



## Call to contribution

# The Second International Conference on Saharan Architectural and Urban Heritage: Modernizing the past



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### Important dates

Abstracts must be sent in two languages (the language in which the article was written + English)	
Receipt of abstracts (400 words)	01/10/2025
Initial acceptance	01/20/2025
Sending complete articles	03/20/2025
Final acceptance of articles	04/05/2025

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### Send articles to the address

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**Selected articles are published in the journal  
Architecture and Environment C**

**Institute of Architecture and Urbanism  
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**The Second International Forum on  
the Saharan Urban Architectural  
Heritage: Modernizing the Past**

**On 23/24 April 2025 at the University of  
Batna1 , Batna - Algeria**

**Intervention languages**  
Arabic, English, French

**For your communications**  
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## Conference issues

Desert regions, often perceived as harsh and inhospitable, conceal a wealth of history, culture, and architecture. Ancient civilizations that thrived in these areas developed ingenious building techniques to overcome the challenges of the harsh climate. They crafted harmonious landscapes, utilizing local materials to construct mud houses, palaces, and entire cities. These architectural marvels represent a tangible link between the past and present of Saharan societies, embodying a deep and enduring cultural identity.

However, the rapid pace of global development and changing socioeconomic dynamics pose significant threats to this invaluable heritage. Modernization and urbanization often overlook the unique qualities of desert architecture, leading to neglect, decay, and outright destruction. It is imperative to recognize the importance of preserving this heritage and to implement strategies that balance progress with cultural conservation. By safeguarding these architectural treasures, we can ensure that future generations can appreciate and learn from the ingenuity and resilience of past civilizations.

The rapid urbanization and modernization of desert regions pose a significant threat to their unique architectural heritage. The emergence of modern, often poorly adapted structures disregards the cultural, environmental, and climatic characteristics of these areas. While these new buildings may address immediate functional needs, they often clash with the authentic local architecture, which incorporates sustainable and environmentally friendly solutions.

Current development policies prioritize urbanization and rapid modernization, neglecting the preservation of existing heritage. This devaluation of ancestral knowledge and techniques blurs the cultural identity of desert inhabitants. The lack of awareness, inadequate conservation initiatives, demographic pressure, and increasing urbanization exacerbate this issue.

To address these challenges, sustainable strategies must be developed to preserve desert architectural and urban heritage. This involves rethinking the integration of modernity, striking a balance between urban development and heritage preservation. Modernization should not replace or disregard traditional elements but rather adapt them to contemporary needs while retaining their cultural and architectural essence.

Promoting traditional building techniques that have proven their effectiveness over time is crucial. By combining these techniques with elements of bioclimatic

architecture and environmental technologies, it is possible to meet the needs of local residents without compromising their cultural heritage or identity.

The preservation and promotion of Sahrawi heritage can contribute to the economic and cultural development of local communities. By restoring historical buildings and converting them into museums, guesthouses, or cultural centers, desert regions can attract specialized tourism that respects and reveres local heritage and practices. This can strengthen the cultural identity of inhabitants, promote local crafts and traditional knowledge, and generate economic opportunities.

Learning from international policies applied in other regions with similar environments can provide valuable insights. International cooperation, involving experts, architects, and researchers, is essential to develop tailored solutions and implement effective conservation and modernization strategies.

This conference aims to address the critical issue of preserving and modernizing Sahrawi architectural and urban heritage. It seeks to find innovative and sustainable solutions that honor the cultural identity of Sahrawi regions while meeting contemporary development needs. The conference explores various approaches, ranging from material heritage preservation to identity affirmation and local economic development, including modernizing urban infrastructure while respecting architectural traditions.

The conference delves into the following key themes:

1. **Integrating Modern Solutions into Desert Architectural Heritage:** This theme focuses on sustainable and environmentally friendly approaches to preserving and modernizing desert architecture.
2. **The Role of Desert Heritage in Local Socio-Economic Development:** This theme explores the potential of desert heritage to drive cultural tourism, innovative projects, and local economic growth.
3. **International Exchange and Cooperation for Heritage Preservation:** This theme examines successful international policies and case studies to foster global collaboration and knowledge sharing in heritage preservation.

By addressing these themes, the conference aims to reconcile the past and the future, originality and modernity. This holistic approach ensures the dynamic and comprehensive preservation of the rich desert heritage.