

Draft response of ICR to proposed new definition of a museum.

Version 2 – 2 September, 2019

For ICR Board further feedback, comment and/or suggested amendments, please

ICR

- Acknowledges with gratitude the extensive work and intellectual contributions of the Working Group in preparing and presenting their proposal for a new definition of a museum for ICOM
- Recognises the need for the current 2007 definition to be updated to reflect the new responsibilities, activities and models of museums which have emerged since 2007
- Accepts that ICOM members should expect to be able to vote at the Extraordinary General Meeting on the acceptance or rejection of the proposed new definition
- Notes that the level of language needs to be meaningful to general readers

We would offer the following comments:

- Further consideration is needed on *who* uses the current definition, and *how* it is used, including by members, members' museums and external organisations such as government policy-makers, and the wider general public
- Any museum definition should continue to have functional value for local and central government policy makers
- ICOM's definition needs to reflect the diverse models of museums which are developing to respond to the needs, interests and circumstances of different communities and national jurisdictions
- Understands that cultural, social and political environments will generate different interpretations of
- The proposed definition appears to combine both functional and aspirational aspects. These are both important.

ICR believes that:

- The definition should firstly be functional to ensure public understanding of what museums are and what they do
- ICOM's broader aspirations for museums can be provided in an additional text

The following aspects should be covered in the ICOM statements:

- Relevance to the communities that they serve
- Inclusiveness
- Responsiveness to changing communities and operating environments
- Accountability
- Regular access for the museum's audiences
- Digital dimensions of museum collections, programmes and services
- Both tangible and intangible dimensions of museum
- The need for museums to be constantly developing as communities and operating environments change
- Openness to flexible interpretations of the definition