

Company: Ministry of Culture
Company Description: The Ministry of Culture works to enrich the cultural ecosystem of the UAE by supporting the country’s cultural, art and heritage institutions. It provides a platform for artists and innovators, promotes cross-cultural dialogue, and delivers dynamic productions and experiences that represent the UAE’s rich and eclectic culture on national as well as international level.
Nomination Category: Sustainability Categories
Nomination Sub Category: Sustainability Leadership Award - in the Middle East and Africa
Nomination Title: Culture for Climate: Driving Sustainable Transformation Through Heritage and Innovation



1. Which will you submit for your nomination in this category, a video of up to five (5) minutes in length about the achievements of the nominated organization since 1 January 2023, OR written answers to the questions for this category? (Choose one):
- Written answers to the questions
2. If you are submitting a video of up to five (5) minutes in length, provide the URL of the nominated video here, OR attach it to your entry via the "Add Attachments, Videos, or Links to This Entry" link above, through which you may also upload a copy of your video.
3. If you are providing written answers for your submission, you must provide an answer to this first question: Briefly describe the nominated organization: its history and past performance (up to 200 words):

Total 159 words used.

The Cultural Heritage Department at the UAE Ministry of Culture is the national authority responsible for safeguarding and promoting both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Established to lead the cultural heritage agenda in alignment with the UAE’s national vision, the department has built a comprehensive framework grounded in strategic planning, sustainable governance, and global best practices.

Over the years, the department has evolved into a national model for heritage sustainability by integrating legislation, community participation, digital innovation, and cultural economics. It actively collaborates with leading international organizations such as UNESCO, ICCROM, and ICOMOS, reinforcing its global influence and credibility.

Among its notable accomplishments, the department was awarded the Ministry’s top internal honor: the Minister of Culture’s Award for Best Performing Department. All initiatives are guided by values of continuity, empowerment, and community engagement, positioning cultural heritage as a driver for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals—especially Goal 11.4, which focuses on protecting the world’s cultural and natural heritage.

4. If you are providing written answers for your submission, you must provide an answer to this second question: Outline the organization's achievements since the beginning of 2023 that you wish to bring to the judges' attention (up to 250 words):

Total 192 words used.

Since 2023, the Cultural Heritage Department has implemented transformative initiatives aligned with the UAE’s vision of cultural sustainability. Key achievements include the development of a comprehensive five-year strategic direction, aligning policies, initiatives, and enablers into a cohesive national framework with long-term cultural, social, and economic impact.

A pioneering milestone was the launch of the National Policy for Modern Architectural Heritage Preservation, the first federal initiative in the region to safeguard 20th-century buildings. The policy is community-centric and includes a national research grant program that awarded AED 400,000 to support 20 scholarly projects.

The department also enhanced its digital infrastructure through the National Heritage Register, consolidating data on tangible and intangible heritage to enable smarter planning and conservation.

Another major development is the drafting of the National Cultural Heritage Law, a future-proof legal framework addressing gaps in heritage protection and incorporating mechanisms for implementation, especially in the face of emerging challenges.

Collaborations were expanded with over 20 local and international partners—including universities, research centers, and community organizations—enabling programs such as private museum initiatives and community-led conservation. These efforts collectively strengthened the social fabric, empowered local actors, and institutionalized a sustainable heritage model.

5. If you are providing written answers for your submission, you must provide an answer to this third question: Explain why the achievements you have highlighted are unique or significant. If possible compare the achievements to the performance of other players in your industry and/or to the organization's past performance (up to 250 words):

Total 229 words used.

The department’s post-2023 achievements are distinguished by their strategic depth, pioneering nature, and tangible results. Compared to peer organizations in the UAE and the region, and to its own past performance, the department has significantly advanced heritage sustainability.

Firstly, the shift from program execution to policy leadership is a major transformation. The Modern Architectural Heritage Policy is the first of its kind in the Arab region to treat 20th-century architecture as a component of sustainable development. No other GCC country has adopted such a federal framework with community engagement at its core.

Secondly, the draft Cultural Heritage Law represents one of the most comprehensive legislative frameworks in the region—covering tangible and intangible heritage, modern challenges, and providing flexible, future-oriented solutions. It’s among the few laws globally to dedicate full sections to intangible heritage and heritage industries.

Thirdly, in terms of global competitiveness, the department has maintained the UAE’s leadership in UNESCO intangible heritage listings (ranked 1st in the Arab world and 10th globally). To ensure continued success, it launched a 10-year registration strategy, a rare initiative even among global heritage leaders.

Institutionally, the department doubled its project output and significantly expanded cross-sector partnerships. This internal governance evolution contributed to greater efficiency and integration across Ministry divisions.

Overall, the department’s holistic and future-focused model has shifted heritage from preservation to sustainable development, making it a cultural, social, and economic enabler.

6. You have the option to answer this final question: Reference any attachments of supporting materials throughout this nomination and how they provide evidence of the claims you have made in this nomination (up to 250 words):

Attachments/Videos/Links:

[Culture for Climate: Driving Sustainable Transformation Through Heritage and Innovation](#)

[REDACTED FOR PUBLICATION]