

# 2025 annual summary

Arcadia helps people to record cultural heritage, to conserve and restore nature, and to promote open access to knowledge. We want future generations to enjoy the diversity of human culture and the natural world.

## A year in giving

In 2025, we made grant payments totalling

**\$113**  
million

**nature**

**\$59**  
million

**culture**

**\$21**  
million

**open  
access**

**\$19**  
million

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We also made grant payments totalling \$14m to causes and projects that do not fall under our three funding areas.

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You can find information on all our grants on our website and 360Giving, or you can **sign up to our newsletter.**

Faced with an increasingly fractured and fragile world, Arcadia's work to ensure that our shared nature, culture, and knowledge are preserved for all has never felt more pressing. We have continued to support our grantees through a challenging year, giving them the flexibility to manage unexpected changes in the global funding environment.

Our long-term commitment to organizations that do good work is reflected in our renewed funding to **Oceana Inc.**, whose campaigns to protect marine biodiversity we have supported since 2007. Alongside **Oceans 5** and our **Joint 30x30 Funding Initiative** with Bloomberg Philanthropies, Oceana remains a cornerstone of Arcadia's commitment to restoring flourishing and sustainable seas.

We also renewed our support for DREAMSEA, a programme run by the Center for the Study of Islam and Society at the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Jakarta and the **University of Hamburg**, which is preserving and digitizing endangered manuscripts across Southeast Asia. And we made a further grant to **PublicResource.Org**, a champion for ensuring public access to laws and regulations in countries around the world.

In 2025 we also celebrated the completion of the first round of large scale restoration projects supported through the **Endangered Landscapes and Seascapes Programme**, hosted by the **Cambridge Conservation Initiative**. These projects have shown the enormous potential to help nature regenerate across land and sea in Europe, in ways that not only support the climate and the natural world, but also bring huge benefits to local communities.

Arcadia is a family-led foundation. We are grateful for the continued support of our Donor and Advisory Boards, and for the partner organizations which run grant programmes on our behalf.

Simon Chaplin  
Chief executive

The greater spotted woodpecker in the Southern Carpathian Mountains. Endangered Landscapes and Seascapes Programme. Credit: Dan Dinu.





African elephants with Mount Kenya in the background, Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya.  
Fauna and Flora. Credit: Juan Pablo Moreiras.

# Conserving and restoring nature

We want to help nature survive and flourish. Our grants support solutions to the global biodiversity and climate crises.

Our nature funding area focuses on **on-site interventions, governance, and leadership.**

In 2025 we made grant payments totalling

# \$59m

to conserve and restore nature and awarded new grants totalling \$17.68m

See new grants awarded in 2025 on page 7

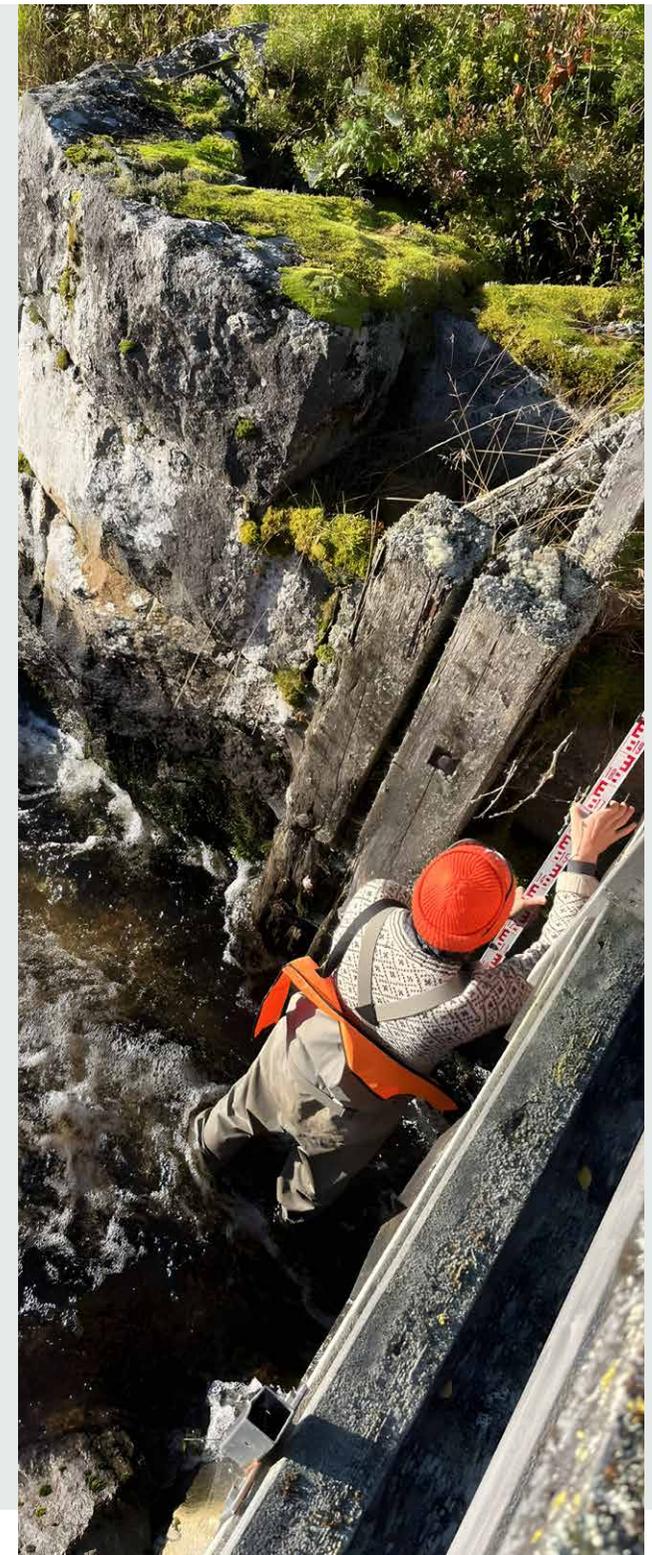
## 100 dams removed in Europe

The **European Open Rivers Programme** celebrated the completion of its hundredth dam removal project in 2025. The project, led by Rewilding Sweden, has helped reopen more than 112km of rivers in the Vindelälven catchment in northern Sweden, a river system protected as a Natura 2000 site and a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The programme has now helped restore more than 1,500km of free-flowing rivers across 18 countries.

The programme also supported a project to demolish Finland's Palokki dam. When complete, it will be the country's largest river restoration project and one of the biggest in Europe, with over 1,500km free of barriers. The €1.9m grant helped unlock a total investment of €36.9m, including €20m from the Finnish government. Removing the Palokki dam will bring the Open Rivers Programme more than two thirds of the way towards its current target of liberating 5,000km of river.

The growing movement to remove derelict barriers means communities across Europe are seeing the return of healthier freshwater habitats. In 2025, the continent saw a record-breaking 542 river barriers demolished, 60 of which were supported by the Open Rivers Programme.

Manual preparations for dam removal to reconnect tributaries in the Vindelälven catchment, Sweden. Open Rivers Programme. Credit: Rewilding Sweden.



# Conserving and restoring nature



## Spotlight on Europe's nature loss

A pioneering cross-border collaboration between journalists and data scientists has highlighted the pace and scale of Europe's loss of green space to construction. Part-funded by the **Earth Investigations Programme**, which is run by **Journalismfund Europe**, the Green to Grey project involved 41 researchers and 11 newsrooms across Europe. Scientists from the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research Resource applied a deep learning image recognition model to satellite imagery to identify millions of natural or agricultural sites that were built on between 2018 and 2023 – an expanse equivalent to the land area of Cyprus.

## New protections for the High Seas

In January 2026 a new High Seas Treaty to protect marine life in international waters became international law. It followed more than two decades of campaigning and negotiations, which we supported through our grants to the

**Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, Deep Ocean Stewardship Initiative, Oceans 5** and the **Joint 30x30 Funding Initiative**. Two thirds of the world's oceans are international waters – open to fishing, shipping, and research by all nations. The new law will safeguard marine biodiversity in these areas.

## Defending nature through law

The **Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (ELAW)** is a global alliance of lawyers and scientists that helps communities protect themselves against nature loss and degradation. In Nepal, ELAW helped win a case to protect the Lumbini UNESCO World Heritage site – revered as the birthplace of the Buddha – from polluting cement plants, brick kilns, and other industries. In Mexico, ELAW also supported the community group Tiskini to defeat plans for a vast port expansion in Cuyutlán Lagoon on the Pacific coast, a development which threatened one of Mexico's largest and most important coastal wetlands.

Populations of South American sea lions are growing steadily along the coast of Río Negro province in northern Patagonia, Argentina. Joint 30x30 Funding Initiative grantee Por el Mar. Credit: Matías Acuña.

# Conserving and restoring nature

## New grants awarded in 2025

### On-site interventions

We support the conservation of large areas of high biodiversity, and the rehabilitation of degraded but promising land and seascapes.

We did not award any new grants in this area in 2025. Our **Endangered Landscapes and Seascapes Programme, European Open Rivers Programme** and **Joint 30x30 Funding Initiative** continued to make grants on our behalf (read more on pages 17 and 18).

### Governance

Our grants help to develop, monitor, and enforce laws and policies that ensure nature can thrive.

GRANT HOLDER	AMOUNT	YEARS
Grant purpose		
Oceana Inc Core support	\$14,000,000	7
Peace Brigades International Core support	\$2,472,000	4
Environmental Defenders Collaborative Core support	\$1,210,000	4

### Leadership

Our grants help people gain the knowledge and skills they need to lead nature conservation and restoration.

We are no longer making new leadership grants, but we still fund bursaries for the Masters degree in conservation leadership at the **University of Cambridge**.



Pattern making on cow-dung fuel stores in the villages of south Delhi. Endangered Material Knowledge Programme. Credit: Andrew Burton.

# Recording cultural heritage

We want future generations to have knowledge of the world's cultural diversity. Our grants support digital documentation of cultural heritage which is poorly recorded and under threat.

Our culture funding area focuses on **archives and manuscripts, intangible culture, and heritage sites.**

In 2025 we made grant payments totalling

# \$21m

to record cultural heritage and awarded new grants totalling \$6.92m

See new grants awarded in 2025 on page 11

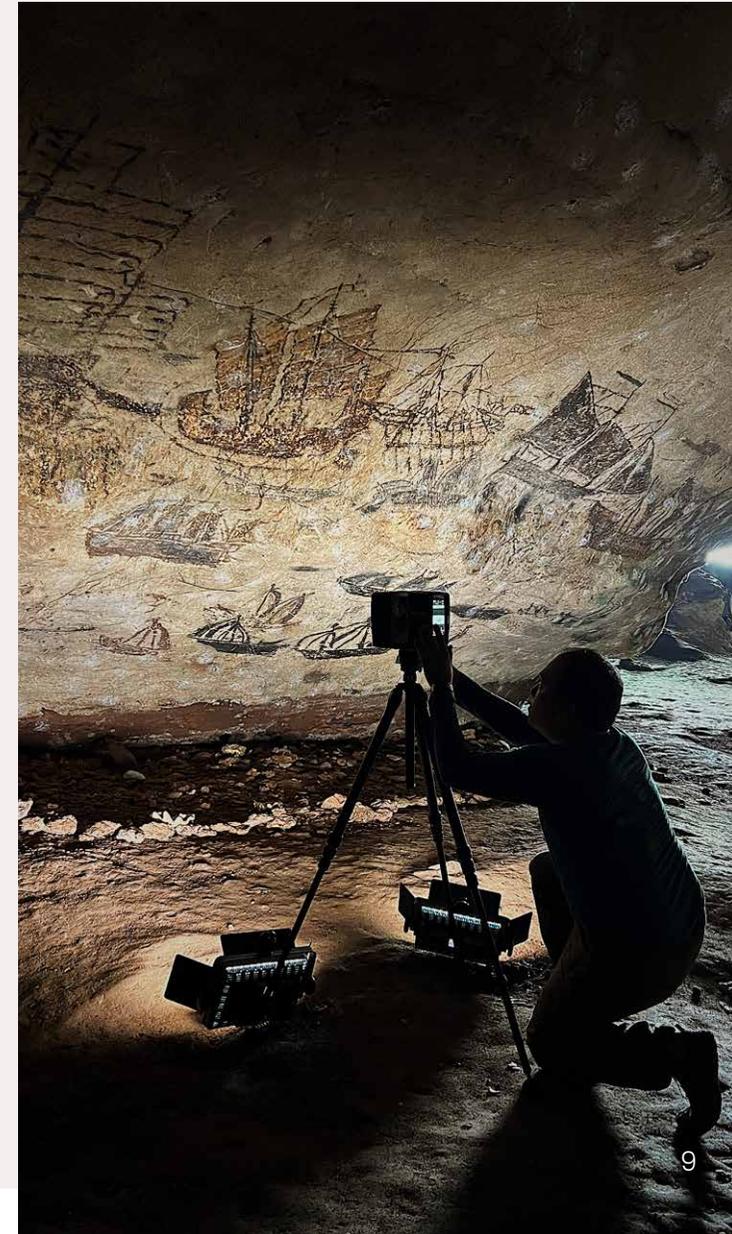
## Celebrating over ten years of heritage site documentation

In 2014, Arcadia launched the Endangered Archaeology of the Middle East and North Africa (EAMENA) project at the **University of Oxford**. The project works with local partners to use satellite images, aerial photographs, and archives to create a publicly accessible database of heritage sites across the region. Many of these sites are threatened by conflict, climate change, and development.

In the decade since EAMENA'S launch, we supported 11 more projects to document at-risk archaeological sites across Africa, Asia, and Latin America using the same approach. Together, these projects have become the largest archaeological heritage documentation effort ever undertaken. By the time the final projects finish in 2029, they will have recorded more than 1.5m sites in nearly 50 countries.

The databases created by the projects are already being used by governments to protect and conserve sites. They also support new research and are helping local communities map and celebrate their cultural heritage.

The Maritime Asia Heritage Survey Thailand field survey team documenting rock art images of Chinese junks and European sailcraft at Phaya Nak Cave in Krabi province. Maritime Asia Heritage Survey.



# Recording cultural heritage



## Preserving archives from the margins

The Anticaste Archives project digitizes endangered collections connected with Dalits, the socially disadvantaged communities in India formerly known as ‘Untouchables.’ Led by **Columbia University** library and the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences in Kolkata, the project began by digitizing two key collections of Dalit material, the Shinde and Pantawane archives, and has subsequently digitized 20 smaller collections across 11 cities and villages in the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka. The project will create the largest free online archive of material connected with Dalit communities and the struggle against caste discrimination.

## Bringing Native American languages out of the attic

The California Language Archive at the **University of California, Berkeley** holds a unique archive of Native American languages and cultural practices. In some cases, these are the only remaining records of languages and

traditions that no longer exist. With Arcadia’s support, the archive has been tracking down notes and field recordings kept in the attics and garages of retired scholars (or their children) who worked with the last speakers of indigenous languages in the 20th century. As a result, this unique and irreplaceable material is being preserved and made accessible. Our grant is also helping the archive support Indigenous community researchers using the collection.

## Building bridges with digitized manuscripts

The **Hill Museum and Manuscript Library** has completed a decade-long operation to digitize over 308,000 Islamic manuscripts in Mali. These will all be freely available online. The library is now building up its work in India and Pakistan. By supporting different teams in each country, it is digitally reunifying the shared Arabic, Persian and Urdu manuscript heritage of the two countries.

Research associate Gouri Desai Patil organizing and cataloguing historic materials from the Satyawadikar Balasaheb Patil collection, Kolhapur. Anticaste Archives. Credit: Sourav Mandal.

# Recording cultural heritage

## New grants awarded in 2025

### Archives and manuscripts

We help digitize at-risk collections of written documents, photographs, and audio and video recordings, including born-digital material.

GRANT HOLDER	AMOUNT	YEARS
Grant purpose		
<b>EMI Archive Trust</b> The Global Gramophone: early commercial sound recordings around the world	\$2,541,000	5
<b>University of Hamburg</b> Digitization of manuscripts in Southeast Asia	\$2,260,000	5
<b>University of Cape Town</b> The Five Hundred Year Archive	\$565,000	5

### Heritage sites

We support the large-scale documentation of archaeological sites and buildings in regions where existing records are incomplete and the risk of future loss is high. We are no longer funding new heritage site projects.

GRANT HOLDER	AMOUNT	YEARS
Grant purpose		
<b>Universitat Pompeu Fabra</b> Extension to the Mapping Archaeological Pre-Columbian Heritage in South America project	\$434,000	1

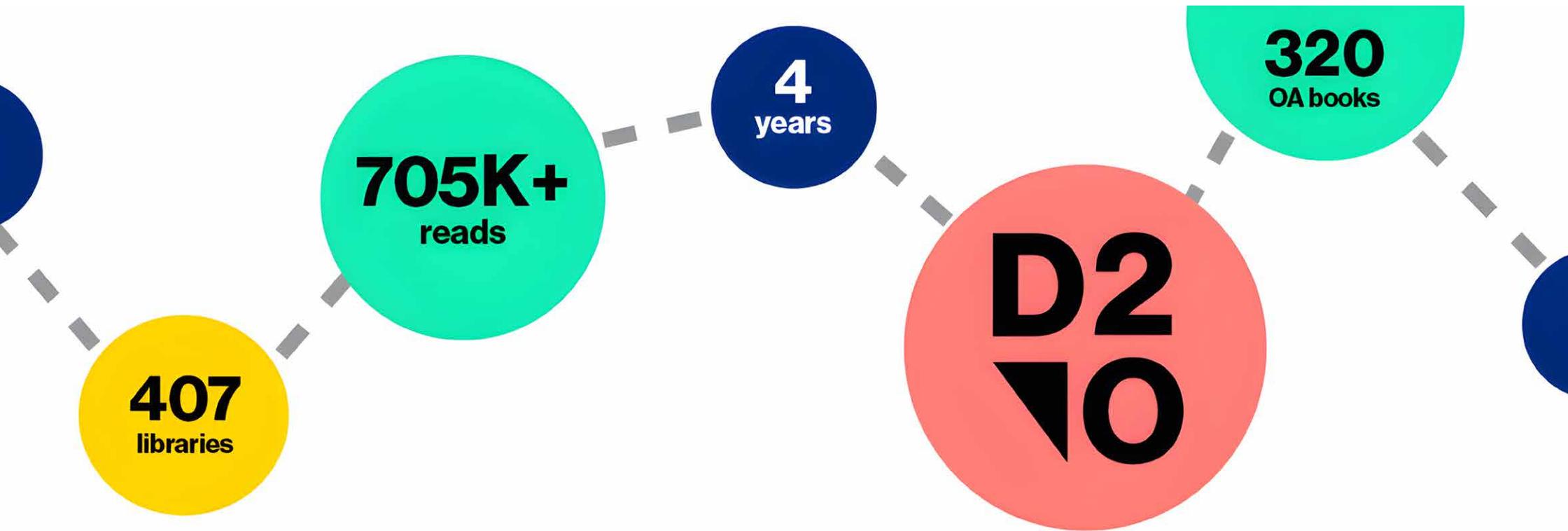
### Intangible culture

We support the documentation of languages and cultural practices that may be at risk of dying out.

We did not award any new grants in this area in 2025. Our **Endangered Languages Documentation Programme** and **Endangered Material Knowledge Programme** continued to make grants on our behalf (read more on pages 19-21).

### Other culture grants

This year we awarded \$1m to the **Stiftelsen Språkmuseet** to support the establishment of a language museum in Stockholm, and \$100,000 each to the **Wende Museum** and the **Center for Jewish History** to support core costs. We also gave \$15,000 to the **Cultural Funders Network**.



# Promoting open access to knowledge

We want knowledge to be free for anyone, anywhere to access and use.

Our open access funding focuses on **copyright and intellectual property, books, and discoverability.**

In 2025 we made grant payments totalling

# \$19m

to promote open access and awarded new grants totalling \$12.68m

See new grants awarded in 2025 on page 15

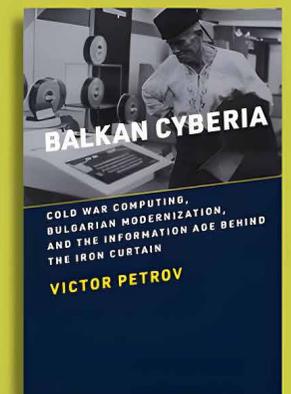
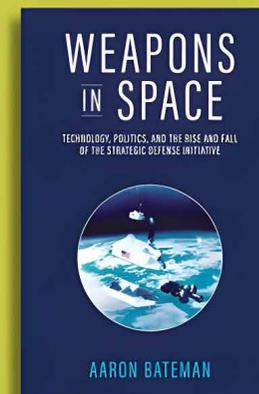
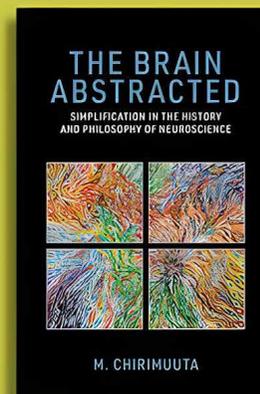
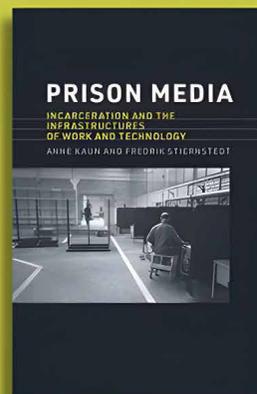
## Open access publishing

**MIT Press** is one of the world's largest university presses and has pioneered open access publishing since 1995. With our support, it created Direct to Open (D2O), a new model that works with libraries to make academic books free for everyone, everywhere. Through D2O, MIT Press makes over a hundred new scholarly monographs and edited collections open for anyone to read every year. Participating libraries also get access to more than 2,500 books from

the MIT Press's backlist. The model helps to cover the costs of publishing high quality works, which remain available to buy in print form as well.

Making these books open dramatically increases their reach. On average, D2O humanities and social sciences books are read 3.75 times more and receive 21% more citations than comparable non-open books. More than 350 libraries around the world now support the Direct to Open model, with new partners including Duke University Press and Goldsmiths Press.

Award-winning open access books from MIT Press, part of MIT Press's Direct to Open program.



# Promoting open access to knowledge

## Helping libraries integrate open access books

Open Book Futures is an international initiative to strengthen and scale up sustainable, community-led open access book publishing, coordinated by **Lancaster University**. It develops shared infrastructures, funding models, and experimental publishing practices to support a more equitable and diverse future for open access books. With Arcadia's help, Open Book Futures established Thoth Open Metadata, a non-profit company which helps ensure that open access books can be easily distributed and used by academic and public libraries.

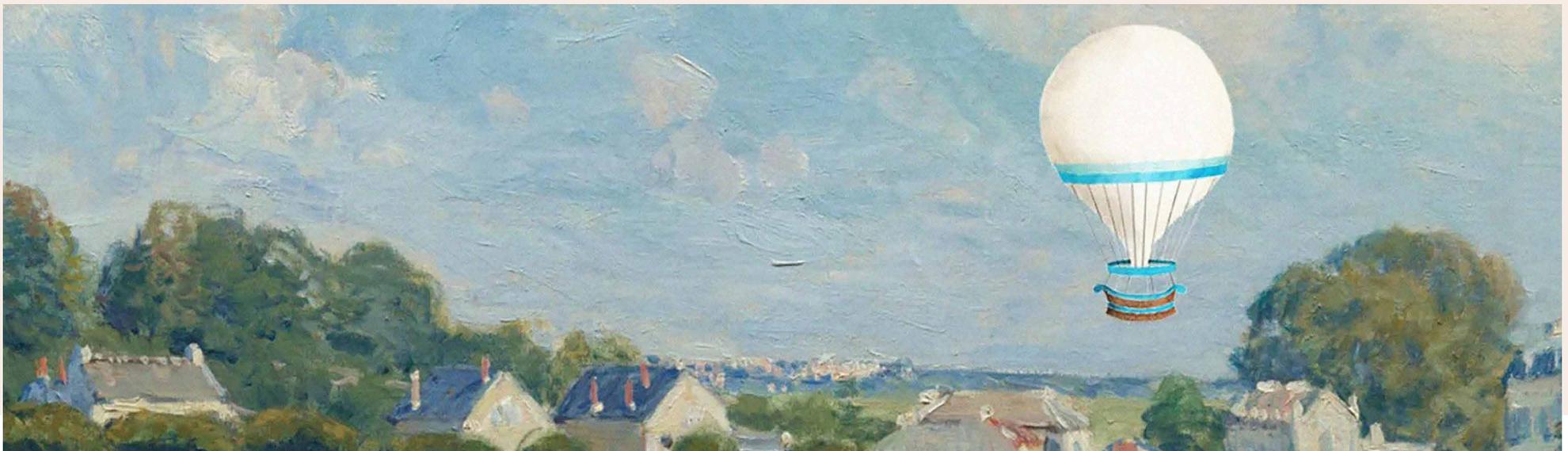
Watering Place at Marley by Alfred Sisley, 1875, Art Institute of Chicago, remixed with "TAROCCH balloon" by Creative Commons/Dee Harris, 2025, <https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/> "CC0".

## Cultural heritage for all

In 2025 our grant recipient **Creative Commons** launched the Open Heritage Statement, calling for more equitable access to public domain digital heritage. Developed with more than 60 organizations from 25 countries, the statement challenges obstacles to access, such as institutions incorrectly (but frequently) claiming copyright on digital images they create from public domain material, or making only low-resolution images available so they can charge for usable ones.

## Levelling the playing field for German students

**Open Knowledge Foundation Germany's** FragDenStaat project is helping to nudge German federal and state governments towards giving free online access to public documents. It has built a user-friendly web platform to make it easier for people to file freedom of information requests to German and EU public authorities and publish responses, creating a public, searchable repository of government documents. It is targeting inequalities such as the availability of state school-leaving papers. Thanks to their work, all students can now use past papers for revision regardless of their ability to pay commercial publishers for access.



# Promoting open access to knowledge

## New grants awarded in 2025

### Copyright and intellectual property

We support efforts to challenge and improve copyright laws, regulations, exceptions, and limitations so that people have better access to knowledge.

GRANT HOLDER	AMOUNT	YEARS
Grant purpose		
<b>Public.Resource.Org</b> Core support	\$5,000,000	6
<b>Creative Commons</b> To support the Open Infrastructure Circle	\$600,000	3
<b>SPARC, Inc</b> To support the Open Research Funders Group	\$50,000	3

### Books

We support projects that provide free online access to in-copyright scholarly books.

GRANT HOLDER	AMOUNT	YEARS
Grant purpose		
<b>New York University</b> To support the Library Futures project	\$2,500,000	4
<b>Stichting Internet Archive</b> To digitize theses and dissertations	\$900,000	3
<b>National Yiddish Book Center Inc</b> To support the Universal Yiddish Library	\$750,000	3
<b>Max Weber Foundation – German Historical Institute Washington D.C.</b> For open-access books in Jewish-German history	\$15,000	3

### Discoverability

Our grants help people find legal, free-to-read versions of government documents, publicly funded research, standards, and laws.

GRANT HOLDER	AMOUNT	YEARS
Grant purpose		
<b>Code for Science and Society</b> The Invest in Open Infrastructure Fund for Network Adoption	\$1,800,000	4

### Other open access grants

We gave \$250,000 to the **Wikimedia Endowment**, \$100,000 to **New York Public Library**, \$160,000 to **Stichting European Review of Books** and \$50,000 to **Authors Alliance** to continue their work to advance open access. We also gave \$500,000 to the **J Paul Getty Trust** towards the Arches Endowment.

# Grant programmes

We support grant programmes in our nature and culture funding areas. The programmes are set up by us but hosted and managed by partner organizations. Each programme invites applications on a specific theme, and has an expert advisory panel to review grants.

We also participate in collaborative funding initiatives with other foundations. These partnerships allow us to support local initiatives worldwide that deliver clear outcomes.

In 2025 our grant programmes supported 322 projects.

Above: Preparing for the chhot-boat handover ritual in West Bengal, India. Endangered Material Knowledge Programme. Credit: Swarup Bhattacharyya.

Below: Flamingos in the newly protected waters of Río Negro province, Argentina. Joint 30x30 Funding Initiative grantee Por el Mar. Credit: Matías Acuña.



# Nature grant programmes

## Endangered Landscapes and Seascapes Programme

Hosted by the Cambridge Conservation Initiative

**25**  
grants  
in 2025

The programme aims to create large, connected landscapes and seascapes, restore ecosystem processes, and promote more sustainable local economies.

**93**  
grants  
since 2018

It gave one project \$5m to restore the Eastern Mediterranean's largest seagrass meadow around the Greek island of Lemnos. Neptune grass meadows will be replanted, creating artificial reefs and restoring hydrological flows between coastal lagoons and the sea.

## Open Rivers Programme

Hosted by Stichting European Open Rivers

**68**  
grants  
in 2025

The programme brings back biodiversity in European rivers by supporting the removal of dams to restore river flow.

**196**  
grants  
since 2022

In 2025, the programme gave a €142k grant to remove the Surgié dam on the Célé river in southern France, restoring connectivity to 38km of upstream habitat for brown trout and critically endangered freshwater pearl mussels.



Vindelälven river catchment after the removal of the Fräkäntjärnsdammen, Sweden. Open Rivers Programme. Credit: Rewilding Sweden

# Nature grant programmes

## Earth Investigations Programme

Hosted by Journalismfund Europe

**74**  
grants  
in 2025

**392**  
grants  
since 2021

The programme supports environmental investigative journalism on European affairs in and outside Europe. Since it started in 2021, it has awarded 392 grants.

In 2025, the programme funded an exposé of the multi-billion euro black market in European eels, a trade which has driven the species to the brink of extinction. The investigation was led by journalists Alexandra Talty, Alice Facchini and Sofia Nardacchione.

## Joint 30x30 Funding Initiative

Hosted by Oceans 5

**28**  
grants  
in 2025

This fund awards grants for work towards the target of protecting 30% of the world's marine and coastal areas by 2030. It is a partnership between Arcadia and Bloomberg Philanthropies. Arcadia has committed \$25m over five years and gave \$5m in 2025.

In 2025, the programme gave \$550k to support SkyTruth, a tracking tool to measure progress towards the 30x30 goals for marine conservation, and \$411k to Hen Mpoano for its community engagement around Ghana's first coastal marine protected area.



Orcas frequent the waters of Río Negro province, Argentina. Joint 30x30 Funding Initiative grantee Por el Mar. Credit: Matías Acuña.

# Culture grant programmes

## Endangered Archives Programme

Hosted by the British Library

**33**  
grants  
in 2025

**562**  
grants  
since 2004

The programme funds the digitization of threatened collections older than the 1950s.

In 2025, the programme helped to digitize and preserve one of the most important herbaria in the West Indies, a unique collection of repatriated Ge'ez manuscripts in Ethiopia, and a library of over 1,800 Lebanese books dating back to 1610.

## Modern Endangered Archives Program

Hosted by the University of California, Los Angeles

**34**  
grants  
in 2025

**70**  
grants  
since 2018

This programme funds the digitization of threatened archives from the 20th and 21st centuries.

In 2025, the programme gave a grant of \$100k to help five institutions in Brazil to digitize and preserve records relating to social movements and democratic resistance in Baixada Fluminense in the latter half of the 20th century.



Digitization of judicial records related to women in the Judicial Historical Archive of Medellin, Colombia. Endangered Archives Programme. CC BY-NC 4.0.

# Culture grant programmes

## Program for the Archiving of Science and Technology

Hosted by the National Centre for Biological Sciences

**8**  
grants  
in 2025

The programme funds digitization of endangered archives related to the history of science and technology in contemporary India. 2025 was its first year of grant-making.

The programme's digitization projects ranged from the publications of the Bengal Natural History Society from the mid-20th century, to records of traditional ecological and land management practices by the Adivasi communities of North Maharashtra.

## Endangered Languages Documentation Programme

Hosted by the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities

**20**  
grants  
in 2025

The programme documents endangered languages around the world. Some of these have fallen silent since their documentation.

In 2025, the programme gave a grant of \$287k to researchers at the University of Naples to work in refugee camps in Cameroon to document Chinene and Dghwede, two endangered languages of the Mandara mountains of northeast Nigeria whose speakers were displaced by Boko Haram's attacks.

**589**  
grants  
since 2002



Leah Halako Guyo, Tabu Badula Songoro, and Haloni Mashauri Guyo preparing wild fruit from the kitsapo tree in Kenya. The flour from this fruit is used for making the Waata meal called Debele. Endangered Languages Documentation Programme. Credit: Bonifus Mbogo.

# Culture grant programmes

## Endangered Material Knowledge Programme

Hosted by the British Museum

**21**  
grants  
in 2025

**125**  
grants  
since 2028

**The programme documents the skills and practices used in making or using things.**

In 2025, the programme supported projects to document traditional boat-building, fishing, weaving, and reed house construction in the marshlands of Iraq, and to preserve the canoe building knowledge of the Vezo-Tanalana people of southwest Madagascar.

## Endangered Wooden Architecture Programme

Hosted by Oxford Brookes University

**10**  
grants  
in 2025

**60**  
grants  
since 2022

**The programme documents wooden buildings and the skills involved in making them.**

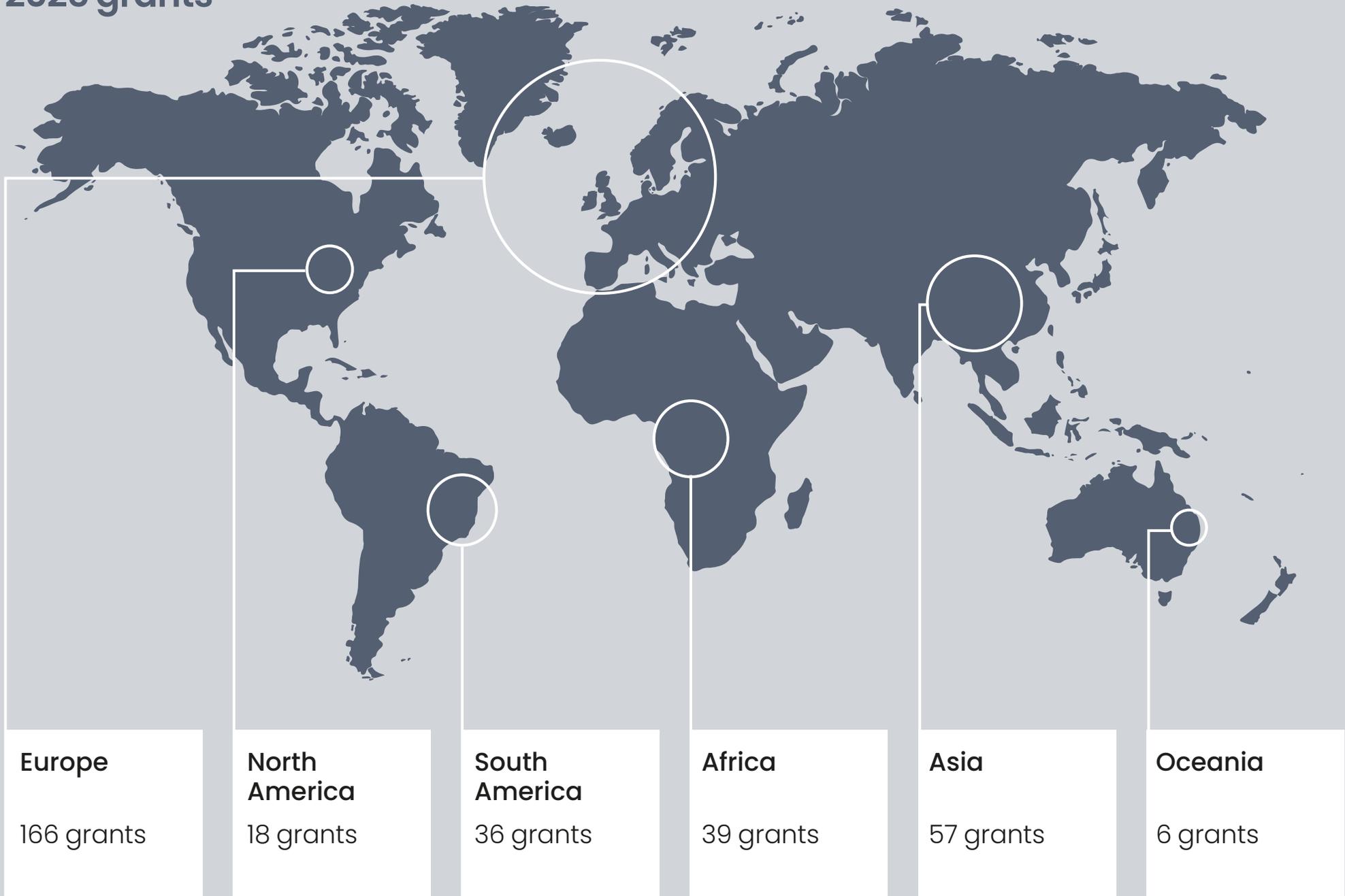
The programme is in its wind-down phase. In 2025, it supported follow-on work for previous projects, including the creation of a 'visual dictionary' of the traditional wooden havelis of Gujarat, India, and a lexicon of the vernacular architecture of Urhobo, Nigeria.



Weaving a small basket called Jumuak Isok in Jagoi Babang village, Indonesia. Endangered Material Knowledge Programme. Credit: Sepatokimin Initiative.

# Grant programmes

2025 grants



# About us

Arcadia is a family philanthropy. It was founded by Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin in 2002. We are led by our donor board, supported by an expert advisory board and a small London-based team.

## Donor Board

**Professor Peter Baldwin** (Chair)  
**Dr Lisbet Rausing DBE**  
**Ben Koerner**  
**Dr Sigrid Koerner**  
**Dr George Morris**

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## Staff

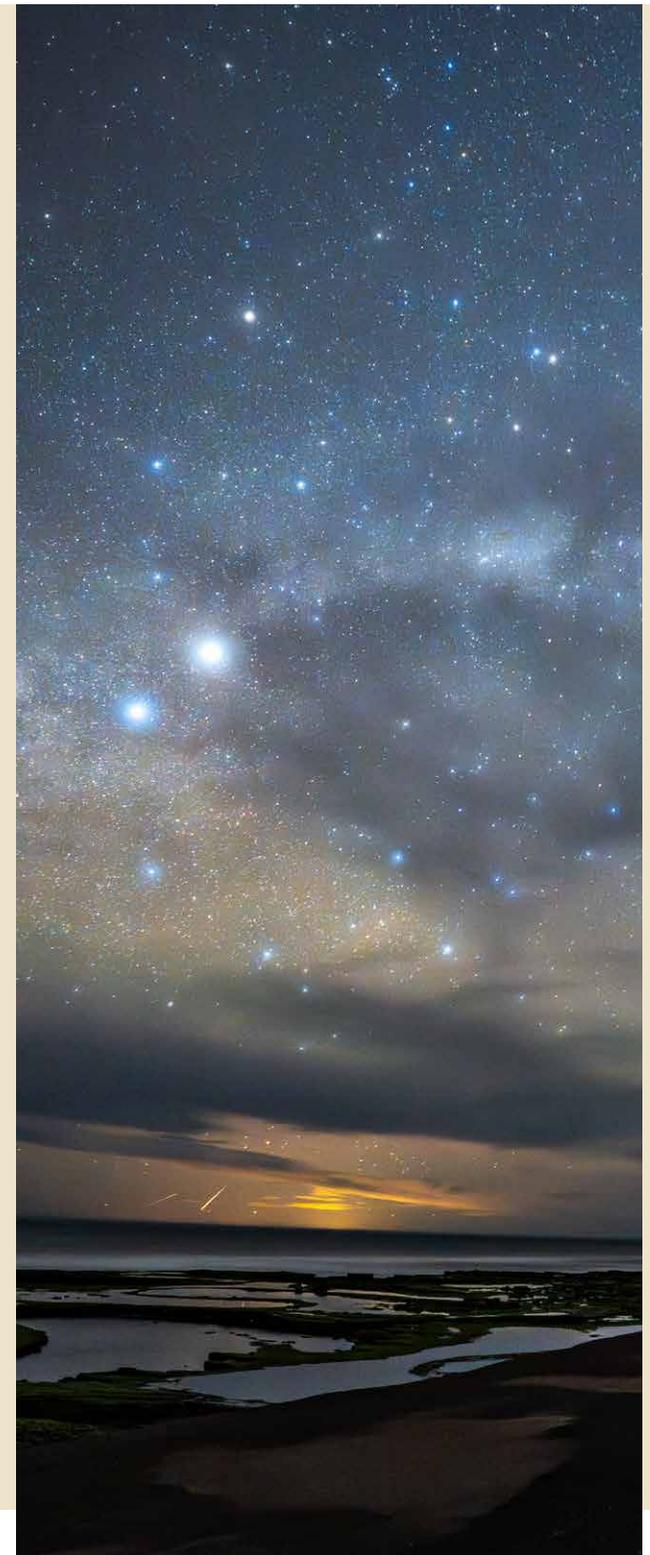
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**Dr Francesca McGrath**, Senior Manager, Nature  
**Dr Catherine Docherty**, Senior Manager, Nature  
**Dr Emma McIntosh**, Consultant, Nature  
**Dr Ross Mounce**, Director of Open Access  
**Dr Arthur Dudney**, Director of Culture  
**Dr Mike Heyworth**, Consultant, Culture

## Sustainability

We are taking active steps to minimize the environmental impact of our operations and we ask our grantees to do the same. We ask them to minimize unnecessary travel, particularly air travel, and report to us on the air travel undertaken as part of their grant.

We report on the carbon footprint of our own activities and our grant programmes where we are the sole funder, so that we can better understand and try to reduce our impact. Our emissions in 2024 were 36 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>, while travel for our grant programmes (staff, boards and panels) emitted 93 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>.

Night sky in the Río Negro province, Argentina. Joint 30x30 Funding Initiative grantee Por el Mar. Credit: Matías Acuña.





Carpathian Mountains, Romania. Rewilding Europe.  
Credit: Sandra Bartocha / Wild Wonders of Europe.