

ICOMOS-UK Strategy: twenty twenty one

Connecting Cultural Heritage Expertise: Sharing Knowledge and Innovation

Message from the President

This five-year strategy aims to reposition ICOMOS-UK as a leader in inter-disciplinary approaches to conservation of cultural heritage in the United Kingdom in collaboration with national and international networks. The main objectives of the strategy are to create a pivotal hub for knowledge exchange, facilitate innovative research and conservation philosophies, help cultural heritage professionals and practitioners acquire and enhance their skills and influence policy development through engagement with key national agencies and cultural heritage communities.

The necessity to identify new ways of working with ICOMOS colleagues and partners in Europe, post Brexit, the threat to our global heritage from climate change, armed conflict and rapid urban development, the need to understand and work with our hidden and difficult history and the impact of COVID-19 on organisation and financial resilience make it a crucial time to strengthen and develop ICOMOS-UK's role to respond appropriately to these dynamic challenges. The direction of travel in this strategy takes account of these threats faced by many of our constituents; namely, the various cultural agencies and professionals from different disciplines working here and abroad, civil society and community organisations, and culturally diverse local and bearer communities engaged in the protection and promotion of monuments, sites and landscapes and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

A number of internal and external reviews of the organisation's capacity to deliver the proposed change agenda underpin this strategy. ICOMOS-UK's cultural heritage manifesto based on the outcomes of its 50th Anniversary Conference in 2015, launched by our Patron, HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO, recognised the need to redefine our aims and objectives and to take a new and creative approach to the way we conserve, sustain, promote and benefit from cultural heritage. Other assessments, including a strategic analysis by the London Business school, a period of reflection on the role of ICOMOS-UK alongside its wide ranging partners, observations from our national Scientific Committees and feedback from members and participants at our annual programme of events have all informed the actions and outcomes presented in this document.

Over the next five years, ICOMOS-UK will continue with a number of its key exemplar services. It will retain and expand on its work as an independent advisor with an international perspective on World Heritage Sites in the UK. It will further strengthen its collaboration with ICOMOS's network of professionals across the globe on good practice and ensure there are arrangements in place for all ICOMOS-UK's members to access this unparalleled resource with ease. The organisation would continue to provide an essential forum for mutual sharing and exchange of ideas and information through education, training and events. The revival of old connections and the forging of new partnerships with local and central governments and other relevant regional and national agencies through memorandums and partnership arrangements will be a priority. ICOMOS-UK will continue to provide the lead on the safeguarding and promotion of intangible cultural heritage. Members will continue to enjoy opportunities to comment and contribute to the strategic actions we will be taking on their behalf.

The strategy also provides direction for addressing new and/or under explored domains. Exploring ways to address the harmful effects of climate change on cultural heritage and engagement with local people through people centred approaches in the management of tangible and intangible heritage would become two key cross cutting themes integrated into all our work. The promotion of digital technology, development of targeted knowledge development and skills training modules and research in partnership with academic institutions would feature high on the list of innovative ways of working. ICOMOS-UK would disseminate through training, seminars and workshops the internationally renowned models of good practice and standards developed and held by ICOMOS International.

We believe that '**ICOMOS-UK Strategy: twenty twenty one, *Connecting Cultural Heritage Expertise: Sharing Knowledge and Innovation***' offers an excellent opportunity to celebrate our achievements made over a period of more than half a century and consolidate experiences and competencies in conservation practice gained during that time to inform our future direction. This outward facing strategy is also designed to ensure that we are flexible in our response, visible, relevant and engaged in the UK and abroad especially in complex and changing times.

We invite members and non-members to join us in delivering the aim and objectives of this strategy for the benefit of everyone interested in or passionate about conservation aimed at protecting and promoting cultural heritage for all.

Clara Arokiasamy

ICOMOS-UK

ICOMOS-UK is a network of people and organisations committed to the protection and celebration of cultural heritage. ICOMOS-UK encourages and shares innovative approaches while sustaining and building the skills and broad-based support necessary to conserve, sustain and promote cultural heritage now and for future generations both in the UK and with our international partners abroad. It is the only organisation in the United Kingdom that offers its members access to a strong and truly international interdisciplinary network of cultural heritage professionals. This unique attribute allows ICOMOS-UK to offer unparalleled potential for professional and personal development.

ICOMOS-UK Vision

ICOMOS-UK is an established and nationally recognised organisation that leads on the promotion of heritage conservation through knowledge exchange, innovation, capacity building, advocacy and engagement. It provides an active and vibrant network for international exchange of best practice between professionals from all disciplines and at all stages of their careers. It supports all those interested in cultural heritage through education and events. ICOMOS-UK offers young professionals the chance to develop their careers through Continuing Professional Development. It continues to be financially self-sustaining through the support and growth of its membership, activities and independent advisory work.

ICOMOS-UK Mission

To advance and promote the conservation of cultural heritage:

- **To create a network of professionals, interest groups, communities and individuals to encourage innovation in conservation and cultural heritage management through international and interdisciplinary dialogue, knowledge exchange and skills development.**
- **To raise the profile of cultural heritage through advocacy and engagement and build awareness of its social and economic importance including its role in building sustainable and resilient communities.**
- **To continue to offer expert independent advice on the conservation including the identification, protection and management of World Heritage Sites**

Four Strategic Focus Areas

The following four focus areas have been identified for the purposes of strategic planning. They are of course interdependent with many areas of overlap.

1. Knowledge exchange: international and interdisciplinary
2. Innovation
3. Capacity Building
4. Advocacy and engagement

Focus Areas and Aims

1. Knowledge exchange: international and interdisciplinary

Aims

To ensure best practice, technical skills and new conservation philosophies are widely adopted taking into account cultural and social contexts.

To develop ICOMOS-UK as a leader in and focus for knowledge exchange at both national and international level and to promote interdisciplinary exchange

Objectives and outcomes

To do this we intend to:

1. Host collaborative research and exchange knowledge on pivotal aspects of cultural heritage conservation

Outcome: Publications on research in areas including the uses of digital technology and wood conservation. Relevant workshops to be held by existing UK Scientific Committees as well as cross-disciplinary events on emerging heritage conservation themes

2. Develop the capacity to be a partner in collaborative research projects in the UK and internationally

Outcome: ICOMOS-UK will have established itself as a relevant key partner in research projects both in the UK and internationally.

3. Develop the role as a hub for accessible and timely UK dissemination of the work of the ICOMOS International Scientific Committees on standards and developments in conservation and related disciplines

Outcome: ICOMOS-UK membership will be kept up to date with the latest developments internationally both digitally and through seminars and workshops

4. Undertake awareness raising to ensure ICOMOS UK is widely recognised as a source of expertise on cultural heritage, including all aspects of the World Heritage Convention and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage their implementation. Make international network of expertise more widely accessible to members.

Outcome: ICOMOS-UK will be recognised as the first port of call for expert independent advice and queries on the conservation of cultural heritage and associated conventions: the World Heritage convention and the 2003 convention on Intangible Heritage. Raised awareness of international links and opportunities

Outcome: ICOMOS-UK is recognised as a portal to international best practice and collaboration. A practical process for facilitating professional links will be established such as a database. A pilot project will be completed with a partner national committee.

5. Ensure support for attendance at key international meetings of ICOMOS and other relevant organisations for an identified representative of ICOMOS-UK

Outcome: ICOMOS UK maintains international relevance. Opportunities for collaboration are identified

Innovation

Aims

To develop ICOMOS-UK further as a focus for cross-disciplinary innovative and collaborative thinking on conservation policy and practice in the UK and internationally

To ensure cutting-edge scientific research is safely applied to finite and irreplaceable heritage assets

To design in collaboration with others innovative evidence-based cost-effective low risk interventions

To work in collaboration with others to find innovative approaches to current and emerging challenges for cultural heritage conservation including climate change and the impacts of Covid-19

Objectives and outcomes

To do this we intend to:

6. Increase UK contributions to ICOMOS International Scientific Committees

Outcome: ICOMOS-UK will have agreed representatives on at least 40% of International Committees who feedback twice yearly to ICOMOS-UK Executive Committee and membership

7. Lead a new international Digital Technology Committee and create other new innovative Scientific Committees.

Outcome: An active International Digital Technology Committee established and led by ICOMOS-UK. Potential identified for other innovative national/ international committees

Outcome: At least two new innovative committees identified through discussions with wider membership led by young professional group

8. Promote the application of innovative risk assessment including Building Information Modelling (BIM)

Outcome: ICOMOS -UK Guidance produced on best practice in innovative risk assessment procedures

9. Provide thought leadership by announcing annual themes relevant to the sector.

Outcome: Theme announced on an annual basis. Membership and sectoral partners aware of its international and local importance. Seminars delivered at national and regional level.

10. Work collaboratively to design strategies to mitigate the harmful effects of climate change on cultural heritage

Outcome: ICOMOS -UK guidance produced advising on strategies of mitigating climate change

Capacity building and skills development

Aim

To ensure necessary skills are sustained and developed to protect cultural heritage both in the present and the future

To develop, enhance and promote interdisciplinary working methods

To increase the opportunity for ICOMOS members, a diverse spectrum of organisations, community groups and the wider public to take part in capacity building and skills development related to conservation of cultural heritage.

Objectives and outcomes

To do this we intend to:

11. Disseminate through promotion and training, good practice in both conservation and management from ICOMOS International and other relevant international and national documents and guidance

Outcome: Members and wider public will have been given the opportunity to participate in workshops and seminars on the most recent themes and guidance. At least 2 per annum.

12. Work in partnership with government conservation bodies, local authorities, specialist conservation societies and others to increase training opportunities in conservation related skills

Outcome: Training programme with workshops or other relevant opportunities in place co-designed and resourced with partnerships with such as HE, Cadw, HES and local authorities

13. Increase the number, distribution and focus of training workshops, seminars and conferences organised by ICOMOS –UK and its partners

Outcome: A membership-led programme of events will be in place for the next three years. Minimum of 12 per annum with 6 regionally.

14. Provide independent advice to UK authorities and others on all aspects of the selection and management of World Heritage

Outcome: ICOMOS-UK will have a memorandum of understanding in place with World Heritage: UK and an agreed collaborative approach to training and advice.

15. Contribute to international development priorities through capacity building initiatives such as setting up committees in countries where a need is recognised. Drawing in available international development funds

Outcome: A priority project will have been agreed in consultation with one or more of the following: British Council; Department for Rural Affairs (DEFRA); Department for Foreign Aid (DFID) or other relevant bodies. Opportunities given to the membership to engage where they have relevant skills

16. Develop partnerships with universities/further education colleges and national professional institutions to offer placements opportunities and supervision

Outcome: The ICOMOS-UK offer in this area will have been defined and will be made available to relevant institutions annually. The first formal ICOMOS-UK placements will have begun and the formal supervision arrangements will have been tested and reviewed with at least two students

17. Develop Continuing Professional Development and Mentoring programmes

Outcome: Following needs assessment with all members including the Emerging Professionals group, the ICOMOS-UK offer in this area will have been defined, formalised and made available.

Outcome: There will be a programme of Scientific Committee and member-led opportunities and a list of mentors available to members. Where possible 'meet the experts' events will be organised for the benefit of younger professionals.

Advocacy and engagement

Aim

To provide leadership based on accumulated expertise and experience to ensure effective conservation of cultural heritage

To support people and organisations engaged with planning /development application cases with informed advice where there are adverse effects to protected cultural heritage including World Heritage Sites

To develop the influence of ICOMOS-UK to ensure that the role and importance of cultural heritage is understood at all levels of government and within the wider community

Objectives and outcomes

To do this we intend to:

18. Re-establish strong links with Government, government agencies and local authorities and ensure ICOMOS-UK is represented in all government consultations

Outcome: ICOMOS-UK will be recognised by government as a key stakeholder and expert advisor on cultural heritage conservation to be engaged with across all sectors

19. Adopt a proactive approach to influencing and supporting policy development including international policies and the programmes of ICOMOS, UNESCO and other international organisations

Outcome: An identified ICOMOS-UK lead on policy will consult with members and the Executive Committee to agree ICOMOS-UK position. They will lead ICOMOS-UK responses on consultation and lobbying to set agendas

20. Facilitate debates on the ratification of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage by the UK

Outcome: A report based on roundtable findings for DCMS, UKNC and the wider public on a way forward on ratification

21. Adopt proactive approach to influencing and supporting policy development including international policies and programmes of ICOMOS, UNESCO, other international agencies

Outcome: ICOMOS-UK lead on policy identified to respond and lobby. All relevant consultations responded to and lobbying opportunities taken

22. Engage the wider non-specialist public in valuing cultural heritage

Outcome: ICOMOS will have programmed accessible events for non-specialists (at least 3 per annum), offered volunteering opportunities nationally for both members and non-members and a widened social media presence.