

ICOM AND ALIPH JOIN FORCES TO SUPPORT WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICAN MUSEUMS AT RISK IN THE FACE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The International Council of Museums and the International alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas (ALIPH) are partnering to support 14 West and Central African museums in conflict and post-conflict areas.

The project is part of the ALIPH COVID-19 Action Plan, launched by the Geneva-based organization [in April](#), to support the cultural heritage protection sector through the current health crisis and beyond. The Foundation announced on Wednesday 29 July that it had committed nearly 2 million USD to carry out the Action Plan, which includes a new partnership with ICOM to deliver concrete assistance to museums in the form of emergency grants.

In parallel, ICOM has worked since March to respond concretely to the needs of the museum community and its professionals. Along with [advocacy actions](#) and [reports](#) on the crisis impact on the field, ICOM issued guidelines and recommendations to help museums ensure the [conservation](#) and [security](#) of their collections during the pandemic.

AN EFFECTIVE AND MEANINGFUL COOPERATION

The two organizations have been working hand-in-hand since the global outbreak of the pandemic. Indeed, the Action Plan is a partial response to ICOM's *Statement on the necessity for relief funds*, which calls for an allocation of relief funds to salvage museums and their professionals. Moreover, many components in the Action Plan, including the importance of accessing collections online, and security and safety measures in the context of COVID-19, are in line with ICOM recommendations.

Following the announcement of the ALIPH Action Plan, ICOM, through its Heritage Protection and Capacity Building Department, activated its network and called upon ICOM National Committees to identify museums eligible for emergency funding and the most urgent actions to be implemented.

The ad hoc cooperation between the organizations has now taken the form of a formal partnership. Through the ALIPH emergency granting scheme, ICOM will support 14 museums grouped into 5 initiatives totaling 74,200 USD. These projects will be monitored by the Heritage Protection and Capacity Building Department.

At the same time, ALIPH has awarded several direct grants to museums that were identified through ICOM's network, such as the Glass Museum in Bogota, Colombia. These projects will be followed directly by ALIPH.

SUPPORTING 14 MUSEUMS THROUGH THE CRISIS AND BEYOND

Fourteen cultural institutions in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Cameroon will receive support under the ICOM-ALIPH partnership. The selected projects will improve museum security, provide staff training, and make the collections accessible online.

- The Grand-Bassam National Costume Museum, Côte d'Ivoire will be equipped with showcases to protect its works, install security cameras, and redesign its visual identity.
- ICOM Cameroon has identified two museums, the Babungo Museum and the Royal Museum of Mokolo in the North-Western and Northern Region, known to be among the most vulnerable zones to conflicts in the country, will inventory and digitize their collections.
- ICOM Mali has identified 6 museums in Bamako, Sikasso, Segou, Timbuktu and Gao for a project of awareness-raising and disinfection of museums against the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Badagry Heritage Museum, Lagos State, Nigeria will conduct a research project and digitize its collection.
- ICOM Burkina-Faso will safeguard and secure the collections of the Birgui Julien Ouedraogo Museum of Gourcy, the Bendrology Museum of Manéga, the Douroula Museum and the Communal Museum of Kaya, all located in conflict areas.

To learn more about the museums involved and to follow the progress of the ICOM-ALIPH projects, we invite you to visit our [interactive map](#).

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