

10th Seminar of the UNESCO Chair and the UNITWIN UNESCO network CULTURE, TOURISM, DEVELOPMENT

Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University, IREST-EIREST,
Centre du Patrimoine Mondial de l'UNESCO

ICOMOS France, Association des Biens Français du PM de l'UNESCO

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The neolithic village ruins of Skara Brae.
Source: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk>

CLIMATE CHANGE, WORLD HERITAGE AND TOURISM

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Climate change is one of the fastest growing threats to World Heritage sites globally. Virtually all are affected by changes in the climate, but many are facing severe climate impacts including coastal flooding and erosion, more intense hurricanes and typhoons, and increased risk of damaging wildfires.

Most World Heritage sites are important tourist destinations, and many are among the most emblematic places on the planet, helping to drive economic development and tourism.

However global growth in tourism brings significant issues.

At a global scale, tourism is a major factor contributing to climate change. Carbon emissions from tourism, including air travel, are expected to double in the next 25 years. Climate change poses a risk to the integrity and preservation of World Heritage properties, endangering what makes them attractive to tourists.

Site managers are confronted with assessing risk and managing environmental change, often with few resources and little scientific information about local climate scenarios. Climate change can also impact the safety, quality of experience and number of visitors to sites, and the tourism sector itself is affected and threatened by climate change. Growing water scarcity, more extreme weather events, security concerns, rising insurance costs, and more generally the damage caused to World Heritage properties by climate change are weakening established tourism models and, with them, the local economies that depend on tourism. Where visitor numbers are already overwhelming site services, or where tourism development is uncontrolled, climate change can exacerbate the problems caused by unsustainable tourism.

Faced with these issues, the managers of World Heritage sites are setting up new measures to both mitigate and adapt to these phenomena. These include projects to assess risk, minimize the impacts of climate change by increasing site resilience, and launching initiatives to adapt to changing conditions. What are the conservation, management, communication and interpretation tools that are being developed and tested? What lessons are we learning?

The seminar "Climate Change, World Heritage and Tourism" aims to discuss these questions as holistically and at global, regional and local scales.

Information and registration : The seminar is aimed at heritage site managers, public decision-makers, researchers, students and doctoral students interested in heritage, tourism and climate change issues. Registration is free but mandatory by email to : Chaire-UNESCO-TOURISME@univ-paris1.fr

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