

UNESCO's Thematic Indicators for Culture in the 2030 Agenda

CULTURE | 2030 INDICATORS



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International Workshop on Cultural heritage and Climate Change

Concept Note

Context

UNESCO's Thematic Indicators for Culture in the 2030 Agenda (*UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators*) is a conceptual framework to measure and monitor the progress of culture's enabling contribution to the national and local implementation of the Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The framework assesses both culture's role as a sector of activity, as well as the transversal contribution of culture across different SDGs and policy areas. The *UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators*' framework selects 30 SDG Targets across the 17 Goals and maps the selected Targets in four thematic dimensions: Environment & Resilience, Prosperity & Livelihood, Knowledge & Skills, and Inclusion & Participation. As a set of thematic indicators, it supports and complements the global indicators agreed upon within the 2030 Agenda and foster linkages between different goals and targets. Its main objectives are to:



Implementation of the *UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators* is voluntary by countries and cities. In 2021-2022, twelve countries and fourteen cities participated in pilot implementation demonstrating the framework's potential for policy impact. UNESCO launched a new implementation cycle (2024-2026). Ten countries and their cities will implement the thematic framework as part of a project generously supported by the European Union (EU). An additional three countries and 5 cities are generously supported by Sida and a further four countries and their cities will participate in this cycle, by self-financing their implementation efforts.

The project supported by the EU includes reflection on ways to elaborate and refine indicators for the measurement of culture in climate change. In a context where climate change is the defining issue of our time, the project considered this urgent and timely to include in the *UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators* framework. This is particularly relevant in the context of the UNFCCC COP28 adoption of the UAE-Belem Framework for Global Climate Resilience towards the Global Goal for Adaptation (GGA) which explicitly refers to cultural heritage: "Protecting cultural heritage from the impacts of climate-related risks by developing adaptive strategies for preserving cultural practices and heritage sites and by designing climate-resilient infrastructure, guided by traditional knowledge, Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and local knowledge systems".

Relevant Technical Context

The *UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators* framework includes Indicator 3 – Climate Adaptation and Resilience. This indicator is developed using a checklist that considers the institutional and policy frameworks as well as the traditional knowledge and cultural practices in place for climate

adaptation and resilience. Indicator 3 aims therefore to assess measures taken to foster climate change mitigation and adaptation and enhance resilience through sustainable safeguarding and management of tangible and intangible cultural heritage as well as natural heritage and is implemented at both the national and the local levels. This indicator is also among those under consideration by the UNFCCC Expert Groups for the development of indicators for the GGA.

Given the intricate relationship of sustainable development to climate adaptation, it would be also important to reflect if some of the other indicators of the *UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators* framework could be relevant for measuring culture's contribution towards climate resilience and adaptation. UNESCO co-led a recent UNFCCC technical report on *Non-Economic Losses featuring Cultural Heritage*. In this context, the recent debates on climate change and its impacts, the measurement of Loss and Damage has become increasingly important. The workshop could also be an opportunity to reflect on whether measuring the non-economic losses of cultural heritage could or should be included in the UNESCO Culture|2030 Agenda framework. The workshop supports UNESCO's endeavours to climate action and aligns with the Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage (2023).

Workshop objectives

The **UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators International Workshop on Cultural heritage and Climate Change** aims to elaborate and integrate considerations for measuring the contribution of culture in addressing climate change with a view to make visible culture's active role in advancing climate action. Going beyond Indicator 3 in the existing *UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators* framework, the Expert Workshop aims to identify entry points and synergies to include indicators that measure how culture contributes to climate resilience and adaptation, as well as measures of the impacts of climate change related events that affect loss and damage to cultural heritage. The workshop will gather experts, researchers, and practitioners to assess the critical—and often underexamined and under documented—relationship between culture, climate action/resilience and adaptive capacity, to achieve the sustainable development goals. It will provide the basis for proposing data collection approaches in the area informed by input from experts. This collaborative effort ultimately aims to substantiate the role of culture in promoting environmental sustainability and to inform policies that build on this linkage.

The overall objectives of the workshop are to:

- Discuss the intersection of climate change and cultural heritage
- Identify culture-informed/ led mitigation and adaptation actions and solutions
- Consider indicators and data points reflecting both the loss and damage to cultural heritage due to climate change impacts as well as climate action for cultural heritage
- Consider strategies for data collection at the national and local levels
- Collaboratively identify/develop draft practical and actionable indicators in the framework of the UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators

Participants

The workshop will gather experts, researchers, and practitioners. Invitations are extended based on:

- Members of the EU/UNESCO Expert Facility – Stream II Culture|2030 Indicators, of which members consist of experts from different regions who are fully informed about the methodology and the implementation process of the *UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators* and will support and accompany Member States and their cities in the implementation of the *UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators*.
- Experts on Cultural Heritage and Climate Change including the UNFCCC-GGA Expert Group on Cultural Heritage
- Experts on Climate Change
- UNESCO experts on the Culture Conventions

Resources

More information on the Culture|2030 Indicators can be found at the website

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/culture2030indicators>. Resources include;

- The **Publication** available in [English](#), [French](#), [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [Spanish](#), [Russian](#) and [Thai](#)
- The **Framework Posters** available in [English](#), [French](#), [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [Spanish](#), [Russian](#) and [Thai](#)
- The full video on the global **implementation** of the *UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators*: [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#)

More information on resources on UNESCO World Heritage Centre activities related to climate change and culture can be found at the dedicated website <https://whc.unesco.org/en/climatechange/>.

Cited resources include:

- UNESCO. (2023). The policy document on climate action for world heritage (2023) [Available in English and French]. UNESCO. <https://whc.unesco.org/document/203725>
- UNFCCC. (2024). Non-economic losses: Featuring loss of territory and habitability, ecosystem services and biodiversity, and cultural heritage. Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, UNFCCC. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/nels_paper_2024.pdf
- UNFCCC. (2025). Synthesis of submissions UAE-Belem work programme. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Synthesis%20of%20Submissions%20UAE-Belem%20Work%20programme%20Final.pdf>

Additional resources related to climate change and culture include:

- [ICSM CHC-Global Research and Action Agenda on Culture, Heritage and Climate Change](#), co-sponsored by IPCC, UNESCO and ICOMOS (2022)
- World Heritage Canopy Platform - Heritage Solutions for Sustainable Futures, Case studies on climate change: https://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/search_theme=23&canopy=1&action=list&&order=dmd