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ICOM4Ukraine

SAREC project successfully completed: Support of Ukrainian museums with consultations, material aid, video tutorials and guidelines

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion in February 2022, ICOM Germany has been involved in various international projects to support its Ukrainian colleagues with aid measures so that they can protect their collections from attacks and weather effects and preserve their cultural heritage more effectively. In the midst of the ongoing conflict, the country's cultural heritage is still under extreme threat: according to a UNESCO report from the 12th of June 2024, 412 cultural sites alone have been destroyed, including 31 museums. These alarming figures highlight the urgent need to step up measures to protect the country's cultural heritage and continue to mobilise international support.

The ICOM aid project "Ukrainian museums at risk –a three-step solution plan through knowledge, action and visibility" (June 2023-June 2024) focuses particularly on the digital preservation of collections. Many small museums that received digitisation software, hardware and special restoration equipment face the challenge of using these technologies effectively. The project, carried out in collaboration with ICOM Switzerland and funded by the Strategic Allocation Review Committee of ICOM (SAREC), therefore offers targeted support in three key areas:

Empowerment through knowledge

Firstly, 12 instructional videos were produced in Ukrainian or existing videos were translated into Ukrainian to provide basic specialist knowledge on how to digitise collection objects efficiently and professionally. These tutorials were created in collaboration with museum-digital and the Saving Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Online initiative and are available on the museum-digital YouTube channel.

Secondly, tried-and-tested guidelines from the German Museums Association were translated: the "Standards for Museums" guide, the "Guidelines Developing Education and Public Engagement in Museums" and the "Practical Guide Digital Basic Cataloguing in 10 Principles". In cooperation with the Centre for Digital History in Rivne, 300 copies each of the "Standards for Museums" and "Guidelines Developing Education and Public Engagement in Museums" will be printed and distributed to Ukrainian museums. This transnational cooperation also enables the guidelines to be published internationally: the translations are available as free PDF documents on the websites of ICOM Ukraine, ICOM Germany, ICOM Switzerland, NEMO and the German Museums Association.

Consultations and strengthening visibility

Under the leadership of Ekaterina Malygina, an experienced multilingual coordinator, the project also actively supported Ukrainian museums in digitising their collections and registering them on the "museum-digital" platform. This platform plays a key role in increasing the visibility of museums. It promotes dialogue between museums in Ukraine and provides a secure online space that facilitates contact with international stakeholders. Through the project, several Ukrainian museums have successfully presented their artefacts on museum-digital and Europeana, significantly strengthening their international presence and networking. In total, 34 museums published around 8,000 objects as part of the project.

Material aid with urgently needed technology

The power supply is a major problem in Ukraine due to the damaged infrastructure. As a third measure, [Taras Shevchenko's Homeland](#) therefore received a high performance powerbank as support. The facility is a large national reserve in the Cherkasy region, which is home to the Literary Memorial Museum of the Ukrainian national poet and painter. The transport was kindly provided by the Ukraine Art Aid Centre (UAAC).

Solidarity and targeted support

International solidarity and targeted support remain crucial for the protection and preservation of Ukraine's cultural heritage in these difficult times. We therefore call on the international museum community to continue to work together to preserve these precious artefacts. ICOM will also continue its commitment in a targeted manner.

See for yourself the uniqueness and preciousness of Ukrainian cultural heritage and its importance for the European culture of remembrance: [Kremenets Heritage Museum](#), [M. F. Sumtsov Historical Museum, Kharkiv](#), [National Polytechnic Museum Boris Paton, Kyiv](#)

The Ukrainian translations of the guidelines are available for download under [Publikationen](#) on the ICOM Germany website.

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About ICOM Germany

ICOM Germany e.V. is the German National Committee of the International Council of Museums ICOM and, with more than 7,000 members, the largest organisation of museums and museum professionals in Germany. Current issues such as decolonisation, provenance research, museum definition, standards for museums, etc. are discussed at national and international level together with members and offered as guidance.