

14th WORLD TERRA CONGRESS ON EARTHEN ARCHITECTURE 2026
ORGANIZED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND TOURISM OF ABU DABI
IN UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

October 2025

[The 14th Terra World Congress on Earthen Architecture - Managing Change in Earthen Cultural Landscapes](#) will be held from 13 to 16 April 2026 at ADNEC Center, Al Ain, in the United Arab Emirates. Deadline for paper submission is 30th November 2025.

The Terra World Congress 2026 is a well-known worldwide meeting whose themes relate to the study and conservation of earthen architectural, archaeological and cultural landscape heritage, as well as contemporary earthen architecture. It is organised under the aegis of [ICOMOS](#) – [ISCEAH, the International Scientific Committee on Earthen Architectural Heritage](#).



The Terra 2026 World Congress in Al Ain is the 14th edition, which will be organised by the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi with the main theme “Managing Change in Earthen Cultural Landscapes”. This is the first time it will be hosted in the Arab region and is expected to draw 700 – 1000 participants with an estimated 120 – 150 presentations.

The four-day program will feature talks, posters, digital material, side events and activities that showcase the most recent findings and best practices in the study and conservation of earthen heritage. Sessions covering technical knowledge, management issues, methodology, research advancements, case studies, and best practice guidelines will be included in the programme.

The Congress *Managing Change in Earthen Cultural Landscapes* develops its activities through four key themes:

Theme 1: Transmitting Earthen Heritage and Architecture

- **Celebrating Earthen Heritage and Earthen Communities.** Goal: To celebrate the rich heritage of earthen architecture, recognizing its historical significance and cultural value. The celebration will help foster a sense of pride and appreciation for this building tradition.
- **Reviving Earthen Heritage Through Education and Research.** Goal: To integrate earthen heritage and architecture into formal, informal, and non-formal education systems. This will ensure that knowledge about this sustainable building material and practice is understood and passed down to future generations and is incorporated into modern educational curricula.
- **Promoting Earthen Architecture and its Benefits.** Goal: To focus on raising awareness about the numerous benefits of earthen architecture, including its sustainability, cost-effectiveness, and environmental friendliness. Public campaigns, workshops, and exhibitions will be used to disseminate this knowledge.
- **Documenting, Transferring and Teaching Know-How in Earthen Architecture.** Goal: To document traditional knowledge and techniques of earthen architecture, transfer this knowledge to interested parties, and teach these methods to ensure their preservation and continued use.



Theme 2: Safeguarding Earthen Cultural Landscapes

- **Understanding ECLs and Their Local Traditions.** Goal: To explore numerous case studies and activities that involve inventorying and documenting these landscapes, assessing and establishing an understanding of their historical, cultural, and environmental significance, addressing intangible and local traditions, and developing methodologies for their research.
- **Identification and Documentation of ECLs.** Goal: Capturing both their physical (tangible) and non- physical (intangible) attributes. This might include a detailed recording of architectural features at macro and micro levels, natural elements, and spatial configurations, as well as the cultural practices, traditions, and community narratives associated with these landscapes.
- **Approaches to Conservation for ECLs and Earthen Buildings.** Goal: To evaluate the intervention examples that have revitalized and/or motivated the conservation of earthen cultural landscapes and earthen buildings.
- **Management Frameworks for ECLs.** Goal: To address the development and practical examples that demonstrate the implementation of management frameworks, policies, and mechanisms for ECLs, such as the use of the HUL approach, traditional management systems, or the creation of novel approaches.

Theme 3: Innovations in Earthen Architecture

- **Innovations in Conservation, Materials, Techniques and Practices.** Goal: This theme will cover testing, development and implementation of innovative practices and techniques for earthen architecture conservation. This includes incorporating new technologies and methodologies that support the understanding of earthen materials and structures and their conservation.
- **Adaptive Re-use of Earthen Architecture.** Goal: This theme will cover projects and case studies in which earthen buildings have been adaptively reused. It will include the full spectrum of the projects, from the beginning to the end, including engagement, challenges and lessons learned.
- **Promoting Creativity in New Earthen Architecture Design and Cultural Landscapes.** Goal: To encourage creativity and innovation in the design of contemporary earthen architecture and adaptation of historic earthen architecture. This goal will aim to inspire architects and designers to explore new possibilities in using earthen materials for modern construction.

Theme 4: Resilience to Vulnerabilities of Earthen Cultural Landscapes

- **Regulations for Earthen Building Practices and Conservation of earthen heritage.** Goal: To create comprehensive policies, regulations, guidelines, manuals, and codes to standardize and guide the practice of earthen architecture. These documents will serve as essential references for professionals in the field.
- **Impacts of Climate Change and Natural Hazards on Earthen Cultural Landscapes.** Goal: To address the dual role of earthen architecture in the context of climate change. This involves studying the impact of climate change on earthen structures and exploring how earthen architecture can contribute to climate resilience and sustainability.
- **Challenges in Armed Conflict of Areas in Earthen Cultural Landscapes.** Goal: To address the difficulties of preserving earthen heritage in conflict zones and the opportunities for recovery afterwards and showing examples and plans for models addressing protection of earthen architecture in conflict zones.

The logo of the Congress is inspired by the recovered, collapsed earthen walls at the Iron Age site of Hili 2 in Al Ain, UAE, which displayed finger impressions from the masons over 3000 years ago. The logo aims to create a modern symbol that celebrates the timeless and enduring tradition of earthen architecture and highlights its tangible and intangible attributes. This aligns with the mission of the Terra World Congress to preserve, promote and celebrate earthen architecture and earthen architectural heritage.



The organizers invite all interested parties to submit their work by the deadline of 30 November 2025.

To know more

[Terra World Congress 2026](#)

[Registration](#)

[Article in CRAterre website](#)

[ICOMOS website](#)

[ISCEAH, the International Scientific Committee on Earthen Architectural Heritage.](#)

[ICOMOS 2024 Annual Report](#)

