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YICGG2026 | Shanghai to Venice: Show your brilliant ideas for world cultural heritage

01 Introduction

Ready for innovation, cooperation, and challenge?

Let's go!

The Youth Innovation Competition on Global Governance (YICGG) is the world's first international innovation contest in the realm of global governance independently founded by Chinese university students.

60 years ago, devastating floods hit Venice. UNESCO and the Italian government launched an international preservation initiative, successfully preserving the city's unique urban form and artistic traditions through **multilateral cooperation** and **technological innovation**. It is clear that global cultural heritage protection is no longer solely about preserving the past, but about shaping a shared future.

With the theme of **World Cultural Heritage and Human Civilization**, YICGG2026 marks the competition's return to Italy after **12 years** and is scheduled to be held from **July 20th to July 24th** in **Venice, Italy**. For more details, please continue reading!

02 An Overview of YICGG

YICGG 2015

MILAN, ITALY

Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life

YICGG 2017

ASTANA, KAZAKHSTAN

Reunion at the Expo

Future Energy and Sustainable Infrastructure

YICGG 2018

SHANGHAI, CHINA

Rural Revitalization:

Green Development Innovation & Sharing Economy

YICGG 2019

JAKARTA, INDONESIA

Meeting in Coconut City - Oceans, Rivers and Lakes:

Global Water Preservation, Utilization and Development



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YICGG 2021
HUZHOU, CHINA
Smart City Future Community, Youth Creation:
Build Smart Cities to Drive Sustainable Development

YICGG 2022
SHANGHAI, CHINA
Looking Ahead Governance of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Actions and Future
Prospects

YICGG 2023
YUNNAN, CHINA
Biodiversity Breeds Prosperity

YICGG 2024
BUDAPEST, HUNGARY
Global AI Governance

YICGG 2025
SHANGHAI, CHINA
AI For Peace

03 Theme of YICGG2026

World Cultural Heritage and Human Civilization

Culture is essential for building community identity and social cohesion, while also driving societal transformation and innovation. UNESCO highlights that historical landmarks, living cultures, and natural heritage enrich lives in multifaceted ways, positioning cultural diversity and creativity as cornerstones of sustainable development. To support this, the international community has actively promoted heritage conservation, institutional development and capacity building through mechanisms like the 1972 World Heritage Convention, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, and various multilateral frameworks. These initiatives focus on a multidimensional approach that combines technological empowerment, social participation, and ecological governance.

However, global cultural heritage faces increasingly complex challenges. Climate change, rapid urbanization, mass tourism, and economic development pressures continuously impact historic cities, cultural landscapes, and traditional ways of life. Meanwhile, digitalization, social transformation, and ecological risks place higher demands on traditional conservation approaches. In this context, heritage protection is no longer merely about safeguarding the past; it requires balancing development, ecological sustainability, and cultural continuity, while testing the capacity of the international community to coordinate responsibilities, resources, and governance.



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Venice vividly illustrates the typical challenges and governance experiences in global cultural heritage protection. As a crossroads of civilizations that combines the characteristics of a World Heritage city and a living historic urban center, Venice has developed a unique urban form and rich artistic traditions over centuries. However, this heritage system remains highly fragile, facing continuous threats from sea-level rise, high-humidity environments, and the pressures of overtourism. Following the catastrophic flood of 1966, UNESCO and the Italian government launched an international preservation initiative, employing multilateral cooperation and technological innovation to construct flood control infrastructure, significantly reducing the risks posed by high water levels. The experience of Venice demonstrates that the protection of urban heritage relies on scientific governance strategies, sustained policy investment, and stable international cooperation.

Standing at this historical crossroads of civilizations in Venice, and reflecting on both history and the future, it is clear that global cultural heritage protection is no longer solely about preserving the past, but about shaping a shared future. Amid the intertwined challenges of climate change, development pressures, and growing value pluralism, youth, as a driving force for innovation and cross-cultural dialogue, should embrace a global vision and a strong sense of responsibility. By actively engaging in exploration and practice across related fields, youth can contribute their ideas and actions to advance the prosperity and development of human society.

Subtopic 1: World Cultural Heritage and Civilizational Dialogue

Subtopic 2: AI for Heritage Revitalization and Tourism Regeneration

Subtopic 3: World Cultural Heritage and Multilateral Cooperation

Subtopic 4: World Cultural Heritage and Climate Change

For further details regarding the subtopics, please refer to Attachment 1.

04 Competition Process

With reference to suggestions of participants and judges over the years, YICGG2026 has updated the competition rules as follows:

ROUND 1

Based on the theme of the preliminary round, participants are expected to formulate global-governance proposals with creativity and foresight, either individually or in a group. The YICGG Committee will then strictly follow the experts' evaluation and welcome the most competitive candidates to enter the second round. The 'Most Innovative Team (MIT)' will be selected in this round.



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For participants from outside China,, the proposals will be reviewed online. The organizing committee will announce the results of the advancement via email.

For Chinese participants, there is going to be a Greater China Division Preliminaries before the final competition. The participants will undergo an additional online defense (specific time and format will be notified via email after the deadline for preliminary round registration). The top-performing teams from the Greater China Division will represent China and advance to the offline finals in Venice. The competition encourages participating teams to draw on China's practices and contribute China's wisdom. In project design, research topics based on Chinese cases, data or solutions are prioritized, supporting young people to address global governance issues from China's experience. For further details, please refer to subsequent announcements.

ROUND 2-1

'Ignite Talk' is an optional part for the participants. Applicants are required to submit their Talk outlines (150-200 words) focused on their chosen topics.

20 applicants will be selected by the judges to share their insights in the Talk. The most impressive participant will be honored with the individual award 'The Ignite Talk King/Queen (ITK/ITQ)'.

ROUND 2-2

'We Youth Common Agenda' aims to nourish the common goals of the youth who share a passion for global governance.

ROUND 2-3

The World Café is a form of brainstorming. The World Teams engage in round-table discussions under the guidance of judges, focusing on proposals developed within the finalist theme. Each discussion lasts 15-20 minutes. When the time is up, the World Teams rotate to the next table, where another judge leads the discussion, and so on, allowing contestants to interact with all the judges. The judges and contestants continuously exchange their ideas, igniting sparks of thought.

ROUND 2-4

A more targeted topic will be announced in the final session. Every "World Team" is expected to write a project report based on the topic and finally present it. The project should be featured in creativity, feasibility, and effectiveness. Among all the candidates, the first-ranking final project will be awarded the title of 'The Most Valuable Project (MVP)'.

Application Process

STEP 1 Basic information

If you are interested in YICGG, please register as soon as possible. This will ensure that you receive the latest information from YICGG2026 Committee. For registration, please complete the form in the attachment named 'YICGG2026-personal info-preliminary round'. The number of team members shall not exceed 3 (including 3).



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Send this form with your curriculum vitae to our official mailbox: yicgg_official@fudan.edu.cn.

YICGG consistently encourages students from diverse countries and majors to form dynamic and creative multinational teams. For non-individual teams, each player from a different country and major will receive 1-point bonus (up to a maximum of 5 points).

It should be noted that any team with Chinese nationals (including participants from Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan regions of China) shall be evaluated under the Greater China Division.

STEP 2 Design for Creative Projects

To participate in the first round of competition, you / your group need to submit your proposal to our official mailbox: yicgg_official@fudan.edu.cn.

For the proposal, please refer to Attachment 4.1_Text Format for Preliminary Round Proposals. Please send your registration form with the proposal in one email.

Moreover, each participating team (whether it's a team or an individual category) is encouraged to submit one outstanding case study on cultural heritage conservation from all over the world. For more details, please refer to Attachment 4.2_Text Format for Preliminary Round Case Analysis .

Deadline for submission: **4.10**

STEP 3 Assessment & Result Release

Based on your papers, the professional jury will decide the finalists who will be able to travel to **Venice** for the final, which will be released in **May**.

Deadline for result release: **5.8**

STEP 4 Confirmation

All candidates will have 5 days to decide whether to join the second round. YICGG 2026 Committee, on behalf of the School of International Relations and Public Affairs of Fudan University, will send an invitation letter to the participants after their confirmation.

Deadline for confirmation: **5.15**

STEP 5 Registration for Ignite Talk

Candidates who want to join 'Ignite Talk' should send an email to the official mailbox: yicgg_official@fudan.edu.cn attached with the speech outline based on the theme of the first round, approximately 150 to 200 words. Judges will select 20 candidates as 'Ignite Talk' talkers.

Deadline for registration for Ignite Talk: **5.22**

05 Impression of YICGG

(2015)



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“The idea of global governance is still faced with the problem of weak international organizations and is still practiced on state rather than global level. I really expect that the participants of YICGG, who come from all around the world, can be the core force of global governance some day in the future.”

Enrico Letta
Former Prime Minister of Italy

(2025)

“State-to-state relations thrive on people-to-people friendship, and people-to-people friendship flourishes when hearts communicate. No matter how cutting-edge the technologies are, they must listen to the voices of the broadest people in the world. It is hoped that participants from 38 countries could act as bridge builders between civilizations, exploring the optimal intersection between the innovation of scientific and technological means and civilizational inclusiveness and mutual learning.”

Qiu Xin
Party Secretary, Fudan University

(2025)

“Driven solutions should not be only about technology, they should be about the context, the people, the processes, they should also be thought of in the context of governance challenges. The best advice I can give you and your professors, to continue to look at these problems and continue to look at technology.”

Amandeep Singh Gill
Under-Secretary-General and Special Envoy for Digital and Emerging Technologies

(2025)

“The voices of youth should become the core force in building solutions to international issues. This competition is not only an academic contest, but also a vivid call to the practice of governance.”

TshilidziMarwala
Rector, the United Nations University