PRESS RELEASE

Launch of UK Peer Mentoring Initiative for Ukraine's Cultural Heritage Sector

15 October 2026

Starting in October 2026, Science for Ukraine UK is partnering with ICOM UK and ICOM Ukraine, with support from the Institute of Historical Research (IHR), to launch a pilot project for cultural heritage professionals, scholars and practitioners: the Mentoring Initiative for Museums. Information on signing up can be found below.

This English-language peer-to-peer mentoring programme connects cultural heritage professionals from Ukraine with experienced mentors in the UK. It operates on a simple but powerful principle: professional solidarity. Through structured one-to-one mentoring, participants share knowledge, discuss professional challenges and exchange ideas with peers working in similar roles across different countries.

The Mentoring Initiative for Museums supports both immediate professional development and longer-term capacity building, covering topics and museum specialisms as varied as decolonisation; training in trauma-informed practices; conservation techniques; fund-raising opportunities; governance; as well as preparations for reconstruction, restitution and justice.

Mentees will benefit from access to UK-based museum networks, specialist expertise and opportunities to reflect on their professional goals. Mentors will gain valuable insights into the realities of working in Ukraine's cultural heritage sector, fostering mutual learning and strengthening international understanding.

Not only does the Mentoring Initiative for Museums demonstrate how international cooperation can contribute to the resilience and future development of the cultural heritage sector, it also highlights the important role that peer-to-peer support can play in sustaining professionals working in complex and rapidly changing environments.

At the same time, the Mentoring Initiative for Museums will contribute towards the *UK-Ukraine 100 Year Partnership Declaration*, signed in 2025 by both governments to 'deepen security ties and strengthen partnership for future generations'.

As the programme develops, the partners hope to build a community of cultural heritage professionals committed to knowledge exchange, collaboration, and shared stewardship of cultural heritage for future generations.

Who are we?

Science for Ukraine is an NGO which supports academics, research-active professionals and postgraduate students across all disciplines whose careers have been disrupted by the war in Ukraine. The Mentoring Initiative for Museums builds on its flagship activity in the UK, a well-established academic mentoring and twinning initiative that matches academics from Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora with UK peer mentors. To date, Science for Ukraine UK has supported over 800 participants.

ICOM UK and ICOM Ukraine are national committees of the International Council of Museums, a professional membership association with over 60,000 members across 139 countries.

The IHR is the UK's national centre for history.

Igor Potapov, Professor in the School of Computer Science and Informatics at the University of Liverpool and lead for Science for Ukraine UK, said:

> *'This mentoring initiative is about investing in people. By supporting professional connections between Ukraine and the UK, we are helping to build networks of expertise, collaboration and mutual support that can endure long after the mentoring conversations themselves.'*

Anastasiia Cherednychenko, Chair of ICOM Ukraine, said:

> *'Cultural heritage professionals in Ukraine continue to show extraordinary dedication and resilience. We are proud to partner with ICOM UK and Science for Ukraine UK to create opportunities for knowledge exchange, professional development and international collaboration that can support the sector both now and in the future.'*

Maria Blyzinsky, Trustee and former Co-Chair of ICOM UK, said:

> *'Some of the most valuable professional support comes from conversations with peers who understand the opportunities and challenges of the sector. This partnership creates a space for colleagues in Ukraine and the UK to learn from one another, share experiences, and build lasting professional connections. It's a privilege for ICOM UK to be involved with this initiative.'*

Elizabeth Savage, Senior Lecturer at the IHR, said:

> '*As the UK's national centre for history, the IHR supports the people and institutions who shape knowledge of the past and present and advocates for the future of the discipline in the widest sense. It is an honour to support this initiative to create bridges between Ukrainian and UK memory institutions, as well as the expert practitioners who protect heritage objects and cultural knowledge within them.'*

Further Details

- To download a booklet about the Mentoring Initiative for Museums, please follow this link: https://www.linkua.org/assets/documents/mentoring/mentoring-programme-2026.pdf
- For more information on Science for Ukraine UK's mentoring programmes, please follow this link: https://www.linkua.org/mentoring
- To register as a mentee, please follow this link to the PushFar platform: https://pushfar.app/mentee-registration/6Aj4rMK5y8/
- To register as a mentor, please follow this link to the PushFar platform: https://pushfar.app/mentor-registration/6Aj4rMK5y8