



Thematic Abstract | ICOMOS International Day for Monuments and Sites 2023

The ICOMOS International Day for Monuments and Sites 2021 - ‘Complex Pasts: Diverse Futures’ initiated important baseline discussion of complex narratives that has provided scope for greater discourse during the 2021 - 2023 triennium. **In keeping with the spirit of open, innovative, constructive intergenerational dialogue, and the strategic focus of ICOMOS [Triennial Scientific Plan 2021-2024](#), the International Day for Monuments and Sites 2023 features the following theme:**

Heritage Changes

ICOMOS declared a [Climate Emergency in 2020](#), recognising the potential of heritage to enable inclusive, transformative and just climate action through the safeguarding of all types of heritage from adverse climate impacts, implementing risk-informed disaster responses, and delivering climate resilient sustainable development - all from a perspective of equity and justice. This General Assembly Resolution calls for working in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples, vulnerable and frontline communities; is driven by participatory climate governance; gender-responsive human rights; and utilises rights-based approaches that contribute to transformative change. This built on the [‘Future of our Pasts’](#) report, which was published by ICOMOS in 2018, and called for solidarity between heritage professionals and those communities most affected or least able to bear the cost of climate change.

The **International Day for Monuments and Sites - 18 April 2023** provides a timely opportunity to showcase strategies demonstrating the full potential of heritage research and practices which deliver climate-resilient pathways, while advocating for inclusive transitions to low-carbon futures. It is part of the ICOMOS Triennial Scientific Plan 2021-2024 and supports the 2020 [ICOMOS resolution on People-centred Approaches to Cultural Heritage](#).

The recently published [Global Research and Action Agenda](#) - a key outcome of the ICOMOS, UNESCO and IPCC International Co-Sponsored Meeting on Culture, Heritage, and Climate Change- proposes that traditional knowledge, heritage, and cultural practices can act as a bridge between different ways of knowing, embody inherited knowledge accumulated over generations, and serve as entry points for innovative and inclusive solutions to climate action. This requires acknowledging, respecting and implementing a plurality of recommendations, traditional and innovative solutions inherent in culture, heritage and creative practices. These need to engage with industry and form part of integrated planning methods.

Key messages from this agenda, which may be useful for event organisers include:

- Climate and culture relations need to demonstrate all voices and knowledge systems are equally valuable in terms of their role, function, distinctiveness and contribution to addressing climate change and emerging problems;
- More knowledge is needed about cultural approaches and heritage methodologies in facilitating the use of local knowledge for adaptation planning, and the involvement of local communities in decision-making and policy development;

- Existing knowledge and methods for sustainable ecosystem management are embedded in Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' knowledge systems and practices;
- Urban transformations require methods rooted in local conditions and needs that consider the requirements of energy, sustainability and climate adaptation;
- Heritage drives holistic and transformative change which contributes to achieving the UN Agenda 2030;
- Identifying the ways in which traditional knowledge and practice, particularly in land and water management, could contribute to climate adaptation in the agricultural sector, and thus contribute to food security.

Responses to climate change must acknowledge and respect issues of climate justice and equity. These are particularly acute when engaging with diverse stakeholders and rights-holders. We encourage organisers to consult the ICOMOS [Climate Justice and Equity Toolkit](#) which includes ways to increase inclusivity and participation, promote meaningful co-production and be more sustainable.

How can traditional knowledge inform innovative and transformative climate action?

- Consider the integration of traditional, historic building conservation, adaptive reuse, and/or energy efficiency of heritage buildings and landscapes;
- Feature innovative infrastructure development to showcase the ways in which traditional knowledge, practices and cultural heritage can be part of solutions;
- Capture traditional philosophy and rationale in dealing with the environment (both land and water) and the climate as manifested in built vernacular heritage and cultural landscapes.

While traditional knowledge is respected as a rich source of inspiration and knowledge for places facing climate change consequences on a local level, bottom-up perspectives are not often accessible to Committees. How can we respectfully engage more fully with discourses about traditional ways of knowing and knowledge systems?

ICOMOS calls on all communities to **collaborate through partnerships, inclusive practices, and in cooperation** with local governments, industry, private sector, academia, community-based organisations, civil society, scientists, Indigenous Peoples and vulnerable communities. Knowledge exchange must be built on respectful and meaningful multiple perspectives which acknowledge the plurality of knowledge systems.

ICOMOS Committees, members and all those wishing to celebrate the International Day for Monuments and Sites are warmly invited to showcase the myriad ways in which traditional knowledge is/can be employed to address climate change in transformative ways.

Events might relate to discourses about: Disaster Risk (Climate-Induced, Human-Induced), Energy & Sustainability, Indigenous Cultural Heritage, Just Transitions, land management and diverse Heritage Futures.

Examples of empowerment of communities displaced by climate change, low-cost interventions to disaster risk management in the heritage context, heritage and environmental education and just transitions, promotion of gendered narratives to climate adaptation, and ecological transitions are welcome.

The theme of **“Heritage Changes”** offers the opportunity to respond to questions regarding learning about traditional ways of knowing and knowledge systems in relation to climate action, and how to use a cultural

heritage focus to support equitable protection of vulnerable communities through climate action, while responding to the UN Decade of Action.

Get Involved!

ICOMOS National Committees, International Scientific Committees, Working Groups, and Task Forces, and all those who wish to celebrate the Day, may refer to the following focus questions:

- **How can cultural heritage conservation drive climate action?**
- **How do local and traditional knowledge systems contribute to developing viable climate adaptation measures?**
- **What actions are the ICOMOS National Committees, International Scientific Committees, Working Groups, and Task Forces taking in response to the increasing risks and impacts of climate change?**
- **How can local and traditional knowledge systems mitigate future climate change risks and impacts?**

Event organisers are encouraged to address some of the following SDGs as part of their holistic thinking of the role of heritage as a driver and enabler of sustainable development.

More information can be found in the [2021 ICOMOS publication, “Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals: Policy Guidance for Heritage and Development Actors”](#).



See UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG 4 , 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15

We encourage you to contact the organisers of events in your country, and you can **share your events** by writing to: communication@icomos.org

Potential formats for participation can include, but are not limited to:

- 1-2 minute (max) **video submissions** from each ICOMOS National Committee, International Scientific Committee and Working Group, showcasing local and regional approaches towards generating climate action. The videos may be shared across ICOMOS Social Media

Platforms or sent to the above mentioned email address. Make sure to include descriptions, quotes or facts to accompany any video, as well as hashtags.

- **Photographic submission with captions** to explain current approaches, changing narratives and goals for the future. In all cases, **please make sure that you retain the rights to any image you post (on Social Media or not).**
- **Organise Virtual Roundtables, Host Webinars, propose Workshops** to reflect on the gaps in current theory and practice, engaging government agencies, industries, and invite others to join the discussion. Using Twitter threads, tell a story about your complex pasts to present more inclusive stories and to build diverse futures. Don't forget to use images and hashtags!

Events, activities and other inputs will be shared on ICOMOS website, social media platforms and the annual report of ICOMOS.

Relevant hashtags:

#18April #ICOMOS #HeritageChanges #heritage4climate #IDMS2023 #icomosIDMS2023

ICOMOS Social Media handles :

Facebook @ICOMOSinternational

Linkedin @icomos

Twitter @ICOMOS

Instagram @icomosinternational

YouTube @ICOMOSinternational

Relevant Social Media handles :

@icomosSDG2030

@climateheritage