



V. International Correspondent

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1. General Information

International Correspondent on Cultural Heritage Protection in the Asia-Pacific Region 2025

Heritage Conservation in the Asia-Pacific: Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities

1. Background

ACCU Nara invites past training course participants to share and exchange information on cultural heritage protection in their home countries. This programme is a part of ACCU Nara's information gathering and dissemination efforts, and the recent updates and challenges shared during the programme are considered when evaluating how ACCU Nara can better support ongoing heritage protection in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, the programme also serves as platform for former participants to strengthen their networks with each and provide learning and collaboration opportunities.

Continuing from the previous year, the programme was held online with abstracts collated and published in ACCU Nara's annual report on training courses.

2. Date

14:00-16:00, 22 January 2026.

3. Organisers

This programme was organised by the Cultural Heritage Protection Cooperation Office, Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU Nara).

4. Participants (Listed in alphabetical order of countries)

- Malaysia: **Rohayah binti CHE AMAT** (*Senior Lecturer*, Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia)
- Nepal: **Suresh Suras SHRESTHA** (*Joint Secretary*, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation)
- New Zealand: **Matthew SCHMIDT** (*Senior Heritage Advisor/Kaitohu Matua Taonga Tuku Iho*, Southern South Island, Department of Conservation)
- Papua New Guinea: **Jethro Tulupul STALEN** (*Student*, World Heritage Studies Program, University of Tsukuba)
- Uzbekistan: **Tatyana TRUDOLYUBOVA** (*Researcher*, UNESCO Iraq Office)

5. Theme & Content

Theme: Heritage Conservation in the Asia-Pacific: Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities

Content: The presentation content should be related to cultural heritage in the Correspondents' country and introduce research or conservation and management projects conducted within it. The report should be related to cultural heritage protection projects in which the Correspondent is involved in. The focus of the International Correspondents' reports should be on the following:

- Efforts, initiatives, and achievements by the Correspondent in advancing research, protecting, transmitting, or utilising cultural heritage for the benefit of societies in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Current trends, ongoing challenges, and practical needs faced by heritage conservation professionals in Asia-Pacific countries.
- Innovative approaches, lessons learned, and opportunities for collaboration that contribute to the sustainable preservation of cultural heritage.

6. Requirements

Selected Correspondents were required to deliver a 15-minute presentation and submit a 500-word abstract.

7. Programme

14:00 – 14:05 Opening Remarks
MORIMOTO Susumu, *Director*
Cultural Heritage Protection Cooperation Office,
Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU Nara)

- 14:05 – 14:20 Papua New Guinea: **Jethro Tulupul STALEN**, *Student*
World Heritage Studies Program, University of Tsukuba,
‘Preliminary Study on Effects on Heritage Collections due to lack of disaster and hazard policy frameworks for heritage collections in Papua New Guinea: A case study on Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery & Kokopo Museum’
- 14:20 – 14:35 New Zealand: **Matthew SCHMIDT**,
Senior Heritage Advisor/Kaitohu Matua Taonga Tuku Iho
Southern South Island, Department of Conservation
‘Te Papa Atawhai/Department of Conservation Southern South Is. New Zealand:
Heritage Conservation Projects 2025-2026’
- 14:35 – 14:50 Malaysia: **Rohayah binti CHE AMAT**, *Senior Lecturer*
Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology,
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
‘From Research to Public Memory: Protecting Sydney Lake Garden as Cultural Landscape’
- 14:50 – 15:05 Nepal: **Suresh Suras SHRESTHA**, *Joint Secretary*
Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
‘Cultural Heritage Rehabilitation: EXPERIENCES and ACHIEVEMENTS’
- 15:05 – 15:20 Uzbekistan: **Tatyana TRUDOLYUBOVA**, *Researcher*
UNESCO Iraq Office
‘Uzbekistan’s types and approaches to cultural heritage documentation’
- 15:20 – 15:50 Q&A and Discussion Session
- 15:50 – 16:00 Wrap-up and closing remarks

8. Secretariat

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Patricia SUN, *Intern*, Programme Operation Department
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2. Abstracts

■ Jethro Tulupul STALEN, Papua New Guinea

Student, World Heritage Studies Program, University of Tsukuba

Title: *Preliminary Study on Effects on Heritage Collections due to lack of disaster and hazard policy frameworks for heritage collections in Papua New Guinea: A case study on Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery & Kokopo Museum*

Papua New Guinea is frequently affected by disasters and hazards, including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, flooding, droughts, and the growing impacts of climate change. While national disaster responses understandably prioritise human safety and critical infrastructure, cultural heritage often receives little attention in disaster preparedness and recovery planning. As a result, heritage institutions face compounded risks from both extreme events and long-standing gaps in policy, resources, and preventive conservation practices.



Figure 1 (a): Before



Figure 1 (b): After

Figure 1(a) and 1(b) (Image by UNITAR/UNOSAT, 2018): Satellite imagery for an initial rapid assessment of two mixed cultural and natural heritage sites – the Kikori River Basin and Sublime Karsts, which are on Papua New Guinea's World Heritage Tentative List. (UNITAR, 2018). Figure 1(a) is the satellite imagery of the area before the disaster. Figure 1(b) is the satellite imagery of the area after the disaster.

The absence of heritage-specific disaster and hazard policy frameworks affects museum collections in Papua New Guinea. The case study at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery in Port Moresby and the Kokopo Museum in East New Britain Province highlight the challenges faced at both national and provincial levels and demonstrate how environmental, biological, and governance factors interact to threaten the long-term survival of cultural heritage.



Figure 2



Figure 3

Figure 2 indicates that biological specimens and natural history collections are stored on the storage racks without proper guardrails. Figure 3 shows that World War II displays are improperly displayed at the Kokopo Museum.

A mixed-methods approach combining questionnaire surveys with on-site environmental monitoring and collection condition assessments was used as part of the investigation. Data were collected on relative humidity and temperature, pests, and mould, alongside staff experiences and perceptions of disaster preparedness and institutional decision-making. The findings reveal that persistently high relative humidity levels, often exceeding recommended thresholds, have directly contributed to widespread mould outbreaks and pest infestations at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Equipment failures, including air-conditioning breakdowns, further exacerbate these

conditions and limit staff capacity to respond effectively. At Kokopo Museum, environmental risks are compounded by geological hazards such as volcanic activity, ash tephra falls, earthquakes, and flooding. These risks reflect the museum’s geographic setting and underline the need for locally adapted disaster strategies. Across both institutions, the absence of clear heritage-focused disaster plans has resulted in reactive and inconsistent decision-making.



Figure 4



Figure 5

Figure 4. (supplied by Mr Tiko Waundu). Archaeological collections (Figure 4) and Natural History Collections (Figure 5) suffered from a mold outbreak. The mold was caused by high relative humidity and continuous malfunctioning of the HVAC system.

Hazards become disasters not only through sudden events, but also through prolonged inaction and insufficient planning, as we have seen through prolonged high relative humidity at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Preventive conservation, often viewed as secondary to more visible emergency responses, emerges as a critical tool for disaster risk reduction in cultural heritage. Integrating heritage into disaster policy frameworks, strengthening institutional preparedness, and empowering museum professionals in decision-making are essential steps toward safeguarding heritage collections. Ultimately, protecting heritage collections also supports people and communities. Cultural heritage provides identity, continuity, and resilience, particularly in disaster-prone contexts.



Presentation by Jethro Tulupul STALEN

■ **Matthew SCHMIDT, New Zealand**

Senior Heritage Advisor/Kaitohu Matua Taonga Tuku Iho, Southern South Island, Department of Conservation

Title: *Te Papa Atawhai/Department of Conservation Southern South Island New Zealand: Heritage Conservation Projects 2025-2026*

The Southern South Is. of New Zealand is rich in its variety of Polynesians/Māori (beginning ca. 1280AD), Pakeha (European) (beginning with the arrival of Cook in 1769) and Chinese (beginning in the later 19th century) heritage places and sites. Most of these sites lie on land and water managed by the Department of Conservation (“DOC”) as large swathes of this land are conservation areas. Of the approximately 3000 recorded heritage sites on DOC land and water, 143 places consisting of 250 heritage sites/features are actively managed by DOC.

In 2025-2026, DOC focused on the conservation of 13 heritage places. Three places were of particular importance: the Whenua Hou Codfish Island 1810s-20s settlement site; the 1870s Bobs Cove Limestone Kilns Managers House; and the 1873 Lindis Hotel ruins.

The Whenua Hou heritage site contains subsurface evidence of the 1810s-20s Pakeha and Māori settlement site

on the island. The site had been excavated on four occasions with initial work focused on research but later work for salvage reasons. Taonga/artefacts from the excavations were housed in a variety of locations for curation and conservation reasons but a comprehensive report inventorying all the known artefacts had not been undertaken. In addition, decisions were required from the Whenua Hou Committee, which has representatives on the committee from the various Runaka (Māori families) connected to the island, on where the taonga should be curated in the long term. This project produced a taonga inventory and, through a workshop with Runaka, decisions were made on the future curation of the taonga.

The Bobs Cove Limestone Kilns Managers House and the 1873 Lindis Hotel ruins are both stone structures. The Bobs Cove Managers House is located near Queenstown which, in the late 19th century, was a bustling goldfields town. Lime was required for building construction and so lime kilns were established by limestone outcrops near the town. The Bobs Cove Managers House was built of well-dressed limestone blocks by a skilled stone mason and contained only two rooms: a bedroom and an office. After the lime kilns closed at the end of the 19th century, the house was abandoned and became a ruin. DOC stabilised the ruin and built a protective roof over the top which matched the original roof alignment.

The Lindis Hotel was built in 1873 in the isolated Lindis Valley to serve travellers coming through the valley to and from Central Otago. It was built of dressed schist stone and was expanded in size in the late 19th century. It functioned as a hotel until ca. 1923 but, after the roof was removed in 1924, it became a ruin. Its importance lies in its association with an initial gold rush to this location in 1861, later depression mining and the history of early hotels and tourism. DOC is currently undertaking stonework conservation on the ruin which will finish in April 2026, and a transparent roof designed to let light onto the stonework will be built by the end of 2026.



Presentation by Matthew SCHMIDT

■ Rohayah binti CHE AMAT, Malaysia

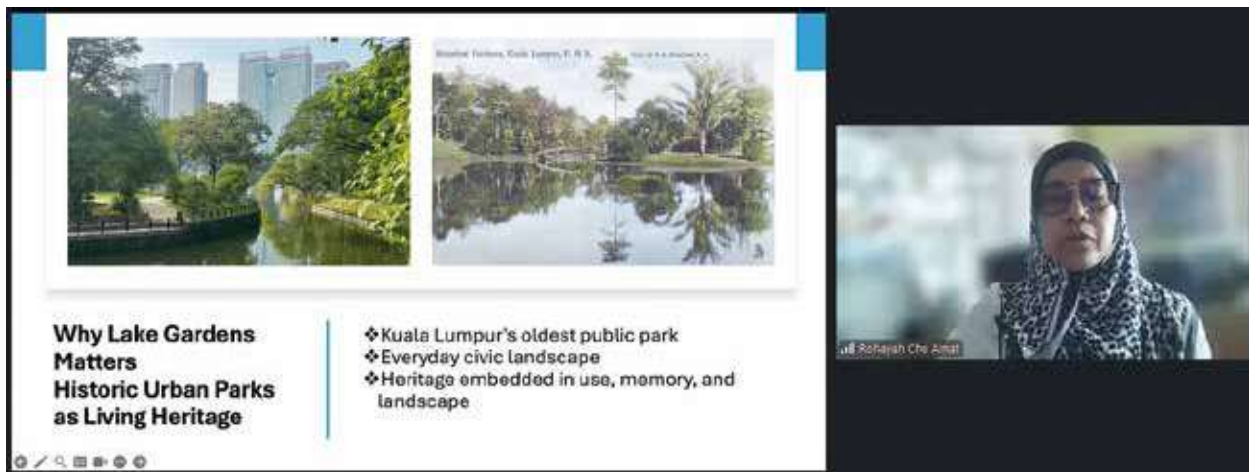
Senior Lecturer, Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

Title: *From Research to Public Memory: Protecting Sydney Lake Garden as Cultural Landscape*

Historic urban parks are among the most intensively used public spaces in cities, yet they remain one of the most vulnerable forms of cultural heritage. Unlike monuments or historic buildings, their significance is embedded in landscapes, everyday practices, and collective memory elements that can erode gradually without any visible physical loss. This presentation reflects on a recent cultural heritage protection project centred on Lake Gardens, Kuala Lumpur's oldest public park and a foundational civic landscape in Malaysia's urban history. Lake Gardens originated in the late nineteenth century as part of the early colonial formation of Kuala Lumpur. In 1884, Alfred Reid Venning, then Treasurer of Selangor, proposed the creation of a public garden for the town. The proposal was approved by F.A. Swettenham in 1888, and a 173-acre swampy area was identified due to its proximity to government quarters and the hospital at Bluff Hill, as well as its natural setting along the Bras Bras River. Officially named the 'Public Gardens,' it was conceived in the style of European public parks of the period and formally opened on 13 May 1889 by the Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Cecil Clementi Smith. The lake within the park was named 'Sydney' in honour of Constance Sydney Holmes, the wife of Swettenham, and the park soon became popularly known as Lake Gardens. In 2022, the site was redesignated as Perdana Botanical Gardens, reflecting ongoing institutional and functional transformations.

The KL Dulu Trail Guide: Lake Gardens was undertaken as a commissioned heritage documentation and interpretation initiative, with the aim of safeguarding Lake Gardens not through physical conservation works, but through researched public engagement. Drawing on archival research, spatial analysis, and cultural landscape interpretation, the project examined the park's evolution from its colonial origins to its post-independence role in nation-building and its contemporary function as an everyday recreational landscape. Particular attention was given to how layers of meaning, memory, and use have accumulated over time, forming an intangible yet critical dimension of heritage value.

Rather than treating publication as an academic outcome, the project positioned the resulting guide book as a heritage protection instrument. The book functions as a public memory archive, an educational resource, and a shared reference for institutions and park users. By translating scholarly research into accessible narratives and visual storytelling, it bridges institutional knowledge and public understanding, ensuring that cultural significance is communicated beyond expert and professional circles. In this way, documentation and interpretation are reframed as active and preventative forms of heritage protection for living cultural landscapes. The presentation argues that heritage protection must move beyond material preservation to address the fragility of public memory in rapidly transforming cities. In the absence of demolition, cultural landscapes such as Lake Gardens remain vulnerable to becoming generic amenities, detached from their historical and civic meanings. By situating Lake Gardens within broader cultural landscape and living heritage discourses, the presentation offers a transferable model for protecting historic urban parks across Asia. It highlights the role of research as an ethical and practical tool for sustaining public memory, cultural continuity, and long-term stewardship while allowing landscapes to continue evolving.



Presentation by Rohayah binti CHE AMAT

■ Suresh Suras SHRESTHA, Nepal

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation

Title: *Cultural Heritage Rehabilitation: EXPERIENCES and ACHIEVEMENTS*

The catastrophic earthquake of 25 April 2015 in Nepal not only precipitated a profound humanitarian crisis but also engendered an unparalleled disruption to the country's tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The seismic event resulted in extensive structural damage across 31 districts, affecting approximately 920 cultural monuments (and 845 monasteries), with the Kathmandu Valley—recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Property—suffering damage to 170 monuments, including 33 complete collapses and 137 partial destructions. While the Post Disaster Needs Assessment quantified the economic loss to heritage at USD 205 million, the more consequential loss was epistemic and cultural: the disruption of historical continuity, erosion of traditional craftsmanship, and attenuation of socio-spiritual practices embedded in these monuments.

Nepal's heritage rehabilitation response represents a paradigmatic case of post-disaster cultural governance, wherein rehabilitation was approached as both a technical and epistemic exercise. By 2025, 815 monuments had been rehabilitated, and 164 restored within the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Property. This demonstrates a significant alignment of institutional capacity, technical expertise, and socio-cultural engagement, resulting in a recovery trajectory that balances authenticity, structural integrity, and community agency.

The process confronted multifaceted challenges. A critical shortage of traditional technical human resources, including masons, carpenters, and artisans proficient in historical techniques, coincided with limited production of indigenous construction materials such as bricks, timber, and lime-surkhi mortar. Institutional coordination complexities, compounded by multi-layered governance involving national authorities, local stakeholders, and international partners, further complicated project execution. Additionally, rigorous documentation, archival research, and analytical assessment were indispensable prerequisites for credible heritage rehabilitation, underscoring the epistemic dimension of post-disaster heritage conservation and management.

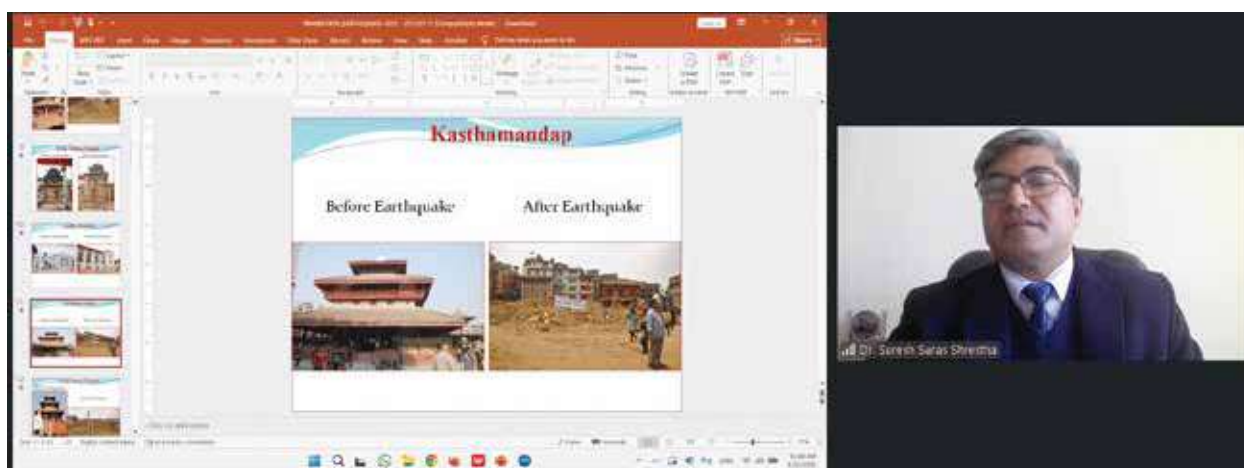
Nepal's strategic response entailed the development of comprehensive conservation guidelines, emphasising the use of traditional techniques while circumscribing the application of modern interventions to contexts of necessity. The principles of 'Back to Traditional Technique and Technology' and 'Preserve Site Authenticity' constituted normative frameworks guiding both technical execution and policy rationale. Institutional mechanisms, including the NRA's CLPIUs and DLPIUs in coordination with the Department of Archaeology through ERCO, facilitated integrated

project management, while specialised technical task forces and capacity-building programs ensured knowledge transfer and sustainability.

Crucially, the active engagement of local communities functioned as both an epistemic and operational vector. Indigenous knowledge systems, ritualistic insights, and craftsmanship expertise were mobilised, enabling not merely structural restoration but also revitalisation of socio-cultural practices intrinsic to heritage sites.

This experience elucidates several globally relevant lessons: the centrality of systematic research and documentation, the irreplaceable value of traditional knowledge, the imperative of institutional coordination, and the efficacy of community involvement as a sustainable mechanism. Nepal's post-earthquake heritage rehabilitation exemplifies how a developing nation, despite constraints, can orchestrate a culturally sensitive, technically robust, and socially inclusive recovery paradigm.

The Nepalese case thus extends beyond mere rehabilitation; it constitutes an exemplar of heritage governance, resilience, and knowledge integration, offering critical insights for international discourse on post-disaster cultural policy and the preservation of historical authenticity.



Presentation by Suresh Suras SHRESTHA

■ **Tatyana TRUDOLYUBOVA, Uzbekistan**
Researcher, UNESCO Iraq Office

Title: *Uzbekistan's types and approaches to cultural heritage documentation*

Uzbekistan boasts a rich historical and cultural heritage comprising around 8,000 registered sites, including seven World Heritage properties: four historical cities and two natural transboundary sites, as well as one transboundary Silk Road corridor. One of these historic cities is currently on the List of World Heritage in Danger, which highlights the importance of effective documentation and protection measures, among other actions.

In this context, the Agency of Cultural Heritage is responsible for identifying historic buildings. It also registers and documents them. The Agency maintains the state register and cadastre. It issues site passports and it defines protection zones. It also oversees conservation work, expert evaluations, digitisation processes, and the management of specially protected historic areas, including traditional mahallas (neighbourhoods).

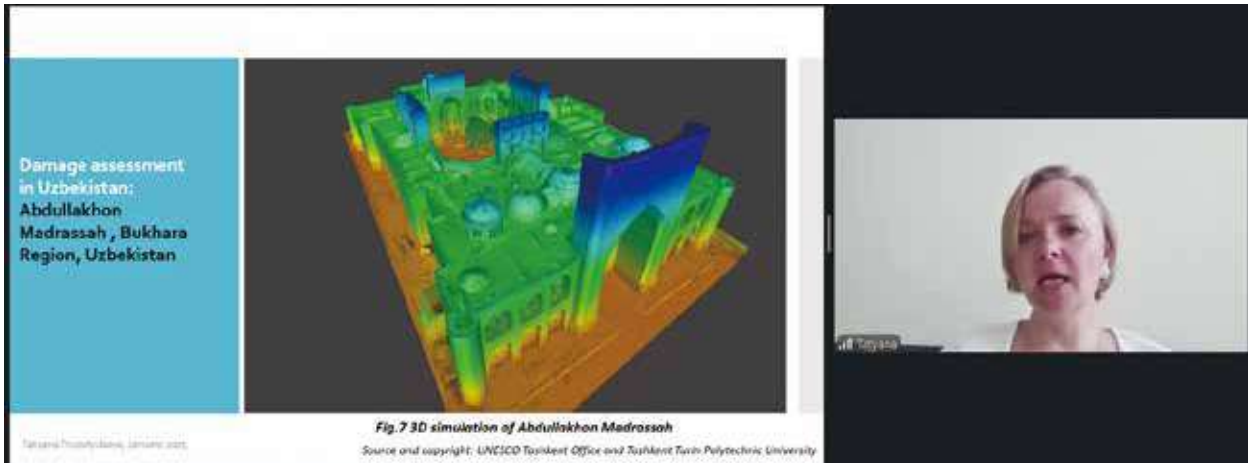
The main legal framework for the protection of cultural heritage sites is set out in the 2001 Law on the Protection and Use of Cultural Heritage Sites and the 2009 Law on the Protection and Use of Archaeological Heritage Sites. To facilitate the rehabilitation of historic sites, the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 265 (30 March 2019) introduced a comprehensive documentation package, regulating the documentation requirements related to the protection and use of tangible cultural heritage.

Within this framework, international cooperation has played a significant role in enhancing documentation practices, particularly with regard to World Heritage properties. The UNESCO Tashkent Office has made a significant contribution to preservation efforts by conducting detailed field surveys of sites such as the Historic Centre of Bukhara (2008–2013), Itchan Kala (2016), and the Historic Centre of Shakhrisayabz (2017). These surveys were primarily conducted using empirical methods, such as interviewing householders, creating hand-drawn sketches of houses, and taking photographs, with all the collected data subsequently integrated into a GIS database and transmitted to the Uzbek government.

Building on this experience, more advanced documentation techniques have recently been introduced. In 2023, the UNESCO Tashkent Office, supported by the World Heritage Fund and in collaboration with Turin University Tashkent and local Bukhara companies, conducted an extensive survey of the Abdullakhan Madrasah in Bukhara. This resulted in the creation of a comprehensive photogrammetric model of the monument. This project is an example of good

practice that could be applied to other historic sites in Uzbekistan.

Photogrammetry can be an effective tool for documenting cultural heritage because it can provide accurate, measurable data in the form of 3D models, orthophotos and drawings. This data can support conservation analysis and decision-making. It enables the detailed recording of geometry, surface conditions, and damage, such as cracks, deformation, and material loss, while remaining non-invasive and safe for fragile historic structures. Photogrammetry also creates a permanent digital record for monitoring changes over time and planning interventions. It is relatively cost-effective and integrates well with GIS, CAD, and BIM systems. While conventional digital photography may be sufficient for smaller sites, photogrammetry is particularly valuable for documenting the complex architectural forms and traditional urban fabric of historic cities such as those in Uzbekistan in line with international heritage documentation and conservation standards.



Presentation by Tatyana TRUDOLYUBOVA



Group photo