

PRESS RELEASE

Catalysts for Regenerative Futures: ENCATC Awards Celebrate Role Models Shaping Cultural Policy, Practice, Education, and Research

ENCATC placed the spotlight on changemakers who are actively building regenerative futures as it unveiled the laureates of the 2025 ENCATC Awards. More than a celebration, the **Awards' Ceremony** affirmed a dual purpose: to inspire the current and next generation of cultural leaders, policymakers, educators, and researchers, and to elevate role models who are already changing the field—so their ideas, methods, and evidence can guide sector-wide transformation.

Gianna Lia Cogliandro-Beyens, ENCATC Secretary General, said: *"These awards recognise exemplars who turn knowledge into capacity and capacity into impact. By publishing their work and bringing it to a global audience, platforming their voice, and connecting them across our network, we help the sector act—responsibly, creatively, and at scale—towards truly regenerative futures."*

2025 ENCATC Award Laureates

ENCATC Award for Outstanding Contribution — leadership as a compass

In times of rapid change, the sector needs visible role models whose long-horizon stewardship safeguards cultural rights and diversity, strengthens cross-border collaboration, and embeds culture at the heart of public agendas. Established in 2019 as ENCATC's highest distinction, the Award for Outstanding Contributions signals what transformational leadership looks like — and why it matters for those who will lead next. The 2025 Laureate, Ernesto Ottone R., Assistant Director-General for Culture at UNESCO, was recognised for his sustained international leadership that positions culture as a structural condition for development and for reinforcing the enabling ecosystem in which cultural policy, education, and practice can thrive. *"This recognition from peers in cultural management is deeply affirming".* Ernesto Ottone R. declared. *"Together, we can realize a bold vision for a future where culture is upheld as a fundamental right. In these fractured times, we must believe in the power of culture to build lasting peace."*

ENCATC Research Award — research that equips policy and practice

Established in 2014, the ENCATC Research Award run in partnership with the Cultural Management Fund of the University of Antwerp, honours doctoral/PhD research that is rigorous, original, and interdisciplinary — work that pushes beyond traditional boundaries and delivers methodological innovation with real-world impact. Crucially, the award ensures the winning thesis reaches a global audience through publication in the ENCATC Advances on Cultural Management and Policy (EACMP) Book Series, published by Routledge. The winner of the 2025 edition is **Giada Calvano**, with the thesis *"Greening European Music Festivals: Environmental Sustainability Strategies, Practices, and Certification from an Organisational Perspective"* obtained at the University of Barcelona, Spain. The Jury underlined how Giada's cross-cultural, data-driven study shows how organisational features—from genre to workforce—and especially internal culture and human resources drive environmental transition. The thesis provides research-based guidance for festival organisers,

indications for policymaking, and insights for certification bodies seeking credible pathways to sustainability.

Best Research Paper Award — evidence that sets direction for policy excellence

Policy innovation begins with **high-quality, innovative research** that translates into actionable direction. This award recognises scholarly articles that pair originality and methodological rigour with clear policy relevance—offering new perspectives, frameworks, or evidence that can orient innovative and excellent policymaking as well as professional practice. The winners of this edition are Marta Gertrudes and Paula Ochôa from the Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Portugal, with the paper *“Museums in Transformation: Analyzing the Contributions of Curatorship and Digital Humanities in Impact Assessment Models.”* By aligning curatorship with digital humanities, the award Jury underlined that the paper refreshes impact assessment models—moving from outputs to engagement, participation, and lasting social value—and provides research-based indications that help leaders and policymakers navigate digital transformation with purpose. Marta Gertrudes and Paula Ochôa will be rewarded with the publication of their Research Paper in the European Journal of Cultural Management and Policy, the official ENCATC Journal published by Frontiers.

Best Innovative Teaching Method Award — educators inspiring capacity for tomorrow

Education is where system change takes root. inaugurated this year, this award celebrates creative, effective, and forward-looking teaching that inspires educators in cultural policy and management to renew curricula and methods in line with current and future challenges—so students and professionals gain the critical thinking and practical skills to lead. Winners: Cleopatra Charles from Rutgers University–Newark, in the USA, and Margaret F. Sloan, from James Madison University, USA, with their method *“Evaluating the Intangible Value of the Arts Using FACE Metrics”*. The evaluation by the jury stresses how combining the Performance Measurement Cycle, SMART goals, multiple evaluation types, and the FACE framework (Finance, Artistic Value, Community, Engagement), this approach turns evaluation into a story of mission, impact, and accountability. Through role-play, case analysis, and data visualisation, learners build ethical, critical, and practical competencies that are immediately transferable. Special visibility will be given to the winner method through a highlight in the ENCATC Scholar.

The ENCATC Congress 2025

The Awards Ceremony crowns Day One of the ENCATC Congress 2025, held under the theme “The Future Is Cultural: Policy, Practice, and Education.” Conceived as a living lab, the Congress brings together scholars, cultural professionals, educators, and policymakers for policy dialogues, scholarly panels, workshops, and project showcases. Organised with the Universitat de Barcelona, Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, and the Espronceda Institute of Arts and Culture, the programme advances transformative learning—education that integrates heart, mind, and action—to empower the next generation of leaders and managers for a transformative future. By recognising role models and then circulating their knowledge through education and policy, ENCATC ensures these awards are catalysts: inspiring future leaders on the one hand, and spotlighting today’s change-makers on the other—so the entire ecosystem can move from ideas to impact.

Media assets: [download the photos here](#)

Press contact:

ENCATC Communications Officer — Filippo Tamietti communications@encatc.org

About ENCATC

ENCATC is the European network on cultural management and policy, bringing together educators, researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and artists across the cultural and creative field. With consultative status at the UN, as an official UNESCO partner, observer to the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Culture, and a Creative Europe Network, ENCATC advances an inclusive, sustainable, and democratic cultural ecosystem. We facilitate networking, foster interdisciplinary education, publish research, and advocate for evidence-based cultural policies at international, European, national, and local levels. Learn more at www.encatc.org.

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