

UN-recognised campaign, Heritage Adapts! launches to accelerate climate adaptation for heritage by 2030

Washington, DC, 4 June, 2026 — Heritage Adapts! launches today as the first global campaign uniting the heritage sector behind a shared mission: at least 3,000 sites and practices taking locally led climate adaptation action by 2030. Spearheaded by a coalition led by Preserving Legacies, an initiative supported by the National Geographic Society, and strategic partners ICOMOS, CIPRED, Climate Heritage Network, European Heritage Hub, Europa Nostra, The Heritage Management Organization, ICH NGO Forum, IFLA, Julie's Bicycle, Shadhona and the World Monuments Fund; the campaign mobilises local stewards behind a collective pledge and provides the technical guidance, data access, and global connections to help them succeed. Recognised by the UN's climate agency as a Plan to Accelerate Solutions advancing the Global Goal on Adaptation, Heritage Adapts! connects local action to global impact, strengthening community resilience worldwide.

A crisis threatening heritage, community resilience

Climate change is the fastest-growing threat to heritage globally. According to UNESCO, one in three natural heritage sites and one in six cultural heritage sites are under threat, as are 60% of World Heritage Forests and 66% of World Heritage Marine Sites. UNESCO's newly published *People and Nature in Unesco-Designated Sites* report further found that across its sites, climate-related hazards have increased 40% in a decade, and more than one in four could hit potentially irreversible tipping points by 2050. But this data covers only a fraction of the world's heritage; most sites, living practices, collections, and landscapes that communities value remain untracked by international frameworks. This gap is itself part of the problem. Compounded by heritage adaptation remaining largely absent from climate finance and policy, stewards on the frontlines are often left with limited funding and support. Yet heritage is not just a victim, it is part of the solution, a source of community resilience and time-tested solutions relevant today.

A collective campaign built for action

Heritage Adapts! — with its founding coalition of over 100 organisations and stewards across the Global North and South — aims to fill that gap and accelerate climate adaptation for all types of heritage.

“As the world hurtles toward 2°C of warming, we are in a race to help communities—and the culture and heritage that sustain them—adapt while there is still time. The UN's new Global Goal on adapting cultural heritage can be transformative, but only if it fuels real support for every site and cultural practice. Around the world, partners are uniting to urgently seize this moment. That shared resolve is the driving force behind Heritage Adapts!”

– Andrew Potts, Director of Policy, Preserving Legacies

“Climate change is the greatest threat facing humanity and its cultural heritage. ICOMOS is a Leadership Partner of the Heritage Adapts! Coalition and a strong advocate for cultural heritage

in climate action. Throughout the years, the partnership between ICOMOS and Preserving Legacies has been essential to deliver global and inclusive support for capacity building of heritage communities and heritage places worldwide. The Heritage Adapts! Coalition scales up our efforts, uniting and empowering global stakeholders as well as local rightsholders in heritage, highlighting the urgency of culture-based climate action and the importance of building resilience of the heritage ecosystem in climate adaptation. ICOMOS is proud to be a Founding Leadership Partner of the coalition.”

– Ave Paulus, Focal Point of the ICOMOS Climate Action Working Group (CAWG)

At its core is the collective pledge to take locally led adaptation action by 2030 and an online *community of action* platform to support those adapting. Built around a self-paced program through every stage of adaptation, it makes the process accessible no matter the starting point. A global peer network connects those on the frontlines, and downscaled climate data is available in downloadable regional packets, complemented by training so stewards can use it on their own terms and weave it with the knowledge their communities already hold. Developed directly with stewards, it is grounded in hands-on expertise and an inclusive, locally led, plural knowledge system approach to help ensure all voices are at the table and that solutions are targeted, sustainable, and locally appropriate.

Heritage stewards, organisations, and institutions are invited to take the pledge, join the community, and start adapting at act.heritageadapts.org.

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About Heritage Adapts!

Heritage Adapts! is a global campaign mobilising heritage sites and cultural practices behind a collective pledge to implement locally led adaptive strategies by 2030. Recognised as a UNFCCC Plan to Accelerate Solutions advancing the cultural heritage target of the Global Goal on Adaptation, it provides stewards worldwide with the guidance, connections, and data they need to take meaningful climate action. Led by a cross-sector coalition spearheaded by Preserving Legacies, Heritage Adapts! is accelerating adaptation to strengthen community resilience worldwide. Partners include:

Preserving Legacies

Preserving Legacies is a global initiative advancing locally led adaptation to safeguard heritage places and practices from the impacts of climate change, strengthening community resilience. Supported by the National Geographic Society, it equips custodians with the training, tools, and networks to implement targeted, sustainable, and locally appropriate solutions. Its proven three-stage cohort model supports nearly 100 custodians representing a wide range of heritage, from UNESCO World Heritage Sites like Petra to Indigenous seed-saving practices in New Mexico. With the launch of the Heritage Adapts! “community of action” platform, Preserving Legacies is scaling its impact to support thousands of stewards worldwide, protecting our past to save our future.

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is a non-governmental, not for profit international organisation, committed to furthering the conservation, protection, use and enhancement of the world’s cultural heritage. With over 12,000 members, 110+ National Committees, 31 International Scientific Committees and several Working Groups, ICOMOS has built a solid philosophical, doctrinal and managerial framework for the sustainable conservation of heritage around the world. As an official Advisory Body to the World Heritage Committee for the implementation of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, ICOMOS evaluates nominations and advises on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List.

CIPRED

Center for Indigenous Peoples' Research and Development (CIPRED) has been carrying out Indigenous-led research, documentation, publication, and evidence-based policy advocacy for securing Indigenous Peoples' inherent rights to protect, promote, recognize, and continue traditional knowledge, skills, cultural values, and customary self-governance systems that have been contributing for sustaining traditional livelihoods (food and economy), natural resource management, climate change resilience, biodiversity, and sustainable development. CIPRED has been involved in the layers of activities at community, national and international levels in partnership and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples' Organizations (IPOs), relevant agencies including Government, Bilateral and Multilateral agencies, research institutions, Universities, and Local Community Organizations.

Climate Heritage Network

The Climate Heritage Network (CHN) is a voluntary, mutual support network of government agencies, NGOs, universities, businesses, and other organizations committed to tackling climate change and achieving the ambitions of the Paris Agreement. Mobilized in 2018 during the Global Climate Action Summit and launched in 2019, the Climate Heritage Network works to re-orient climate policy, planning, and action at all levels to account for dimensions of culture - from arts to heritage.

European Heritage Hub

The European Heritage Hub, launched in May 2023 is led by Europa Nostra and co-funded by the European Union, to set up a permanent and autonomous heritage hub in Europe. The project, now in its Preparatory Action phase, counts 28 consortium partners and brings together

a large array of heritage stakeholders and initiatives, responding to the need for a more structured cooperation and coordination at all levels of governance, from local to European and international.

Heritage Management Organization

The Heritage Management Organization (HERITAGE) is a non-profit that was founded in 2008 to train and support heritage professionals worldwide and enable them to transform the assets they manage into dynamic sources of learning, identity, and sustainable economic development. Since its founding, the organization has trained over 5,000 professionals from more than 100 countries, affecting over a quarter of the world's global heritage hotspots.

ICH NGO

The ICH NGO Forum, founded in 2009, represents more than 260 NGOs from over 70 countries accredited under the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. It brings extensive, and diverse ICH safeguarding expertise from civil societies, positioning it strategically to advise the Intergovernmental Committee of the Convention, and other stakeholders. The Working Group of the ICH NGO Forum on 'Living Heritage and Climate Change' works towards establishing and strengthening the vital role of Intangible Cultural Heritage in climate action.

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

IFLA is the global voice of libraries, representing the interests of the profession and working to improve services worldwide. We benefit from a strong membership, a vibrant professional community, and close collaboration with partners. Founded in 1927, IFLA brings together over 1600 members and affiliates from over 150 countries around the world. With the vision to bring about sustainable futures for all through knowledge and information, we provide a space and structure for sharing experience, developing standards and driving innovation. Through our relations with UN agencies, including UNESCO and the UNFCCC, we engage in wider policy discussions, promoting engagement with and through libraries to build better societies.

Julie's Bicycle

Julie's Bicycle (JB) unites culture, creativity and climate action to drive change. For nearly two decades, we've been at the forefront of the creative climate movement - one of the first to position culture as a powerful force for radical change. Our mission is to mobilise the creative sector, equipping thousands of artists, cultural organisations, and creative leaders with the tools, knowledge, and confidence needed to transform their practice into climate action. We focus on tackling the root causes of the climate, nature, and justice crises by shaping thinking, informing policy, and scaling practical solutions. Together, we can turn creativity into a powerful force for a just and regenerative future.

Shadhona

At Shadhona, we believe that performance and cultural practices are individual and communal acts that aim to transcend everyday limits of consciousness. Furthermore, their enactment and the processes behind their execution are both capable of transforming the world we live in.

Established in 1992, though Shadhona's scope of work encompasses many genres of art and the target group is diverse, the defining character of our organization is the hard-core, intensive work that we do with the Arts and Artistes, in the areas of a) research, documentation, b) training c) production & presentation, and d) safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. Our work encompasses both urban and indigenous arts and cultural practices.

World Monuments Fund

World Monuments Fund (WMF) is the leading independent organization devoted to safeguarding the world's most treasured places to enrich people's lives and build mutual understanding across cultures and communities. The organization is headquartered in New York City with offices and affiliates in Cambodia, China, France, India, Peru, Portugal, Spain and the UK. Since 1965, our global team of experts has preserved the world's diverse cultural heritage using the highest international standards at more than 700 sites in 112 countries. Partnering with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF draws on heritage to address some of today's most pressing challenges: climate adaptation, inclusive heritage, balanced tourism, and post-crisis recovery. With a commitment to the people who bring places to life, WMF embraces the potential of the past to create a more resilient and inclusive society.