

**WORKING GROUP ON DECOLONISATION**  
*Mandate 2023 – 2025*

---

**ARTICLE 1. CONTEXT**

In its Strategic Plan 2022-2028, ICOM recognised the role that museums have played in colonisation and outlined the objective of leading a global forum to explore the key issues and identify best practice on decolonisation and museums. The Strategic Plan further cites the following objectives:

- ICOM proactively addresses decolonisation, cultural rights and democracy, and the role that museums have played in colonisation.
- ICOM supports museums to engage with communities and highlights good practices in the field.

ICOM national and international committees have been engaged in activities around decolonisation in the museum field, some of them for decades. Topics include principles for the repatriation and restitution of cultural property, new governance models, reconciliation, reparations, Indigenisation, practices and processes of engagement with Indigenous peoples, minority and marginalized communities, mechanisms to empower local communities to lead museum activities, among others. In 2019, a global survey of ICOM members showed strong interest in advancing knowledge of the historical, ethical and methodological questions associated with decolonisation.

**ARTICLE 2. MISSION**

The purpose of the Working Group is to advise on how ICOM, as the global voice of museum professionals and as an international NGO, can address key topics around decolonisation, and ensure exemplary institutional practice, seeking equity and social inclusion. To do so, the group will:

- Develop language and methodologies for an institutional approach for ICOM, addressing the role of museums in colonial histories and identifying the practices and forms in which colonialism is expressed in museums.
- Draft a framework institutional strategy and action plan on decolonisation, taking into account a diversity of approaches, including reconciliation, equity and inclusion, Indigenisation, as well as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other relevant international frameworks, including the ICOM Code of Ethics for Natural History Museums and the ICOM Guidelines for Deaccessioning. The Working Group may, for example, decide to amend or propose new guidelines in these areas.
- Collaborate with the ICOM Standing Committee on Ethics (ETHCOM) to propose amendments to the ICOM Code of Ethics, including by identifying lacunae in the abovementioned frameworks.

**ARTICLE 3. COMPOSITION OF THE WORKING GROUP**

**3.1 Appointment of members**

In accordance with Article 5.1 of the Internal Rules, the President of ICOM may, with the approval of the Executive Board and in accordance with the nomination process for Standing Committees and Working Groups, define the membership of the Working Group.

The Working Group shall be composed of at least 5 members and a maximum of 10 members (including *ex officio* members). The membership will be composed of representatives of each region of the world and strive for gender balance.

### **3.2. Eligibility and restrictions**

The members of the Working Group shall be:

- Individual members of ICOM in good standing;
- Individuals with an understanding of and demonstrated experience in the key topics related to decolonisation.

The following restrictions apply:

- No ICOM member shall be appointed to more than two (2) ICOM Standing Committees or Working Groups at the same time.
- No ICOM member shall be appointed as Chair of more than one (1) ICOM Standing Committees or Working Groups at the same time.
- ICOM Executive Board Members, the Chair of the Advisory Council and the Spokesperson for the National Committees and International Committees shall not be appointed as Chair of ICOM Standing Committees or Working Groups.

### **3.3. *Ex officio* Members**

In addition to the members appointed by the ICOM President, the Working Group also includes:

- the President of ICOM;
- one (1) or two (2) Executive Board representative(s).

The Director General can take part in the Committee meetings but not in voting.

### **3.4. Cooperation with other ICOM Standing Committees and Working Groups**

The Working Group shall work closely with the ICOM Ethics Standing Committee. The ICOM President shall appoint:

- one (1) representative from the Ethics Committee as a member of the Working Group to support the work.

### **3.5. Appointment and role of the Working Group Chairpersons**

Two (2) Chairpersons of the Working Group shall be appointed by the ICOM President, with the approval of the Executive Board. The Chairpersons shall, with the support of the Capacity Building – Museums & Society Department, prepare, convene and chair the meetings of the Working Group.

## **ARTICLE 4. FUNCTIONING OF THE WORKING GROUP**

### **4.1. Meeting and working methods**

The Working Group shall meet either face-to-face or online as often as their duties require or at the request of the ICOM Executive Board. The Working Group shall perform most of its work online.

**4.2. Agenda and convening of meetings**

The Chairpersons of the Working Group shall set the agenda, in consultation with Capacity Building – Museum & Society, and convene meetings by a reasonable deadline.

**ARTICLE 5. REPORTING**

The Chairpersons of the Working Group shall submit regular reports (or upon request) on the progress of the work, to the President of ICOM and the Executive Board, in accordance with Article 5.1. of the ICOM Internal Rules.

**ARTICLE 6. COMPENSATION OF WORKING GROUP MEMBERS**

ICOM does not compensate Working Group Members or reimburse expenses incurred such as travel, hotel and other costs, unless otherwise instructed by the Executive Board.

**ARTICLE 7. TERM OF MANDATE OF THE WORKING GROUP**

The Working Group will begin its mission in June 2023 and run until the completion of its tasks, up to a maximum of three years, unless the Executive Board of ICOM expressly decides to dissolve it.