



SD-WISHEES

Insight Brief

Innovation Pathways to enhance reach of R&I outcomes that are intended to protect cultural heritage against hydroclimatic events

Protecting our cultural heritage in the face of climate change requires innovative approaches.

SD-WISHEES aims to identify existing practices and innovations, instruments and mechanisms that enhance the reach of research and innovation (R&I) outcomes towards climate adaptation practices and policies.

This brochure outlines some of the key strategies identified for developing and implementing effective dissemination and exploitation of R&I outcomes to foster adaptation and preservation of cultural heritage in a climate change context.



Our research, based on a literature review and interviews with relevant researchers and providers of knowledge on this topic, has highlighted four key recommendations that can support improved dissemination and exploitation of R&I focused on water, climate and cultural heritage (the Nexus):

Engagement and Co-creation with 'end users'

Involve community and stakeholder-led approaches throughout the R&I process to improve effectiveness and uptake of outcomes. Such engagement can improve utility, trust and adoption of R&I solutions in a Nexus that requires matching with local ancestral knowledge and cultural awareness.

Raising Societal Awareness

Peer engagement, in-country networking and bridging organisations can help to raise societal awareness about the importance of protecting and adapting cultural heritage. These dissemination strategies have also been shown to overcome skepticism about the effectiveness of innovations, enhancing the potential for societal buy-in and adoption.

Proactive Knowledge Sharing

National and transnational knowledge platforms, government agencies and academia play a critical role in translating and sharing R&I outcomes, including through user-friendly technical reports and policy briefs. Beyond published data sharing, the resulting knowledge also needs to be shared more proactively through networking approaches such as knowledge hubs, demonstrations and collaborative clusters. This includes further informing decision-makers and research funding organisations on the importance of taking action.

Practical alignment with local needs and conditions

Practical and user-friendly information on R&I outputs is critical to enhance uptake. This includes demonstrating alignment with local legislative and regulatory conditions. It is therefore proposed to align dissemination of R&I outcomes with regional policies and frameworks to improve the potential for uptake and scalability. It is also important to build on support from organizations such as national heritage organizations that can proactively facilitate dissemination of the relevant outcomes.



Overcoming Barriers to Adoption

The barriers to adoption of R&I solutions in this Nexus can be summarized in the following main areas:

Limitations on data and background knowledge to use them

The most productive solution to this problem is to encourage local communities and stakeholders to get involved in co-creation of R&I outcomes right from the beginning and through to dissemination. This sharing of their local knowledge and understanding helps to translate technical information into usable knowledge.

Policy Fragmentation

It is incredibly important to develop supportive national policies and regulatory frameworks to facilitate uptake. These policies and frameworks should also encourage the sharing of results from pilot studies so that they are seen as valid beyond the specific development sites, to enhance the reach of their benefits.

Limited timing and resources

The timing for return on investments in R&I is often long term, so funding objectives should be aligned with the extended timeframes needed for engagement and support from the local communities.

Outcomes are not seen quickly and often take many years

Emerging topics like the protection and adaptation of cultural heritage and the effects of climate change, require sustained funding and commitment to allow time to demonstrate quantifiable and sustainable results. This is not always possible in short R&I project funding cycles, so new approaches to monitoring outcomes long term, and sharing the outcomes, are essential.





Conclusions

This Nexus of water, climate and cultural heritage is poorly understood, and emerging knowledge and technologies are not widespread. This is reflected by the lack of general understanding of the impacts of extreme hydroclimatic events on our cultural heritage and their importance. Action to protect and adapt natural, tangible and intangible heritage needs to be taken before the damage is irreversible and the heritage is lost.

Recommendations based on research to date:

- A more holistic approach to knowledge generation and sharing is required, with a focus on developing practical and community-led solutions.
- Improvements in transfer of data and knowledge management and its communication are needed, together with supportive policies.
- R&I funding objectives should support the longer time frames required for meaningful engagement and development of pilot programmes and sustainable solutions.

Join us in innovating for cultural heritage protection and adaptation. Together, we can create and disseminate practical, user-friendly and implementable solutions that make a real difference.