

# SUSTAINING DIGITAL HERITAGE

## Sustaining Digital Heritage

Capacity Development and Networking for Digital Preservation and Access

Digital technologies and services have created a growing virtual domain of bits, powered by machines, which offers immense opportunities for **societal growth and development**.<sup>1</sup>

We must ensure that the cultural and creative sectors are economically competitive and helped to thrive in the digital realm.

There are, however, **significant challenges** to sustaining digital heritage. **Deep digital divides** exist where long-term preservation and user-driven access is concerned. A survey showed that while less than 20% of European museum collections are shared online<sup>2</sup>, in Africa and Asia this number is expected to be lower. The Covid pandemic has further highlighted the growing digital divide.

The volume of digital data in the world is increasing exponentially.

In 2020, **64.2 zettabytes** of data were created, a **314 percent** increase from 2015.

To seize the current opportunities offered by digital technologies, ICCROM is launching a new programme to enhance capacities for the **long-term preservation** of heritage in the digital domain, to promote its **equitable use** as a source of **creativity, knowledge** and **well-being** for present and future generations.

The Sustaining Digital Heritage (SDH) programme will offer training and knowledge sharing. **Cross-sectorial partnerships** will further amplify **cascading effects of capacity building activities**.

Through its learning partners, the programme will identify tools and strategies for ensuring long-term preservation and access of digital heritage. One of the primary goals of the SDH initiative is to develop a **self-sustaining network** of digital heritage leaders and communities.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/big-data-for-sustainable-development>

<sup>2</sup> NEMO - Digitisation and IPR in European Museums (March 2020)

The programme responds to ICCROM's [Strategic Directions](#) –

- 1.3 to foster emerging issues of cultural heritage and conservation, as well as
- 2.1 to lead and innovate capacity building at local, regional and international levels.

The Sustaining Digital Heritage (SDH) programme, will pursue the targets of the following [Sustainable Development Goals](#) –



[SDG 4 – Promote quality education](#) by engaging youth, women and vulnerable cultural bearers through skill development for creating digital heritage content;



[SDG 8 – Encourage decent work and economic growth](#) among cultural and creative industries by developing sustainable business models that use digital technologies;



[SDG 9 – Develop industries, spark innovation and boost infrastructure](#) through heritage-based initiatives; and



[SDG 13 – Contribute to climate Action](#) through responsible consumption and by developing low energy digital storage solutions.

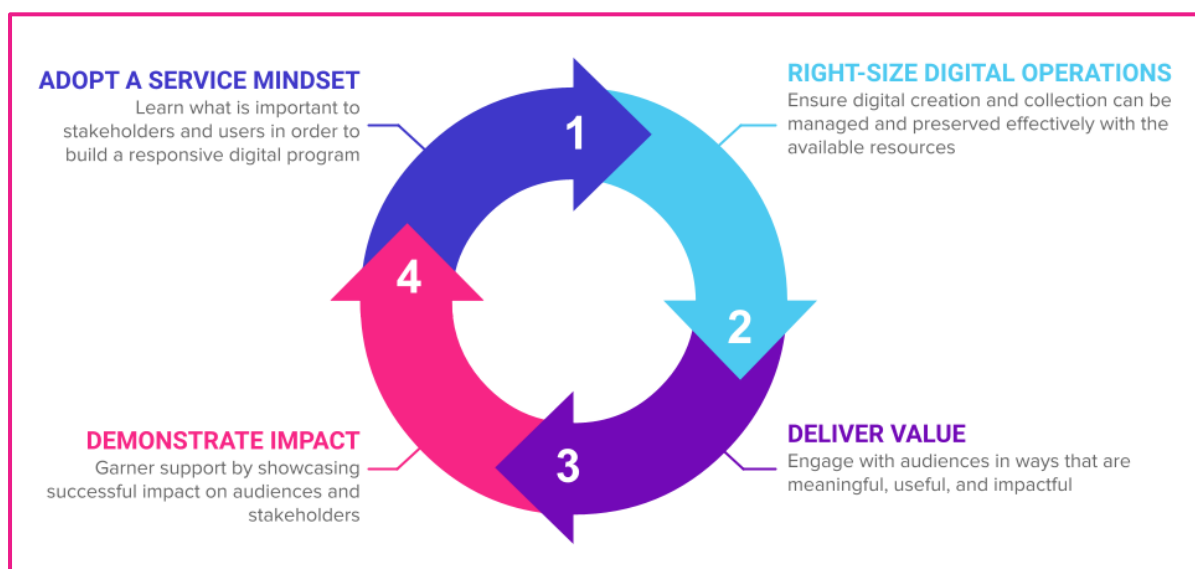


## How will ICCROM enhance capacities for sustaining digital heritage?

With our partners [AVP](#) and [NISV](#), ICCROM has developed an **integrated model**<sup>3</sup> that connects knowledge and expertise from different fields for developing capacities at various levels for the long-term preservation and creative use of heritage in the digital domain. The model emphasizes the following key actions: **adopt a service mindset; right-size digital operations; deliver value; and demonstrate impact**. The programme will use this model to empower diverse professionals around the world to build long-lasting solutions for digital collections.

<sup>3</sup> ICCROM (2021). *The Digital Imperative - Envisioning the Path to Sustaining Our Collective Digital Heritage. Summary of Research Finding & Opportunity Assessment*. Available at [https://www.iccrom.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/en\\_0\\_sustainingdigitalheritage-findingsreport\\_iccrom\\_2021.pdf](https://www.iccrom.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/en_0_sustainingdigitalheritage-findingsreport_iccrom_2021.pdf)





## Programme activities will include

- Development of **sustainability case studies** and **learning materials**
- Self-help **tools**
- Online short **courses**
- In-depth in-person **training**
- **Hackathons** and **webinars** to build networks and increase awareness



## Expected outcomes

- **Cascading impact** of learning and development on learning partners' staff and networks
- **Enhancing capacities** to build sustainable digital heritage programmes
- **Deeper understanding of digital heritage** problems and solutions, grown during the period of applied research
- **Increased awareness** of the potential of digital, as well as **visible changes** in the path of learning partners functioning
- Cohort-based learning will be a catalyst for building a **self-supporting cross-sectorial network** of proactive professionals



## How can you join?

- **Learning Partners**: Learning partners represent institutions that are on their digital journeys and looking to improve the sustainability of their work with digital heritage. They will work with the programme partners to develop case studies, learning materials and tools that can be used to support international capacity development.
- **Programme Partners**: Programme partners represent external organizations that take a role in building and informing the programme by supporting it with resources, staff and/or expertise. This may also involve educational support, programme promotion and communication.
- **Resource Partners**: Donors support the programme financially, providing funding and other resources (whether material or software) to ensure the well-functioning of learning activities and more.
- **Training**: The programme will develop capacities for working with and sustaining digital heritage through international trainings. Join to grow your knowledge of the digital heritage landscape and learn context-specific strategies for building sustainable digital programmes.
- **Artists, creators, volunteers**: This initiative also welcomes collaboration in these forms to help bring the programme to life.

To know more about the Sustaining Digital Heritage (SDH) programme, write to [digitalheritage@iccrom.org](mailto:digitalheritage@iccrom.org)