

# Navigating the Depths: Problems, Progress, and Prospects in Asian Underwater Archaeology

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## Session Description

Asia's vast and diverse waters hold an unparalleled wealth of underwater cultural heritage that reflects the region's rich maritime past. Despite its significance, underwater archaeology in Asia has historically faced considerable challenges, including limited resources, varying levels of expertise, and inconsistent legal frameworks, to name but a few. This session aims to bring together academics, practitioners, and policymakers to discuss the current state of underwater archaeology in Asia, considering its problems, progress and prospects.

The session will explore critical issues such as the difficulties in preserving submerged sites in rapidly developing coastal areas, the impact of climate change on submerged landscapes, the politicisation of underwater archaeology and the challenges of balancing economic development with heritage conservation. By telling tales through time, the session will highlight the progress made through recent and re-examined archaeological discoveries, technological advances, new theoretical perspectives and collaborative initiatives that enhance our understanding of Asia's unique underwater cultural heritage.

The session will further address prospects for the future of underwater archaeological research in the region, including the potential for greater regional cooperation, new funding mechanisms, and the integration of underwater heritage into broader cultural and environmental conservation strategies.

A platform for interdisciplinary dialogue and knowledge exchange, the inclusive, gender-balanced session seeks to showcase diverse perspectives and dissenting voices. We strongly encourage and value contributions from minoritised and underrepresented communities and those employing transformative and participatory approaches that enrich our collective understanding of underwater cultural heritage in the Asian region. There are no thematic or temporal limits.

## **Keywords**

Maritime Archaeology; Shipwrecks: Underwater Cultural Heritage; Underwater Archaeology;  
Asia