

## ICOM-CC Preventive Conservation Group Newsletter

Dear colleagues,

In May 2021, ICOM-CC's first ever online conference took place. It was the delayed Triennial Conference, which was planned to take place in Beijing in September 2020. I hope many of you were able to attend this event from wherever you are in the world. It was a great success! Personal highlights for me included, apart from the contributions to preventive conservation, the Getty International Session on *Transcending Boundaries; global points of view*, as well as the technical visits. It was convenient to be able to see all technical visits in form of a video at a time that suited me. I also very much enjoyed the panel session on *Current challenges in conservation*.

Being based in the Netherlands I was lucky enough to be able to attend the conference during normal working hours. That said, no breaks were scheduled, so the days got pretty intense with lunches and dinners in front of the laptop! The upside of this pre-recorded programme was that it was even easier to switch sessions from one Working Group to another. I always enjoy doing this, as there is so much to learn from the other disciplines. The Q&A sessions were fun, moderating the questions and reading the questions in the chat function of Zoom at the same time. We planned these such, that there were always two of us moderating. And once we got the hang of it, it worked well I thought.

Many thanks at this point to Assistant Coordinators past and present who gave themselves up to help.

A few of my past and present Assistant Coordinators have shared their own thoughts on the Conference. Read more on the pages of the Newsletter. All published papers are now available free of charge [online](#).

With the Triennial Conference now well and truly behind us, we have focused our attention to the working group Triennial Programme 2020-2023. We have promised a number of knowledge exchange sessions with the aim of:

- Creating a global network, and being a bridge for others: a 'global network' on particular subjects
- Sharing challenges & experiences, and
- Making potential solutions practically applicable

We are in the midst of planning these sessions. It will no doubt be a learning curve to organise such an online event. On the other hand, most of us have become quite used to online meetings and conferences by now, so I am sure we will be able to make something good of it!

Subscribe now for the [Global Climate Network: challenges and experiences in managing the museum environment](#) session. We will let members of the Preventive Conservation Working Group have further details on other sessions as soon as we have them. I look forward to seeing many of you on one of these forthcoming events!

Anna Bülow. Working Group Coordinator.

### Personal view

*The ICOM-CC 19th Triennial Conference was the first conference of this size that I attended online and not face to face. Online meetings are convenient as we can attend from anywhere in the world without travelling, but we missed the opportunity to meet friends (especially overseas) in person. As a new Assistant Coordinator, I really expected to meet people directly... The first days were on a system that I was not used to, but I was relieved that the technical team kindly handled the problem. Thank you to the organizing committee and to everyone involved in the conference. Hope we can meet at the next conference!*

*Naoko Sonoda, ICOM Japan*

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## Personal view

As a presenter I found it quite challenging to cope with the idea that the life time of the presentation would be much longer than 20 minutes. It made me much more critical about the way the information should be provided to the conference participants. This led to a rather time consuming production of the presentation. The positive side of this is that the presentation can now be used in educational setting and shared easily through the internet.

As a participant I thought it was wonderful that we did not have to travel and spend a week abroad. Since I did not want to miss the intimacy of a conference and the immersion of oneself in a conference I decided to spend the conference week in a holiday house together with a colleague. Together we could talk and evaluate the presentations. The online setting was no problem at all and proved rather good. The only thing I really missed were chat rooms where colleagues could informally meet each other.

Bart Ankersmit, ICOM Netherlands

Andrea Bernath, ICOM Romania:

*In the last almost fifty years, ICOM organized 19 ICOM-CC Triennial Conferences, valorising about 3300 contributions originating from all over the world. In all this time, there were 5 papers and 11 posters presented by 20 (co-)authors from Romania of whom the majority represented the field of conservation science with application in connected domains. A couple of grants for attendance were also applied for. Having the opportunity to receive a grant for attending the Lisbon (2011) edition myself made me understand the magnitude and significance of what I could refer to as a phenomenon within the conservation field. From the professional knowledge exchange, I was impressed in all aspects including the way it was organized, and the level of attendance which I never experienced up to then. Building on this point, I advocated among colleagues and myself to attend the ICOM-CC Triennial Conferences if possible.*



*When the 2020 Beijing Triennial Conference was announced, I knew that I had no possibilities to get there. But by then, the pandemic brought us many unthinkable changes, and all meetings turned into an online format! There are many drawbacks in holding conferences not live, e.g. social limitation, intermediated contact, equipment, and the need for an excellent internet connection, as well as other human and technical issues. But there are also some unimaginable advantages, too. The reduced cost makes the participation fee more accessible. Also, travel expenses disappear! All of a sudden, the 2021 online Beijing edition became a possibility for me. I thought that with this impediment eliminated there will be a chance for other fellows as well. Regrettably, except for one Romanian student, no other colleague registered. In addition, here, I take the opportunity to thank ICOM, as I was generously offered the Young Member Grant which then totally facilitated my attendance.*



*Agnes Brokerhof, ICOM Netherlands attending ICOM-CC online conference*

*My direct interest in attending the two Working Groups, Preventive Conservation and the Theory, History, and Ethics of Conservation, was a professional*

*benefit that I feel so fortunate to have had. The subjects discussed offered new knowledge of an occidental model in conservation research and subjects, as well as a reference for the position of the field of collection care in Romanian museums. The latter is also one of the recent subjects I am focusing on, to be turned into a tool for the encouragement of the conservation community in getting more involved internationally.*

*Finally, the online version of the 2021 Beijing ICOM-CC Triennial Conference gave us also a ubiquitous feature. I was very happy to attend papers held from other Working Groups that were presented in parallel sessions and which in an offline meeting we would have missed. A unique experience like this should bring us further to a hybrid format that might offer more accessibility to people, places, and possibilities unreached before!!!*

## ICOM CC Preventive Conservation Working Group online knowledge exchange sessions

In its programme within the Triennium of 2020-2023 the Preventive Conservation Working Group committed to make an overall assessment of preventive conservation expertise and requirements across the network of ICOM-CC. We decided to organise a series of online knowledge exchange sessions developed to enable the preventive conservation community to connect and share knowledge, insights and experiences through presentations, panel discussions, workshops, etc. The sessions will on one side explore and discuss the issues of sustainability and climate in heritage institutions in different contexts and on the other side focus and expand on the topic of decision making for preventive conservation.

The first Preventive Conservation Working Group knowledge exchange session will take place on 25 February 2022, between 9:00 and 10:30 CET (Central European Time)! Subscribe via <https://forms.gle/ykQy3KNIQDDuvhti8>.

### Global Climate Network: challenges and experiences in managing the museum environment

With this session we hope to bring together heritage professionals that work within the area of environmental management within a heritage institution from all over the world to share their experience and knowledge. Maintaining a specific temperature and/or relative humidity is a time-consuming complex challenge to many with or with HVACs, mobile devices or passive means. This challenge became even more complex with the COVID-19 pandemic which forces museums to find a balance between ventilation with fresh air and maintaining a museum climate. This first session should be seen as a first of several where you can meet colleagues to share your ideas, questions and discuss options to seek solutions together. In this session we will present an overview of the trends in climate management in western Europe, Japan and New Zealand.



Naoko Sonoda from the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka will talk about indoor climate control, and especially the challenges and issues faced as due to the Covid-19 pandemic ventilation and the supply of fresh air became a high priority in the exhibition galleries. This new control strategy forced the museum to use more energy to keep indoor climate conditions at an acceptable level.

Bart Ankersmit, researcher at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands will provide an overview of the challenges museums

last decades, international efforts such as the ICCROM-ICC Risk Management Method, among others, have been developed to improve conservation decisions and communication among heritage professionals and the persons and instances who decide. Also, better decisions mean better practices in terms of sustainability. But it is still a long way ahead for many institutions and decision-making is a complex process that involves several dimensions. To connect professionals and to share thoughts & experiences, we have identified three different aspects we are going to address in this session.

*We decided to organise a series of online knowledge exchange sessions developed to enable the preventive conservation community to connect and share knowledge, insights and experiences.*

face in the Netherlands due to the combination of strict climate requirements and the nation-wide energy transition.

Vesna Živković works at the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library New Zealand. ATL is an institution which achieved the perceived “optimum” of constant relative humidity and temperature and minimising the levels of air pollutants. However, urging consideration of sustainability, the Library is deliberating introducing new guidelines with broadened environmental parameters, using the present body of knowledge.

## Decision Making for Preventive Conservation

The decision-making process is a fundamental part of conservation in collection-based institutions. Big questions are raised when you have limited access to knowledge, budget, or technology. That is why over the

Communication and conservation decisions, conservation treatments, decisions, and alternatives and collections’ value pies and collection knowledge.

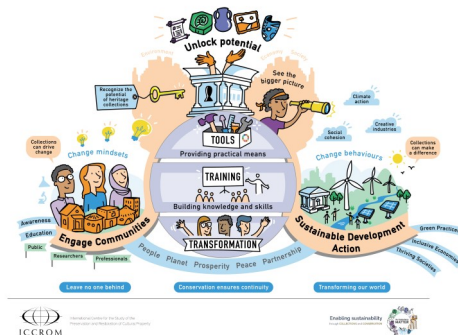
The session is in the process of the development but we will have Andrea Bernath, head of a Collection Care department at ASTRA National Museum Complex in Sibiu, Romania, an institution responsible of both built-heritage and ethnographic collections, Suruchika Chawla, Supervisor of projects at the Archaeology and Museums Department, Haryana, India and David Cohen currently an assistant professor at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the Universidad de Los Andes in Bogota discussing the decision-making process and the three components. Andrea, Suruchika and David will present problems, needs and cases related to decision-making for preventive conservation in Romania, India and Latin America context followed by participants in the session sharing their experiences and cases relevant for each of the topics.

# Our Collections Matter Project update

[Our Collections Matter](#) is an initiative with the goal to empower organisations in charge of heritage collections to make genuine difference to address sustainable development challenges. Initial focus of OCM was to develop and field test web-based toolkit and currently there are over 195 tools available, all of which are open access. This list will continue to grow as new resources are identified and developed and as we learn more about the need of users and opportunities within heritage field and beyond. New set of 35 tools is being prepared to be uploaded to the [OCM toolkit](#) at the beginning of January 2022. Furthermore, new tools including improved methods for collections mediated, intergenerational dialogue, sustainability checklists, sustainable environmental management and life cycle assessment are being developed and field-tested by ICCROM and partners. Similar tools will continue to be developed in the next biennium, e.g. for collections and climate action; collections and creative industries, etc.

In order to test and refine the toolkit and to collect critical information to develop effective training modules field studies are currently being implemented by the project partners in different part of the world, engaging with different types of organisations and collections to build constructive dialogue with these organisations around their sustainability aspirations and challenges and their perceived role in sustainable development.

Ongoing field study with Italian museums looks at indicators used to measure and communicate the outcomes of museum activities in relation to sustainable development goals. It challenges different types of metrics typically used to assess the effectiveness of a museum, such as the number of exhibitions and number of acquisitions. Are they meaningful to measure the impact of a museum on the community it serves? How to best assess the balance in museum activities between carbon footprint, working conditions and cultural impact? How can the potential of museum collections can be fully realised to reach and sustain an optimum balance?



In another field study carried out in Philippines in a conflict affected area a museum has identified and worked with two tools in the toolkit to support their aspiration to involve more women in preservation and promotion of the culture and arts through capacity building to create a lasting and sustainable change and livelihood. Another museum in Philippines has identified and worked with three tools from toolkit in its project to expand accessibility and the benefits of its collections through a digital database. New field tests are due to start in Nigeria in 2022.

In addition to the field studies, research and development the project team also carries out ongoing awareness raising and dissemination to help accelerate the envisaged transformation for collections-based organisation and the heritage sector. The team has been participating in various national, regional, and international events to disseminate OCM, including an [EU Side event at COP26](#). OCM international course is being developed for first edition in 2022-2023.

A dedicated web page on the ICCROM website with diverse case studies and success stories from collections base organisation making concrete contributions towards sustainable development to inspire and provide tangible examples of possible ways is to follow.

Training on sustainability literacy to effectively connect collection-based work and the various spheres of sustainable development would start in 2022. Next to providing useful tools, making collections-based organisation more converse, comfortable and confident with SDGs and make them fully aware of their potential to affect the change is vital to achieve transformation.

OCM continues to look for new strategic partners and invite all collections-based organizations to join us in this collective journey towards a sustainable future @ [collectionsmatter@iccrom.org](mailto:collectionsmatter@iccrom.org).

## Working Group Assistant Coordinators

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