



OPPORTUNITY

19

SCOPE **WITHIN REACH**

UNCERTAINTIES

Values, Systems

MEGATRENDS

Future Humanity

TRENDS

Cross-sectoral Partnerships
Culture & Heritage
Government Agility
Restoration
Urban Design

SECTORS IMPACTED

Communication Technologies & Systems
Cyber & Information Security
Data Science, AI & Machine Learning
Digital Goods & Services
Education
Government Services
Immersive Technologies
Art, Media & Entertainment
Travel & Tourism

What if culture was integral to policymaking?

SAFEGUARDING CIVILISATION

Incorporate culture into public policy for effective conservation of both tangible (physical aspects of culture) and intangible (cultural practices and rituals) heritage.





Number of sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List



WHY IT MATTERS TODAY

Culture forms the essence of our identity and shapes who we are.⁴⁷⁴ Maintaining cultural diversity and richness ensures that future generations around the world have access to, and an understanding of, their cultural roots.⁴⁷⁵ Education initiatives,⁴⁷⁶ coupled with the strategic use of digital technologies to enhance access to cultural archives,⁴⁷⁷ have the potential to shape future generations’ understanding and knowledge and support more open-minded, culturally sensitive societies.⁴⁷⁸

Since 2016, the European and North American regions together have continued to lead in the number of world heritage sites inscribed each year on the UNESCO World Heritage List, followed by Asia and the Pacific.⁴⁷⁹ By country, Italy (59), China (57), Germany (52), Spain (50), India (42), Mexico (35), United Kingdom (33), and Russia (31) have the greatest total number of sites⁴⁸⁰ and the Arab states^N (93) have the greatest percentage of world heritage sites in danger at 41%, followed by Africa at 25%.⁴⁸¹

Through the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), culture for the first time has been recognised as core to sustainable development,⁴⁸² particularly in cities (as delineated in SDG11.4⁴⁸³). Across other SDGs, culture is segregated across four themes: environment and resilience, prosperity and livelihoods, knowledge and skills, inclusion and participation.⁴⁸⁴ Over two years (2017–2019), a collaborative effort involving numerous institutions and professionals led to the first draft of the Thematic Indicators for Culture in the 2030 Agenda.⁴⁸⁵ The new framework for measuring and collecting cultural data is vital for advocating culture’s role in the SDGs and integrating an evidence-based approach to development plans and policies at national levels and within United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks.⁴⁸⁶

The UAE uses cultural diplomacy and a myriad of collaborations to preserve its own heritage and celebrate diverse cultural landscapes. For example, in 2023, Harees – a traditional dish – was inscribed into the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list.⁴⁸⁷ It also showcases its own culture through the UAE pavilion at the Expo 2020 site in Dubai,⁴⁸⁸ that has remained open for visitors and residents to visit and was repurposed for the COP28.⁴⁸⁹ The Louvre Abu Dhabi bridges cultural histories from the UAE, the Gulf and the Middle East to Asia, Africa, and Europe.⁴⁹⁰

^N Includes Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, State of Palestine, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.



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Cultural considerations are integrated into public policy for the effective conservation and preservation of cultural heritage – both tangible and intangible.⁴⁹¹ This can be achieved through the creation of local cultural frameworks and policy toolkits that identify aspects of cultural heritage considered significant especially where technology forms a core part of a new or amended policy supporting the paradigm shift of ‘Intelligent Heritage Management’.⁴⁹²

Culture can be embedded in policymaking by using technology for the preventive maintenance of heritage sites, surveillance of heritage sites, promoting of preservation efforts, and dissemination of cultural heritage⁴⁹³ and by broadening the scope for public participation,⁴⁹⁴ government funding of initiatives,⁴⁹⁵ education and awareness programmes,⁴⁹⁶ and digital preservation of artefacts and traditions.⁴⁹⁷

BENEFITS

Embedding cultural heritage into policymaking supports efforts to preserve and conserve cultural heritage. A range of policies incentivise businesses to integrate cultural preservation initiatives. Helps position cultural diversity as a source of competitiveness, international cooperation and intergovernmental dialogue enhancing cross-cultural understanding.

RISKS

Cultural homogenisation could occur unintentionally if complexity and distinctiveness of cultural variations and heritage are oversimplified or standardised. Cultural preservation might be perceived as either outdated or holding onto the past as the reason failing to develop innovative policies that challenge the status quo. Inability to find a way to balance global with the local cultural values.



Societies Empowered

Safeguarding civilisation

