



PREFACE

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WELCOME to REAL CORP 2023, the 28th International Conference on Urban & Regional Development and Spatial Planning in the Information Society!

A constantly growing world (around 8 billion people now, 9.7 billion to be expected by 2050) with constantly expanding cities and urban agglomerations is facing various challenges such as scarcity of resources, infrastructure provision security, risk of disasters, global warming or ageing of the population. These topics have to be seen as global challenges which are unevenly distributed across the world regarding the dynamics of those phenomena and their geographic location. Are Nature-Based Solutions the key to liveable, sustainable, resilient cities even under the threats of climate change? Is it just about greening the cities and their green and blue infrastructures? What is the context of their technological developments and social innovation?

Nature-Based Solutions are definitely being understood well beyond greenery or only biotic nature. There are strong relations with topics such as liveability, social cohesion and human activities, and urban planning, architecture and design as key disciplines. Thus, beside green and blue (water) infrastructure as currently the most often addressed manifestation of Nature-Based Solutions in cities, REAL CORP 2023 suggests to reflect also on the physical processes and materials (abiotic nature) as inevitable parts of nature. These can be seen in connection with parameters of urban planning, such as morphology, land use, availability of space for (land) use occupancy etc. These physical world processes are also part of nature, especially as the properties of locations and sites that may well dictate their further development as well as the selection of suitable Nature-Based Solutions for implementation at these specific locations.

Nature-Based Solutions that directly use natural processes (e. g. natural terrain with high vegetation, which in urban areas is most often associated with a park), especially in dense urban patterns, are generally more difficult to implement due to spatial as well as economic constraints. Nature-Based Solutions that may be more appropriate in such situations may come from a set of ideas and proposals that “mimic” nature. Here, it is important to note that nature is made up of both biotic and abiotic components. For example, in terms of reducing the occurrence of heat islands in cities, solutions can be found in the selection of suitable building materials and their appropriate treatment, appropriate physical characteristics of the components of abiotic nature, optimum orientation of buildings and their compositions on the sites, as this can influence the natural ventilation of the rooms (micro scale) or area (macro scale).

Other open questions include ways in which Nature-Based Solutions can be addressed in various spatial planning documents and processes and how can the capabilities of Nature-Based Solutions be used in effective policy making and implementation.

This year we brought together some 200 participants from more than 30 countries worldwide. The main goal of the REAL CORP conference series is to bring together leading experts in the field of spatial planning, geoinformation and related disciplines to exchange their knowledge, share their ideas, discuss current developments and get together for face to face networking leading to the development of new thoughts, partnerships and projects.

The success of the REAL CORP conferences is – clearly without doubt – the result of the efforts of participants, reviewers, and the conference organising team. We would like to acknowledge the Reviewer Team and Programme Committee members for their valuable voluntary help with the review process. Our thanks go to all participants and authors of the submitted papers as well.

The proceedings of this year’s conference contain around 110 scientific papers; 92 of them were selected after a double-blind, double-stage (for both abstracts and full papers) peer-review process for publication and presentation at REAL CORP 2023. The non-reviewed papers were accepted by the programme committee after a double-blind abstract review. The conference is held from 18 to 20 September 2023 in Slovenia’s capital Ljubljana as well as in virtual space.

Welcome to Ljubljana! Have a great conference!

Manfred SCHRENK, Clemens BEYER & the REAL CORP Team