

Call for Collaboration Letter

Archaeological, Historical and Ancestral perspectives f(r)om the Global South to navigate the Anthropocene crisis. An Assessment Report for the Convention of Parties.

Dear Colleagues,

The current era, known as the Anthropocene, signifies a period where our species exerts a profound influence on Earth's systems. While geologists pinpoint the Anthropocene's formal commencement in the 1960s, the origins and drivers of this epoch possess deep and often unequal historical underpinnings. Archaeology, history, and palaeoecology increasingly underscore the long-lasting consequences of human-environment interactions on contemporary ecosystems, which might trigger Earth system feedbacks. Furthermore, it is evident that the onset of European colonialism and the formation of a geopolitical Global South disrupted millennia of Indigenous landscape management, resulting in enduring global socioeconomic disparities and 21st-century challenges.

To shed light on these complexities, we are assembling a panel of specialists from diverse backgrounds, equipped with multifaceted methodological approaches. Our mission is to underscore how dialogue among archaeology, history, palaeoecology, Indigenous traditional knowledge, and oral histories can yield intricate insights into the evolution of human land use across space and time, shaping the world we inhabit. Crucially, by ensuring the inclusion of these perspectives, with a particular emphasis on the Global South and its scholars, we endeavor to address long-term questions regarding Anthropocene dynamics. This is especially vital for regions and communities most severely impacted by climate change and poverty, which have also pioneered sophisticated theories and approaches for adapting to environmental unpredictability.

Our panel also seeks to underscore the pivotal role of heritage sites and traditional ecological and landscape knowledge in fostering sustainable approaches to landscape care. These approaches offer lasting economic, cultural, and ecological benefits for future generations. At times, these perspectives may challenge prevailing conservation and developmental models, but it is imperative that they are heard if we are to find suitable and just solutions.

Our goal is to present case studies and viewpoints from across the Global South to create the foundation for a collaborative, multi-authored Assessment Report. We plan to submit this report to the Convention of Parties (COP) 30 meeting in Brazil in 2025, serving as a platform for often-marginalized voices. By doing so, we aim to provide a practical, tangible framework for combining historical perspectives and Indigenous theories to advocate for a more equitable and sustainable Anthropocene trajectory.

We are extending an invitation to researchers and research groups working on interdisciplinary and historical approaches, as well as Indigenous peoples, local communities, and stakeholders based in and working from the Global South, to collaborate in crafting this Assessment Report. We intend to encompass four primary areas in the report:

1. Constructing a Conceptual Framework: We will explore the historical foundations of the Anthropocene and contemporary challenges in climate and biodiversity. Our aim is to foreground a critical perspective from the Global South, focusing on the historical drivers and inequalities in responses and responsibilities. We intend to challenge the perception of the Anthropocene as a product of all humanity and advocate for equitable and redistributive conservation structures.

2. Relevance of Paleoecological Reconstructions: We will emphasize the significance of paleoecological reconstructions and historical documentation of human settlements in understanding contemporary ecosystem dynamics. Our goal is to illustrate how multidisciplinary approaches to past environmental reconstructions, combined with historical and archaeological records, can enable an exploration of the long-term interactions between climate and human societies on ecosystem dynamics in the 21st century. We will favor comparative perspectives across distinct geographies and provide concrete examples of how the past informs contemporary policy.

3. Biodiversity Management across the Holocene: This axis aims to highlight evidence of human interactions with plant and animal biodiversity on local, regional, and global scales. We will emphasize how innovative archaeological science approaches, in tandem with traditional knowledge perspectives, can unravel species

movements, extirpations, extinctions, and the role of historical processes in reshuffling communities and nutrient flows across different parts of the globe.

4. Global, National, and Traditional Heritage Protection: We aim to bring together experiences of local and traditional strategies for cultural heritage and their interaction with national policies. We will address the challenges associated with conserving and utilizing cultural legacies. We will underscore the interconnectedness of natural and cultural heritage, avoiding the exclusion of the human from landscapes that have been cared for or interacted with over centuries and millennia. This axis will also explore the significance of intangible cultural heritage and its role in landscape interactions.

This platform is collaborative, multi-authored, and open for subscription. Please subscribe to our mailing list to receive instructions on how to participate in this crucial initiative.

Let us unite our expertise and diverse perspectives to pave the way for a more just, sustainable Anthropocene. Together, we can make a meaningful impact on our shared future.

Sincerely,

Archaeo Anthropocene Group

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