

PRESS RELEASE

The ECHOES consortium was selected to oversee the creation of a Collaborative European Cloud for Cultural Heritage

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Category: Launch of the ECHOES project

In June 2022, the European Commission announced its commitment to supporting the creation of a collaborative cloud for cultural heritage. This initiative aims to strengthen connections between various heritage institutions and sector professionals, enhancing the understanding, documentation, preservation, and promotion of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage across Europe. The initiative will establish a digital ecosystem to interconnect and harmonise practices related to digital objects.

Funded under the Horizon Europe program, the Cloud for Cultural Heritage has been allocated a budget of €110 million until 2025, marking the largest investment ever made in Europe for a cultural heritage initiative and more broadly in the humanities and social sciences (HSS). Two calls for proposals were launched in 2023, with additional calls planned for 2024 and 2025.

The European Cloud for Heritage OpEn Science (ECHOES) project, led by CNRS under the scientific coordination of Xavier Rodier, Director of MSH Val de Loire, has won the Horizon Europe 2023 call "A European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage" (HORIZON-CL2-2023-HERITAGE-ECCCH-01-01). ECHOES has been awarded €25 million for five years of work (2024 – 2029). The project aims to create the collaborative cloud, a European reference platform for both tangible and intangible cultural heritage professionals.

For the ECHOES project, CNRS, together with CNR (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Italy) and FSP (Fondation des Sciences du Patrimoine), has formed a consortium of 51 European partners. These partners include research organisations, networks representing cultural heritage communities (museums, libraries, archives, restoration, etc.), universities, and private sector entities. As a pilot project, ECHOES aspires to create the infrastructure and legal entity for the cloud in collaboration with and for the cultural heritage communities. ECHOES promotes a holistic approach to digital transformation, encouraging the co-construction of knowledge.

The ECHOES project will foster the emergence of Digital Commons through this digital environment, allowing collective enrichment and analysis of cultural heritage objects, facts, or phenomena. Actors—both human and artificial intelligence (AI)—will be able to develop their interpretations and thus contribute to the construction of knowledge. Thanks to a transparent governance approach and the application of open science principles, ECHOES will also integrate other European and national projects within the cloud.