

The Next 50



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Theme

In 2022, the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage celebrates its 50th anniversary. Over the past five decades, the Convention has protected and promoted humanity's treasures and transformed the way we value heritage.

The landmark year arrives as the world assesses the extent of damage caused by COVID-19 on the economic, social and cultural lives of citizens. Combined with accelerating environmental degradation and widening social divisions, we find ourselves in uncharted territory, questioning our fundamental values as individuals, society, and global community: What do we truly treasure? What must change for the better? What should be passed down to future generations in the face of crises?

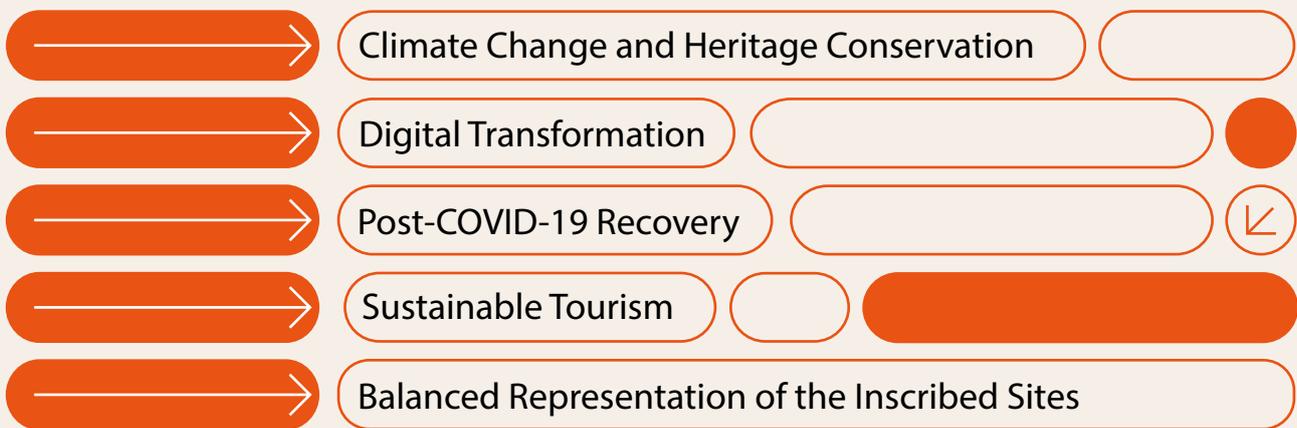
As a knowledge-based and intellectual agency, UNESCO sees an opportunity and responsibility to lead these important discussions on education, sciences, information and culture. Therefore, UNESCO dedicates this milestone to a year-long interdisciplinary reflection on the future of the World Heritage, going well beyond celebrating past achievements.

In this spirit, the theme of the year is "The Next 50: World Heritage as a source of resilience, humanity and innovation."

WORLD
HERITAGE
AS A SOURCE
OF
RESILIENCE,
HUMANITY
AND
INNOVATION.

Five Priority Areas

Activities undertaken within The Next 50 framework shall tackle one of the following areas:



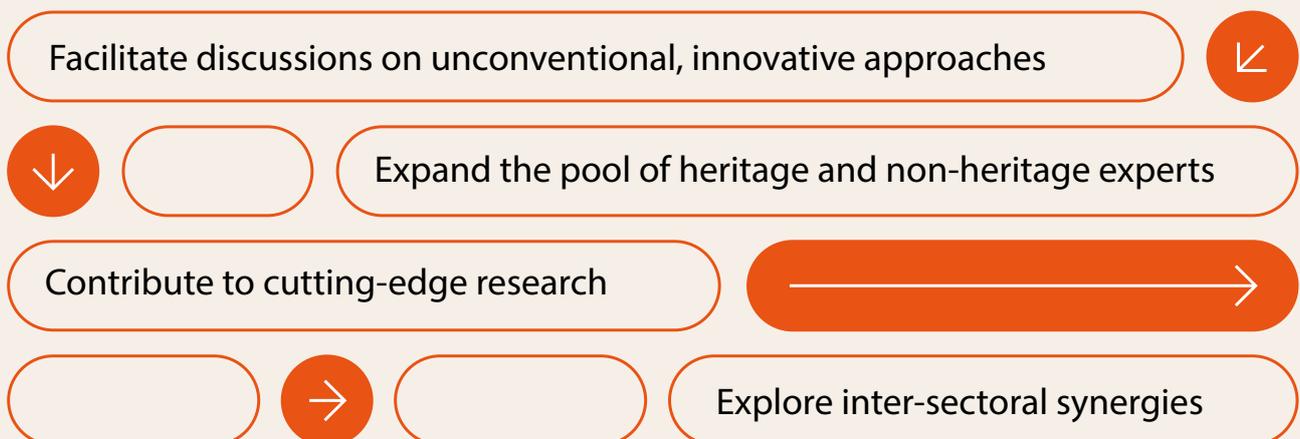
These five areas represent existential challenges as well as lesser-explored domains that can influence the preservation of heritage in years to come. By focusing reflections on these priorities, The Next 50 has the potential to generate high-impact results and expedite innovation.

The selection was informed by the 50th anniversary survey undertaken in 2021 by over 200 Site Managers, National Focal Points and other relevant stakeholders.

Methodology

Be it climate change, overtourism or COVID-19 recovery, the challenges experienced by the World Heritage properties are the symptoms of crises of global magnitude. The solution-oriented discussions around conservation, therefore, require expertise well beyond the realm of heritage.

Using the following methods, UNESCO aspires to translate the heightened interest in the World Heritage in 2022 into dynamic occasions open to the intellectual communities and the public alike:

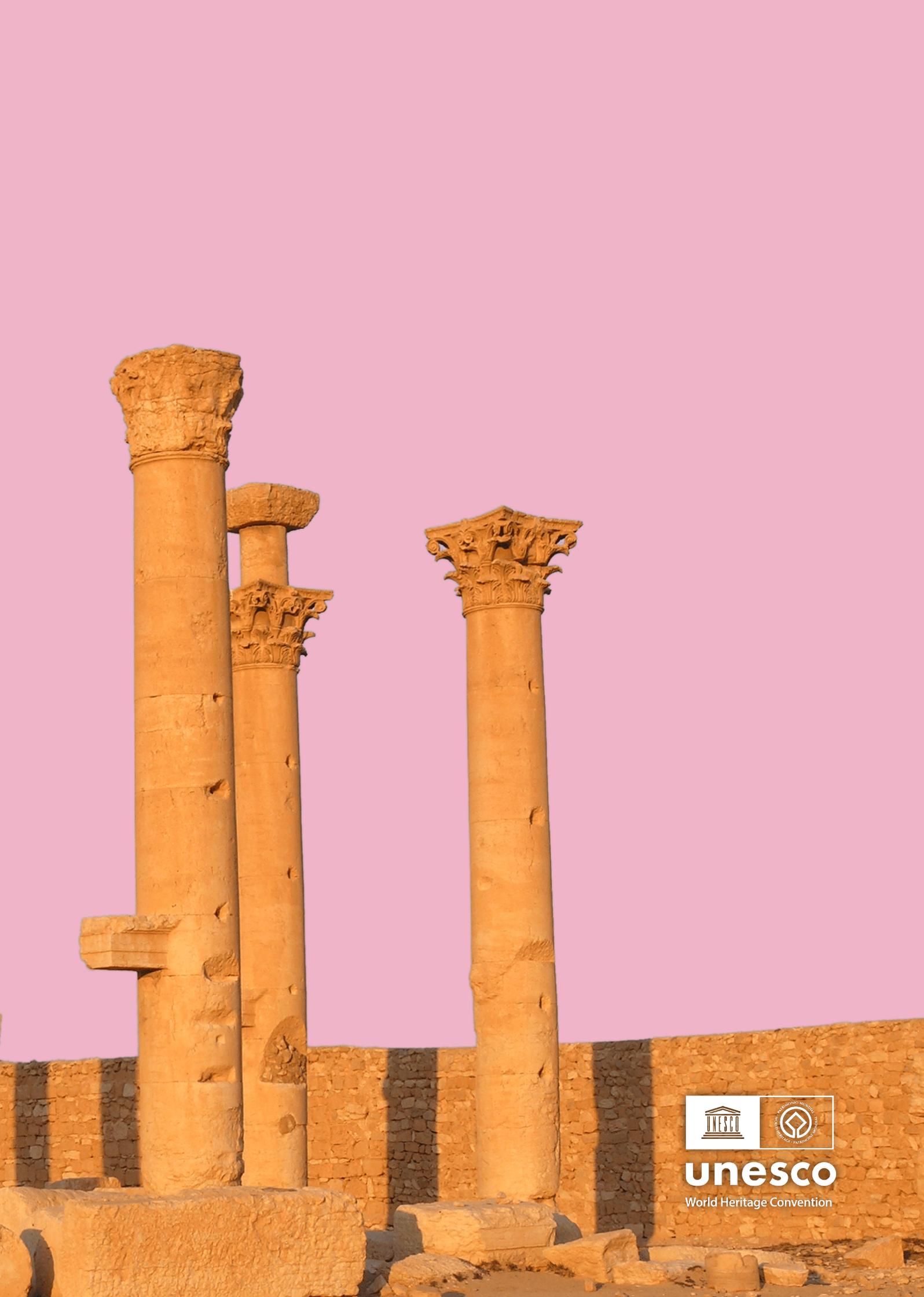


These methodologies ensure the sustained impact of The Next 50 through the new, interdisciplinary heritage supporters and a road map inspired by novel ideas.

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50 Minds for the Next 50

UNESCO invites 50 innovative and bold thinkers of our time to deeply and freely reflect on the future of the World Heritage.

The “50 Minds” hail from diverse fields – economics, architecture, literature, environmental science, engineering – to facilitate the most interdisciplinary discussion on heritage ever to be held. By going well beyond the usual roster of experts, the 50 Minds explore the very meaning of “heritage” unbound by the operationalization of the 1972 Convention.

Five sessions take place throughout 2022, each animated by ten thinkers. The five distinct themes directly respond to the priority areas of The Next 50.

The public may follow the discussions via livestream.

Preliminary timeline

Session



Sustainable Tourism,
Sustainable Heritage

Session



Safeguarding Heritage against
Climate Crisis

Session



Towards a Balanced Representation
of World Heritage Sites

Session



Imagining Heritage in the Digital
Dimension

Session



Heritage in the post-COVID
World

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Outdoor Exhibition for The Next 50

(UNESCO Headquarters)

UNESCO Headquarters hosts a major outdoor exhibition on the fences surrounding its premises. The exhibition begins in September with the aim of welcoming the visitors during the 39th European Heritage Days (Journées européennes du patrimoine), and concludes in November in a nod to the Convention anniversary date of 16 November.

The display consists of over 100 large-format panels and represent diverse regions and types (i.e. natural and cultural) of heritage. Faces of communities are also featured.

High-definition images are secured through existing partner organizations of UNESCO.



Date

September-November



Call for Articles

UNESCO invites researchers and academics to submit proposals for new articles and ideas for podcasts which explore the five priority areas of The Next 50. The objective is to spark interdisciplinary, cutting-edge, data-driven discussions among the global research community beyond heritage, contributing a scientific and evidence-based perspective on the future of World Heritage and heritage at large.

The Call and development of the articles are done in partnership with The Conversation, a non-profit online media outlet specialized in the publication of data-driven written pieces authored by experts, with the aim to enrich public debate and ultimately influence policies.

All articles are under Creative Commons license, which enables free redistribution and a democratic access to quality information – a value fully complementary to UNESCO's commitment to Open Access.

Preliminary Timeline



High-level event in Greece

(Delphi, Greece)

A high-level meeting unites representatives of the World Heritage Committee members, site managers and experts, at the World Heritage-listed Archaeological Site of Delphi.

A series of thematic exchanges contribute to The Next 50 laboratory of ideas. Case studies from diverse regions are produced to reinforce evidence-based discussions.



Date

September 2022



Florence Conference for the Next 50

The Next 50 culminates in Florence, Italy, with a major conference dedicated to the anniversary. In tribute to the adoption of the Convention on 16 November 1972, the event is to take place in November 2022.

The Next 50 Conference methodically takes stock of the year-long reflections on the five priority areas. Possible modalities include thematic meetings, panel discussions and presentations.

The list of invitees mirrors the interdisciplinary spirit of The Next 50, ranging from Ministerial, high-level guests to experts and specialists. Some of the 50 Minds may also be invited to Florence to share findings and renew their commitments.

The global stage serves to amplify the intellectual discussions undertaken in 2022 and bring innovative ideas to the decision makers.

The Conference is made possible by the generous contribution of the Government of Italy as well as the City of Florence, which celebrates the 40th anniversary of its inscription on the World Heritage List.



Date

November 2022



High-level event in South Africa

A high-level meeting in South Africa concludes the year-long The Next 50 programme hosted around the world.

This event dedicates particular attention to “Balanced Representation of the Inscribed Sites” among the five key areas of The Next 50. At the same time, other major issues facing the Sites in Africa, such as climate change, shall be explored by high-level guests and experts in attendance.



Date

December 2022



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Join us

Organize your Next 50 event

All interested partners and stakeholders are invited to contribute to The Next 50 and crowdsource innovative ideas.

Organizers of anniversary events may follow the interdisciplinary, open approach detailed in the Methodology section. Below questions may be used to assess their relevance within the Next 50 framework:

- Does the event provide a space for heritage and non-heritage specialists to reflect on the future of the World Heritage?
- Are stakeholders beyond the usual roster of experts invited?
- Does it examine one or more priority areas of The Next 50?

The National Commissions of the Member States are encouraged to play a decisive role for the organization of The Next 50 events, both to spread this call and compile substantive outcomes of the events that take place in their respective countries.

For activities undertaken by UNESCO Headquarters and Field Offices, these guiding questions shall be rigorously applied to their formulation and implementation.



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