

An account of the activities of the ICOM Sustain, November 2023 through November 2024.

ICOM established a Working Group on Sustainability in 2018 with the goal of aligning the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement across ICOM's range of activities. The group gathered data about sustainability globally and within the museum sector, participated in the 2019 ICOM conference in Kyoto, and put forward a Resolution to align the United Nation's Agenda 2030 with ICOM initiatives. The working group presented a formal report to the ICOM Board in December 2019 that recommended ways that ICOM could incorporate sustainability across the organization. Members considered infusing sustainability throughout as more important than forming an international committee at that time. ICOM issued a new mandate to the working group, and members organized virtual, hybrid, and face-to-face opportunities to collect data and draft an Action Plan to guide ICOM sustainability initiatives to 2030.

November 2023 to March 2024

ICOM created the new International Committee on Museums and Sustainable Development (SUSTAIN) in November 2023 to accomplish two goals: 1) to offer ICOM members an arena and an accessible platform where they can influence the future direction of the organization in all matters pertaining to sustainability and climate breakdown; and 2) to develop a sustainability information hub to facilitate initiatives undertaken by and within ICOM and to communicate these to ICOM members as they address their own pathways to a sustainable future.

ICOM appointed Morien Rees, longtime member of the working group, as interim chair of ICOM SUSTAIN. He bore responsibility for supporting the drafting process of the SUSTAIN By-Laws, arranging the first meeting of the IC, and arranging the elections of the first board. The call for candidates to the board ran from 21 November 2023 to 5 January 2024. He also announced the first SUSTAIN General Assembly, held on 7 March 2024. During the 7 March meeting, members approved the SUSTAIN bylaws and elected the board members and chair. Presentations introduced attendees to SUSTAIN's ICOM 2030 Action Plan and its relevance to ICOM business and the work of ICs, NCs, and affiliated organizations.

March through September 2024

1.0 Introduction

During the inaugural general assembly of ICOM SUSTAIN, held on the seventh of March 2024, the following members were elected to the board:

Clémence Aycard ICOM UK, Mohamadou Moustapha Dieye ICOM Senegal, Susan Edwards ICOM US, Marina von der Heyde, ICOM Argentina, Mårten Janson, ICOM Sweden, Dr Jamie Larkin ICOM UK, Lucimara Letelier ICOM Brazil, María Auxiliadora Llamas Márquez ICOM Spain, Ben Melham ICOM UK, Dr Jenny Newell ICOM Australia, Debra A. Reid, PhD ICOM US, Michela Rota ICOM Italy, Johanna Sentef ICOM Germany, Hélène Vassal ICOM France, Dr. Siyi Wang ICOM China. Morien Rees, Chair.

2.0 ICOM SUSTAIN Administrative Committee.

At the inaugural board meeting the following members were selected to fill administrative roles:

- Chair: Morien Rees ICOM NORWAY
- Vice Chairs: Lucimara Letelier ICOM BRAZIL and Siyi Wang ICOM CHINA
- Treasurer: Marina von der Heyde ICOM ARGENTINA
- Secretary; Debra Reid ICOM USA
- Our contact in the ICOM secretariat is Marine Walon, International Committee Coordinator.

3.0 Organization

3.1 At the board's inaugural meeting it was agreed to hold board meetings on the last Thursday of each month, with the Administrative Committee meeting on the previous Tuesday. Contact with the board should be addressed to our secretary Debra Reid, at secretary.sustain@icom.museum. We have held four subsequent meetings; our next meeting is scheduled for the 31st of October.

3.2 The board has agreed to focus initially on four areas to establish a solid platform for the future development of the IC: Strategic planning, Communications, Capacity building, and Membership,

At present the board has created a subcommittee for each of the four areas with members from the board allocated to each to address the specific issues within the subcommittee's mandate.

You will be kept informed of the developments within these four areas in future newsletters and through direct communications from these subcommittees. As we move forward through the probationary period, more areas of interest will be added. The membership will be canvassed to identify these areas of interest and invited to join the committees addressing them.

We also plan to investigate how to establish a digital forum for all members to contribute ideas, information, requests etc. One such platform has been suggested, Padlet. We would be more than happy to receive suggestions for other platforms to create this inclusive digital forum to facilitate direct contact between members and board and members and members.

The present status of the four sub committees is as follows:

- 3.31 the Strategic Planning subcommittee drafted a strategic plan currently under review and pending adoption at the October Sustain board meeting
- 3.32 The Communication subcommittee has submitted content for SUSTAIN's mini website and ICOM's webmaster is building it. Hopefully it will be up and running in October. SUSTAIN's web manager is Johanna Sentef.
- 3.33 The Membership committee has defined criteria for a Young Professionals Grant and a survey to benchmark interests and identify best approaches to meet them.
- 3.34 Capacity building committee will address future SUSTAIN conference offerings and engagement with other ICOM International Committees, among other agendas.

SUSTAIN is much in demand from other parts of ICOM's organization and indeed from the museum sector outside ICOM. Evidence of this is its role in the planning and realization of the IMREC / ICOM KOREA conference on sustainability held in Seoul in July. Board members Lucimara Letelier and Michela Rota contributed to the conference programme, and were also mainly responsible for a workshop held in connection with the ASAPAC Regional Alliance general assembly - a part of the pre-conference programme. The theme of the workshop was ICOM's Sustainability Action Plan and feedback from the participants and organizers was unequivocally favorable. As such, the workshop in Seoul can be viewed as a pilot for capacity building for other Regional Alliances, and a similar workshop will occur at the conference in Livingstone, Zambia in November (see below).

Here are other conferences that SUSTAIN has been invited to in autumn 2024:

- ICOM-ICEE Exhibitions: annual conference – Momentum: Exhibitions and Memory, Estonia (29 Sept-1 Oct): <https://icee.mini.icom.museum/momentum-exhibitions-and-memory/>
- 2024 International Forum for Art and Sustainability, Taiwan 4-5th October
- ICOM-AFRICA / SAREK (Burkina Faso, October 14 - 18): "Enhance Museums in Africa: Capacity Building for African National Committees".
- ICOM Zambia /Intercom/ Nathist / ICOM Africa (Livingston, Zambia, 1-5 Nov) A panel debate and workshop: <https://intercom.mini.icom.museum/call-for-papers-museum-leadership-in-the-21st-century-regional-challenges-and-global-impacts/>
- ICOM-ITC partner in China, The Palace Museum: Zero Waste and Environmental Protection (23 October-1 Nov: <https://icom.museum/en/news/call-for-icom-itc-grants-sustainable-museum-management-local-challenges-and-best-practices/>
- International Congress of Culture in Climate Action: Organized by the Institute for Urban and Sustainable Territorial Development of the City of La Plata Foundation, Sustainable Heritage Forum, Heritage and Climate Change Initiative, and the Climate Heritage Network. The congress is sponsored by ICOMOS Argentina, ICOM Argentina, ICOM Brasil, ICOMOS Climate Action Working Group (ICOMOS CAWG), and the Museum of Contemporary Art Beato Angelico UCALP. December 4, 5, 6, 2024 (Virtually)
- Heritage Middle East 2024 “2nd International Exhibition and Conferences for Museum & Library Technologies, Restoration, Archaeology and Cultural Tourism” scheduled 10-12 December 2024 at ADNEC, in Abu Dhabi – UAE.

4.0 Finances

Sustain has been awarded a budget of 4245 euro for the current year of 2024, of which 1200 euro are for grants for young members. In dialogue with the secretariat, we were informed that our budget for future years will depend on the IC’s activities.

5.0 Research and Development.

SUSTAIN is involved in, or considering involvement in, the following R&D initiatives.

- SUSTAIN is a partner in the SAREC (Strategic Allocation Review Committee) Solidarity in Times of Crises 2024 project: Enhance Museums in Africa. [[Projet ICOM-Afrique SAREC 2024](#)], Mohamadou Moustapha DIEYE will be the board member responsible.
- Lucimara Letelier reported on a project between two universities in Brazil and ICOM-Brazil re. relationship between museums, local development and sustainable development goals.
- A request from Dr. Henrietta Galambos, Chair of the sub-working group on sustainability within LEAC, to Antonio Rodriguez chair of the Advisory Council, Marion Torterat Legal Coordinator at the secretariat and SUSTAIN, regarding collaboration on a feasibility study “to determine research opportunities” in the cross section of law-museums-sustainability.
- Julio Alexander Gonzalez Liendo a proposal for collaboration around the dissemination of his ph.d ” Framework Model of Indicators for Museum Sustainability," Jamie Larkin supported development of the thesis.
- Christian Breternitz, curator at the Berlin Musikinstrumenten-Museum contacted SUSTAIN with a wish to draft ideas on developing a clear definition as well as clear tasks of how musical instrument museums and collections can contribute to achieving congruence with the UN SDGs and the ICOM 2030 Action Plan on Sustainability.
- SUSTAIN has been informed of a February 2025 effort to be undertake by non-ICOM member Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage – INTACH - to collect oral histories of personal observations of climate change.
- SUSTAIN has been informed of a model of urban sustainability – 2030 District Networks - based in partnerships between private property owners, business interests, city planners and sustainability managers, and cultural attractions, including museums. The network supports

2030 District members and partners on the quest to reduce emissions and reach net zero by 2040. A Museum Best Practices Working Group formed in 2021.

6.0 Annual meeting in Marseille 2024

Morien participated in the meeting in Marseille which was also streamed live. The online question and answer session on the last day was unfortunately cut short due to the earlier programme overrunning, resulting in little or no discussion on the themes of the General Conference in 2025. As a result, board member Johanna Sentef has initiated and carried out the drafting of a statement on behalf of the SUSTAIN to be sent to the Director General, regarding the General Conference's theme *The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities*. The statement focuses on LGBTQIA+ and virtual communities to build sustainable futures. The SUSTAIN board discussed the letter at its 29th of August meeting, agreed with its content, and supported sending it on to the ICOM Director General.

7.0 ICOM Award for Sustainable Development Practice in Museums

The Chair of ICOM SUSTAIN will lead the jury for the Inaugural award to be presented at the General Conference 2025 in Dubai.

You can find more information about this award [HERE](#).

8.0 General Conference 2025

Further information about the Dubai symposium November 2024 and the Dubai General Conference in 2025 will be made available on the SUSTAIN mini website. Here is the latest information on ICOM. Museum: <https://icom.museum/en/news/call-for-papers-museum-international-general-conference-dubai-2025-youth-intangible-heritage-and-new-technologies-in-museums/>

9.0 *Museum International* on Sustainability

Here is the link to the recent edition of *Museum International* on sustainability:

<https://icom.museum/en/news/publication-of-museum-international-museum-sustainabilities/>

10.0 Communication with members

SUSTAIN initiated MailChimp 21 August 2024 and sent its first newsletter that month.

SUSTAIN's website - <https://sustain.mini.icom.museum/> - launched 13 November 2024.

SUSTAIN's LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/company/icom sustain/> - launched 15 November 2024.

11.0 Membership

7 March 2024: 44 individual, 2 institutional members

End of 2024: 82 individual, 5 institutional members

Submitted to ICOM SUSTAIN members (individual and institutional) and ICOM members interested in SUSTAIN:

Morien Rees. Chair. Oslo, Norway. 23.08.24

Debra Reid. Secretary. Dearborn, Michigan, USA. 5.10.24; updated 18.10.2026