

Scotland's UNESCO Trail

UNESCO sites as hubs of sustainable development practice through travel routes

SCOTLAND'S
UNESCO TRAIL
THE WONDERS WITHIN



unesco

United Kingdom
National Commission



This →



As an example of:

- The increasing role of UNESCO Designated Sites (World Heritage Sites, Biospheres, and Geoparks) as hubs of sustainable development practices by developing cultural routes and itineraries
- How UNESCO sites help align with national policies to adopt sustainable practices to attract and retain mindful visitors



There are lots of UNESCO routes/itineraries..

Predominately in the space of World Heritage..



Scotland and its UNESCO sites

Biosphere Reserves

1. Galloway and Southern Ayrshire
2. Wester Ross

Global Geoparks

1. Shetland
2. North West Highlands

Creative Cities

1. Edinburgh City of Literature
2. Glasgow City of Music
3. Dundee City of Design

World Heritage Sites

1. Old and New Towns of Edinburgh
2. The Forth Bridge
3. Heart of Neolithic Orkney
4. New Lanark
5. St Kilda
6. Antonine Wall

Scotland is home to

35 UNESCO sites and projects

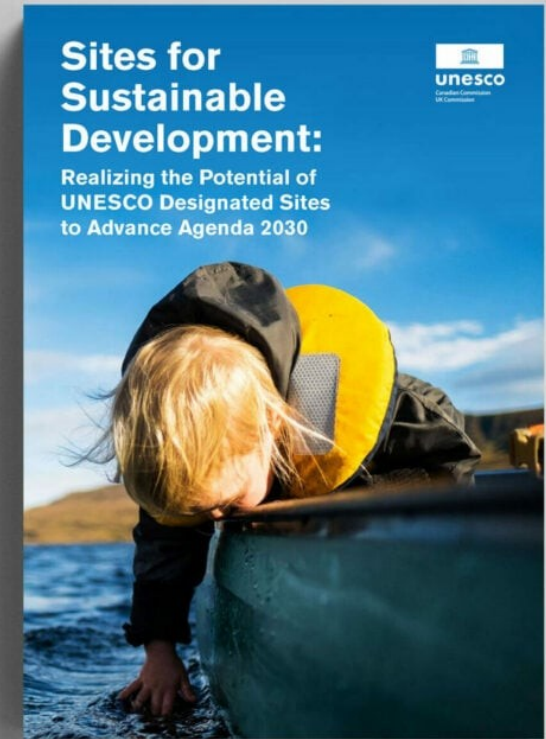
as well as a dynamic network of experts working in UNESCO's fields of competency



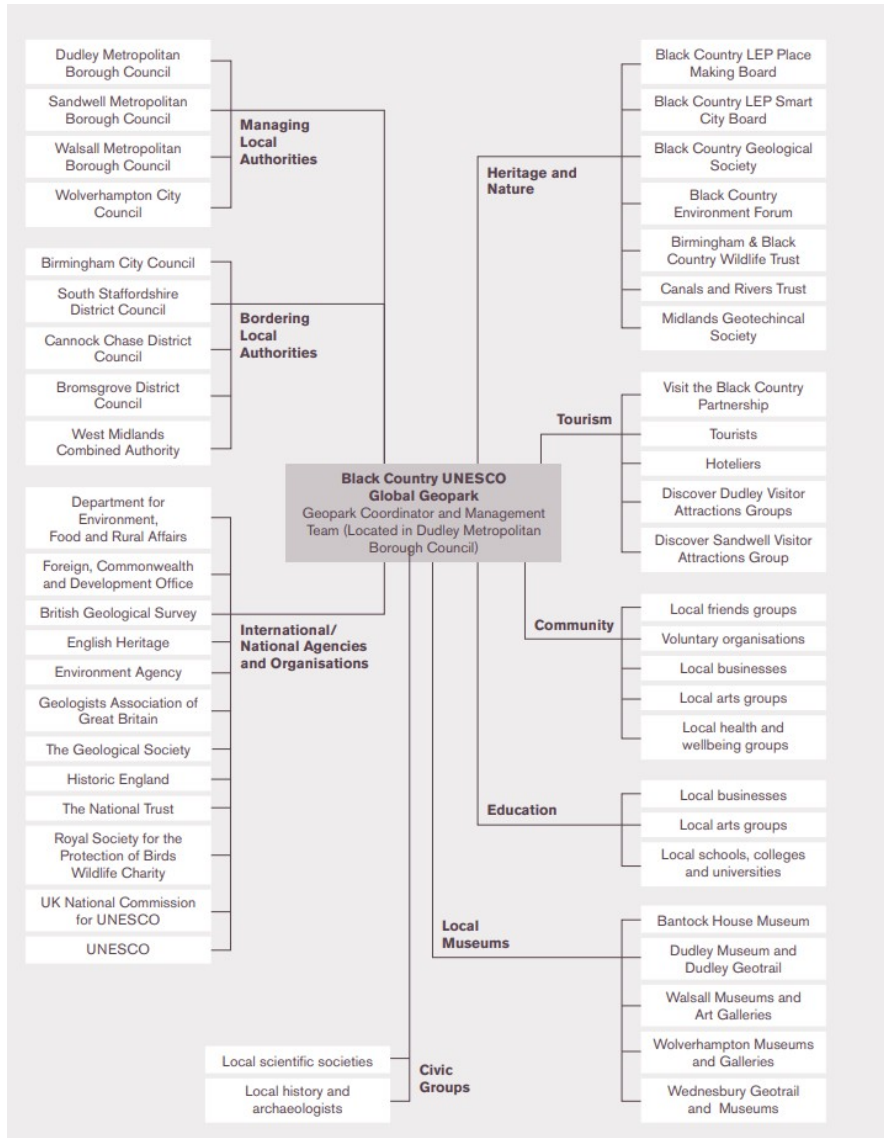
UNESCO sites fostering sustainable development

UNESCO sites are uniquely placed to address 21st-century sustainable development challenges them **by bringing people, communities, businesses, and organisations together to mobilise solutions locally, regionally and internationally.**

<https://unesco.org.uk/unesco-sites-for-sustainable-development/>



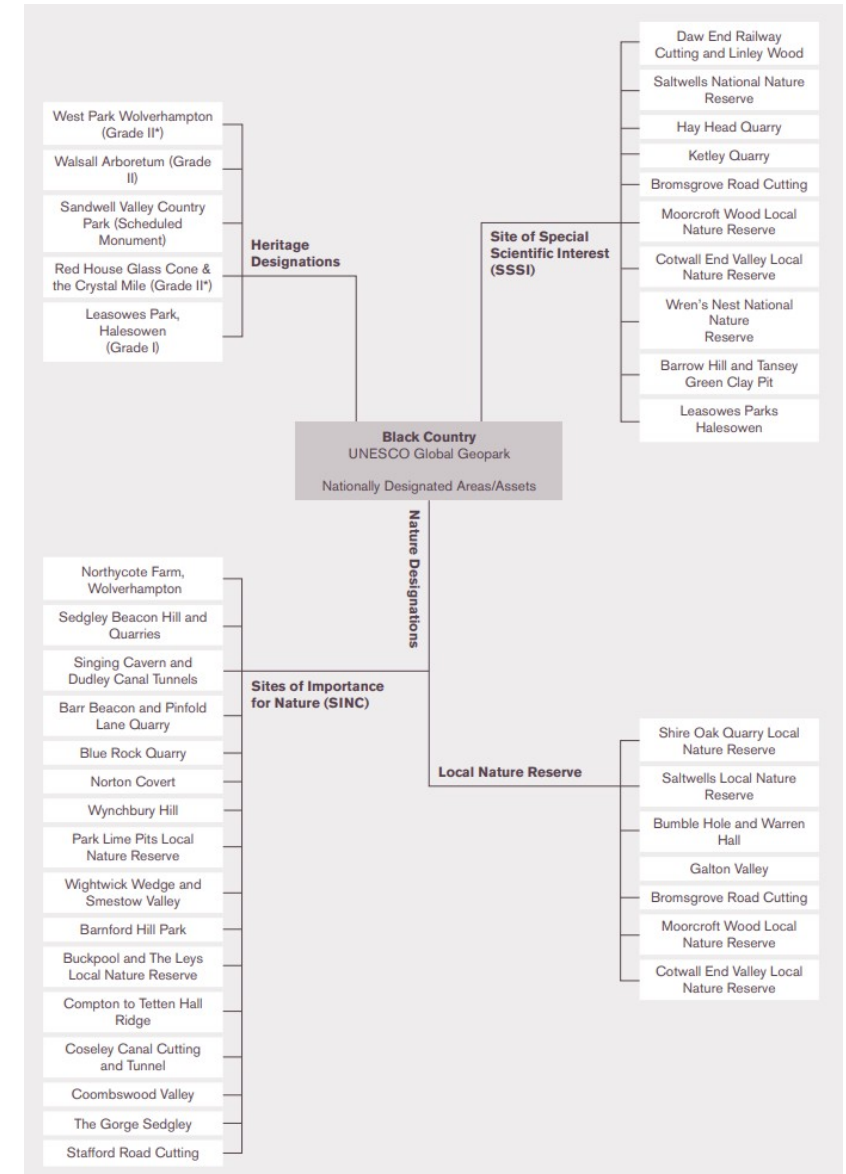
UNESCO designation stakeholders



UNESCO designations are made up of two key 'stakeholders'.

← **Local communities, businesses, heritage and nature groups**

Natural and cultural heritage protected areas →



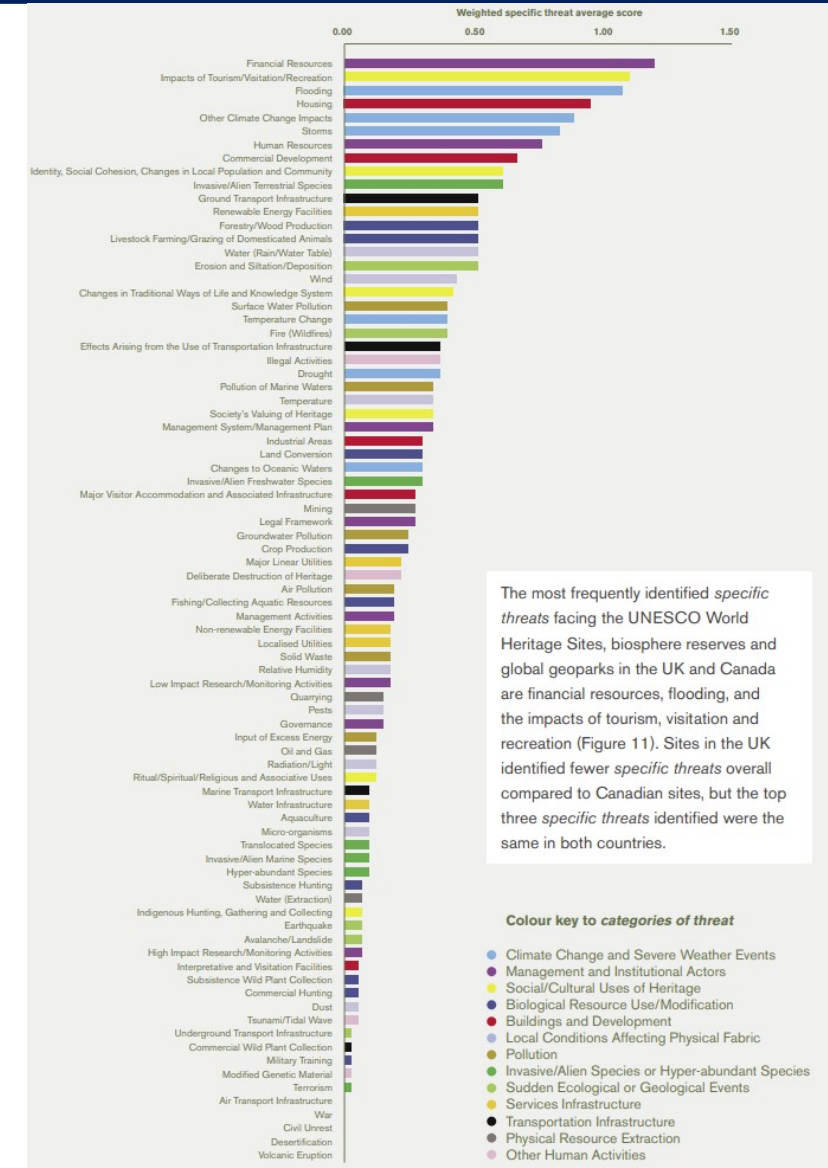
Biggest threat: overtourism

Threat based-analysis of all sites shows the top-threats they face

A closer look

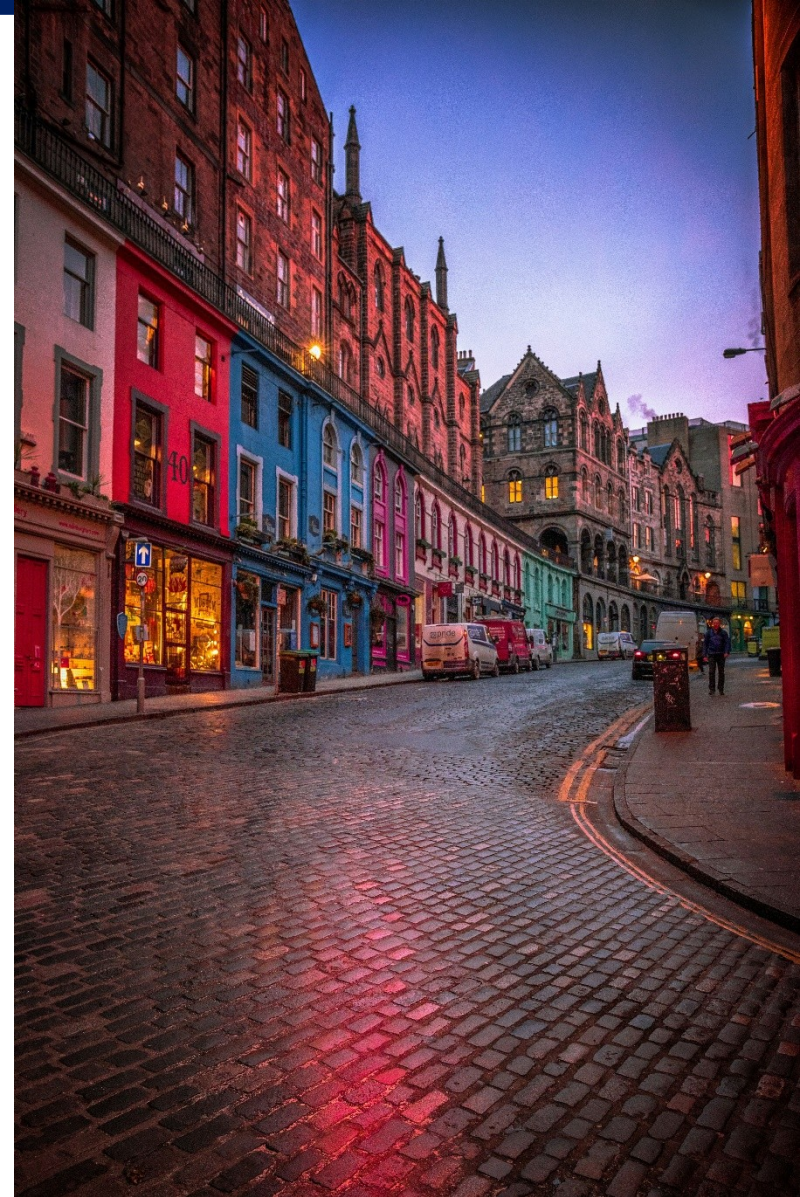
It showed that the top threats facing all sites in the UK and Canada are:

1. **Financial Resources**
2. **Impacts of Tourism/Visitation/Recreation**
3. **Flooding**
4. **Housing**
5. **Other climate change impacts**



What is Scotland's UNESCO Trail?

- Scotland's UNESCO Trail is a digital trail connecting the 13-place-based UNESCO designations across Scotland.
- It is the **first national trail anywhere in the world** that brings together Scotland's full range of UNESCO place-based designations while promoting responsible tourism.
- A unique partnership between the Scottish Government, UK National Commission for UNESCO, VisitScotland, and Scotland's site designation representatives.
- All UNESCO designations across Scotland work together for the first time to tell the story of Scotland in a new way that is innovative, exciting, and most importantly, responsible.



Project Objectives

- Support ambitions to position Scotland as a world-leading responsible tourism destination.
- To increase the value of visitors to the sites
- To encourage the geographical spread of visitors
- To encourage genuine engagement with communities
- To promote UNESCO values
- To apply sustainable tourism policies to contribute towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- To aid in the recovery of the sector by prioritising Responsible Tourism and Green Recovery.

Aligns with **Scotland Outlook 2030 – Responsible Tourism for a Sustainable Future**



CHOOSE A DESIGNATION ▾

MAP LIST

SCOTLAND'S UNESCO TRAIL

THE WONDERS WITHIN

The first country in the world to bring together 13 UNESCO sites into one trail. Are you ready to discover the wonders within?



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UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Every UNESCO designation tries to include the UN Sustainable Development Goals in their work.

WHAT ARE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)?

An urgent call for action from a global partnership of countries.

Recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations comes from strategies to:

- improve health and education
- reduce inequality
- encourage economic growth
- tackle climate change



Gladstone's Land

EDINBURGH'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Here's how Edinburgh's Old and New Town is working towards three of the goals.



GOAL 1 NO POVERTY

Edinburgh's Poverty Commission has set out a plan for the elimination of poverty also by 2030.



GOAL 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES & COMMUNITIES

Edinburgh has set out a vision to be thriving, welcoming, fair and pioneering.



GOAL 13 CLIMATE ACTION


Edinburgh is committed to achieving zero carbon by 2030.

OLD AND NEW TOWNS OF EDINBURGH

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Edinburgh is one of the world's most beautiful cities. Its historic heart is one of the most striking and architecturally significant in the world, thanks to the dramatic juxtaposition of its Old and New Towns.

[CLICK TO VIEW MAP](#)

 This UNESCO site is big, spanning 1.75 square miles (4.5 square km) with 4,500 buildings.

Promoting Stakeholder Engagement

Tourism attractions

BEST LOCAL ATTRACTIONS & EXPERIENCES

We've highlighted some of the best sustainable businesses around Edinburgh.



CALTON HILL

This 100 m peak which rises majestically above the eastern end of Princes Street is Edinburgh's answer to the Acropolis, thanks to its grand memorials and monuments, its observatory and neoclassical Royal High School. It enjoys one of the best panoramas in Edinburgh, encompassing the castle, Holyrood, Arthur's Seat, the New Town and the Firth of Forth beyond to Fife.



THE ROYAL MILE

The Royal Mile cuts an ancient line from Edinburgh Castle to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the Queen's Scottish residence. Discover what life was like for the well-to-do in the 17th century at Gladstone's Land, a fantastically well-preserved high-tenement house, visit fascinating attractions like the Museum of Childhood and Museum of Edinburgh and follow the narrow closes and passageways leading off from the Mile to uncover secret gardens and other historic remnants.



CHARLOTTE SQUARE

The elegant Charlotte Square was and is one of Edinburgh's most coveted addresses. Designed by design luminary Robert Adam, its townhouses boast palatial-like frontages and are considered among the crowning achievements of the first New Town. Bute House, on the north side of the square, is today the official residence of Scotland's First Minister.

Sustainable Local Businesses

SUSTAINABLE LOCAL BUSINESSES

These Green Tourism businesses are assessed on everything from energy efficiency to biodiversity and awarded bronze, silver or gold.

We want Scotland's UNESCO Trail to be an opportunity to explore the country in a sustainable and responsible way.

HOTEL TEN HILL PLACE HOTEL

Ten Hill Place Hotel is owned by the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, meaning profits help...



SELF CATERING POLLOCK HALLS

Located at the foot of Arthur's Seat and the royal Holyrood Park, the Pollock Halls Campus offers...



HOTEL KIMPTON CHARLOTTE SQUARE HOTEL

Off the predictable path; a luxury boutique hotel in the heart of Edinburgh's New Town



HOTEL VILLAGE THE HOTEL CLUB EDINBURGH

Situated just outside Edinburgh's city centre, Village comprises 120 contemporary bedrooms, a...

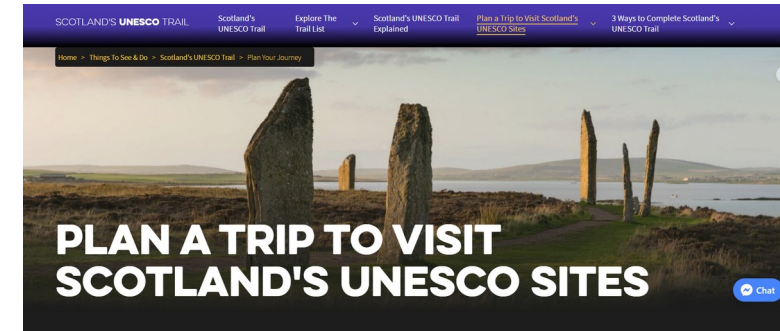


Hi! Welcome to VisitScotland we're online BST.

- To accompany the Trail, VisitScotland published an Industry toolkit for all types of tourism businesses.

They can:

- Access digital assets to promote business
- Access sustainable tourism itineraries
- Promotion of responsible tourism businesses and their communities
- A webinar on promoting businesses



THE UNESCO TRAIL GEOGRAPHICAL JOURNEYS

Time: Choose from 4-day to 8-day trips

Choose a part of the trail to explore and experience a different area of Scotland. To make things easy for you, we've pulled together six different journeys covering each part of the country, and you can easily create a trip which combines any number of them.

You could start in the south of Scotland, and then explore Edinburgh and Dundee, or why not head north to the biosphere and geopark of the north west Highlands? If you've got time you could sail over to Orkney, Shetland or the Outer Hebrides. Or take your time slowly exploring Glasgow and nearby New Lanark and the Antonine Wall sites.

Each of our journeys provides travel information with tips on how to get to the area, making it simple for you to start planning your own unique journey, as well as prioritising the most sustainable travel options available. We've also highlighted things to do, places to stay, food and drink, local tips and ways to travel around.



JOURNEY ONE - OUTER HEBRIDES

TRAVELLING TO OUTER HEBRIDES

From Inverness, you can take a bus to Ullapool which takes just over an hour.

The Calmac ferry runs from Ullapool to Stornoway on Lewis, and takes 2 hours 30 minutes.

There are also flights to Stornoway or Benbecula with Loganair, or you can land on the world's only beach airport on the Isle of Barra.

Once you arrive, local bus services connect major villages, and there are plenty of great organised tours and taxi services that you can take advantage of. Make saving on ferry journeys between islands and take advantage of HopScotch tickets issued by CalMac.

Driving is the most popular way for people to explore the Outer Hebrides, but you can also explore the islands on a cycling holiday.

Find more information on [getting to the Outer Hebrides](#) and [getting around the islands](#).

ST KILDA UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Promoting UNESCO Values and responsible tourism

- Partnership with the **Green Tourism Business Scheme**
- **Sustainability Certification Scheme:** To be promoted as part of Scotland's UNESCO Trail campaign, any business will need to have a listing on VisitScotland.com and be Green Tourism accredited.
- Private sector partners to ensure visitors have options to choose sustainable travel: ScotRail, Enterprise-Rent-A-Car, Skyscanner and Expedia.



Green Tourism Criteria

- **3 Pillars**
 - Caring for People
 - Caring for Places
 - Caring for Our Planet
- **15 Goals**
- **70 Criteria**
- **Aligned to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)**



Results so far..

- VisitScotland leading the promotion through an integrated digital marketing campaign across UK, France and Germany.
- In 2022, there were **162k visits** to the website.
- Reached **19 million** people and around **1 million interactions**.
- These have also generated: **24k shares and 27k likes** – well above industry averages.
- National Media: more than 30 pieces of coverage with an approximate reach of 407 million.
- Skyscanner...



- Ongoing ...
- Evaluating the impact of the UNESCO Trail with UNESCO designations is challenging.
- The project is unconventional, and many designations do not have systems to accurately capture or isolate impacts from the project.
- VisitScotland has developed a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to understand its impact against the UNESCO Trail objectives and how far it advances UNESCO's mission
- It will also understand how far the trail has influenced: value, visitor numbers, sustainable tourism, awareness, community engagement and networking.
- Published in Spring/Summer 2024

