.Sustain@icom.museum

Title of the proposal

Abstract (max. 300 words)

Selected track (Sustain / Adapt / Regenerate) with brief explanation

Type of presentation (research paper, practice-based, intervention, etc.)

Short biography (maximum 150 words)

Co-presenters, if any (with short biographies - 75 words - for each)

Email

Your geographic location to help facilitate scheduling presentations over 16 to 24 hours.

Selection Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated based on:

Relevance to conference themes

Originality and innovation

Contribution to practice and/or research

Geographic and cultural diversity

All who submit proposals will be notified of selection decisions during August 2026.

Brief Report on SUSTAIN at ICOM's 27th General Conference (Dubai)

SUSTAIN held its first IC Day (the only hybrid IC-Day offered during the Triennial) at the Museum of the Future, entitled "Museums as Arenas for Action: Supporting Changing Communities in a Just Transition to a Sustainable Future." Our three panels were: 1) Sustainable Development: From 2030 Goals & Beyond; 2) Climate Justice,

Equity & Community; 3) Cultural Heritage & Sustainable Practice, and presentations were delivered by 11 speakers from 10 countries. A concluding conversation, “Future Directions of Sustainable Museums”, spanned generations with ICOM past-president, Alberto Garlandini, SUSTAIN board member Michela Rota and young professional Rossella Locatelli, sharing their thoughts on Italian efforts to engage museums in ecosystem thinking. The day concluded with SUSTAIN's General Assembly, including featured speaker and SUSTAIN Vice Chair, Lucimara Letelier, live from COP30 in Belém, Brazil.

SUSTAIN's IC Day program remains available [HERE](#).

SUSTAIN held its General Assembly on November 15 at the end of it's IC Day. The agenda appears [HERE](#).

SUSTAIN partnered with AVICOM and NATHIST to organise three additional sessions: "Digital Media and Sustainability: Developments from the perspectives of AVICOM and SUSTAIN"; "How sustainable is the future in light of the rapidly changing environmental and social effects on communities?" and the workshop "Why We Talk About Sustainable Communities (digital and online) and their Importance in the Cultural Sector.

Details about these sessions and the workshop appear [HERE](#).



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