



FRH INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR 2024

Call for applications

Deadline extended: 11 October

The Religious Heritage Innovator of the Year is an annual award that celebrates excellence in the field of religious heritage by recognising projects that contribute significantly to the understanding, enhancement, safeguarding and promotion of Europe's places of worship.

The award was first launched by FRH in 2022 to showcase the exceptional work being done by religious heritage actors to delve into the historical context, cultural significance, and spiritual value of religious places, objects, or intangible religious heritage.

The 2024 edition is open for applications from 18 June to 11 October. The award will have an overall winner and four finalists whose projects will be widely promoted by FRH as examples of best practices and presented at the FRH Biennial Conference 2026.

Future for Religious Heritage

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1. Timetable

Call for applications: 18 June - 11 October 2024

Jury's meeting: beginning of October 2024

Announcement of the winner and finalists: mid-October 2024

Awards ceremony: FRH Biennial Conference 2026

2. Eligibility criteria

The competition is open to all the following actors with an ongoing or completed project related to the understanding, enhancing, safeguarding, and/or promotion of religious heritage:

- European public or private institutions (cultural heritage organisations, museums, universities, tourism boards, etc.)
- Public administrations at different levels (local, regional and national)
- Professionals from the cultural and creative industries
- Civil society organisations

In projects with several actors involved, at least one must be based in a European country.

3. Applications

Entries must be submitted between 18 June and 11 October via the form on the competition website: <https://www.frh-europe.org/religious-heritage-innovator-of-the-year/>.

Candidates will be asked to provide the following information:

- a) Name of the project
- b) Participating country(ies)
- c) Description of project
- d) Status of project (finished or ongoing)
- e) How does the project relate to the evaluation criteria?
- f) Website and social media (optional)
- g) Photographs (optional)
- h) Annexes (optional)
- i) Name of the managing organisation and contact information

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4. Evaluation criteria

Applications will be evaluated according to the five pillars of the [European Commission's Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage](#): inclusion, sustainability, resilience, innovation and cooperation. The jury will consider the following aspects:

1) Innovation

Applicants should demonstrate the innovative nature of their project. The call welcomes projects that introduce new approaches, technology, methodologies or social innovations.

2) Sustainability

This criterion refers to the use and/or promotion of environmental, cultural and social sustainable practices. For example, projects that are successful examples of adaptive re-use or extended use of heritage buildings; projects that demonstrate sustainable practices in terms of energy efficiency or reduction or the carbon footprint; projects that support sustainable tourism or incorporate religious heritage into existing responsible tourism strategies.

3) Inclusion

Community engagement and participation of different social groups is essential to guarantee the future of religious heritage. The jury will favorably evaluate projects empowering, engaging or facilitating access to religious heritage to local communities, young people, people with disabilities, ethnic/religious minorities or marginalized groups. Projects developed in cooperation with these groups or including them in the decision-making process will also be positively assessed.

4) Resilience

In an era of rapid environmental and technological changes, adapting fast and efficiently to the new situation is vital. This call welcomes projects that demonstrate the ability to address current challenges, learn from them, and take appropriate action to overcome them. Special consideration will be given to projects demonstrating resilience in scenarios of natural disasters or armed conflict.

5) Cooperation

Cross-sectoral projects and projects promoting cooperation and understanding among different cultural, social or religious groups will be positively assessed. For example, projects promoting interreligious dialogue, fostering dialogue between the EU and other countries, bringing together different ethnic communities, etc.

IMPORTANT: Applicants do not need to fulfill all evaluation criteria to the same degree. A project may be strongly related to one specific criterion and to a lesser extent to the others. In their submission, applicants should explain well the strengths of their project in relation to these criteria and highlight what is the added value it brings.

5. Selection process

A jury composed of highly qualified cultural heritage professionals and FRH representatives will select the five best projects from among all those submitted. From these five, one will be chosen as the overall winner and the other four will be finalists.

The jury is expected to meet in the first half of October to evaluate all submissions. The jury's decision will be communicated to all participants shortly after its deliberation. The overall winner and finalists will be publicly announced in the second half of October.

6. Awards ceremony

The awards ceremony will take place at the FRH Biennial Conference 2026 (location and date to be confirmed). The winner will be invited to take part in the conference with all costs covered up to a maximum of €1,000. Finalists will be welcomed to participate in the conference at their own expense.

The projects of the winner and the finalists will be included in a special publication by FRH and promoted at European events as examples of best practices.

