HERITAGE
THE HERITAGE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

Resilient Cultural Heritage

Heritage Adaptation to Climate Change
A Resilient Cultural Heritage (RCH) – Seasonal School

A Ten-Day Seasonal School · Athens (and online) 5–15 October 2026

Facilitators: JR — Jenny Richards · PB — Peter Brimblecombe · EK — Evangelos Kyriakidis

Introduction

The European Partnership for Resilient Cultural Heritage (RCH) is the first co-funded European Partnership under Horizon Europe Cluster 2, the EU's dedicated programme area for social sciences and humanities research. Bringing together partners from across Europe and beyond, RCH supports collaborative research and innovation at the intersection of cultural heritage and climate change, strengthening the role of heritage research in climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. Through research, capacity building, and knowledge exchange, the partnership aims to equip heritage professionals and institutions to contribute to climate-oriented solutions and more sustainable futures.

Seasonal School Description

This intensive ten-day Seasonal School, delivered by the Heritage Management Organization (HERITΛGE) bridges climate sciences and cultural heritage conservation. It aims to help heritage managers adapt cultural heritage to a changing climate. It is led by an expert team —Jenny Richards, Peter Brimblecombe and Evangelos Kyriakidis, — combining expertise in heritage management, the science of climate-driven deterioration, and the protection of both tangible and intangible heritage. It is directed to people who can make a difference in the adaptation of the heritage of their country to climate change: policy makers, conservation and material scientists, heritage managers and the wider spectrum of cultural heritage professionals dealing with the need to understand and tackle climate related challenges.

According to the provisional program the training opens by framing the challenge: what we mean by "climate" in relation to material deterioration, how climate impacts are distinguished from other human-driven influences, and — distinctively — how climate change threatens intangible heritage, the practices, knowledge and meanings bound up with places. From the outset, learning is anchored to each participant's own study project, a real adaptation challenge drawn from the sites they manage; participants present the theme of their project early and develop it across the two weeks.

Participants are introduced early to the sources and tools they will need: where climate data and projections come from, how to access them, and how to read models and their outputs critically. The core of the programme then works systematically through the deterioration processes that climate

drives — physical (freeze–thaw cycles, salt crystallisation, thermal stress), chemical (air pollution and material decay), and biological (mould, insects, lichen, algae, macrophytes and animal pests such as rodents and birds). The emphasis throughout is on converting this understanding into a "heritage climatology" — a damage-focused reading of climate — and from there into practical conservation planning.

A visit to the Acropolis with the School of Conservation, followed by a weekend of fieldwork and cultural visits (10–11 October), grounds the science in real places before the training turns to risk and decision-making: the nature of fire, flood and sea-level risk; the role of community stakeholders and the intangible dimensions of heritage; the realities of financing adaptation; and how to prioritise across a portfolio. Participants learn to gather and assess site-level data efficiently — including how to get the best from bibliometric and AI tools — and apply this directly to their projects. A round table coordinated by Dr Maria Girtzi, on interpretation, local communities and the adaptation of heritage to climate change, brings the perspectives of the Empaths project to bear on these questions.

The Seasonal Schoool closes with participants presenting their study projects, followed by a day of one-to-one consultations. Participants — typically responsible for managing multiple heritage assets — leave equipped to decide whether and how to adapt their management approaches to protect those assets from current and predicted climate change, and to weigh and prioritise actions across their sites. All in person participants are going to be subsidized for their travel and accommodation expenses. Currently the level of subsidy is €800 for each participant. The RCH consortium and HERITΛGE are currently determining whether there will be additional support.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the school, participants will be able to:

1. Define the links between climate and heritage deterioration, and distinguish climate impacts from other human-driven influences.
2. Locate, access and critically interpret climate data, projections and model outputs relevant to heritage.
3. Explain the physical, chemical and biological deterioration processes that act on heritage materials.
4. Assess the risks posed by air pollution, fire, flood and sea-level rise to particular sites.
5. Account for intangible heritage, community stakeholders and the financing of adaptation when planning conservation.
6. Apply heritage climatology — supported by bibliometric and AI tools — to prioritise and plan adaptation across a portfolio of sites.

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Day	Morning	Afternoon
Monday 5 October	Introduction to the course and discussion of the challenges *Coordinators, EK, PB*	Introduction to the challenges of climate change for intangible heritage *EK*
Tuesday 6 October	Participant presentations (10 minutes each) on the planned theme of their study project, followed by discussion *PB & JR*	Climate data, climate projections and environmental change: an introduction to sources and how to access them; models and their outputs *PB & JR*
Wednesday 7 October	Processes, heritage materials and environmental threats *PB & JR*	Physical deterioration processes: freeze–thaw cycles, salt crystallisation and thermal stress *PB & JR*
Thursday 8 October	Chemical deterioration processes and air pollution *PB & JR*	Converting heritage climatology into conservation planning *PB & JR*
Friday 9 October	Visit to the Acropolis *With the School of Conservation*	Climate-change biology and biological deterioration: mould, insects, lichen, algae and macrophytes, together with animal pests (rodents, birds, etc.) *PB*
Saturday 10 – Sunday 11 October · Fieldwork, cultural visit and site study		
Monday 12 October	Project planning and developing the participant projects *PB & EK*	Fires, floods and sea-level rise — the nature of the risks; community stakeholders and intangible aspects of heritage; financing adaptation (e.g. historical practices at University of Oxford); prioritization *PB*
Tuesday 13 October	Gathering data and assessing the risk to particular sites, especially for the participant projects; getting the best from bibliometric and AI tools *PB & JR (online)*	Round table: Interpretation, Local Communities and Heritage Climate Change Adaptation *Coordinated by Dr Maria Girtzi (Empaths project)*
Wednesday 14 October	Preparing participant project presentations *PB — available to help as needed*	Project presentations by participants *PB, EK & JR (online)*
Thursday 15 October	Optional consultation and one-to-one meetings	

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The Instructors

Dr. Jennifer Richards is a Teaching Fellow in Physical Geography at St John's College, Oxford, having completed her DPhil there and conducted research at Adelaide University and University College London. She teaches across a broad range of physical geography topics — including climatology, geomorphology, and biogeography — guiding students from foundational concepts through to advanced earth system dynamics. Her research explores how environmental processes such as wind, rain, and moisture drive the weathering and deterioration of natural and man-made materials, with a particular focus on heritage sites in dryland regions. She works to better understand these human-environmental interactions in order to inform conservation strategies for culturally significant sites facing harsh and changing climatic conditions. Her work has been published in journals including *Geomorphology*, *Scientific Reports*, *Heritage Science*, and *Science of the Total Environment*.

Prof Peter Brimblecombe was born in Australia, but went to university in Auckland, New Zealand where he did a PhD on the aqueous chemistry of sulphur dioxide in the atmosphere. He is a Professor in Atmospheric Chemistry and was appointed senior editor of Atmospheric Environment in 1990. He is convinced that environmental pollution is not merely a matter of environmental chemistry. The smells have to be smelt. Painting and poetry can be as informative as a scientific description when trying to understand the complexities of environmental problems. He admires detective writers; no crap and their hearts are in the right place. The title of his book The Big Smoke was meant remind us of Philip Marlowe in The Big Sleep, so he was pleased when this academic book was reviewed as "reading like a thriller". Recently he has been thinking much about the representation air pollution in cinema in films such as Blade Runner.

Dr Evangelos Kyriakidis is the founding Director of the Heritage Management Organization. Trained at University College London and at Cambridge in classical archaeology, linguistics and anthropology, Evangelos has been a senior lecturer in Aegean Prehistory at the university of Kent and director of the MA in Heritage Management (KENT-AUEB), a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London and of the Archaeological Society of Athens, a Leventis Senior Research Fellow in Heritage Management at Kent, as well as a Visiting Professor in the University of Basel and at UCLA. Evangelos has research interests in Mycenaean administration, Minoan religion and iconography, as well as ritual theory. He is also interested in heritage based community engagement, the history of archaeological thought and in archaeological site management and planning.

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Selection Criteria

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In-person participants (15) — in priority order

1. **Mandate to act** — authority over, or a direct line to, heritage management decisions and budgets at one or more heritage sites.
2. **A live, actionable project** — a named site or portfolio of sites that can receive a climate adaptation strategies in the following 12 months.
3. **Multiplier reach** — a role — national agency, trainer, network — that lets the learning spread to many sites or peers.
4. **Commitment to follow-up** — willingness to deliver a 1 and 2 year plan, join annual check-ins, and share their case with the network.
5. **Regional and heritage-type spread** — applied across the cohort, so countries, climate zones and material types are well distributed.
6. **Vulnerability of the heritage context** — favouring high-risk, under-resourced settings, provided the readiness above is also met.

Online participants (100) — streams in priority order

1. **Internal team members of the 15** — colleagues who form a backing team inside each of the 15.
2. **Underserved constituencies** — heritage professionals from African and Middle Eastern countries, reached through RCH's networks.
3. **Open network** — the wider partnership, building awareness and the pipeline for future rounds.