MINUTES

RSAI COUNCIL MEETING during 2026 ERSA Congress in Sofia, Bulgaria

Wednesday, August 26th, 13:00-14:45 (Sofia time UTC/GMT + 3 hours)

AGENDA

1. **(Hiro) Apologies**
2. **(Hiro) Approval of Minutes from the previous RSAI Council Meeting (ANNEX I)**
3. **(Hiro) RSAI Council representatives in the LRPC Approved ONLINE**
4. **(Hiro) RSAI Program Nurturing New Talent (NNT). 2nd call. *Proposals for events taking place from June 2026 to Dec 2026*. Approved ONLINE**
5. **(Hiro) Approval of the new text/rules for the RSAI Fellow Award (ANNEX II)**
6. **(Hiro) Approval of the text/rules for the new RSAI Award (the Best Reviewer Award for RSPP) (ANNEX III)**
7. **(Ana) Information/evaluation on the applications received to organize the RSAI World Congress 2028 (ANNEX IV and V and VI)**
8. **(Ana) Approval or rejection of the application from CARSA (Central Asia Regional Science Association) to become part of RSAI (ANNEX VII)**
9. **(Rosella and Andrea) Report on PiRS and RSPP (ANNEX VIII)**
10. **(Ana) RSAI Council debate on:**
    1. **Benefits of belonging to RSAI**
    2. **RSAI statement on US research situation**
    3. **RSAI President's allowance**
    4. **Communication strategy**
11. **(Hiro) Any other business (AOB)**
12. **(Hiro) Next meeting**

1. Apologies **(Hiro)**

The following members are participating onsite: Hiroyuki Shibusawa, Janet Kohlhase, Dimitris Kallioras, Roberta Capello, Camila Lenzi, Andre Chagas, Katarzyna Kopczewska, Ana Viñuela (and Rosella Nicolini and Andrea Caragliu)
The following members are participating online: Hidehiko Kanegae, Sumona Banerjee, Sarah Low, Mauricio Oyarzo, Sebastien Bourdin, Rafael Garduño (And Mina Akhavan and Elisabete Martins)
Apologies received by email by InKwon Park, Enrique Gilles, and Lisa Bourdeau-Lepage (and Martjin Smith).

We start the meeting when we reach 50% members of the council required for all our decisions to be considered final.
RSAI president welcomes all RSAI members attending online or onsite. For convenience, a power point presentation will be shown during the meeting with the 12 points of the Agenda.

Roberto Capello reports on the LRPC meeting and a document produced by Eduardo outlining future challenges for RSAI and potential institutional restructuring. The document lists problems RSAI may face in the future and a small committee has been tasked with exploring possible institutional restructuring. Next steps will be reported at the next RSAI council meeting in Philadelphia.

2. Approval of Minutes from the previous RSAI Council Meeting (ANNEX I)

Minutes from previous RSAI Council meeting were previously distributed by email to the all council members and no questions or comments were raised. They are officially approved with no objection.

3. RSAI Council representatives in the LRPC Approved ONLINE

RSAI Council recognises the need to count with some council members serving as communication channels between the Long Range Planning Committee and the RSAI Council, with attention to geographical and gender balance. After asking among RSAI Councilors and considering geographical/gender balances, In Kwon Park from PRSCO and Sarah Low from NARSC will adopt this role starting next year. In case Camila Lenzi from ERSA, gets reelected for 27-29, we will have 3 councillors serving (as in many occasions attendance to LRPC meetings cannot be guaranteed). Approved online, and now officially approved

4. RSAI Program Nurturing New Talent (NNT). 2nd call. *Proposals for events taking place from June 2026 to Dec 2026*. Approved ONLINE

The designated Committee finished the evaluation of the 2 proposals received for the RSAI Program Nurturing New Talent (2nd call). The “EU Regional Development Dialogues: From Policy to Research – Regional Science Research Incubator Workshop”, (28–29 September 2026 in Split, Croatia) was allocated 4,530 € (same as quantity requested) and the Workshop: Advancing Urban Sustainability Analysis in Southeast Asia through Experimental and Computational Modeling (July 31 – August 2, 2026; Bangkok, Thailand) was allocated 2,376€ (quantity requested 5 039,47 €). Alocation of funds was approved ONLINE by the RSAI Council.

Awardees were informed and funds have been transferred only in the first case, as Thailand decided to change the date and apply later on to the NNT Program.

Roberta Capello, as ERSA president, expressed discomfort when national sections from Europe apply for RSAI funding without informing ERSA, particularly when the allocated budget is attributed to the European share. She also raised the issue of a conflict of interest in her role. ED underlines that exists a soft requirement for national sections to inform/coordinate with their supranational before applying, but not a requirement. Roberta Capello proposes then that coordination with both national and supranational sections to be a prerequisite, and that obtaining supranational approval can be treated as a positive criterion (a "plus") rather than a veto. Rosella suggests that a compulsory letter of endorsement from the supranational section be required as part of the application.

There is agreement that rules to apply to NNT Program need a compulsory endorsement letter from the supranational section and that coordination with national a supranational sections needs to be explicitly stated in the rules.

5. Approval of the new text/rules for the RSAI Fellow Award (ANNEX II)

ED explains several issues identified in the last RSAI Fellow Award evaluation process, prompting a revision of the rules. Issues detected included strategic membership applications solely to qualify for the award, difficulty evaluating qualitative criteria, reception of multiple applications for the same nominee, indirect self-nomination, false information in CVs and leakage of confidential process information. The Evaluation Committee drafted revised rules, which were reviewed by the Honours Committee and now circulated to the Council for approval. The revised rules text for the RSAI Fellow Award is approved and will be updated in the RSAI web page for next call.

A discussion also took place on setting an annual cap on the number of new fellows. Roberta Capello raised the question of whether an annual cap on new fellows should be introduced, noting that some years saw as many as six fellows elected, which may dilute the award's value. Janet Kohlhase agreed that too many fellows per year dilutes the value of the award. A maximum of two new fellows per year was suggested by Roberta Capello, and despite supporting the cap, Katarzyna Kopczewska suggests three rather than two, to allow more flexibility for gender balance. Also proposes that for the 5% limit, RSAI fellows who are no longer active should not be counted in the total pool. Andres Chagas agrees with reducing the annual number and emphasizes that the evaluation should consider that women's CVs may reflect additional career burdens compared to men's. In this regard, ED Ana Viñuela clarifies that the RSAI Fellow Award is not solely CV-based; it requires demonstrated engagement with the RSAI community and thus, the selection committee, elected by the Council, plays a key role in shortlisting candidates before all present RSAI fellows vote.

Roberta adds that in order to get a more gender balanced outcome, the Honours Committee should scout candidates and ensure diversity, including gender and geographical balance. Sarah Low recommends approving the revised text for the current cycle as a priority, and suggests a final cap of three new RSAI Fellows per year.

The revised rules text for the RSAI Fellow Award is approved and will be published in the RSAI Web page.

6. Approval of the text/rules for the new RSAI Award (the Best Reviewer Award for RSPP) (ANNEX III)

Andrea Caragliu, EiC of the journal RSPP (Regional Science Policy and Practice), has presented to RSAI ED a proposal to create a new RSAI award recognizing outstanding reviewers for the journal RSPP. The award would recognize reviewers based on quality, constructiveness, timeliness, and volume of reviews. Winners would receive a free conference registration certificate and a publication fee waiver for one paper submitted to RSPP in the following year. EiC of RSPP explains the financial implications: the waiver represents approximately half of the APC (around 1,700 euros), meaning the net cost to RSAI is approximately 850 euros per award. Existing waivers in the pool can be used initially; the contract with Elsevier needs to be renegotiated for 2029 onwards. Also, if the award recipient has an institutional open-access agreement, there is no cost to RSAI.

EiC of PiRS, Rosella Nicolini, stated that PiRS will not offer a similar award, as it does not face reviewer shortages and the cost of a PiRS waiver would be double that of RSPP, so the initiative should not be extended to PiRS.

The new Best Reviewer Award for RSPP is approved. The waiver policy will be factored into the next contract renegotiation for 2029 onwards.

7. Information/evaluation on the applications received to organize the RSAI World Congress 2028 (ANNEX IV and V and VI)

RSAI ED explains that three applications were received for the 2028 RSAI World Congress. After reviewing the applications, the RSAI Council will take a decision during the next RSAI Council meeting in Philadelphia. The three applications received are from the Indonesian Section (Bali), the Spanish Section (Madrid, proposed by Rafa Garduno), and China (School of Economics, Xishuang).

The Indonesian section is highly active; the initial budget submitted was financially unviable and had to be reworked. The revised budget is now solid.

The Madrid proposal is well-positioned due to strong connectivity and appeal to European and Latin American attendees. Rafa Garduno was advised to check for a date that avoids conflict with the ERSA conference (April or early May suggested). Rafael Garduño (online) shows no conflict in adjusting dates for the Madrid proposal (in case it is elected)

The Chinese application came as a surprise; the source is unclear, and even Hans and Paul Snow were unaware of it. Ki Mingxia is identified as the applicant and is an active RSAI member.

After the experience from the Ecuador World Congress application, Andre Chagas suggests that Council representatives from ERSA, PRESCO, and LARSA should proactively contact the respective applicants to discuss and potentially endorse proposals.

The three applications (Indonesia/Bali, Spain/Madrid, China) are accepted for consideration; Council members need to review the full applications (annexes) before Philadelphia and each applicant will present for two to three minutes at the Philadelphia Council meeting, followed by a vote.

8. (Ana) Approval or rejection of the application from CARSA (Central Asia Regional Science Association) to become part of RSAI (ANNEX VII)

RSAI ED explains that an application was received to create a new national section comprising researchers from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and other Central Asian countries. This group of researchers has been active since approximately 2023, organizing annual conferences, with plans through 2029. However, their activity appears to be largely dependent on RSAI support, and they have not demonstrated independent sustainability.

Roberta raises concern about sections being created without affiliation to any supranational organization, noting precedents with Armenia, SARSA, and China. She proposes that newly created sections be required to affiliate with a supranational (ERSA, PRESCO, or LARSA) or risk being excluded.

Sarah Low cautions against issuing ultimatums before the Long Range Planning Committee presents its restructuring recommendations in Philadelphia and suggests sending a friendly advisory email instead. Roberta agrees to send a non-threatening email to CARSA, SARSA, Armenia, and China, encouraging them to consider supranational affiliation, without issuing formal threats.

The CARSA application was accepted for further consideration; a formal vote will take place in forthcoming 2026 RSAI Council meetings.

9. Report on PiRS and RSPP (ANNEX VIII)

Brief reports are provided by the EiCs on the status of both RSAI journals.

Rosella Nicolini, PiRS EiC, reports that the Impact factor increased and there is a rebalancing underway in terms of subject areas and author origins. A new online database of routines has been launched on the PiRS website to support replication.

Andrea Caragliu, RSPP EiC, reports that impact factor for RSPP also increased, submissions are growing, and presents two proposals for the journal development: 1) a new short paper format (approximately 4,000 words) with a fast-track review of up to three weeks, inspired by a timely spontaneous submission on tunnel closure impacts; and 2) a tightening of the book review policy, limiting authors to one book review per year and requiring closer alignment with the journal's policy focus. There will be a reshuffling of the editorial board (removing inactive members, adding active contributors), is within the editors' discretion but will be shared with the Council for transparency and suggestions, but changes to journal policies require RSAI Council approval.

RSAI Council does not show any objection.

10. RSAI Council debate on:

1. Benefits of belonging to RSAI

An open discussion is held on the tangible benefits of RSAI membership, the potential for a formal mentorship program, and the effectiveness of the Building Bridges program.

RSAI ED Ana Viñuela summarizes pre-meeting email responses from councillors. Key themes included the need to articulate a clear package of membership benefits and the recurring suggestion of a formal mentorship program for early-career researchers. She highlights that the Building Bridges program, which funds researchers from low-income countries, has failed to convert recipients into RSAI members. None of the funded researchers over the past ten years are currently RSAI members. She also suggests that RSAI Council members should attend Nurturing New Talent workshops to engage directly with young researchers and encourage membership. RSAI needs to understand what young researchers actually want from RSAI before designing new programs. Some ideas are cost-free while others require budget allocation,.

Deeper discussion deferred to Philadelphia

2. RSAI statement on US research situation

The RSAI Council discussed whether RSAI should issue a public statement regarding the current political situation in the USA.

RSAI ED summarizes councillors' pre-meeting email responses. The consensus was that RSAI should not issue a statement, as it could have negative consequences for researchers based in the USA. Sarah Low suggests a very broad, general statement could be added to the RSAI website, as used by other associations. Janet Kholhase agrees with not making a statement.

Therefore, RSAI will not issue a specific public statement on the USA situation. Any statement, if considered, would be extremely broad and non-specific; this remains optional and low priority.

3. RSAI President's allowance

The question of whether to introduce a financial allowance for the RSAI President was discussed, with divided opinions among councillors. Opinions are split between those in favor and those against. The matter has budget implications, and it is necessary to remind that annual expenses already exceed annual fee income.

An online ballot will be circulated to all Council members to vote and result will be approved during the next RSAI Council meeting. The ballot will include options for yes, no, and conditional yes with suggested amounts or conditions.

4. Communication strategy

A brief discussion took place on the need for a modernized RSAI communication strategy. RSAI ED identified the need to move away from newsletters, embrace social media, and develop strategies to reach non-members as well as existing members. She also acknowledges that implementing a new strategy requires involvement of people with relevant digital skills and a different generational perspective.

Full discussion deferred to Philadelphia. Social media engagement and outreach to non-members identified as key priorities.

11. (Hiro) Any other business (AOB)

None

12. (Hiro) Next meeting

Next meeting will take place during NARSC in Philadelphia.

RSAI Council Members

2026 RSAI Council Members

2026 RSAI Council Members

	Name	Member	Period	Email address
1	Hiroyuki Shibusawa	President	2025-2026	shibusawa.hiroyuki.dc@tut.jp
2	Janet Kohlhase	Vice-President	2026-2027	kohlhase@central.uh.edu
3	In Kwon Park	PRSCO President	2024-2026	parkik@snu.ac.kr
4	Hidehiko Kanegae	PRSCO Representative	2021-2026	hkanegae@sps.ritsumei.ac.jp
5	Sumona Banerjee	PRSCO Representative	2025-2027	sumona_bm@yahoo.com
6	Elizabeth Mack	NARSC Representative	2021-2026	emack@msu.edu
7	Haifeng Qian	NARSC Representative	2024-2026	haifeng-qian@uiowa.edu
8	Sarah Low	NARSC Representative	2025-2027	SarahLow@illinois.edu
9	Roberta Capello	ERSA President	2024-2026	roberta.capello@polimi.it
10	Lise Bourdeau-Lepage	ERSA Representative	2023-2025	lblepage@gmail.com
11	Dimitris Kallioras	ERSA Representative	2026-2028	dkallior@uth.gr
12	Fernando Perobelli	LARSA Representative	2024-2026	fernando.perobelli@ufjf.edu.br
13	Enrique Gilles	LARSA Representative	2026-2028	enrique.gilles@cesa.edu.co
14	Mauricio Oyarzo	LARSA Representative	2026-2028	mauriciooyarzo@udec.cl
15	Camilla Lenzi	Councillor at large	2024-2026	camilla.lenzi@polimi.it
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17	Katarzyna Kopczewska	Councillor at large	2024-2026	kkopczewska@wne.uw.edu.pl
18	Sébastien Bourdin	Councillor at large	2025-2027	sbourdin@em-normandie.fr
19	Rafael Garduño	Councillor at large	2026-2028	rgarduno@unav.es
20	Ana Viñuela	Executive Director	2025-2027	avinuela@uniovi.es

LRPC Members

1	Peter Nijkamp	President	1991-1992	pnijkamp@hotmail.com
2	Lay J. Gibson	President	1993-1994	ljgibson@comcast.net
3	Kingsley E. Haynes	President	1995-1996	khaynes@gmu.edu
4	Peter W. J. Batey	President	1997-1998	pwjbatey@liv.ac.uk
5	H. Khono	President	1999-2000	
6	Geoffrey J.D.Hewings	President	2001-2002	hewings@uiuc.edu
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8	Roberta Capello	President	2009-2010	roberta.capello@polimi.it
9	Yoshiro Higano	President	2011-2012	higano@jsrsai.jp
10	Jean-Claude Thill	President	2013-2014	Jean-Claude.Thill@uncc.edu
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13	Mark Partridge	President	2019-2020	partridge.27@osu.edu
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15	Hans Hestlund	President	2023-2024	hans.westlund@abe.kth.se
16	Camila Lenzi	Council Representative	2021-2025	camilla.lenzi@polimi.it

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9	Elisabete Martins	Finance Director	Elisabete.martins@apdr.pt

ANNEX II

RSAI Fellows

RSAI fellows are distinguished scholars with a proven and recognized research record in the field of regional science during a considerable part of their scientific career. Such honoured members of the RSAI are appointed after a sound nomination (based on a broad consultation among the RSAI community) and a careful selection procedure (by the elected evaluation committee) and a voting process (among the RSAI Fellows).

The RSAI fellowship is a world-wide sign of scientific recognition that is bestowed on a regional scientist with outstanding research credentials in his/her field. The RSAI fellowship does not imply any obligation to the Association, although it is expected that fellows on a voluntary basis will serve the scientific objectives of the RSAI whenever possible or appropriate.

Regional science has witnessed a great increase in scholarly interest and scientific publications all over the world. To create a vital Association, it is therefore critical that senior members - and, in particular, RSAI fellows – act as a role model, in particular for a younger generation. The RSAI membership should have the highest expectations on – and appreciation for – the ethical behavior of its fellows, given their past seminal research contributions.

RSAI fellows may contribute to the fulfilment of the goals of the Association by offering a scientific service or incentive to its members through various means, such as:

- Organization of **Special Sessions** at any major RSAI conference (ERSA, NARSC, PRSCO, LARSA or World Conference) with the aim to reflect on new methodologies or promising approaches in research.
- Before any of the major RSAI conferences, organization of:
    - short ‘next gen’ **training courses** for young researchers
    - solid **special sessions** with a balanced mix of seniors (in particular, RSAI fellows) and juniors (‘rising stars’), where fellows and rising stars present recent research work (in the long run, even joint senior-junior research work could be foreseen).
- Organization of **meetings** at any major RSAI conference (ERSA, NARSC, PRSCO, LARSA or World Conference):
    - “Meet the professor” meetings, i.e. early-bird (breakfast) meetings, luncheon meetings or late afternoon drinks meetings with a small group of young researchers, based on an open subscription/application system, in which informal presentations (5-10 minutes) are held by young researchers

    - "Fellows meeting", i.e. a socializing meeting (e.g., a luncheon or late afternoon drinks) or a substantive meeting (e.g., an exploratory venue addressing future research strategies or topics).

- Organization of a voluntary 'Foster Fellow Plan', in which an RSAI fellow is willing to adopt for a period of (e.g.) one year a selected young researcher from a different country –in consultation with his/her supervisor – with the aim to provide network contacts or scientific guidance, or perhaps to start a joint research project.
- Organization of a column in the RSAI Newsletter (after consultation of the Newsletter editors) on any topic.

Any Special Session, training course or meeting at the conferences needs to be done in consultation with the conference organizers.

Limit on the Number of Fellows

1. An upper limit on the number of fellows is set at 5% of the membership of RSAI.
2. Fellows who are deceased are not counted in the upper limit on the number of fellows set out in 1 above.

Nomination and Selection Protocol of RSAI Fellows:

a/ The selection of new RSAI fellows takes place only once a year, but nominations can be sent in at any time and will be considered for a given selection round, if they have been received before a given deadline. A nomination has a maximum life of two years.

b/ Each RSAI member - except RSAI fellows – is entitled to nominate candidates for the RSAI fellowship, but self-nominations or self-promoted evaluations are not allowed. An RSAI-member can only nominate the same candidate once. Each nomination must be done exclusively through a standard concise nomination form that follows a systematic template (See below the "Standard Nomination Form for RSAI Fellows"). Apart from the profile described below, the nominee must be a long-established RSAI member (or a member of any section recognized by the RSAI) with a strong commitment with the Association in order to be able to serve RSAI in the way described above.

c/ The process requires the management of private information that cannot be shared outside those entities involved in the procedure (i.e. Selection Committee, RSAI Council and RSAI Fellows):

1. A selection committee comprising 3 RSAI Fellows is approved by the RSAI Council for a period of staggered 3-year terms before the deadline to submit nominations. The aim of the selection committee is seriously considering all available information on the nominees and remove candidates (unanimous vote) who do not qualify

according to the requirements and the expected profile described above[1]. The selection committee can also decide to reduce the list of candidates to a manageable number, so that nominees can be voted by qualified majority. In the case that multiple nominations for a nominee are received, only the first received will be considered.

A short list should normally not contain more than 10 to 12 names and no fewer than 8 names (unless the number of nominations is fewer than eight).

The decision of this selection committee is irrevocable.

2. The selection committee will inform on the names finally included in the short list to the RSAI President and RSAI Executive Director, who will subsequently inform the RSAI Council for consideration. Only names included in the short list will be available to RSAI Council and RSAI Fellows.
3. The short list is next circulated to all RSAI fellows, who have the exclusive right to vote for (a maximum of) 3 candidate-fellows. No ranking of candidates is allowed. A vote of at least 1/3 will normally mean election, (unless exceeding the maximum number of RSAI Fellows allowed, i.e. 5% of the RSAI membership). Those candidates from the short list that were not elected will be included in the list of candidates of the following year (with maximum life of two years)
4. The RSAI Executive Director will inform on the results of the ballot to the RSAI Council. RSAI Executive Director will write exclusively to the new elected RSAI fellows to congratulate them for obtaining this RSAI Award. Email announcing the news will also be sent to their home institutions and their home RSAI Section and supranational.

To avoid privacy issues, it is worth noticing that names of those candidates not selected in the first phase of this procedure (selection committee creating a short list) or in the second phase (ballot by RSAI Fellows) are not in any part of the process made public.

Standard Nomination Form for RSAI Fellow nomination:

To ensure full consideration by the selection committee, please send exclusively a PDF file named “Standard Nomination Form_ SURNAME NAME” containing the following sections:

1. Factual bio-data on candidate (RSAI Secretariat will check on the long established RSAI membership)

[1] Common causes of exclusion may be, among others, self-promoted nominations, the inclusion of additional attachments -as for instance the CV of the nominee or letters of support from other researchers-, or the presence of information in the nomination materials that cannot be verified by the Selection Committee.

2. Professional career of candidate (max. 100 words)
3. Substantive contribution to regional science (max. 200 words)
4. Path-breaking publications on regional science (max. 5)
5. Signs of international scientific recognition (max. 50 words)
6. Reasons for nominating the candidate (max. 50 words).
7. A declaration that the nomination is a result of the nominator's own initiative and not based on a request or initiative by the nominee.

The standard nomination form must be submitted before **April 15, 2027** to Ana Vinuela, RSAI Executive Director (rsai@apdr.pt)

The Selection Committee for the 2027 RSAI Fellows award, approved by the RSAI Council, will be formed by Jouke Van Dijk (chair), Amit Batabyal and Sarah Low.

ANNEX III

Regional Science, Policy & Practice: Best Ireviewer award

Regional Science, Policy & Practice values the crucial role placed by our colleagues who kindly agree to work for free for the benefit of the journal; help improving the quality of the papers published; and withstand the pressure we all feel, both as authors as well as of editors, triggered by the growing number of journals, journal articles, and, consequently, of the requests sent and received to review papers.

The best reviewer for each calendar year will be chosen as follows.

Each February, the Editors of the journal nominate a maximum of two reviewers who contributed to the improvement of papers they handled. They then gather within Apr. 1 to discuss their proposals, based on the following criteria:

- Contribution to the paper's improvement;
- Number and quality of reviews provided in the calendar year;
- Capacity to meet the review deadlines;
- Use of a constructive and inclusive language in the reviewer's reports submitted.

The editors submit the name of the winner, and a one paragraph motivation for their choice, within mid April, to the RSAI's Executive Director, who then informs the RSAI Council members. The winner will be presented a certificate at a major RSAI event in the same calendar year (ERSA, NARSC, LARSA, PRSCO, or RSAI World Congress) at the choice of the reviewer. They will also be offered by the editors a waiver for the APC of an article submitted by the winner in the subsequent calendar year, should the paper be eventually accepted, and irrespective of the actual date of acceptance.

ANNEX IV

RSAI

THE REGIONAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL

BID TO HOST THE
2028 RSAI World Congress

Shaping the Future of Regions: Innovation, Resilience and Inclusive Growth.

20 – 23 June 2028, Madrid, Spain

Venue:

University of Navarra, Madrid Campus



asociación española de ciencia regional

Universidad de Navarra

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Spanish Association of Regional Science (AECR) and the University of Navarra are pleased to submit this proposal to host the 2028 RSAI World Congress in Madrid, Spain.

The proposed Congress will bring together scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and students from all RSAI supranationals and sections to discuss the most pressing regional challenges of the twenty-first century.

The Congress aims to combine scientific excellence with strong institutional visibility, including the invitation of leading public authorities and distinguished international scholars.

Madrid offers:

- exceptional international accessibility;
- world-class academic institutions;
- strong institutional support from the Spanish Regional Science community through AECR;
- extensive experience hosting international scientific events;
- a strategic position connecting Europe, Latin America, North Africa and the Mediterranean.

The proposed dates are:

20–23 June 2028

Expected attendance:

Expected attendance of approximately 400 participants, with planning scenarios ranging from 200 to 600 delegates representing more than 60 countries.

2. INTRODUCTION

Madrid 2028 represents a unique opportunity to strengthen the global reach of RSAI by bringing together scholars from Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia, Africa and Oceania in one of the world's most internationally connected cities. Beyond providing an outstanding scientific program, the Congress seeks to reinforce collaboration between academia, policymakers and international organizations working to address the major regional challenges of the twenty-first century.

Madrid 2028 also represents an opportunity to reinforce the historical links between European and Latin American regional science communities while opening new avenues of collaboration with Africa and Asia through one of Europe's most globally connected capitals.

In this document, we include the purpose of the Congress, the Congress Theme, proposed Dates, Location and Venue. The text also includes Tourism, Travel, Accommodation, and Language information. The organization concerning the schedule, the speakers, the program and the Committees are also advanced. The proposal finishes with a budget.

3. PURPOSE OF THE CONGRESS

The purpose responds to the purpose of the Call:

- To create an opportunity for bridging the networks established by the supra-regional organizations.
- To provide a scientifically and socially attractive event for first entry into the RSAI networks for postgraduate students and scholars from parts of the world where the supraregionals and their constituent sections have little or no representation

4. WHY MADRID?

Madrid is one of Europe's most dynamic global cities.

Strategic Location

Madrid serves as a natural bridge between:

- Europe
- Latin America
- North Africa
- Mediterranean countries

No other European city offers comparable connectivity with both Europe and Latin America.

International Accessibility

Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport:

- more than 60 million annual passengers
- direct flights to over 200 destinations
- direct connections to all major European capitals
- extensive connections to North and South America

Travel times:

Origin	Time
London	2.5 h
Paris	2 h
Berlin	3 h
New York	8 h
Mexico City	11 h
São Paulo	10 h

Attractive Destination

Madrid consistently ranks among Europe's most visited cities due to:

- cultural heritage
- safety
- gastronomy
- museums
- climate
- affordability compared with other major European capitals

5. WHY SPAIN?

Spain has a long and distinguished tradition in Regional Science.

Scientific Leadership

Spanish scholars have made major contributions in:

- regional economics
- urban economics
- spatial econometrics
- innovation studies
- territorial cohesion

Spain hosts one of the largest regional science communities in Europe through AECR.

Strategic Location

Spain occupies a unique geographical position at the crossroads of Europe, Latin America, North Africa and the Mediterranean. Madrid serves as one of the world's principal air hubs connecting Europe with Latin America while also offering excellent accessibility from North America, Africa and Asia.

Hosting the RSAI World Congress in Spain would maximize participation from the European Regional Science Association (ERSA) and the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Science Association (LARSA), while remaining highly accessible for participants from NARSC and PRSCO. This strategic position strengthens the Congress's objective of fostering dialogue across all RSAI supranationals and expanding participation from emerging regional science communities.

Strong International Presence

Spanish scholars regularly publish in:

- Papers in Regional Science
- Regional Science Policy & Practice
- Regional Studies
- Journal of Regional Science
- Growth and Change

Historic Opportunity

Despite Spain's leadership in Regional Science, the RSAI World Congress has never been held in Spain. Although the 4th RSAI World Congress was held in Palma de Mallorca in 1992, Spain has not hosted a World Congress in more than three decades. Madrid 2028, therefore, represents an exceptional opportunity to bring the Congress back to Spain for the first time in a generation.

Madrid 2028 would represent a historic milestone.

Hosting the RSAI World Congress in Spain would further strengthen collaboration between the European and Latin American Regional Science communities while expanding RSAI's global outreach.

6. WHY MADRID 2028?

The year 2028 represents a timely opportunity to convene the international Regional Science community at a moment when regions are confronting profound technological, demographic, environmental and geopolitical transformations. To list all the challenges we are facing:

- Post-pandemic transformation of regions
- AI revolution
- Green transition
- Demographic change
- Territorial cohesion challenges
- Strategic importance of Europe-Latin America relations

7. CONGRESS THEME

Shaping the Future of Regions: Innovation, Resilience and Inclusive Growth

The world is experiencing unprecedented economic, technological, environmental and geopolitical transformations.

Regions are at the center of these transitions.

The Congress will explore:

- climate adaptation
- demographic change
- energy transition
- governance
- housing and urban mobility
- migration
- regional resilience
- smart and sustainable cities
- sustainable development
- technological disruption and AI
- territorial cohesion
- urban development
- urban planning and spatial planning

These themes reflect both the traditional strengths of Regional Science and the emerging challenges faced by regions worldwide.

8. HOST INSTITUTIONS

University of Navarra

The University of Navarra is among Spain's leading research universities.

The School of Economics and Business provides:

- modern conference facilities
- international academic reputation
- extensive administrative support

Asociación Española de Ciencia Regional (AECR)

Founded in 1977, AECR is Spain's leading scientific association devoted to regional science.

AECR organizes:

- Reunión de Estudios Regionales
- Investigaciones Regionales
- multiple regional science workshops

9. THE VENUE

University of Navarra – Madrid Campus

The proposed venue for the 2028 RSAI World Congress is the University of Navarra Madrid Campus, one of Spain's most modern and internationally oriented academic environments.

Located in the northern area of Madrid, the campus combines state-of-the-art conference facilities, outstanding accessibility, and a vibrant academic atmosphere. As part of the University of Navarra, one of Europe's leading research universities, the Madrid Campus provides an ideal setting for hosting a major international scientific event such as the RSAI World Congress.

The campus is situated in a strategic location within the Madrid metropolitan area, offering convenient access to Adolfo Suárez Madrid–Barajas International Airport, the city center, major transportation hubs, and a wide range of accommodation options. Participants will benefit from Madrid's excellent public transportation network, including metro, commuter rail, bus, and high-speed rail connections.

The University of Navarra has extensive experience organizing international conferences, executive education programs, academic workshops, and professional events involving participants from around the world. The campus combines modern architecture with advanced technological infrastructure, creating an environment conducive to scientific exchange, collaboration, and networking.

Conference Facilities

The University of Navarra Madrid Campus offers a modern and flexible conference environment capable of accommodating all scientific, institutional and social activities of the RSAI World Congress within a single venue.

The Congress would make use of the campus's lecture theatres, classrooms, meeting rooms, exhibition areas and common spaces, allowing participants to move easily between plenary sessions, parallel sessions, poster presentations and networking events.

The proposed facilities include:

Facility	Proposed Use
Main Auditorium / Aula Magna	Opening Ceremony, Closing Ceremony, Keynote Lectures and Plenary Sessions (subject to final room allocation).
15–20 medium-sized classrooms and lecture halls	Parallel scientific sessions (6–8 simultaneous sessions), Special Sessions and Workshops.
Meeting rooms	RSAI Council, Supraregional meetings, Editorial Board meetings and Organizing Committee meetings.
Poster Exhibition Area	Poster sessions, publishers' stands and institutional exhibitions.
Open networking spaces	Coffee breaks, informal meetings and networking activities.
Dining and catering facilities	Lunches, Welcome Reception and Gala Dinner (or alternative social events).

The campus has sufficient classroom capacity to accommodate multiple parallel sessions throughout the Congress while maintaining all activities within walking distance. This compact layout facilitates interaction among researchers, policymakers, students and practitioners, one of the defining characteristics of RSAI World Congresses.

Technology and Conference Support

The University of Navarra Madrid Campus provides modern technological infrastructure suitable for an international scientific conference, including:

- High-speed Wi-Fi throughout the campus.
- State-of-the-art audiovisual equipment in lecture halls and classrooms.
- Hybrid conference capabilities for selected sessions.
- Professional sound, projection and videoconferencing systems.
- On-site technical support throughout the Congress.
- Digital signage and event management services.

Accessibility

The campus is fully accessible and offers:

- Barrier-free access to all conference facilities.
- Elevators and accessible restrooms.
- Ample indoor and outdoor common areas.
- On-campus parking facilities.
- Easy access by taxi and public transportation.
- Approximately 15–20 minutes from Adolfo Suárez Madrid–Barajas International Airport.

Preliminary Room Allocation

A preliminary allocation of spaces is envisaged as follows:

Congress Activity	**Venue**
Opening Ceremony	Main Auditorium / Aula Magna (TBC)
Keynote Lectures	Main Auditorium / Aula Magna
Parallel Sessions	15–20 classrooms and lecture halls
Doctoral School	Two classrooms
Workshops	Four classrooms

Congress Activity	Venue
Poster Sessions	Central Exhibition Area
Coffee Breaks	Networking Hall
RSAI Council Meeting	Executive Meeting Room
Supraregional Meetings	Seminar Rooms
Welcome Reception	Campus Atrium / Outdoor Terrace

Academic Environment

The University of Navarra is consistently recognized among Spain's leading universities and enjoys a strong international reputation for excellence in research, teaching, and professional engagement.

The School of Economics and Business has established itself as an important center for research in economics, business, public policy, innovation, and regional development. Its international orientation aligns closely with the mission of the Regional Science Association International and provides an ideal intellectual setting for the Congress.

Hosting the RSAI World Congress at the University of Navarra Madrid Campus will offer participants not only first-class conference facilities but also the opportunity to engage with one of Europe's most dynamic academic communities.

Venue Address

University of Navarra – Madrid Campus
Camino del Cerro del Águila 3
28023 Madrid
Spain









10. ACCESSIBILITY AND TRANSPORTATION

The University of Navarra Madrid Campus is easily accessible from all major points within the city:

Location	Approximate Travel Time
Madrid-Barajas International Airport	15–20 minutes
Chamartín Railway Station	10 minutes
Madrid City Center	15–20 minutes
IFEMA Convention District	15 minutes
Major Hotel Areas	10–20 minutes

Its proximity to the airport and high-speed rail network significantly reduces travel times for international and domestic participants.

By Air

Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport

- Europe's fifth busiest airport
- direct intercontinental connections

International Air Connectivity

Madrid is one of Europe's principal aviation hubs and offers direct flights to more than 200 destinations worldwide through Adolfo Suárez Madrid–Barajas International Airport (MAD). The airport serves as the main hub for Iberia and Air Europa. It is one of the **most important gateways connecting Europe with Latin America while remaining easily accessible from North America, Africa, and Asia**.

Participants from all RSAI supra-regions can reach Madrid through direct or one-stop flights from virtually every major international city.

The table below presents indicative round-trip economy airfares for travel in June (booked several months in advance).

Departure City	Flight Time (Approx.)	Typical Round-Trip Airfare (€)
London	2 h 20 min	120–220
Paris	2 h 00 min	120–220
Amsterdam	2 h 30 min	150–250
Rome	2 h 30 min	150–280
Berlin	3 h 00 min	180–320
Stockholm	4 h 00 min	220–380
New York	8 h 00 min	600–900
Mexico City	10 h 30 min	700–1,100

Departure City	Flight Time (Approx.)	Typical Round-Trip Airfare (€)
São Paulo	10 h 45 min	700–1,100
Buenos Aires	12 h 30 min	900–1,300
Tokyo	16–18 h (1 stop)	900–1,400
Sydney	24–28 h (1 stop)	1,300–1,900

Estimated economy-class round-trip fares based on typical June prices for tickets purchased several months in advance. Actual prices vary depending on airline, booking date, and itinerary.

International Connectivity

Madrid Airport offers excellent global connectivity through direct flights to major destinations in Europe, North America, Latin America, the Middle East, and selected destinations in Asia. Frequent long-haul services are operated by airlines including Iberia, Air Europa, American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, United Airlines, LATAM, Aeroméxico, Air China, Emirates, Qatar Airways, Turkish Airlines, and many other international carriers.

Its extensive network of direct intercontinental flights, particularly with Latin America, represents one of Madrid's greatest advantages as the host city for an international scientific conference.



Source: https://brilliantmaps.com/flight-maps/mad-airport-map/

By Rail

Madrid is the hub of Spain's high-speed rail network.

Direct AVE connections:

- Barcelona
- Valencia
- Seville

- Málaga
- Zaragoza

Local Transport

- Metro
- Bus
- Commuter rail
- Taxi
- Ride-sharing services

Accessibility

- 15–20 minutes from the airport
- metro access (nearest Torre Arias)
- hotel district nearby



https://maps.app.goo.gl/rEAPkAkmtuckznHB8

11. ACCOMMODATION

Madrid offers accommodation for all budgets.

Premium Hotels

- NH Collection Eurobuilding
- Hyatt Regency Hesperia
- Meliá Castilla

Mid-range

- AC Hotels
- NH Hotels
- Eurostars

Budget

- B&B Hotels
- Ibis
- Hostels

Expected room rates:

Category	Rate
Budget	€70–100
Mid-range	€120–180
Premium	€220–350

Reserved room blocks will be negotiated.

12. SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

The scientific program will combine keynote lectures, plenary sessions, parallel sessions, special sessions, policy forums, workshops and poster presentations. Particular emphasis will be placed on interdisciplinary dialogue among economists, geographers, planners, political scientists, data scientists and policymakers working on regional development.

Sessions will include contributed papers, organized special sessions, policy roundtables, workshops, doctoral training activities and publisher presentations.

Special Tracks

1. Regional Development
2. Urban Development and Planning
3. Regional Resilience
4. Climate Adaptation
5. Spatial Econometrics
6. Urban Economics
7. Housing Markets
8. Transportation
9. Environmental Economics
10. Energy Transition
11. Migration
12. Demography
13. Innovation
14. Entrepreneurship
15. Governance
16. Tourism
17. AI and Regional Analytics

Policy Forum

Joint sessions with:

- European Commission
- OECD
- Banco de España

Young Scholars Forum

Regional Science Academy Session

Editors' Roundtable

13. Congress STRUCTURE

Day 1

- Registration
- Workshops
- Doctoral School
- **Opening Ceremony**
    - Welcome by the Organizing Committee
    - Welcome by the President of RSAI
    - Welcome by the President of AECR
    - **Special Address by His Majesty King Felipe VI of Spain (invited, TBC)** *
- Keynote Speaker #1
- Welcome Reception

Day 2

- Keynote Speaker #2
- Plenary Sessions
- Parallel Sessions
- RSAI Council and Supraregional Meetings
- Poster Sessions

Day 3

- Keynote Speaker #3
- Plenary Sessions
- Parallel Sessions
- Young Researchers Competition
- Gala Dinner

Day 4

- Final Parallel Sessions
- Awards Ceremony
- Keynote Speaker #4
- **Closing Ceremony**
    - Congress Summary
    - Presentation of the RSAI World Congress 2030
    - Closing Remarks
    - **Minister of Science, Innovation and Universities (TBC) or President of the Comunidad de Madrid (TBC)**

* The participation of His Majesty King Felipe VI of Spain is subject to acceptance by the Royal Household (Casa de S.M. el Rey) and confirmation of the official agenda.

14. POTENTIAL KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

The Local Organizing Committee(LOC) will choose a keynote speaker relevant to the topic of the Congress. The rest of the keynote speakers will be chosen by the LOC and RSAI, keeping a geographic, thematic and gender equilibrium. Potential invitees include:

Academic Leaders

- Andrés Rodríguez-Pose
- Geoffrey Hewings
- Gilles Duranton
- Henry Overman
- Jouke van Dijk
- Kara Kockelman
- Linda McDowell
- Maryann Feldman
- Masahisa Fujita
- Neil Reid
- Patricia Melo
- Paul Krugman
- Philip McCann
- Riccardo Crescenzi
- Roberta Capello
- Simona Iammarino

Policy Leader

- Karen Maguire

Emerging Scholar

- Ines Helm

15. YOUNG RESEARCHERS PROGRAMME

Special emphasis will be placed on supporting:

- doctoral students
- early-career researchers
- participants from developing countries

Activities:

- doctoral workshops
- mentoring sessions
- Young Researchers Prize
- networking events

16. SOCIAL PROGRAMME

Welcome Reception

University of Navarra Madrid Campus

Gala Dinner

Potential venues:

- Casino de Madrid
- Círculo de Bellas Artes
- Real Fábrica de Tapices

Optional Tours

- Prado Museum
- Reina Sofía Museum
- Royal Palace
- Toledo
- Segovia

17. ORGANISING COMMITTEES

Honorary Chair
Fernando Rubiera Morollón, President, AECR
Congress Chair
Rafael Garduño Rivera, University of Navarra
Local Organizing Committee
Representatives from:

- AECR
- The Basque Country and Navarre Regional Science Association
- University of Navarra
- Madrid regional institutions

International Advisory Committee

- Geoffrey Hewings (Tentative)
- Roberta Capello (Tentative)
- Sarah Low (Tentative)
- Neil Reid (Tentative)
- Riccardo Crescenzi (Tentative)
- Andrés Rodríguez-Pose (Tentative)

Scientific Program Committee

- RSAI
    - Janet E. Kohlhase, President (2027-2028) (Tentative)
    - Hiroyuki Shibusawa, President (2025-2026) (Tentative)
    - Ana Viñuela, Executive Director (2025-2027) (Tentative)
- JRC
    - Emmanuel Sinagra, Chairperson (Tentative)
    - Francisco Javier Moreno Fuentes, Spain Member (Tentative)
    - Andrea Conte (Tentative)
- ERSA
    - Roberta Capello, President (Tentative)
    - Ioannis Psycharis, Vice-President (Tentative)
    - Rosella Nicolini, Secretary (Tentative)
    - Artur Ochojski, Treasurer (Tentative)
- LARSA
    - André Chagas, President (2027-2029) (Tentative)
    - Fernando Perobelli, President (2024-2026) (Tentative)
- NARSC
    - Janet Kohlhase, President (Tentative)
    - Christa Court, Chair (Tentative)
    - Christina Miller, Councilor-at-Large (Tentative)
    - Brian Whitacre, Councilor-at-Large (Tentative)
    - Eli Knapp, Councilor-at-Large (Tentative)
    - Elizabeth Dobis, Councilor-at-Large (Tentative)
- PRSCO
    - In Kwon Park, President, PRSCO (Tentative)
    - Hidehiko Kanegae (Tentative)
    - Sumona Banerjee (Tentative)

18. BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PLAN

18.1 Registration Fees

The proposed registration fees have been designed to encourage broad international participation while ensuring the financial sustainability of the Congress. Reduced registration fees are available for students, early-career researchers, and participants from lower- and lower-middle-income countries.

Registration Category	**Early Bird** ***(until 31 March 2028)***	**Regular** ***(1 April – 31 May 2028)***	**Late / On-site** ***(after 31 May 2028)***
RSAI Member	**€420**	**€490**	**€550**
Non-Member	**€500**	**€570**	**€630**
Reduced Registration*	**€250**	**€300**	**€350**
Accompanying Person	**€180**	**€200**	**€220**

* Reduced Registration applies to:

- Full-time Master's and PhD students.
- Early-career researchers (within five years of completing their PhD).
- Participants from lower- and lower-middle-income countries (according to the World Bank classification).

Registration Fee Includes

The registration fee includes:

- Admission to all scientific sessions.
- Access to keynote lectures and plenary sessions.
- Conference materials and electronic program.
- Name badge and conference kit.
- Coffee breaks throughout the Congress.
- Three lunches.
- Welcome Reception.
- Gala Dinner.
- Wi-Fi access throughout the venue.
- Access to the poster and exhibition areas.

Accompanying Person Registration Includes

The accompanying person registration includes:

- Welcome Reception.
- Gala Dinner.
- Access to the exhibition and networking areas.
- Participation in the social program (excluding scientific sessions).

18.2 Expected Budget Scenarios

To demonstrate the financial sustainability of the proposed Congress, three attendance scenarios have been considered.

Estimated Revenues (€)

Income	200 participants	400 participants	600 participants
Registration Fees	**98,500**	**197,000**	**295,500**
Sponsorships	**35,000**	**65,000**	**95,000**
Gala Dinner (Accompanying Persons & Extra Tickets)	**3,500**	**7,000**	**10,500**
TOTAL REVENUES	**137,000**	**269,000**	**401,000**

Estimated Expenditures (€)

Expense	200	400	600
Keynote Speakers (Travel & Accommodation)	**12,000**	**12,000**	**12,000**
Lunches (3 lunches)	**14,400**	**28,800**	**43,200**
Coffee Breaks (6)	**7,200**	**14,400**	**21,600**
Welcome Reception	**6,000**	**12,000**	**18,000**
Gala Dinner	**12,000**	**24,000**	**36,000**
Conference Materials & Badges	**4,000**	**8,000**	**12,000**
Conference Kit	**3,000**	**6,000**	**9,000**
Printing & Signage	**2,500**	**3,500**	**4,500**
Website & IT Support	**3,500**	**4,000**	**4,500**
Audio-Visual Equipment	**5,500**	**7,000**	**8,500**

Expense	**200**	**400**	**600**
Administrative Support	**10,000**	**15,000**	**20,000**
Local Transportation	**3,500**	**6,000**	**8,500**
Miscellaneous & Contingency	**6,000**	**9,000**	**12,000**
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	**89,600**	**149,700**	**209,800**

Projected Financial Balance

Scenario	Total Revenues	Total Expenditures	Estimated Surplus
Conservative (200 participants)	**€137,000**	**€89,600**	**€47,400**
Expected (400 participants)	**€269,000**	**€149,700**	**€119,300**
Optimistic (600 participants)	**€401,000**	**€209,800**	**€191,200**

Assumptions

The estimates above are based on the following assumptions:

- Approximately 50% of participants register during the Early Bird period, 30% during Regular Registration, and 20% during Late Registration.
- Registration revenues are calculated using the current RSAI World Congress fee structure, considering a balanced distribution of participants from high-, middle-, and low-income countries, as well as RSAI members, non-members, and students.
- Sponsorship revenues are expected from public institutions, research organizations, and private-sector partners.
- Catering costs include three lunches, six coffee breaks, one welcome reception, and one gala dinner.
- Four international keynote speakers are assumed, with travel and accommodation covered by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC).
- Venue costs are not included, as the University of Navarra will provide the conference facilities as an institutional contribution to the Congress.

The University of Navarra will make its conference facilities available as an in-kind institutional contribution, substantially reducing the overall cost of organizing the Congress and ensuring its financial sustainability.

The proposed budget is intentionally conservative and assumes no direct financial contribution from the University of Navarra, the Comunidad de Madrid, or the Ayuntamiento de Madrid. Any institutional support obtained would further strengthen the financial position of the Congress.

19. SPONSORSHIP STRATEGY

Target sponsors:

Institutional

- European Commission
- Comunidad de Madrid
- Ayuntamiento de Madrid
- Ministerio de Ciencia

Corporate

- Banco Santander
- BBVA Research
- CaixaBank Research
- Iberdrola
- Repsol Foundation

Publishing partners

- Springer
- Elsevier
- Taylor & Francis
- Wiley

20. LEGACY AND IMPACT

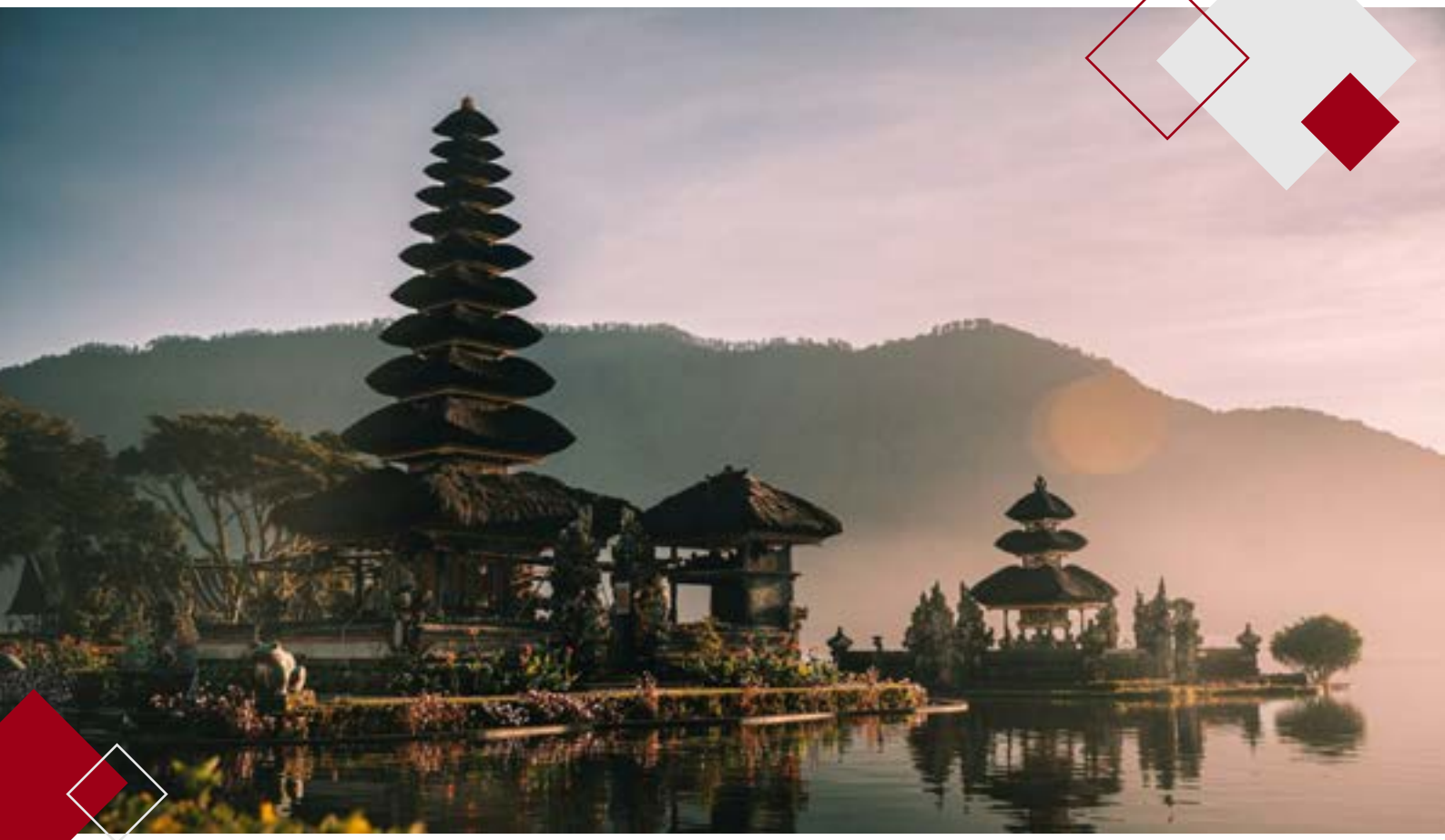
Madrid 2028 will:

- strengthen RSAI's global presence
- deepen ties with Africa, Asia, and Latin America
- expand participation from emerging economies
- support young researchers
- enhance collaboration across supranationals

The Congress will create a lasting scientific and institutional legacy for Regional Science.

Madrid 2028 will strengthen the international visibility of Regional Science in Spain while fostering long-term collaboration between European, American, Asian and African regional scientists.

ANNEX V



Bringing the 2028 RSAI World Congress to Bali, Indonesia

Proposed Host

Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Indonesia with Universitas Udayana and the Indonesian Regional Science Association

Proposed Location

ITDC Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia

Working Theme

Spatial Fragmentation, Regional Resilience: Rethinking Development in an Uncertain World

1. Why Indonesia

Indonesia would be a strong and meaningful host for the 2028 RSAI World Congress.

Indonesia is one of the most relevant settings for a global conversation in regional science. It is one of the largest and most diverse economies in Asia, spread across thousands of islands, with regions that differ sharply in income, infrastructure, connectivity, natural resources, demographic structure, and exposure to climate risks. For regional science, Indonesia is not just an interesting case. It is a living laboratory.

Many of the questions central to regional science are everyday policy questions in Indonesia. How do large cities grow without leaving smaller regions behind? How does connectivity change the economic future of islands and peripheral areas? How do people move across regions in search of work? How do tourism, infrastructure, decentralization, and environmental pressure reshape local economies? How can national policy work in a country where geography itself is a major development challenge?

Indonesia is also relatively easy to enter for many international participants. Based on the latest information from the Directorate General of Immigration, nationals of 97 countries and entities are eligible for Visa on Arrival, while nationals of 16 countries or areas are eligible for visa-free entry. Permanent residents of Singapore may also enter visa-free through selected immigration checkpoints. This makes Indonesia a practical host country for a global congress, especially for participants travelling from Asia, Europe, Australia, the Middle East, and the Americas.

The congress will also actively reach out to all RSAI supranational sections, including ERSA, LARSA, NARSC, and PRSCO. Bali's accessibility through major global hubs makes it feasible for participants from Europe, Latin America, North America, Asia, Australia, and the Middle East to attend. Through IRSA and PRSCO networks, the congress will also seek to attract scholars from Southeast Asian countries where regional science communities are still emerging.

A World Congress in Indonesia would bring RSAI closer to Southeast Asia, the Indo-Pacific, and the wider Global South. These regions face development challenges that are urgent, complex, and intellectually rich. Hosting the congress in Indonesia would help broaden RSAI's reach and strengthen its engagement with scholars, policymakers, and institutions working on regional development beyond the traditional conference circuits.

Indonesia already has an active regional science community through the Indonesian Regional Science Association, or IRSA. IRSA has been an important platform for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners working on regional development in Indonesia. Its annual conferences have brought together universities, government institutions, development partners, and researchers from Indonesia and abroad. This gives the proposed congress a solid academic base. It means the event would not be



organized from scratch but would build on an existing regional science network with conference experience and policy relevance.

2. Why Bali

Bali is the right Indonesian location for the 2028 RSAI World Congress.

Bali is not only attractive as a destination; it is also ready to host a serious international academic congress. Its global reputation is an advantage, but the stronger point is its conference readiness. Bali has the venues, hotels, accessibility, safety, services, and international visibility needed to welcome a large and diverse RSAI audience.

Nusa Dua offers the most practical and reliable setting for the congress. It is one of Indonesia's main international meeting and convention areas, with large hotels, convention facilities, restaurants, transport services, health facilities, and a relatively secure and well-managed environment. For a congress with plenary sessions, many parallel sessions, meetings, receptions, poster sessions, and side events, this compact setting would make the participant experience much easier.

Bali provides accommodation options for different types of participants. Those who prefer five-star hotels will have many choices, especially in and around Nusa Dua. Participants looking for more affordable three-star or four-star hotels can also find suitable options nearby. This range matters because the congress should be accessible not only to senior scholars, but also to early career researchers, students, self-funded participants, and participants from different income contexts.

Bali is well connected to international and domestic travel routes. I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport is connected to major hubs in Asia, Australia, the Middle East, and beyond. Participants can reach Bali through Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Doha, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Istanbul, Tokyo, and major Australian cities, among others. For Indonesian participants, Bali is also well connected to Jakarta and other major cities.

Bali can help RSAI attract strong attendance. A world congress depends not only on the quality of the academic program, but also on whether people are willing to make the trip. Bali offers both: a serious conference setting and a memorable place to visit. This gives the proposed congress a clear advantage in attracting participants from different regions.

Bali also offers strong post-conference value. Participants may choose to explore culture, temples, performing arts, beaches, mountains, local food, nature-based activities, and nightlife. These would be offered as optional additions to the academic program. The congress would remain academic at its core, while giving participants the chance to experience one of the most distinctive destinations in the region.



3. Academic Framing

"Spatial Fragmentation, Regional Resilience: Rethinking Development in an Uncertain World"

This theme fits both RSAI and Indonesia. It speaks to the global regional science community, while also taking the geography of the host country. An archipelagic country forces us to think differently about space. Distance is not only measured in kilometers. Sea crossings, transport costs, logistics, digital access, institutional capacity, and uneven public services shape it. Some regions are deeply connected to global markets, while others remain physically and economically distant. Some places grow through tourism, trade, education, or industry, while others depend on natural resources or public spending. These contrasts make Indonesia an ideal setting to discuss regional transformation.

Bali itself is also relevant to the theme. It is a successful tourism region, but also a place facing questions about sustainability, land use, infrastructure, environmental pressure, labour mobility, local livelihoods, cultural preservation, and resilience. In that sense, Bali is not only a venue. It is part of the conversation.

Possible tracks may include:

1. Regional inequality and spatial transformation
2. Cities, secondary cities, and metropolitan growth
3. Islands, borders, and connectivity
4. Tourism, culture, and local development
5. Climate risk, coastal regions, and resilience
6. Migration, labour mobility, and demographic change
7. Infrastructure, logistics, and regional integration
8. Decentralization, local governance, and fiscal capacity
9. Digitalization, productivity, and regional competitiveness
10. Spatial modelling, data, and policy evaluation
11. Social protection, welfare, and inclusive regional development
12. Regional development in Southeast Asia and the Global South

The congress would welcome academics, policymakers, international organizations, local governments, development practitioners, and early career researchers. The aim is to make the event academically strong but also connected to the real policy questions faced by regions today.





4. Proposed Program

The proposed timing is July 11-13, 2028, subject to consultation with the RSAI President and Executive Director to avoid clashes with ERSA, PRSCO, NARSC, LARSA, IRSA, and other major regional science events.

The detailed program will be developed further in consultation with RSAI, IRSA, Universitas Indonesia, Universitas Udayana, and the scientific committee. At this stage, we propose a three-day congress structure that provides enough space for plenary sessions, parallel sessions, special sessions, policy discussion, association meetings, and networking. All congress sessions, including both formal and engagement activities, will be conducted in English, with simultaneous interpretation arranged for plenary sessions, where appropriate.

Day	Main Activities	Proposed Focus
Day 1	Opening ceremony, welcome remarks, presidential or keynote lecture, opening plenary, selected parallel sessions, and welcome reception	Setting the tone of the congress and introducing the main theme. The opening session may include a high-level discussion on regional science in an archipelagic and Global South context. The welcome reception would provide an early opportunity for participants to meet and build networks.
Day 2	Full-day parallel sessions, special sessions, roundtables, early career	Main academic exchange day. Sessions may cover the core congress tracks, including regional inequality, cities, connectivity,

Day	Main Activities	Proposed Focus
	activities, poster session, publisher sessions, RSAI-related meetings, and congress dinner	tourism, climate resilience, migration, infrastructure, governance, and spatial methods. The day would also create space for doctoral students, early career researchers, RSAI meetings, and formal networking through the congress dinner.
Day 3	Final parallel sessions, policy panels, closing plenary, award session, handover session, and optional cultural or field visit	Bringing the academic program to a close while connecting the congress to future RSAI agendas. The policy panels may involve government, development partners, local authorities, and practitioners. Optional visits may include cultural sites, heritage areas, coastal areas, or field activities related to tourism and local development.

Note: A pre-congress workshop is planned before July 11, including spatial data, regional modelling, or policy evaluation methods for doctoral students and early-career researchers.

Additionally, the program timetable is outlined below.

Day 1	Day 2		Day 3	
Registration desk [08:00 - 16.00]	Registration desk [08:00 - 16.00]		Registration desk [08:00 - 16.00]	
Opening Ceremony & Welcoming Remarks [08:30-09:00]	Parallel Sessions 4 [08:30-10:30]	Early Career Activities [08:30-10:30]	Parallel Sessions 7 [08:30-10:30]	Policy Panel [08:30-10:30]
Opening - Plenary Session 1 Keynote 1 [09:00-10:30]				
Coffee Break [10:30-11:00]	Coffee Break [10:30-11:00]		Coffee Break [10:30-11:00]	
Parallel Sessions 1 [11:00-12:30]	Plenary Session 2 Keynote 2 [11:00-12:30]		Parallel Sessions 8 [11:00-12:30]	
Lunch [12:30-13:30]	Lunch [12:30-13:30]	LRPC of the RSAI Meeting [12:30-13:30]	Lunch [12:30-13:30]	RSAI Council Meeting [12:30-13:30]
Parallel Sessions 2 [13:30-15:30]	Plenary Session 3 Keynote 3 [13:30-15:00]		Final - Plenary Session 4 Keynote 4 [13:30-15:00]	
Coffee Break [15:30-16:00]	Coffee Break [15:30-16:00]		Coffee Break [15:30-16:00]	

Day 1	Day 2		Day 3
Parallel Sessions 3 [16:00-18:00]	Parallel Sessions 6 [16:00-18:00]	Special Session [16:00-18:00]	Closing Ceremony [16:00-18:00]
Welcome Reception [18:00-19:00]			
	Congress Dinner [19:00-22:00]		Optional cultural activities/tour [19:00-22:00]

Joint Conference

We propose that the 2028 RSAI World Congress be organized jointly with the annual conference of the Indonesian Regional Science Association (IRSA), under the same organizational framework, in line with the option foreseen in the RSAI application guidelines. The IRSA annual conference is the main national gathering for regional science in Indonesia, bringing together universities, government institutions, development partners, and researchers from across the country. The IRSA conference is similar in nature to the RSAI World Congress, as it is conducted in English. For 2028, IRSA would merge its annual conference into the World Congress as part of the parallel sessions, so that the two events are held as a single, integrated congress rather than as competing events in the same year.

This arrangement offers clear benefits for both sides. For RSAI, it guarantees strong domestic participation from the start, mobilizes the full IRSA network of Indonesian universities and policy institutions, and connects international participants directly with the local regional science community. For IRSA, it gives Indonesian scholars, students, and policymakers direct access to a world-class academic program. The joint format also strengthens the policy dimension of the congress, since IRSA conferences traditionally attract national and regional government participants. The final format, branding, and governance of the joint arrangement will be agreed in consultation with the RSAI President, the RSAI Executive Director, and the IRSA Council, and formalized as part of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Keynote Strategy

The plenary program will follow the typical RSAI World Congress structure, with a keynote lecture anchoring each plenary session across the congress days. The proposed three-day program currently includes four keynote plenary sessions; the final

number and scheduling of keynotes will be aligned with RSAI's typical congress structure in consultation with the RSAI President and Executive Director.

Following standard RSAI practice, one keynote speaker will be selected by the Local Organizing Committee, and the remaining keynote speakers will be selected by RSAI. In line with the RSAI guidelines, the theme and the keynote selection are intended to be of interest to the global regional science community, with local perspectives interwoven with global ones rather than dominating the program.

The keynote selected by the Local Organizing Committee will be a distinguished scholar working on regional development in Indonesia, Southeast Asia, or the wider Global South, chosen to speak directly to the congress theme of spatial fragmentation and regional resilience. For the keynotes selected by RSAI, the Local Organizing Committee will support the process with the following principles in mind:

- Academic distinction and international standing in regional science or closely related fields;
- Relevance to the congress theme and its main tracks, including inequality, connectivity, resilience, and spatial methods;
- Diversity across region, gender, career stage, and subfield, so that the plenary program reflects the breadth of the RSAI community and its four supranationals.

According to the initial assessment, the Local Organizing Committee proposes the following individuals as potential keynote speakers to represent Indonesia for the 2028 RSAI World Congress:

- **Iwan Jaya Azis**, Professor of Emerging Markets at Cornell University and Professor of Economics at the University of Indonesia, is internationally recognized for his contributions to regional science, macro-financial economics, and regional economic integration.
- **Sri Mulyani Indrawati**, former Minister of Finance of Indonesia and internationally recognized economist with extensive experience in public finance, economic development, and global economic governance.
- **Chatib Basri**, Economist and former Minister of Finance of Indonesia, is widely recognized for his expertise in international trade, macroeconomics, and economic policy.
- **Bambang Brodjonegoro**, Economist and former Minister of Finance of Indonesia, with extensive expertise in development economics as well as urban and regional development.

In addition to representatives from Indonesia, the Local Organizing Committee has identified several distinguished international scholars and policy leaders whose expertise closely aligns with the proposed congress theme and the breadth of the regional science community. Potential international keynote speakers may include:

- **Tetsuya Watanabe,** President of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), with extensive experience in international economic cooperation, regional economic policy, and development finance.
- **Justin Yifu Lin**, former Senior Vice President and Chief Economist of the World Bank and Professor at Peking University, internationally recognised for his work on development economics, structural transformation, industrialisation, and the changing geography of global development.

The Local Organizing Committee aims to confirm all keynote speakers at least twelve months before the congress. In accordance with RSAI rules, keynote speakers will not pay registration fees, and their travel and accommodation costs are included as a dedicated line in the tentative congress budget. Keynote lectures will be complemented by high-level policy panels involving government, international organizations, and development practitioners.

Emerging Scholar Activities

The congress program includes dedicated professional development activities for emerging scholars and postgraduate students. Consistent with the RSAI guidelines, these activities are designed to be valuable also for emerging scholars who may not be in a position to contribute a full paper to the formal scientific programme. They are built into the main program, with a dedicated early career slot on the final congress day, and are complemented by the pre-congress workshop described above. Planned activities include:

- **Publishing and meet-the-editors sessions,** where editors of leading regional science journals discuss publication strategies, common pitfalls, and the review process;
- **Grant writing and research funding workshops,** covering international funding sources and collaborative research opportunities;
- **A mentoring initiative,** pairing emerging scholars with senior members of the RSAI community for structured conversations during the congress;

These activities will be designed in coordination with RSAI and IRSA early career networks and will be open to emerging scholars from all regions, with active encouragement for participants from Southeast Asia and the Global South.

5. Host Institutions and Local Capacity

The congress would be led by the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Indonesia. FEB UI has strong academic and policy networks in economics, public policy, development studies, labour markets, social protection, fiscal policy, and regional development. It has experience organizing academic events, policy dialogues, research dissemination, and international collaboration with universities, government institutions, development partners, and professional associations.

Universitas Udayana would serve as the local academic partner in Bali. Its role would be important for local coordination, academic engagement in Bali, student volunteers, links with local stakeholders, and practical support during the congress.

IRSA would provide the national regional science platform. Its network across Indonesian universities and its experience in organizing annual conferences would help mobilize domestic and regional participation. IRSA's involvement is important because it shows that Indonesia has a real regional science community, not only a proposed venue.

The proposed organizing structure would include a steering committee, scientific committee, local organizing committee, finance and sponsorship team, communications and participant services team, and protocol and risk management team. The structure will be kept practical and focused, with clear roles and early coordination with RSAI.



6. Venue and Participant Experience

Nusa Dua, particularly the ITDC area, is the preferred venue location for the congress, which will be organized specifically at The Westin Resort Nusa Dua. Several hotels and convention facilities meet the needs of an international academic event in the area. However, The Westin Resort Nusa Dua is chosen as the main venue due to its experience hosting international events (including G20, IMF Meeting, and World Water Forum) and is supported by nearby hotels for accommodations, restaurants, transport services, health facilities, and event vendors.

A hotel-based convention venue is better suited to a World Congress of this scale, as it combines large-capacity meeting spaces, multiple parallel rooms, integrated technical facilities, and professional hospitality services in one location. This creates a more seamless experience for several hundred international participants and reduces the logistical complexity of moving between separate venues. University facilities may remain suitable for selected workshops or smaller sessions, but would be less practical as the main venue for the plenary session.



More economical venue options can also be considered if needed. Nusa Dua also offers several alternative conference venues, including the Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua Beach Resort, which may provide a more cost-effective option while maintaining international-standard meeting facilities. Nearby areas, such as Sanur, offer additional alternatives, including the Inna Bali Beach Resort, The Meru, and other hotels with conference and meeting facilities. Facilities at Universitas Udayana, including lecture rooms and campus meeting spaces, may also be considered for selected parallel sessions, workshops, or pre-congress activities.

Participants will receive clear practical guidance before arrival. This will include information on hotels, visas, airport transfers, local transport, weather, currency, health and safety, and cultural etiquette. Subject to budget and sponsorship, the organizers may also explore discounted registration, selected travel support, volunteer opportunities, early career sessions, and affordable accommodation guidance.

Details of the proposed main venue, The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali, are presented below.

Opening, Plenary, and Closing Sessions

The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali houses the renowned Bali International Convention Centre (BICC), one of the island's largest and most comprehensive convention venues. The BICC offers more than 14,700 square metres of event space, including a grand ballroom where the opening and closing ceremonies, as well as the major plenary sessions, will be held. The ballroom can accommodate up to 2,300 participants in a theatre-style configuration and is equipped with high-speed Wi-Fi connectivity.






Parallel Sessions

The venue provides extensive facilities to support parallel sessions, committee meetings, workshops, and networking events. In addition to its grand ballroom, the convention centre features 26 versatile meeting rooms of varying capacities, accommodating formats ranging from small board meetings of 10 participants to theatre-style sessions. The meeting rooms are also equipped with high-speed Wi-Fi and modern audiovisual facilities, while dedicated event services, executive lounges, and flexible room configurations enable multiple concurrent sessions throughout the congress.








Congress Dinner

For the Gala Dinner, the Heritage Beach Garden at The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali provides an ideal beachfront setting that combines Balinese ambience with modern event facilities. Overlooking the white sand beach of Nusa Dua, this landscaped outdoor venue can accommodate up to 500 guests in a banquet configuration at round tables. Should attendance exceed the garden's banquet capacity, the resort also offers alternative indoor and outdoor function spaces.





Accommodation

The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali offers 433 guest rooms and suites, providing on-site accommodation for delegates, speakers, and organizers. Each room is equipped with modern amenities to ensure a comfortable stay. In addition to the rooms within the resort, Nusa Dua is home to numerous internationally branded hotels across a range of price categories, many of which are located within a five-to-fifteen-minute walk (see Appendix).





Travel and Local Transport Information

The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali is conveniently located in the Nusa Dua tourism enclave, approximately 12 km (20–25 minutes) from I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport (DPS), Bali's primary international gateway. The airport offers direct connections to major cities across Asia, Australia, the Middle East, and Europe through numerous full-service and low-cost airlines, making the destination readily accessible for international delegates.

Upon arrival, participants may travel to the venue via airport taxis, app-based ride-hailing services, hotel limousine transfers, or private shuttle services arranged by the LOC. Travel times are generally predictable due to the dedicated toll road connecting the airport to the Nusa Dua area.

Within Nusa Dua, most hotels, restaurants, shopping facilities, and recreational attractions are located within walking distance or a short drive from the convention venue. Delegates may travel using taxis, ride-hailing services (e.g. Gojek and Grab), hotel shuttle buses, or bicycle rentals available in the area. The pedestrian-friendly environment and well-maintained roads make movement between hotels and the venue convenient and safe throughout the congress.

To facilitate a seamless participant experience, the LCO will also provide comprehensive travel information prior to the congress, including visa guidance, airport transportation options, recommended accommodation, local maps, and shuttle schedules (where applicable). Information desks and volunteer assistance will also be available throughout the event to support delegates with transportation and logistical inquiries.

7. Money Matters

The registration fee structure for the 2028 RSAI World Congress will follow the framework established by RSAI and applied at recent World Congresses, most recently in Quito. Fees are differentiated along four dimensions: the participant's country of residence based on the latest World Bank income classification, with participants from upper middle-income countries receiving a substantial discount relative to high-income countries and those from lower middle- and low-income countries an even deeper one;

RSAI membership status, with member rates set below non-member rates to reinforce the value of membership; career stage, with reduced rates for postgraduate students who meet the RSAI age criterion; and timing of registration, with an early-bird rate designed to encourage advance commitment and improve cash-flow predictability for the organizing committee. Accompanying persons and the gala dinner are priced separately, with the gala dinner set on a cost-recovery basis in line with RSAI guidelines so that it neither subsidizes nor burdens the congress budget.

This structure is particularly favorable in the Indonesian context. As Indonesia is classified as an upper-middle-income country, participants from the host country and much of the surrounding region will automatically benefit from discounted rates, supporting strong local and regional participation alongside the international delegations expected from North America, Europe, and East Asia. The organizing committee has modeled the expected composition of participants across income categories, membership status, career stage, and registration timing, and has stress-tested the resulting revenue under alternative attendance scenarios. This graded pricing approach balances two objectives: keeping the congress financially accessible to scholars from developing countries and emerging researchers, consistent with RSAI's inclusion agenda and its Building Bridges programme, while ensuring that participants with greater institutional funding capacity contribute proportionately more to the cost of the event.

The pricing analysis indicates that registration revenue alone, after deduction of the RSAI commission stipulated in the Terms of Reference, will cover a meaningful but partial share of total congress costs at fee levels consistent with recent World Congresses. Raising fees to a full cost-recovery level would place them well above the established benchmark and would undermine accessibility and is therefore not considered a viable option. The organizing committee has instead adopted a deliberate strategy of holding fees at internationally comparable levels and closing the remaining funding requirement through the sponsorship and institutional support channels described in this section, complemented by careful cost management in venue, production, and logistics arrangements.

The organizing committee will explore sponsorship and institutional support to reduce congress costs, improve participant services, and support selected side events:

1. Venue-based support may be sought from hotels and convention facilities in Nusa Dua. This may include discounted meeting packages, accommodation rates, catering, technical facilities, reception spaces, or other in-kind support.
2. Local transport support may be explored with professional transport providers, including Blue Bird Group or other bus and shuttle operators. This support may cover airport transfers, hotel-venue shuttles, or transport to official side events.
3. Support from the Bali provincial government, local authorities, and tourism stakeholders may be explored for cultural and tourism-related side events. Possible activities include cultural visits, a sunset Kecak performance, or a congress dinner at Garuda Wisnu Kencana or other suitable venues.
4. Financial sponsorship will be coordinated through the Unit Ventura, Kerjasama dan Alumni of FEB UI. Potential sponsors may include government agencies,

development partners, banks, state-owned enterprises, private companies, publishers, professional service firms, and alumni networks.

All sponsorship arrangements will be managed transparently and with clear safeguards to avoid any conflict of interest. Sponsorship support will not influence the scientific program, selection of papers, keynote speakers, session chairs, awards, or any academic decisions related to the congress.

The financial plan is built around a single confirmed venue, The Westin Resort Nusa Dua, and sets registration revenue, net of RSAI's 20% commission, against an itemized cost build-up covering venue and meeting package, accommodation for committee and keynote guests, keynote travel and honoraria, event production, and organizing committee logistics. In line with the RSAI guidance's request for scenarios depending on the final number of attendees, the plan stress-tests this budget at three attendance levels: 400, 600 (the base planning case), and 800 participants. Because most costs do not scale with headcount, cost per participant falls and registration coverage of total costs rises with attendance, from approximately 25% at 400 participants to 34% at the 600-participant base case and 43% at 800. The resulting funding gap, estimated between USD 356,000 and USD 416,000 depending on attendance, is expected to be closed through the sponsorship channels described above; the Local Organizing Committee will size minimum sponsorship targets against the lower-attendance scenario rather than the base case alone. If needed, the more economical venue options both more cost-effective hotel or facilities at Universitas Udayana as mentioned above, can also be considered.

A detailed financial plan is available in a separate file:
RSAI_2028_World_Congress_Budget.xlsx

8. Managing Risks

Venue risk will be managed by choosing an established international conference facility in Nusa Dua. Accommodation risk will be managed by preparing hotel options across different price ranges. Transport risk will be reduced by keeping the main congress activities within a compact area. Weather risk will be managed by scheduling the event during a suitable period and keeping the core program indoors.

Financial risk will be managed through conservative budgeting, phased commitments, sponsorship outreach, and transparent reporting. Safety risk will be managed through coordination with the venue, local authorities, medical providers, and emergency services. Program risk will be managed through a strong scientific committee, clear review process, and early communication with RSAI, IRSA, and international networks.

Bali's advantage is not that there are no risks. The advantage is that the island has the infrastructure, experience, and partners needed to manage those risks professionally.

9. Expected Legacy

The 2028 RSAI World Congress in Bali would leave a legacy beyond the event itself.

For RSAI, it would strengthen engagement with Southeast Asia and the Global South. It would help bring new scholars, institutions, and policy communities into the RSAI network.

For Indonesia, it would deepen the conversation on regional development, spatial inequality, infrastructure, decentralization, tourism, climate resilience, and sustainable development.

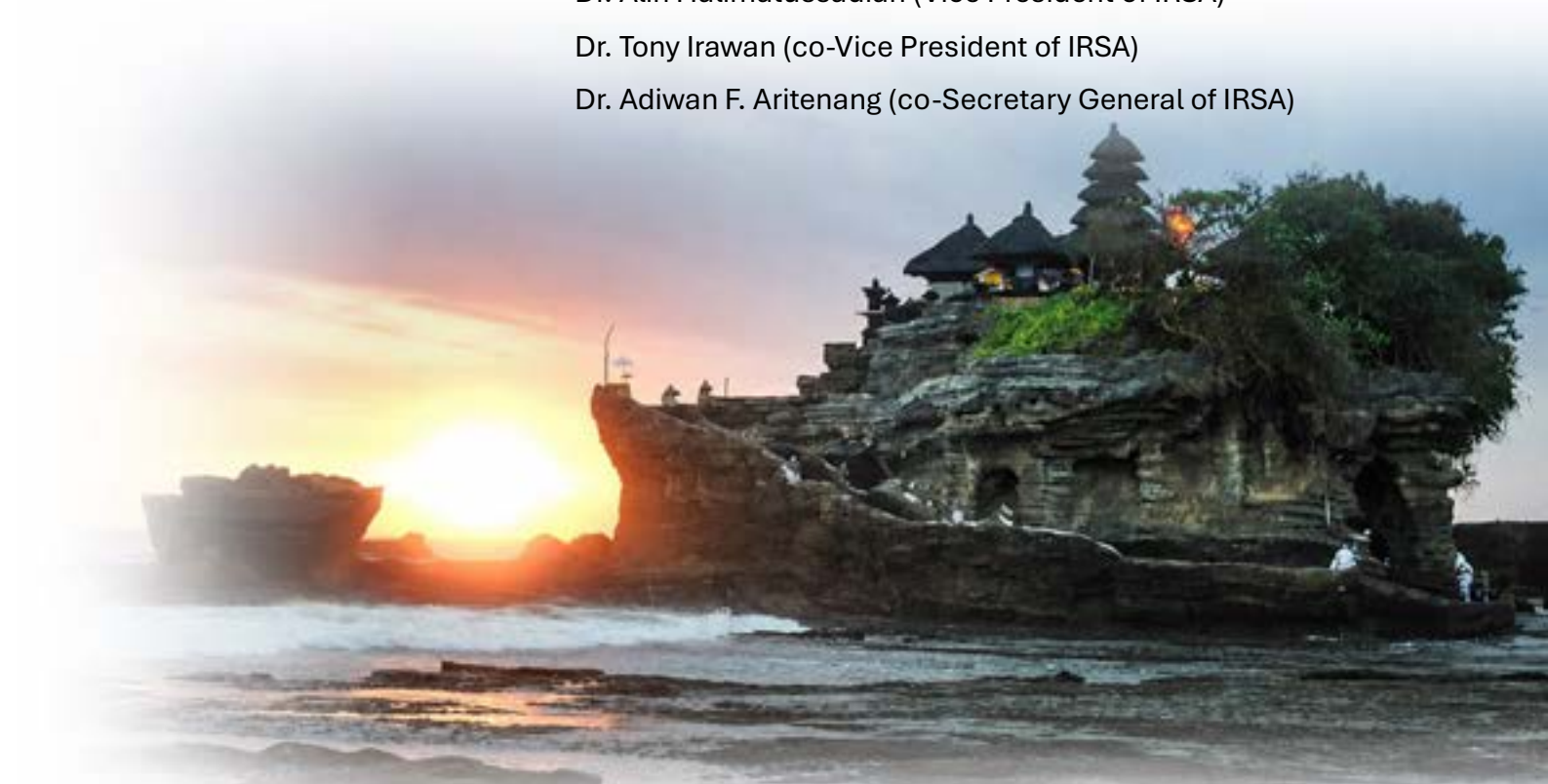
For Universitas Indonesia, Universitas Udayana, and IRSA, it would strengthen international academic collaboration and create new opportunities for joint research, teaching, publication, and policy engagement.

For participants, it would offer a congress that is academically serious, logistically smooth, and personally memorable.

10. Proposed Committee

The following are the proposed local committee members for the 2028 RSAI World Congress.

Chair	: Khoirunurrofik, Ph.D (Universitas Indonesia)
Convenor	: Muhammad Hanri, Ph.D (Universitas Indonesia)
Working Committee	: Prof. Ni Putu Wiwin Setyari (Universitas Udayana)
	Prof. Devanto S. Pramono (President of IRSA)
	Prof. Tri Mulyaningsih (Secretary General of IRSA)
	Rus'an Nasrudin Ph.D (Universitas Indonesia)
	Dr. Alin Halimatussadiah (Vice President of IRSA)
	Dr. Tony Irawan (co-Vice President of IRSA)
	Dr. Adiwan F. Aritenang (co-Secretary General of IRSA)



10. Closing

Indonesia is ready to host the 2028 RSAI World Congress, and Bali is the right place to do it.

Bali offers what a world congress needs: a strong destination, reliable conference infrastructure, many hotel options, international accessibility, a safe and attractive environment, and a setting that is directly relevant to regional science. With Universitas Indonesia as lead host, Universitas Udayana as local partner, and IRSA as the national regional science platform, the congress would be supported by credible institutions and an active academic community.

The proposed congress would not use Bali only as a backdrop. It would use Bali as a place to think seriously about regions, islands, connectivity, inequality, resilience, and sustainable development.

We would be honoured to welcome RSAI to Indonesia in 2028.



Appendix

Alternative Accommodations in Nusa Dua

No	Hotel	Star Rating	Estimation Number of Rooms	Distance from Main Venue
		Within 15-minute walk		
1	Grand Hyatt Bali	5★	636	1.0 km (14-minute walk)
2	Paradisus by Meliá Bali	5★	492	500 m (7-minute walk)
3	Club Med Bali	4★	393	650 m (9-minute walk)
4	Nusa Dua Beach Hotel & Spa	5★	382	73 m (1-minute walk)
5	The Laguna, a Luxury Collection	5★	287	450 m (6-minute walk)
6	Grand Whiz Hotel Nusa Dua	4★	130	550 m (8-minute walk)
7	Sol by Meliá Benoa	4★	128	1.1 km (15-minute walk)
8	Bali Nusa Dua Hotel	4★	~92–96	100 m (1-minute walk)
9	Marriott's Bali Nusa Dua Gardens	5★	73	1.2 km (17-minute walk)
		Short-drive		
10	Mulia Resort	5★	526	2.7 km (6-minute drive)
11	Renaissance Bali Nusa Dua Resort	5★	307	2.5 km (7-minute drive)
12	Courtyard by Marriott Bali Nusa Dua	4★	247	1.3 km (5-minute drive)
13	Mercure Bali Nusa Dua	4★	201	1.6 km (4-minute drive)
14	The Lerina Hotel Nusa Dua	3–4★	103	3.4 km (7-minute drive)
15	Sunrise Aventus Hotel	3★	~78–89	3.8 km (8-minute drive)
16	The Grand Bali Nusa Dua	4★	63	1.8 km (4-minute drive)
17	La Berceuse Nusa Dua	4★	~45–60	3.8 km (9-minute drive)

KEY ASSUMPTIONS - REVISED BUDGET, 2028 RSAI WORLD CONGRESS

Ref	Assumption	Value	Unit	Source / Note
GENERAL				
PAX	Congress participants - base case	600	pax	Planning basis for the proposal
DAYS	Congress duration	3	days	11-13 July 2028
PARD	Days requiring parallel-session rooms	3	days	Parallel sessions across the congress days
FX	Exchange rate - Bank Indonesia JISDOR	18 069	IDR/USD	JISDOR reference spot USD/IDR, 10 July 2026, www.bi.go.id
CTG	Contingency rate	10%	% of subtotal	Buffer for rate revision, FX movement and scope changes
PAXLO	Low attendance scenario	400	pax	Sensitivity case - see Attendance Scenarios sheet
PAXHI	High attendance scenario	800	pax	Sensitivity case - see Attendance Scenarios sheet
HOTEL (Quoted July 2027)				
FPKG	Full-day meeting package - 4-star Sanur (2027/28 est.)	594 000	IDR/pax/day	Quoted full-day IDR 550,000/pax (2x coffee break + 1x lunch, 8h venue), Jul 2026. +8% escalation to 2027/28 -> IDR 594,000
FBALL	Grand ballroom rental - 4-star Sanur	10 000 000	IDR/day	Ballroom rental normally waived when a 600-pax meeting package is contracted; conservative provision, to be negotiated to nil
FBRK	Parallel-session room - 4-star Sanur	3 500 000	IDR/room/day	The two hotels are adjacent (Jl. Hang Tuah 46 & 48) with ~27-30 meeting rooms
FROOM	Keynote guest room - 4-star Sanur (Deluxe Balcony, 2027/28 est.)	1 710 000	IDR/room/night	Quoted Deluxe Balcony incl. breakfast IDR 1,580,000, Jul 2026. +8% to 2027/28 -> IDR 1,706,400
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS				
KFUS	Return flight, North America - Denpasar, BUSINESS	9 673	USD/pax	1 speaker. Business-class round-trip benchmark USD 5,500-8,000 to SE Asia; USD 6,500 used
KFEU	Return flight, Europe - Denpasar, BUSINESS	9 000	USD/pax	1 speaker, business-class round-trip
KFJP	Return flight, East Asia - Denpasar,	3 200	USD/pax	2 speakers, business-class, shorter sector
KNGT	Keynote accommodation	4	nights	Arrival the day before, departure the day after the congress
KTRF	Keynote airport transfer and local transport	1 000 000	IDR/pax	Return airport transfer
SECRETARIAT & ON-SITE OPERATIONS				
SECN	Secretariat / admin staff on site (registration, liaison, logistics)	30	persons	Repackaged from 'volunteers': the on-site secretariat and admin team. No honorarium - a daily operational allowance only
SECDAY	Secretariat on-site days	5	days	Set-up day, three congress days and tear-down day
SECPD	Secretariat daily operational allowance (meals & incidentals)	1 000 000	IDR/person/day	Operational allowance for the on-site secretariat/admin team. Not an honorarium; no committee flights or hotel budgeted
GALABUS	Coach (bus) rental for the gala-dinner transfer	3 500 000	IDR/bus	~50-seat coach, return transfer venue <-> gala dinner venue
GALABUSN	Number of coaches for the gala transfer	12	buses	Reduced provision: staggered / partial coach transfer to the gala venue rather than moving all delegates at once

REVISED COST BUDGET - 2028 RSAI WORLD CONGRESS

No	Description	Qty 1	Unit 1	Qty 2	Unit 2	Qty 3	Unit 3	Unit Price (IDR)	Total (IDR)	Total (USD)	Source / Assumption
A. VENUE, MEETING ROOMS & CATERING - PRIME PLAZA + SANUR PARADISE PLAZA (4-STAR, ADJACENT)											
A.1	Full-day meeting package - grand ballroom (2 coffee breaks + lunch, 8h venue, standard AV included)	600	Pax	3	Days			594 000	1 069 200 000	59 173	Quoted IDR 550,000 net/pax (Jul 2026); +8% escalation to 2027/28 = IDR 594,000. Half-day option quoted at IDR 450,000
A.2	Grand ballroom rental (Griya Agung / Paradise Plaza ballroom, capacity up to ~1,200)	3	Days					10 000 000	30 000 000	1 660	Conservative provision; normally waived with a 600-pax package. To be negotiated to nil
A.3	Parallel-session rooms - 12 rooms across the two adjacent hotels	12	Rooms	3	Days			3 500 000	126 000 000	6 973	Prime Plaza (No. 46): 14 rooms + Griya Agung ballroom; Paradise Plaza (No. 48): 13-15 rooms + 1,200-seat ballroom. Adjacent properties - same twin-hotel model used in Lombok
	Subtotal A								**1 225 200 000**	**67 807**	
B. KEYNOTE SPEAKERS (4 PERSONS) - THE ONLY PERSON-LINKED COST											
B.1	Return flight, North America - Denpasar, BUSINESS class	1	Pax	1	Return			174 775 348	174 775 348	9 673	1 keynote speaker, business class. Flights are paid for keynote speakers only (RSAI review)
B.2	Return flight, Europe - Denpasar, BUSINESS class	1	Pax	1	Return			162 621 000	162 621 000	9 000	1 keynote speaker, business class
B.3	Return flight, Asia - Denpasar, BUSINESS class	2	Pax	1	Return			57 820 800	115 641 600	6 400	2 keynote speakers, business class, shorter sector
B.4	Keynote accommodation	4	Rooms	4	Nights			1 710 000	27 360 000	1 514	Quoted Deluxe Balcony incl. breakfast IDR 1,580,000 (Jul 2026); +8% to 2027/28 = IDR 1,706,400
B.5	Keynote airport transfer and local transport	4	Pax	1	Return transfer			1 000 000	4 000 000	221	Return airport transfer. Keynote speakers also pay no registration fee (RSAI ToR)
	Subtotal B								**484 397 948**	**26 808**	
C. CONGRESS MATERIALS & STATIONERY											
C.1	Delegate badge, lanyard and printed programme book	600	Pax	1	Set			35 000	21 000 000	1 162	Stationery - an ordinary congress expense
C.2	Congress bag, notepad and pen (ATK)	600	Pax	1	Set			65 000	39 000 000	2 158	Locally procured
C.3	Participant souvenir (Balinese craft item)	600	Pax	1	Item			75 000	45 000 000	2 490	Can be dropped or sponsor-funded without affecting viability

C.4	Certificates, session signage, banners and directional signage	1	Package					25 000 000	25 000 000	1 384	Print and production only
	Subtotal C								**130 000 000**	**7 195**	
D. IT, BRANDING & TECHNICAL SERVICES											
D.1	Abstract submission and registration management platform	1	Event licence					45 000 000	45 000 000	2 490	Approx. USD 2,500 for a standard conference management system
D.2	Congress website - development, hosting and maintenance	1	Package					15 000 000	15 000 000	830	Built and maintained in-house by the host universities
D.3	Local event organizer - IT coordination, branding, graphic design and run-down management (light package)	1	Package					90 000 000	90 000 000	4 981	Modest local EO retainer for IT set-up, event branding, delegate-facing design and on-the-day run-down coordination. NOT a full production contract
D.4	On-site AV support - technicians and additional microphones for parallel rooms	3	Technicians	3	Days			1 500 000	13 500 000	747	Standard AV is in the hotel package; this covers technicians and extra mics
D.5	Dedicated internet bandwidth for the congress area	3	Days					7 000 000	21 000 000	1 162	Hotel proposals quote dedicated 50 mbps at ~IDR 20m for 3 days
D.6	Live streaming of plenary sessions (basic 2-camera set-up)	1	Package					15 000 000	15 000 000	830	Modest hybrid provision
	Subtotal D								**199 500 000**	**11 041**	
E. SECRETARIAT & LOCAL OPERATIONS											
E.1	On-site secretariat & admin team - daily operational allowance (registration, liaison, logistics desk)	30	Persons	5	Days			1 000 000	150 000 000	8 302	Repackaged from the former volunteer + committee per-diem lines into a single secretariat/admin operating cost. No honorarium
E.2	Secretariat shirts, meals and kit	30	Persons	1	Set			250 000	7 500 000	415	Team identification and on-site kit
E.3	Permits and administration (event permit, police recommendation letter)	1	Package					15 000 000	15 000 000	830	Required for organised events in Indonesia
E.4	Secretariat operations - printing, courier, communications, bank charges	1	Package					25 000 000	25 000 000	1 384	Pre-event and on-site running costs
	Subtotal E								**197 500 000**	**10 930**	
F. GALA-DINNER TRANSFER											
F.1	Coach (bus) transfer to and from the gala-dinner venue (reduced, staggered)	12	Buses	1	Return trip			3 500 000	42 000 000	2 324	Reduced coach provision (staggered / partial transfer). The gala dinner meal itself is voluntary and self-funding
	Subtotal F								**42 000 000**	**2 324**	
	SUBTOTAL (A - F)								**2 278 597 948**	**126 105**	

	G. Contingency		10% of subtotal						227 859 795	12 611	
	GRAND TOTAL COST								**2 506 457 743**	**138 716**	
	Net registration revenue retained by LOC (80% of fees)								3 042 588 317	168 387	
	SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) BEFORE SPONSORSHIP								**536 130 574**	**29 671**	
	Cost coverage by registration income								121%		
	Cost per participant								4 177 430	231	

REGISTRATION FEE ESTIMATE - 2028 RSAI WORLD CONGRESS, BALI

1. FEE STRUCTURE INPUTS (blue = editable)			
Ref	**Parameter**	**Value**	**Note**
BASE	Base fee: High-income (A), RSAI member, regular, EARLY (USD)	450	Set at the Quito 2026 level (USD 449) to keep fees internationally comparable and the Indonesian blended fee below USD 300
LATE	Late registration multiplier	1,35	Quito 2026 pattern: late = ~1.35x early (606/449)
CATB	Category B multiplier (Upper middle-income, incl. Indonesia)	0,6	Host-country policy: ~40% discount vs A (deeper than the standard 30%). The RSAI ToR allows the LOC to negotiate lower fees for participants who would otherwise attend their national conference; applied here to keep the Indonesian blended fee under USD 300 and encourage local participation
CATC	Category C multiplier (Lower middle &	0,5	RSAI rule: 50% discount vs A
STU	Student multiplier (vs regular)	0,65	Quito 2026 pattern: 292/449 = 0.65
NONM	Non-RSAI-member multiplier (vs	1,3	Quito 2026 pattern: 583/449 = 1.30
EARLY	Early registration share of participants	0,7	Assumption
COMM	RSAI commission on registration fees	0,2	ToR: RSAI Office charges 20%; LOC retains 80%
ACA	Accompanying person fee - Category A	110	Quito 2026: B=83, C=59
ACB	Accompanying person fee - Category B	85	See above
ACC	Accompanying person fee - Category C	60	See above

2. PARTICIPANT MIX & FEE SCHEDULE (600 PAX) - 50% INDONESIAN

Mix: 50% Indonesian delegates (Category B) = 300 pax; remaining 50% = high-income (A) 30% = 180 pax and other developing countries (C) 20% = 120 pax. Within each category: RSAI members 55% / non-members 45%; regular 65% / students 35%; early 70% / late 30%. The blended average fee for the Indonesian (B) group is shown below and is kept under USD 300.

Income Category	Registration Type	Early Fee (USD)	Late Fee (USD)	Pax Early	Pax Late	Total Pax	Revenue (USD)	Revenue (IDR)
High Income Country (A)	RSAI members - Regular	450	608	45	19	64	31 802	574 630 338
High Income Country (A)	RSAI members - Student	293	396	25	10	35	11 285	203 908 665
High Income Country (A)	Non-RSAI members - Regular	585	790	37	16	53	34 285	619 495 665
High Income Country (A)	Non-RSAI members - Student	380	513	20	8	28	11 704	211 479 576
Upper Middle-Income Country (B) - incl. Indonesia	RSAI members - Regular	270	365	75	32	107	31 930	576 943 170
Upper Middle-Income Country (B) - incl. Indonesia	RSAI members - Student	176	238	41	17	58	11 262	203 493 078
Upper Middle-Income Country (B) - incl. Indonesia	Non-RSAI members - Regular	351	474	62	26	88	34 086	615 899 934

Upper Middle-Income Country (B) - incl. Indonesia	Non-RSAI members - Student	228	308	33	14	47	11 836	213 864 684
Lower Middle & Low-Income Country (C)	RSAI members - Regular	225	304	30	13	43	10 702	193 374 438
Lower Middle & Low-Income Country (C)	RSAI members - Student	146	197	16	7	23	3 715	67 126 335
Lower Middle & Low-Income Country (C)	Non-RSAI members - Regular	293	396	25	10	35	11 285	203 908 665
Lower Middle & Low-Income Country (C)	Non-RSAI members - Student	190	257	13	6	19	4 012	72 492 828
High Income Country (A)	Accompanying Person (flat fee, no scientific programme)	110	110	8	4	12	1 320	23 851 080
Upper Middle-Income Country (B) - incl. Indonesia	Accompanying Person (flat fee, no scientific programme)	85	85	8	4	12	1 020	18 430 380
Lower Middle & Low-Income Country (C)	Accompanying Person (flat fee, no scientific programme)	60	60	3	1	4	240	4 336 560
	TOTAL - participants + accompanying persons					**628**	**210 484**	**3 803 235 396**
	Blended average fee - Indonesian (Category B) delegates		**Weighted average across member/non-member x regular/student x early/late. Target: below USD 300 per**				**297**	

3. REVENUE VS COST - ALL THREE VENUE SCENARIOS								
	Gross registration revenue (participants + accompanying persons)						210 484	3 803 235 396
	Less: RSAI commission (20% of registration fees, per ToR)						(42 097)	(760 647 079)
	NET REGISTRATION REVENUE RETAINED BY LOC (80%)						**168 387**	**3 042 588 317**
	Congress cost: 4-star Sanur						138 716	2 506 457 743
	SURPLUS/DEFICIT						**29 671**	**536 130 574**
	Cost coverage						121%	

ATTENDANCE SENSITIVITY - COST, REVENUE AND SURPLUS AT 400 / 600 / 800 PARTICIPANTS

SCENARIO 2: 4-STAR SANUR (PRIME PLAZA + PARADISE PLAZA)					
Item	**Low (400 pax)**	**Base (600 pax)**	**High (800 pax)**	**Unit**	**Note**
Participants	400	600	800	pax	
Variable cost per participant	1 957 000	1 957 000	1 957 000	IDR/pax	Catering / meeting package plus badge, bag and souvenir
Fixed cost (venue rental, keynotes, IT, secretariat, gala transfer)	1 104 397 948	1 104 397 948	1 104 397 948	IDR	Base-case subtotal less the variable component
Subtotal cost	1 887 197 948	2 278 597 948	2 669 997 948		
GRAND TOTAL COST incl. 10% contingency (IDR)	**2 075 917 743**	**2 506 457 743**	**2 936 997 743**		
Net registration revenue retained by LOC (IDR)	2 028 392 211	3 042 588 317	4 056 784 422		Base-case net revenue scaled pro rata to attendance
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) BEFORE SPONSORSHIP (IDR)	**(47 525 531)**	**536 130 574**	**1 119 786 680**		
Surplus / (deficit) (USD)	(2 630)	29 671	61 973		
Cost coverage by registration income	98%	121%	138%		

ANNEX VI

Proposal to Host the
2028 RSAI World Congress
YIBIN · CHINA
6 – 9 June 2028

Reweaving Regions: Complexity, Culture, and Connectivity in a Fragmenting World

Overall theme: The next World Congress convenes the global Regional Science community around a generation-defining question — how regions hold together, adapt, and renew themselves when the connective tissue of the world economy is being torn and re-stitched at once. The Congress reads this turbulence through the lens of complexity science in regional and special economics, and anchors it in the living evidence of one of the planet's most dynamic urban regions.

Host city	Yibin, Sichuan Province, China (First City of the Yangtze River)
Dates (tentative)	Tuesday 6 – Friday 9 June 2028; pre-Congress PhD summer school 4–5 June 2028
Lead host	School of Economics, Sichuan University of Science & Engineering (SUSE)
Co-organisers	Spatial Economics Committee of the Regional Science Association of China (RSAC, the RSAI national Section)
Proposed LOC leadership	LOC Chair: Zeng Ying (曾英), President, SUSE; Executive Secretary: He Mingxia (何明霞), School of Economics, SUSE · shinehe2012@gmail.com [appointments TBC]
Format	Four-day World Congress + optional pre-Congress summer school; proposed back-to-back with the Regional Science Association of China (RSAC)
Working language	English
Submitted to	Executive Director, RSAI (avinuela@uniovi.es; cc rsai@apdr.pt)
Submission date	July 2026

Note. *All names, institutional commitments, dates and figures marked [TBC] are tentative at the proposal stage, as anticipated by the RSAI application guidelines, and will be confirmed with the RSAI President and Executive Director and formalised in the subsequent Memorandum of Understanding.*

Executive Summary

The Local Organizing Committee proposes to host the 2028 RSAI World Congress in Yibin, Sichuan, China, on 6–9 June 2028, under the theme “Reweaving Regions: Complexity, Culture, and Connectivity in a Fragmenting World.” The proposal responds directly to the three stated aims of the Congress: significant participation across all RSAI supra-nationals; genuine outreach to regional scientists in countries where no section yet exists; and a scientifically ambitious, globally relevant program.

The intellectual case rests on a convergence now reshaping our field. Evolutionary economic geography and economic-complexity analysis have moved relatedness, diversification and the product/knowledge space from the margins to the mainstream. Network science and agent-based modelling let us treat regions as complex adaptive systems rather than points in a gravity equation. New spatial data — street-view imagery, satellite nightlights, mobility traces, large-language-model embeddings of text — are widening what regional scientists can measure. At the same time the geography of discontent, geo-economic fragmentation, the reconfiguration of global value chains, and the diffusion of artificial intelligence are rewriting the map of opportunity. The Congress is designed to bring these frontiers into one room.

Yibin is not merely a convenient venue; it is a live case study for the theme. Known as the First City of the Yangtze River— the point where the Min and Jinsha rivers join to form the Yangtze River proper — it is a key node of the Chengdu–Chongqing twin-city economic circle and China's southern, Yangtze River -head gateway toward ASEAN. Within a single decade Yibin has re-woven its own economic fabric: from a base in baijiu (the globally known Wuliangye) and coal into one of China's fastest-growing clusters for power batteries, smart terminals and green manufacturing, concentrated in the Sanjiang New Area (Sichuan's first provincial-level new area). It pairs a millennia-old wine, tea and bamboo heritage with a brand-new University Town that has drawn campuses and research institutes of leading Chinese universities. Yibin is, in miniature and almost literally, the Congress theme — culture, complexity and connectivity re-woven where great rivers meet.

A World Congress requires a host with genuine conference capacity and global reach. SUSE meets both through its Yibin campus, built within the Yibin University Town in the Sanjiang New Area, so the Congress is delivered in Yibin itself with full logistical capacity. International delegates route through Chengdu Tianfu International Airport and reach Yibin in about ninety minutes by frequent high-speed rail, while Yibin's own Wuliangye Airport adds direct domestic and regional connections. Zigong — SUSE's other home city, some forty minutes away by high-speed rail and an internationally known cultural-economy exemplar (salt-industry heritage, the world-famous dinosaur museum and the International Dinosaur Lantern Festival) — features, together with Yibin's own heritage sites, as an optional cultural excursion that embodies the Congress theme.

The financial plan is built around three attendance scenarios (300 / 450 / 600 delegates) and shows a viable surplus in the central scenario even before sponsorship, with concrete mitigations for the principal risks (attendance shortfall, visa and geopolitical friction, currency movement, and public-health contingency). A dedicated “Building Bridges” strand — co-funded student subsidies for the Asia-Pacific and neighbouring developing economies — is embedded in the budget rather than appended to it.

1. Congress Theme and Intellectual Rationale

1.1 The theme

Reweaving Regions: Complexity, Culture, and Connectivity in a Fragmenting World. The metaphor of re-weaving is deliberate. Regions are not static containers but woven fabrics of firms, institutions, cultures and flows; when global threads are cut — by geo-economic decoupling, by pandemic shock, by the automation of cognition — the question for regional science is not only how places unravel, but how, and where, and by whom, they are re-woven. That is a question about complex adaptive systems, about the cultural and institutional filters that channel novelty, and about the connective infrastructures (trade, migration, knowledge, digital) that bind places together.

Rather than restate the settled agenda, the Congress positions itself on the growth edges of the discipline. It builds on and extends the concerns that have animated recent World Congresses and the field's flagship journals — sustainability transitions, regional resilience, spatial inequality, and digital transformation — by asking what a genuinely complexity-based, culturally-literate, and data-rich regional science can now say about them.

1.2 Four frontier strands

The scientific program is organized around four interlocking frontiers, each a locus of active theoretical and methodological advance:

- **Complexity science and economic complexity.** Relatedness, the product/knowledge space, ECI/PCI, principle of relatedness and complexity outlook; regions as complex adaptive systems; network dynamics, percolation and phase transitions; agent-based and generative models of regional change.
- **Cultural and creative economy.** Culture as a factor of production and a mechanism of selection; cultural diversity and “effective” diversity; culture-led regeneration and its shadow side (cultural gentrification, ecological displacement, rent restructuring); the valuation of meaning and experience in the urban economy.
- **Spatial and urban economics at the data frontier.** Advances in spatial econometrics (spatial Durbin, dynamic and higher-order models, identification with spatial variation); new urban data — street-view computer vision, mobility and sensing, text-as-data and LLM embeddings; the empirical study of agglomeration, accessibility and the fine-grained fabric of cities.
- **Innovation economics and the geography of AI.** Innovation networks and co-invention; the Quadruple-Helix and place-based innovation ecosystems; the spatial and distributional consequences of artificial intelligence for regional production, work and knowledge creation.

1.3 Why now — reading the international moment

The late-2020s are a stress test for the spatial economy. Value chains are being shortened, friend-shored and re-shored; industrial policy has returned across the OECD and the Global South; the diffusion of generative AI is reshaping the geography of skilled work faster than any general-purpose technology in memory; and the political economy of “places that don't matter” continues to destabilize national settlements. Each of these is, at root, a regional-science problem. A World Congress that names the moment — fragmentation and re-connection — and equips the community with complexity-based theory and frontier data methods to address it is a Congress of consequence for the whole field.

1.4 Theoretical anchoring

The theme is built on a definite theoretical apparatus rather than a slogan. Treating a region as a complex adaptive system reframes development as an evolutionary, path-dependent, out-of-equilibrium process. “Reweaving” is, in formal terms, recombination: new economic activity arises as new combinations of existing capabilities — the Schumpeterian intuition of new combinations and the Weitzman logic of

recombinant growth — channelled by the principle of relatedness and rendered measurable by economic-complexity analysis (revealed comparative advantage, the Economic and Product Complexity Indices, the product/knowledge space, relatedness density and the complexity outlook).

The three organising concepts map cleanly onto this apparatus. Complexity supplies the dynamics — network rewiring and percolation, structural holes and brokerage, tipping points and phase transitions, studied with network science and agent-based or generative models. Culture is the selection-and-filtering mechanism that decides which recombinations take root and diffuse locally, and whose regeneration carries a distributional shadow. Connectivity is the bridging topology whose structure governs whether re-weaving succeeds — including the connectivity paradox that over-connection breeds homogenization and systemic fragility while diverse, well-brokered connection breeds resilience. In the fabric metaphor, culture is the warp and connectivity the weft, woven under complex-systems dynamics.

This is a live, operational agenda in the host community's own research — from effective-diversity measures of culture and identification with spatial variation (spatial Durbin and higher-order models) to exponential random-graph models and co-evolution simulation of regional networks — giving the Congress a demonstrable methodological home and a host program sitting squarely on these frontiers.

2. Why China, Why Now: Reach and “Building Bridges”

Hosting the World Congress in mainland China would bring the RSAI to the single largest concentration of emerging regional scientists in the world, and to a policy environment where regional science questions — twin-city circles, urban regeneration, industrial upgrading, inland–coastal convergence — are live matters of national strategy. It squarely serves the Congress's second stated aim: attracting scholars from countries and regions where RSAI sections are thin or absent.

- **A gateway for the Asia-Pacific and beyond.** Reached through the Chengdu Tianfu international gateway (about ninety minutes by high-speed rail) and Yibin's own Wuliangye Airport, the host region is a natural hub for PRSCO economies and for neighbouring developing countries across South, Southeast and Central Asia; as the Yangtze-head gateway toward ASEAN, Yibin is especially well placed to convene the Mekong and Southeast-Asian community. The LOC will actively recruit participation from economies with no established RSAI section, working through PRSCO and regional academic networks.
- **Building Bridges, embedded not appended.** The budget ring-fences funds — to be matched by RSAI's Building Bridges programme and by local sponsors — for travel and fee subsidies targeted at postgraduate students and early-career scholars from lower- and lower-middle-income economies in the region (see §11 and §13).
- **A two-way bridge.** The Congress is equally an opportunity for the global community to engage first-hand with Chinese regional data, institutions and field sites — a comparative resource still underused in the international literature.

2.4 Filling a structural gap in the World Congress map

Since 1980 the RSAI World Congress has convened fifteen times across six inhabited continents (with two further editions — Bangkok 2014 and Istanbul 2016 — assigned but cancelled for reasons beyond the hosts' control). Read as the spatial footprint of the field's flagship event, that map has a conspicuous gap: mainland China, home to one of the world's largest and fastest-growing regional-science communities, has never hosted; and East Asia has hosted in person only once, in Tokyo in 1996 — thirty-two years before 2028.

Recent editions rotated from Africa (Marrakech 2021, online) through Europe (Kecskemét 2024) to Latin America (Quito 2026). An Asia-Pacific edition in 2028 completes a natural continental rotation and, in the network language of the Congress's own theme, closes a structural hole: hosting where the field is thickest yet least served raises the reach and betweenness of the RSAI network far more than another edition in an already well-covered region.

No.	Year	Host city (institution)	Country · macro-region
1st	1980	Cambridge, MA (Harvard University)	USA · North America
2nd	1984	Rotterdam (Erasmus University)	Netherlands · Europe
3rd	1989	Jerusalem	Israel · West Asia
4th	1992	Palma de Mallorca	Spain · Europe
5th	1996	Tokyo (Rissho University)	Japan · East Asia
6th	2000	Lugano	Switzerland · Europe
7th	2004	Port Elizabeth	South Africa · Africa
8th	2008	São Paulo	Brazil · South America
9th	2012	Timișoara	Romania · Europe
10th	2014	Bangkok — cancelled	Thailand · SE Asia
11th	2016	Istanbul — cancelled	Türkiye · West Asia
12th	2018	Goa	India · South Asia

13th	2021	Marrakech (online only)	Morocco · Africa
14th	2024	Kecskemét	Hungary · Europe
15th	2026	Quito	Ecuador · South America
16th	**2028**	**Yibin, China — proposed**	**China · East Asia**

This is not a claim of entitlement but of coverage: the 2028 Congress would extend a forty-eight-year tradition to the one major world region it has yet to reach in person.

3. Host City: Yibin

3.1 A living laboratory for the theme

Yibin is the First City of the Yangtze River: it sits at the confluence where the Min and Jinsha rivers join to become the Yangtze River, and it anchors the southern, river-head flank of the Chengdu–Chongqing twin-city economic circle — one of China's four designated strategic urban regions — as the country's gateway toward ASEAN. It joins a four-thousand-year wine, tea and bamboo culture — the globally known Wuliangye baijiu, early-spring Sichuan tea, the Shunan Bamboo Sea, and Li Zhuang, the riverside town that sheltered China's universities and research academies during the Second World War — with one of the fastest industrial re-weavings in the Chinese west: a deliberate, policy-guided diversification from baijiu and coal into power batteries, smart terminals and green manufacturing in the Sanjiang New Area, alongside a new University Town of branch campuses and research institutes. Yibin is, in miniature, the Congress theme — culture, complexity and connectivity co-producing a region's trajectory, in the one place where the metaphor of re-weaving is also a physical fact.

3.2 Global accessibility

- **Air access via Chengdu and Yibin.** Most international delegates fly into Chengdu Tianfu International Airport — one of China's largest air hubs, with direct intercontinental and dense intra-Asian service — and continue to Yibin by frequent high-speed rail in about ninety minutes. Yibin's own Wuliangye Airport adds direct domestic and growing regional connections for delegates travelling within China and the neighbourhood.
- **A high-speed-rail hub.** Yibin West station sits on the Chengdu–Guiyang high-speed line, linking Yibin to Chengdu in about ninety minutes, to Zigong in roughly forty minutes, and onward to Chongqing, Guiyang and the national HSR grid.
- **Eased entry.** China's recently expanded unilateral visa-free arrangements and 240-hour (10-day) visa-free transit at major ports — including Chengdu Tianfu, Yibin's international gateway — materially lower the entry barrier for many delegates. (Policy is evolving; the LOC will publish confirmed, country-specific guidance well ahead of the Congress.)
- **Moderate cost.** Accommodation, catering and local transport are affordable by world-city standards, supporting strong participation from students and delegates on constrained budgets.

4. Proposed Dates

Congress: Tuesday 6 – Friday 9 June 2028. Pre-Congress PhD summer school and professional-development workshops: Sunday 4 – Monday 5 June 2028. The four-day Tuesday-to-Friday structure mirrors the standard RSAI World Congress template. Early June in Yibin is warm and generally workable, and the window has been chosen to avoid clashes with the main European and Pacific regional-science calendars.

As the guidelines require, final dates will be fixed in consultation with the RSAI President and Executive Director to guarantee no clash with events targeting the same community; the LOC is flexible and can shift the window (e.g. into early September 2028) if that better serves the global calendar.

5. Venue and Accommodation

5.1 Venue

Two venue models are viable and will be finalized with the host university and Yibin venue partners:

1. **University model.** A modern conference facility on SUSE's Yibin campus within the Yibin University Town — plenary auditorium plus 8–12 parallel-session rooms — with catering on site and a curated list of affordable hotels within 15 minutes' walk, as the guidelines require.
2. **Convention-hotel model.** A four-/five-star convention hotel in Yibin (e.g. the Sanjiang New Area or the riverfront core near the Three Rivers Confluence), providing plenary and breakout space with delegate accommodation in the same building and in adjacent hotels across price bands.

Recommendation. The LOC's preferred option is the convention-hotel model for its logistical simplicity and on-site accommodation, with the university model retained as a lower-cost alternative. The specific venue is [TBC] pending the partner agreement and a site visit.

5.2 Accommodation

Yibin offers a growing hotel market across price bands within short reach of both candidate venue districts:

Tier	Indicative rate / night	Purpose
5-star / convention	€90 – €150	Keynotes, VIP delegates, on-site venue block
4-star business	€55 – €90	Main delegate block, negotiated group rate
3-star / express	€30 – €55	Budget-conscious delegates
Student / hostel	€12 – €30	Postgraduate and Building-Bridges participants

Rates are indicative planning figures; the LOC will negotiate blocked group rates across at least three tiers within 15 minutes of the venue and publish them at registration.

6. Local Organizing Committee

6.1 Host eligibility and track record

The call invites proposals from RSAI Supra-Regionals, RSAI Sections, or RSAI members with a proven track record of hosting conferences and related events. This bid satisfies the criterion through its coordination by an RSAI member (the Executive Secretary) and co-organisation with the Regional Science Association of China (RSAC) - the RSAI national Section - together with the Spatial Economics Committee of the RSAC, aligned with the PRSCO supranational, and through the institutional authority and conference infrastructure of the host university.

Co-organising bodies

- **Regional Science Association of China (RSAC) — the RSAI national Section.** National mobilisation, Section endorsement, and integration of the Chinese community into the World Congress rather than a competing domestic event.
- **Spatial Economics Committee of the RSAC — thematic-scientific anchor.** Co-constitutes the Scientific Committee and leads special-session curation and peer review, in direct alignment with the Congress's spatial, cultural, innovation and complexity agenda.
- **Host university and Yibin campus — local delivery.** On-the-ground organisation and volunteer mobilisation on SUSE's Yibin campus within the Yibin University Town, venue and logistics coordination, and liaison with Yibin municipal and Sanjiang New Area authorities and sponsors; a Yibin partner institution may be added [TBC].

Track record

- **Executive Secretary (RSAI member). He Mingxia (何明霞), School of Economics, SUSE: organiser and convenor of Special Session SS07 ("Cultural Evolution & Regional Innovation Networks") at the 15th RSAI World Congress, Quito 2026; referee for the journal Spatial Economic Analysis; active in the RSAI Section and RSAI/RSAI-supranational community.**
- **Host and partner institutions.** [TBC — list the recent international conferences, summer schools and academic events hosted by SUSE's School of Economics and its Yibin campus, with delegate numbers, to evidence event-hosting capacity].
- **Formal cooperation.** Co-organisation agreements and letters of support from RSAC, its Spatial Economics Committee and PRSCO to be finalised [TBC], confirming that the Congress enlarges rather than competes with the regional calendar.

6.2 Committee

The LOC is institutionally led by Sichuan University of Science & Engineering (SUSE), with operational coordination by its School of Economics and delivery on SUSE's Yibin campus within the Yibin University Town (Sanjiang New Area). It is co-organised with the Spatial Economics Committee of the Regional Science Association of China (RSAC) and endorsed by RSAC, the RSAI national Section. The legal entity through which the LOC will operate for the MOU is [TBC - SUSE or its designated conference/finance entity].

Role	Holder (tentative)
Honorary Chair	Zhang Li (张力), Party Secretary, SUSE - institutional sponsorship and senior liaison with provincial and municipal authorities [TBC]
LOC Chair	Zeng Ying (曾英), President, SUSE - overall host responsibility, institutional commitment, and MOU/legal-entity coordination [TBC]

Role	Holder (tentative)
Deputy LOC Chair / Special Sessions & Tracks	Liang Shuanglu (梁双陆), Deputy Chair and Secretary-General, RSAC Spatial Economics Committee - co-organiser coordination, special-session curation, and Chinese academic-network mobilisation [TBC]
Scientific Programme Chair	Liang Qi (梁琦), Chair, RSAC Spatial Economics Committee; Professor, Sun Yat-sen University - scientific leadership and liaison with the RSAI Programme Committee and supranational programme leads [TBC]
Executive Secretary	He Mingxia (何明霞), School of Economics, SUSE - day-to-day coordination, documentation, committee liaison, and delivery follow-up; drawing on experience convening Special Session SS07 at the 2026 RSAI World Congress [TBC]
Finance & Sponsorship	SUSE conference/finance office, reporting to the LOC Chair - budget control, registration receipts, procurement, sponsorship agreements, and financial reporting [named lead TBC]
Logistics & Venue	SUSE Yibin Campus and designated local partner team, reporting to the LOC Chair - venue, accommodation, transport, catering, security, and municipal liaison [named lead TBC]
Communications & Website	SUSE communications/international-cooperation team, coordinated by the Executive Secretary - English-language website, delegate communications, media, and registration information [named lead TBC]
Building Bridges / Inclusion	RSAC Spatial Economics Committee outreach team, overseen by the Deputy LOC Chair - PRSCO liaison, developing-economy outreach, travel support, and early-career inclusion [named lead TBC]
Student-Volunteer Coordinator	School of Economics, SUSE - recruitment, training, scheduling, and on-site supervision of student volunteers [named lead TBC]

Note on composition. The proposed governance separates institutional authority, scientific leadership, and day-to-day delivery. SUSE Party Secretary Zhang Li provides senior institutional sponsorship as Honorary Chair; SUSE President Zeng Ying serves as LOC Chair and principal host-university lead; Professor Liang Qi chairs the Scientific Programme; Professor Liang Shuanglu serves as Deputy LOC Chair and leads special sessions and tracks; and He Mingxia serves as Executive Secretary. All named appointments are tentative pending written acceptance and formal confirmation by the respective institutions before the MOU.

Legal entity — tentative now, firm at the MOU. Under RSAI's own rules this is the single item that may remain open at the proposal stage but must be settled before signing. The guidelines expressly anticipate that parts of a proposal will be tentative at submission, so the hosting legal entity is presented here as [TBC]. However, the Memorandum of Understanding — the binding instrument — must be signed by the person representing the legal entity through which the LOC operates, and the 80% share of registration revenue is transferred to that same entity. The LOC will therefore nominate and confirm the signing legal entity (the host university's conference / finance office) before the MOU, without delaying the present proposal.

7. Scientific Programme

7.1 Overall structure

The Congress follows the standard RSAI four-day structure — opening and closing ceremonies, five plenary sessions with keynotes, a high-level policy panel, and eight parallel-session blocks — with dedicated space for RSAI's own meetings (LRPC, RSAI Council).

	Mon 5 Jun	**Tue 6 Jun**	**Wed 7 Jun**	**Thu–Fri 8–9 Jun**
Morning	Summer school	Registration; Plenary I (Keynote I)	Parallel 1–2; Plenary II (Keynote II)	Parallel 3–7; Plenaries IV–V (Keynotes IV–V)
Midday	Workshops	Lunch; LRPC	Lunch; RSAI meetings	Lunch; RSAI Council
Afternoon	Workshops	Opening; Panel; Plenary III (Keynote III)	Parallel sessions	Parallel 8; Closing ceremony (Fri)
Evening	—	Welcome reception	Cultural tour / free	Gala dinner (Thu)

This grid is illustrative and will be aligned to the definitive RSAI template and to the number of accepted papers.

7.2 Thematic tracks and special sessions

Ten thematic tracks translate the four frontier strands into the parallel-session programme. The Scientific Committee and special-session review are anchored by the RSAC Spatial Economics Committee; the LOC will additionally issue an open call for special sessions and Young-Researcher (PY) papers. The tracks are deliberately pitched at the discipline's growth edge, pairing cultural, spatial, urban and innovation economics with complexity-science and frontier-data methods:

3. Economic complexity, relatedness and diversification: the product/knowledge space, ECI/PCI, complexity outlook, and the spatial externalities of relatedness density.
4. Evolutionary and institutional economic geography: path creation, branching and lock-in read as out-of-equilibrium, path-dependent dynamics.
5. Cultural and creative economy: culture as production factor and selection filter; network-based valuation of meaning and experience; culture-led regeneration and its distributional shadow (gentrification, cultural-ecological displacement, rent restructuring).
6. Innovation economics and the geography of AI: co-invention and knowledge networks, innovation ecosystems and the Quadruple Helix, and the spatial-distributional effects of artificial intelligence on regional production and knowledge creation.
7. Spatial econometrics and new spatial data: spatial Durbin, dynamic and higher-order models and identification with spatial variation; street-view computer vision, mobility sensing, and text-as-data / LLM embeddings.
8. Complex adaptive systems in regional science: network dynamics, percolation and structural holes, tipping points and phase transitions, and agent-based / generative spatial models.
9. Urban economics and city systems: agglomeration and accessibility, the fine-grained urban fabric, regeneration and spatial justice.
10. Regional resilience, sustainability transitions and the low-carbon economy as co-evolutionary processes.
11. Geo-economic fragmentation, global value chains and re-connection: network rewiring under decoupling, friend-shoring and re-shoring.
12. Regional inequality, the geography of discontent and place-based policy.

7.3 Panel

A high-level policy panel — “Reweaving Regions in a Fragmenting World” — will bring together scholars and regional-policy practitioners (from the Chengdu–Chongqing circle, the Yangtze-head region and internationally) to test the Congress theme against real regional strategy.

8. Keynote Speakers

Per RSAI practice, the LOC proposes one keynote and RSAI selects the remainder; final selection and invitation rest with RSAI. The LOC's suggested slate below — offered purely as candidates to be invited and confirmed — maps onto the four frontier strands and spans the supranationals:

Frontier strand	Illustrative candidate profiles (to be invited / confirmed by RSAI)
Complexity & economic complexity	Leading figures in economic-complexity and product-space research; network-science approaches to regional economies.
Evolutionary economic geography	Senior scholars of relatedness, diversification and regional path development (e.g. the Utrecht/CIRCLE traditions).
Cultural & urban economics	Authorities on the cultural/creative economy, agglomeration and the new urban economics.
Inequality & the geography of discontent	Leading voices on spatial inequality, left-behind places and place-based policy.
Regional voice / Building Bridges	A distinguished PRSCO / Asia-Pacific scholar — the LOC-nominated keynote — foregrounding regional science from the host region.

The LOC will provide RSAI with a ranked, named shortlist of candidates for each strand during programme planning; no speaker is named here as confirmed.

9. Pre-Congress Summer School and Professional-Development Workshops

On 4–5 June 2028 the LOC will run a pre-Congress programme aimed at emerging scholars and postgraduate students who may not yet be positioned to contribute a full paper, directly serving the guidelines' call for professional-development activity:

- **PhD summer school — "Frontier methods for regional science."** Hands-on tracks in economic-complexity computation (RCA, ECI/PCI, relatedness density), spatial econometrics, network analysis and ABM, and new spatial data (street-view CV, text-as-data/LLM embeddings).
- **Early-career workshop.** Publishing in regional-science journals, research design, and grant craft, with editors and senior scholars.
- **Building-Bridges cohort.** Subsidised places reserved for participants from developing economies in the region (see §11, §13).

10. Joint / Back-to-Back Arrangements (optional)

The LOC proposes to organize the World Congress in cooperation with the regional community so as to maximize reach and share infrastructure:

- **With the Regional Science Association of China (RSAC).** Coordinating with RSAC's annual meeting to draw the Chinese national community into the World Congress rather than a competing domestic event, subject to RSAI consultation on dates.
- **With the PRSCO network.** Positioning the Congress as the flagship Pacific-facing regional-science gathering of 2028, with PRSCO co-badged sessions.

All joint arrangements are optional and contingent on RSAI's agreement that they enlarge rather than fragment participation.

11. Inclusive Participation and “Building Bridges”

13. **Targeted subsidies.** A dedicated fund (§13) for travel and registration support to postgraduates and early-career scholars from lower- and lower-middle-income economies in the region, designed to be matched by RSAI's Building Bridges program and by local sponsors.
14. **Reduced student fees.** The RSAI income-tier discounts (30% / 50%) will be applied strictly by country of residence, and the LOC will hold student fees to the low end of the permitted range.
15. **Young-Researcher Prize.** Active promotion of PY-type submissions and the RSAI Young Researchers Prize, with a dedicated session stream.
16. **Hybrid access where appropriate.** Selected plenaries live-streamed to widen access for those unable to travel, without diluting the in-person core.

12. Sponsorship

Sponsorship is retained in full by the LOC and is treated in this proposal as upside and contingency buffer rather than as a precondition for viability. Prospective sources (all [TBC], to be confirmed via formal agreements):

- Host-institution and partner-university conference funds and in-kind venue/AV support.
- Provincial and municipal science-and-technology / social-science funding bodies, the Yibin municipal and Sanjiang New Area authorities, and the Chengdu–Chongqing circle program offices.
- Academic publishers and data/software providers active in regional science (exhibition and session sponsorship).
- Corporate partners in the regional innovation and digital-creative economy.

13. Budget and Financial Plan

All figures are tentative planning figures in euros, derived from the RSAI guideline fee schedule and moderate Yibin cost assumptions. China is an upper-middle-income country under World Bank classification; delegates pay according to their own country of residence, so revenue is modelled on a blended composition (40% high-income, 45% upper-middle including most domestic delegates, 15% lower/low-income; 60% RSAI members; 70% regular; 65% early registration). This yields a blended gross registration fee of about **€300** per delegate. Per the guidelines, the LOC retains 80% of registration revenue (RSAI commission 20%).

13.1 Revenue by attendance scenario

Registration revenue	**300 delegates**	**450 delegates**	**600 delegates**
Gross registration fees	€101,400	€152,100	€202,800
Accompanying-person fees	€2,800	€4,300	€5,700
Gross total	€104,200	€156,400	€208,500
less RSAI commission (20%)	−€20,800	−€31,300	−€41,700
LOC net registration (80%)	**€83,400**	**€125,100**	**€166,800**

13.2 Expenditure by attendance scenario

Expense	**300**	**450**	**600**
Catering, delegate kit & on-site (per head)	€19,500	€29,300	€39,000
Venue, AV & technical	€12,000	€16,000	€20,000
Keynote travel & accommodation (no fees)	€16,800	€16,800	€16,800
Secretariat / professional organiser	€18,000	€18,000	€18,000
Registration & website platform	€6,000	€6,000	€6,000
Design, signage & print	€6,000	€6,000	€6,000
Student-volunteer support	€5,000	€5,000	€5,000
Communications & marketing	€5,000	€5,000	€5,000
Building Bridges subsidies	€10,000	€15,000	€20,000
Contingency (10%)	€9,800	€11,700	€13,600
Total expenditure	**€108,100**	**€128,800**	**€149,400**

13.3 Bottom line

	300	**450**	**600**
LOC net registration	€83,400	€125,100	€166,800
Total expenditure	€108,100	€128,800	€149,400
Surplus / (deficit) — registration only	**(€24,700)**	**(€3,700)**	**€17,400**

Reading the numbers honestly. On registration revenue alone, the Congress reaches break-even at roughly 450 delegates and generates a surplus of around €20,000 at 600. Below that — in the deliberately conservative 300-delegate scenario — registration leaves a gap of the order of €20,000–€25,000. This is exactly the case the guidelines anticipate: the LOC does not rely on a large registration surplus, but on the combination of (a) substantial host in-kind support and (b) sponsorship retained 100% by the LOC.

Host in-kind contribution (not shown in the cash statement above). The partner university's conference

venue, plenary auditorium and breakout rooms, core AV/technical services, administrative staff time, and student volunteers are provided in kind — an indicative value of the order of €40,000–€60,000. This is why the cash cost lines above are lower than a fully-commercial convention budget, and is standard practice for a university-anchored World Congress.

Use of sponsorship. Sponsorship (§12) is therefore reserved to (i) close any gap in the lower-attendance scenario, (ii) fund and expand the Building-Bridges subsidies, (iii) absorb currency and cost shocks, and (iv) build a modest reserve. The gala dinner is self-financing (its separate fee is set only to cover its own cost) and is excluded from the surplus. A detailed line-item budget and cash-flow schedule, with the in-kind contribution itemised, will accompany the MOU.

The 300-delegate scenario is deliberately conservative; recent World Congresses attract materially larger numbers, and Yibin's accessibility and the theme's reach support a central planning figure of 450–600, at which the Congress is self-sustaining on registration and in-kind support before sponsorship.

14. Risk Assessment and Mitigation

Risk	Likelihood / impact	Mitigation
Attendance shortfall	Medium / High	Conservative 300-delegate base whose modest gap is covered by host in-kind support and sponsorship; early global call and special-session drive; RSAC/PRSCO co-mobilisation.
Visa / entry friction	Medium / Medium	Leverage expanded visa-free transit; issue invitation letters early; publish country-specific guidance and a visa help-desk; monitor policy and advise continuously.
Geopolitical / travel-advisory shifts	Low–Med / High	Hybrid access for affected delegates; flexible cancellation terms; contingency reserve; RSAI consultation on timing.
Currency (EUR/CNY) movement	Medium / Medium	Fees denominated per RSAI schedule; local costs in CNY; hold a currency buffer within the 10% contingency and the sponsorship reserve.
Public-health contingency	Low / High	Venue with hybrid capability; refund/deferral policy; insurance; ability to pivot key sessions online if required.
Venue / logistics failure	Low / Medium	Contract a professional conference organiser; secure a backup venue; site visit and dry-run 6 months out.
Sponsorship shortfall	Medium / Low	At the central 450–600 attendance, the Congress is self-sustaining on registration plus host in-kind support; sponsorship is upside and low-turnout cover, not a core dependency.

15. Travel and Practical Information

- **Getting there.** Fly into Chengdu Tianfu (TFU) — the international gateway — and continue to Yibin in about ninety minutes on the Chengdu–Guiyang high-speed line; intercontinental delegates route via major Asian, Gulf or European hubs into Chengdu, and intra-Asia connections are dense and frequent. Yibin's own Wuliangye Airport (YBP) offers direct domestic and regional flights for delegates travelling within China and the neighbourhood.
- **Getting around.** Public buses, ubiquitous ride-hailing and taxis, and walkable venue districts around the Yibin University Town. High-speed rail links to Chengdu (~90 min), Zigong (~40 min), Chongqing and Guiyang.
- **Entry.** Many delegates will qualify for visa-free transit or unilateral visa-free entry under China's expanded policies; others obtain a conference (F/M) visa with an LOC invitation letter. Confirmed, country-specific guidance will be published at registration.
- **When to come.** Early June is warm (typically low-to-mid 20s°C to low 30s°C) with occasional rain; light, breathable clothing and an umbrella are advisable.
- **Language & payment.** English signage and support at the venue; mobile-payment and increasingly card/cash-friendly for international visitors; the LOC will provide a delegate guide and on-site help-desk.

16. Cultural and Social Programme

The social programme is curated to embody the Congress theme — culture as economy — rather than to decorate it:

- **Welcome reception (Tue evening)** at a signature riverfront setting by the Three Rivers Confluence, where the Yangtze River begins.
- **Walking tours** of the historic core and creative-district regeneration sites — a field reading of culture-led urban renewal.
- **Gala dinner (Thu evening),** self-financing, showcasing Sichuan's own culinary and baijiu heritage (Yibin ran-mian, Wuliangye), with intangible cultural heritage performance (opera face-changing, tea art).
- **Li Zhuang and the Shunan Bamboo Sea** (optional excursions). Li Zhuang, the riverside town that sheltered China's universities and research academies during the Second World War, is a vivid field reading of how scholarly and regional networks are re-woven under rupture; the nearby Shunan Bamboo Sea adds a living case of eco-cultural economy.
- **Zigong cultural-economy excursion (optional).** A post-Congress option to Zigong, SUSE's home city about forty minutes away by high-speed rail — the world-renowned Zigong Dinosaur Museum, the salt-industry heritage that made Zigong the “Salt Capital,” and the International Dinosaur Lantern Festival tradition — a compact, vivid case of heritage-based cultural and creative economy that maps directly onto the Congress's cultural strand.

17. Indicative Timeline

When	Milestone
Jul 2026	Proposal submitted to RSAI Executive Director (hosting legal entity may remain tentative per RSAI guidelines)
ERSA 2026 (Sofia)	RSAI Council decision; if selected, negotiate MOU
Late 2026	MOU signed; partner venue and legal entity confirmed; website live
2027 H1	Call for special sessions and papers; keynote invitations (with RSAI); sponsorship agreements
2027 H2	Abstract submission opens; hotel blocks and logistics contracted; Building-Bridges call
Early 2028	Early-registration deadline (before 28 Feb 2028); programme assembly; visa-support desk opens
Apr–May 2028	Final programme; dry-run and site readiness; delegate guide published
4–5 Jun 2028	Pre-Congress summer school and workshops
6–9 Jun 2028	2028 RSAI World Congress

18. Commitment and Closing

The LOC is committed to delivering a scientifically ambitious, financially sound and genuinely inclusive World Congress. Yibin offers ready accessibility through the Chengdu gateway and its own airport, the affordability that widens participation, and a regional economy that is itself a laboratory for the questions the Congress poses. The theme — reweaving regions through complexity, culture and connectivity — speaks to the moment the whole field is living through, and to the frontiers on which regional science is now advancing.

We would be honoured to welcome the global Regional Science community to Yibin in June 2028, and we look forward to working with the RSAI President, the Executive Director and the Council to refine every element of this proposal toward a Memorandum of Understanding.

Respectfully submitted,

He Mingxia (何明霞) - Executive Secretary (tentative), on behalf of the proposed LOC
School of Economics, Sichuan University of Science & Engineering (SUSE)
Yibin / Zigong, Sichuan, China · shinehe2012@gmail.com

ANNEX VII

Central Asian Regional Science Association International

Background and plan of activities for 3 years

Central Asia represents a strategically significant yet underrepresented region within the global regional science community. Despite its growing relevance in terms of economic transformation, spatial development, and sustainability challenges, the region has historically lacked an institutionalized platform for advancing regional science research and collaboration. In response to this gap, a series of coordinated academic and capacity-building initiatives have been implemented since 2023, aimed at fostering regional scientific development and aligning Central Asian research communities with international standards and networks. These efforts have been supported by RSAI, particularly through the *Nurturing New Talent Programme*, and have progressively contributed to the emergence of a structured regional ecosystem.

The proposal for formal recognition is grounded in a coherent trajectory of initiatives conducted during last 4 years with active involvement of representatives from HEIs in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (university management, lecturers and researchers). 4 international scientific conferences and 1 spring school organized, namely:

1st International Conference on Sustainable Regional Development in Central Asia (Narxoz University, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 2023). This inaugural event brought together over 70 researchers and established a foundational platform for regional scientific exchange across multiple domains of regional science. During this event, a minute on creation of CARSA was signed by all the participants (annex 1).

2nd Conference on Sustainable Regional Development in Central Asia (Samarkand Brach of Tashkent State University of Economics, Uzbekistan, 2024). Designed to consolidate and expand the initiative, this event focused on strengthening methodological competencies, fostering international collaboration, and promoting RSAI membership and engagement in the region.

3rd Sustainable Regional Development in Central Asia (Kyrgyz-Uzbek University, Osh, Kyrgyzstan, 2025). The continued growth of the initiative was evidenced by international participation, interdisciplinary research presentations, and the integration of complementary activities such as Spring Schools in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

4th Sustainable Regional Development in Central Asia (Tajik State University of Commerce, Dushanbe, Tajikistan), focusing on strengthening methodological competencies, fostering international collaboration, and promoting RSAI membership and engagement in the region.

The institutional development of the Central Asian regional science network is further reinforced by the **formal legal registration of a dedicated entity in Uzbekistan**. As documented in the official certificate issued by the Ministry of Justice on 11 June 2025 (attached to this proposal – annex 2).

Organization

Role / Position	Name	Country
Executive Officers		
President (Farhod Ahrorov)	Elected annually at the CA Regional Science Meeting	Central Asia
Chair (Farhod Ahrorov)	Elected annually at the Board Meeting	Central Asia
Executive Director (Makhabbat Ramazanova)	Appointed by the Association	Central Asia
Voting Councillors — Member Organisation Representatives (Art. III, Sec. B)		
Councillor – Kazakhstan (Zhanar Argynbayeva)	Appointed by member organisation	Kazakhstan
Councillor – Kyrgyzstan (Almaz Atabekov)	Appointed by member organisation	Kyrgyzstan
Councillor – Tajikistan (Mubin Abdullayev)	Appointed by member organisation	Tajikistan
Councillor – Uzbekistan (Raya Karlibayeva)	Appointed by member organisation	Uzbekistan

Plan of activities for the next 3 years

Year	Flagship Conference	Online Training Workshops	RSAI Collaboration & Networking
2027	**5th International Conference on Sustainable Regional Development in Central Asia** *Tashkent State University of Economics, Tashkent, Uzbekistan* Target: ~100 participants; international & regional keynote speakers	• Academic writing & publishing in Scopus-indexed journals • Regional science research methods & tools • Opportunities in open-access & journal selection	• 1–3 CARSA researchers attend RSAI annual conference • Promotion of RSAI membership among Central Asian HEIs • Coordination with RSAI Nurturing New Talent Programme
2028	**6th International Conference on Sustainable Regional Development in Central Asia** *Narxoz University, Almaty, Kazakhstan* Continued growth in participation; dedicated session for early-career researchers	• Scopus journal submission & peer-review process • Quantitative & spatial analysis techniques for regional science • Grant writing & international funding opportunities	• 3–5 CARSA researchers attend RSAI annual conference • Joint panel or special session co-organised with RSAI • Deepen collaboration with RSAI professors and section leaders
2029	**7th International Conference on Sustainable Regional Development in Central Asia** *Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (host institution TBC)* Potential co-organisation with a Bishkek-based HEI; Spring School integrated	• Advanced regional econometrics & GIS for policy analysis • Research visibility: citation practices, indexing & bibliometrics • SDGs framing in regional research	• 3–5 CARSA researchers attend RSAI annual conference • Presentation of CARSA progress report at RSAI World Congress • Formalise CARSA status within RSAI institutional framework

President of the Central Asian Regional Science Association

Farhod Ahrorov



Executive Director of the nCentral Asian Regional Science Association

Makhabbat Ramazanova, 

8 june 2026

Motivation Letter for the formal recognition

of a Central Asian Section within RSAI

Dear Members of the RSAI Executive Council,

I am writing to express our motivation to obtain recognition for a Central Asian Section of the Regional Science Association (CARSA) within RSAI.

Central Asia represents a strategically important yet historically underrepresented region within the global regional science community. Despite its increasing relevance in terms of economic transformation, spatial dynamics, and sustainability challenges, the region has lacked a structured institutional platform to advance regional science research, collaboration, and capacity building. Over the past four years, significant progress has been achieved in addressing this gap through a coordinated and sustained set of academic and institutional initiatives. With the active involvement of higher education institutions from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, engaging university leadership, faculty members, and researchers, we have successfully developed a growing regional scientific network.

This trajectory is evidenced by the organization of four consecutive international conferences on Sustainable Regional Development in Central Asia (2023–2026), hosted across different countries in the region, alongside complementary training activities such as Spring Schools. These events have consistently attracted international participation, facilitated interdisciplinary exchange, strengthened methodological competencies, and promoted engagement with RSAI, particularly under the *Nurturing New Talent Programme*. Collectively, they have contributed to the emergence of researchers. Several publications resulted in collaboration between Central Asian researchers and RSAI experts.

It is important to note that these efforts have moved towards institutionalisation. The recent legal registration of a dedicated research-oriented entity in Uzbekistan, formalized by the Ministry of Justice on 11 June 2025, provides a concrete organizational framework to support and sustain regional activities. This development reflects a clear commitment to long-term coordination, governance, and international collaboration within the field of regional science.

In light of these achievements, we believe that the Central Asian initiative has reached a level of maturity, continuity, and institutional capacity that justifies its formal recognition as an RSAI section. Such recognition would not only acknowledge the progress already made but would also significantly enhance the visibility, integration, and impact of regional science

in Central Asia, while contributing to RSAI's mission of expanding its global reach and supporting emerging research communities.

We remain fully committed to continuing this work in close collaboration with RSAI, contributing to its scientific activities, expanding membership in the region, and fostering high-quality research and policy-relevant knowledge.

We hope for your favourable consideration of this proposal.

Best regards

President of the Central Asian Regional Science Association

Farhod Ahrorov



Executive Director of the Central Asian Regional Science Association

Makhabbat Ramazanova,



8 june 2026

Financial Plan of CARSA (2026–2028)

The Central Asian Regional Science Association (CARSA) is being established as the first regional platform dedicated to advancing regional science, spatial analysis, and evidence-based regional development across Central Asia. During its initial phase, CARSA seeks financial support from membership contributions, conference and congress registration fees (conferences of 2027 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan) and also by applying to Nurturing new talent programme of RSAI. During organizations annual conferences, hosts universities will contribute by providing accommodation, logistical support and lunches/coffee breaks for invited speakers and trainers.

In medium and long term, the association will attempt to get funding from

- Research grants and international development projects;
- Sponsorship agreements and partnerships;
- Professional training and educational programs.

To ensure inclusiveness and accessibility for researchers, academics, students, and practitioners across Central Asia, the annual membership fee is proposed at €10 per member. It has been agreed during the board meeting on June 3, 2026 (photo attached). This modest fee reflects the economic realities of the region, where several Central Asian countries are classified by the World Bank as lower-middle-income economies. At this time, 55 individuals from four Central Asian countries have already expressed their interest in becoming CARSA members (see attached list). This initial level of engagement demonstrates a clear demand for a regional platform dedicated to regional science and spatial development. The number of members is expected to increase as the Association expands its activities, strengthens partnerships with universities and research institutions, and organizes regional conferences, training programmes, and networking events.

RSAI support will enable the establishment of the first regional science association in Central Asia, creating new opportunities for researchers, academics, students, policymakers, and practitioners to engage with regional science. CARSA will actively promote RSAI and encourage its members to participate in RSAI activities, conferences, publications, and scientific networks.

As part of this commitment, CARSA will:

- Expand the regional science community in Central Asia and increase participation in RSAI-related activities;
- Organize conferences, workshops, and training events that promote regional science methodologies and research;
- Facilitate collaboration between Central Asian researchers and the international regional science community;
- Disseminate research outputs and best practices developed through RSAI-supported activities;
- Provide visibility for RSAI through CARSA events, communication channels, and promotional materials;
- Contribute to the development of young researchers and future regional science leaders through capacity-building initiatives.

Best regards

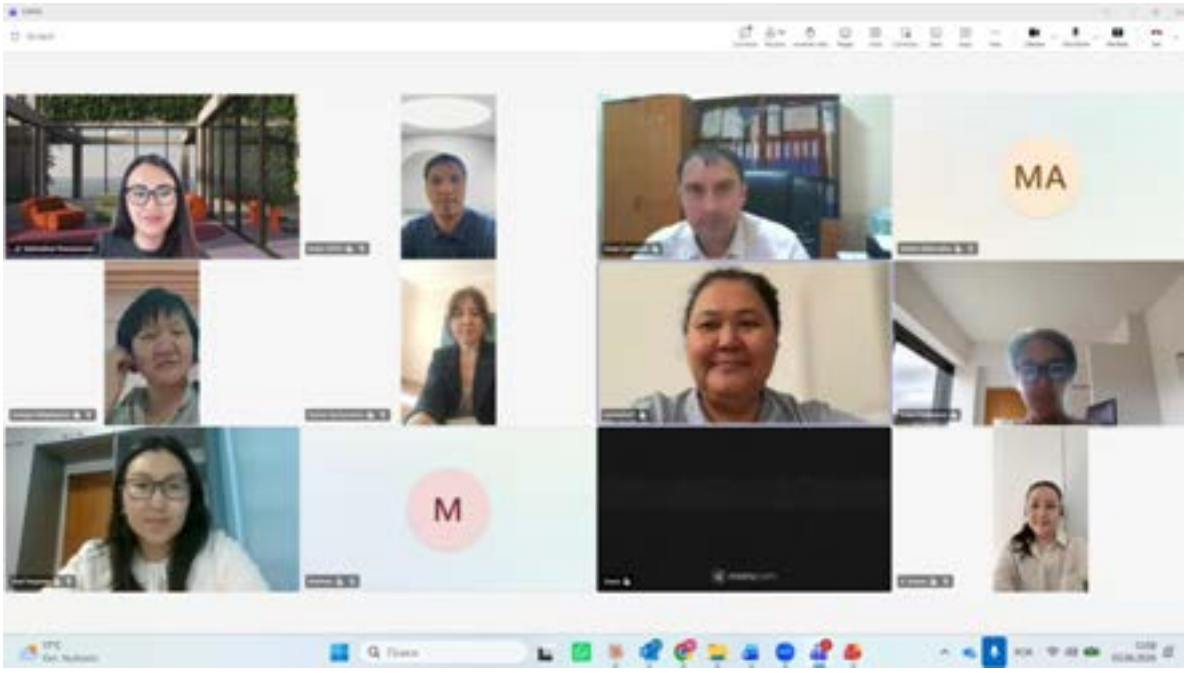
President of the Central Asian Regional Science Association

Farhod Ahrorov 

Executive Director of the Central Asian Regional Science Association
Makhabbat Ramazanova,

8 june 2026 

Photo of the Board meeting



RSAI
THE REGIONAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL

Minute of the 1st international conference
«Sustainable Regional Development in Central Asia»
Narxoz University, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 11-12 May, 2023

On 12th May 2023 the plan for the promotion of regional science and development in Central Asia has been proposed by Professor Tomas Dentinho, editor in chief of the RSPP (Regional Science Policy and Practice).

It was agreed to create the Regional Science section in Central Asia (CARSA).

The following events are planned for the upcoming years:

- 2023 – 1st CARSA Conference Almaty and 1st Conference of Kazakhstan
- 2024 – 2nd CARSA Conference Bishkek and 1st Conference of Kirgizstan.
- 2024 - World Congress in Uzbekistan (to be accepted by RSAI)
- 2025 – 3rd CARSA Conference – Bukhara, Uzbekistan
- 2026 – 4th CARSA Conference – Kokshetau, Kazakhstan

The following plan is made for the CARS journal issues:

- 2024 – 1 Issue
- 2025 – 2 Issues
- 2026 – 3 Issues
- 2027- 3 Issues
- 2028 – 3 Issues (Request to Scopus)

As for institutionalization, it is planned to conduct the following activities:

- 2023 – Creation of the CARSA
- 2023 – Approval of the Regulation of the CARSA
- 2024 – Recognition of CARSA by RSAI
- 2024 – Creation of the Asian Regional Science Organization.
- 2026 – 1st Asian Regional Science Conference in Astana.

As for membership, it is aimed to reach the following numbers:

- Kazakhstan – 200 members
- Kirghizstan – 50 members
- Uzbekistan – 400 members
- Turkmenistan – 100 members
- Tajikistan – 50 members

Institutional agreement:

Presidents of CARSA

- 2023-2024 – Chinara Adamkulova, Kyrgyzstan
- 2024-2025 – Abror Juraev, Uzbekistan
- 2025-2026 – Anuar Kakabayev, Kazakhstan

Executive Directorate

- 2023- 2026 – Makhabbat Ramazanova, Kazakhstan/Portugal

Editors of the CARSA journal:

- 2023 – 2026 – Andrey Shenin, Kazakhstan
  Co-editors: Almaz Atabekov, Kyrgyzstan; Aziz Bobojonov, Uzbekistan

Signed by
Chinara Adamkulova
Abror Juraev
Anuarbek Kakabayev
Makhabbat Ramazanova
Andrey Shenin
Almaz Atabekov
Eduardo Haddad
Tomas Dentinho
Abdul Shaban

12th May, 2023, Almaty, Kazakhstan

Ma'lumotlarni o'zgartirish haqida ma'lumotnoma

O'zgartirishdan oldin

Soliq to'lovchisining identifikatsiya raqami (STIR)
309 406 111

Nomi
INNOVA SCIENCE

Tashkiliy-huquqiy shakli
Mas'uliyati cheklangan jamiyat

Joylashgan joyi (manzili)
Samarqand viloyati, Samarqand tumani,
Самаркандский область, Самаркандский район,
Улугбек ССГ, Бузи МСГ, ул. Чаманистон, дом 743

Faoliyat turi
Boshqa toifalarga kiritilmagan, axborot xizmati ko'rsatish bo'yicha boshqa faoliyat

O'zgartirishdan keyin

Soliq to'lovchisining identifikatsiya raqami (STIR)
309 406 111

Nomi
MINTAQAVIY TADQIQOTLAR ILMIY-AMALIY JAMIYATI

Tashkiliy-huquqiy shakli
Mas'uliyati cheklangan jamiyat

Joylashgan joyi (manzili)
Samarqand viloyati, Samarqand tumani,
Самаркандский область, Самаркандский район,
Улугбек ССГ, Бузи МСГ, ул. Чаманистон, дом 743

Faoliyat turi
Boshqa toifalarga kiritilmagan, axborot xizmati ko'rsatish bo'yicha boshqa faoliyat

11.06.2025
Guvohnoma olingan sana

2843728
Ariza raqami

4516572

Ma'lumotlarni o'zgartirish haqida ma'lumotnoma

Oldingi ta'sischilar

Jismoniy shaxs

MAXFIZA RAZOKOVA XABIBOVNA

JSHSHIR: 41109843970026 | Miqdori: 8 132 000 so'm | Ulush: 100.00%

Ustav fondi	8 132 000 so'm

11.06.2025
Guvohnoma olingan sana

2843728
Ariza raqami

4516572

Ma'lumotlarni o'zgartirish haqida ma'lumotnoma

Yangi ta'sischilar

Jismoniy shaxs

MAXFIZA RAZOKOVA XABIBOVNA

JSHSHIR: 41109843970026 | Miqdori: 8 132 000 so'm | Ulush: 100.00%

Ustav fondi	8 132 000 so'm

11.06.2025	2843728	4516572
Guvohnoma olingan sana	Ariza raqami	

Yuridik shaxsni davlat ro'yxatidan o'tkazilganligi to'g'risidagi

GUVOHNOMA

Yuridik shaxs

"MINTAQAVIY TADQIQOTLAR ILMIY-AMALIY JAMIYATI" MAS'ULIYATI CHEKLANGAN JAMIYAT

Tashkiliy-huquqiy shakli ko'rsatilgan holda yuridik shaxs - tadbirkorlik subyektining to'liq nomi

"MINTAQAVIY TADQIQOTLAR ILMIY-AMALIY JAMIYATI" MCHJ

Yuridik shaxsning qisqartirilgan nomi

309 406 111

Soliq to'lovchining identifikatsiya raqami (STIR)

Tashkil etish (qayta tashkil etish, boshqa ro'yxatga olish, axborotni o'zgartirish)

29.03.2022	1116564
Sana	Tasdiqlandi

Tashkiliy-huquqiy shakli:

MAS'ULIYATI CHEKLANGAN JAMIYAT

Faoliyatni amalga oshirish joyining manzili:

SAMARQAND VILOYATI, SAMARQAND TUMANI, САМАРКАНДСКИЙ ОБЛАСТЬ, САМАРКАНДСКИЙ РАЙОН, УЛУГБЕК ССГ, БУЗИ МСГ, УЛ. ЧАМАНИСТОН, ДОМ 743

Tomonidan berilgan:

SAMARQAND VILOYATI, SAMARQAND TUMANI DXM

4516573

CENTRAL ASIAN REGIONAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION (CARSA)

CONSTITUTION

1. Purpose and Scope

The Central Asian Regional Science Association (CARSA) represents the common interests of regional science organizations, researchers, academic institutions, and professionals throughout Central Asia. CARSA operates as an independent, non-political, non-profit, scientific organization dedicated to advancing regional science, regional development studies, spatial analysis, and related disciplines.

CARSA promotes scientific cooperation, academic exchange, research collaboration, professional networking, and the dissemination of knowledge among scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and institutions within Central Asia and beyond.

CARSA serves as the regional representative body of Central Asian regional science communities in relation to the Regional Science Association International (RSAI) and other international scientific organizations.

2. Principles

CARSA and all its members shall adhere to the principles, values, and regulations of RSAI and shall promote scientific integrity, academic freedom, inclusiveness, transparency, and international cooperation.

3. Membership

CARSA shall consist of:

- National Sections of Central Asian countries;
- Regional and local affiliated associations;
- Academic institutions and research centers;
- Individual members interested in regional science.

Membership shall be open to organizations and individuals that support the objectives of CARSA.

4. National Sections

National Sections shall represent the interests of regional scientists within their respective countries.

Initially, CARSA shall include:

- Kazakhstan Regional Science Section;
- Kyrgyzstan Regional Science Section;
- Tajikistan Regional Science Section;
- Uzbekistan Regional Science Section.

Additional sections from other countries of the wider Central Asian region may be admitted by decision of the Council.

5. Governing Council

CARSA shall be governed by a Council composed of representatives of each National Section.

Each National Section shall appoint two representatives to the Council.

The Council shall be the supreme governing body of CARSA and shall determine strategic priorities, approve policies, and oversee the activities of the Association.

6. Officers

The Council shall elect the following officers:

- President;
- Vice-President.

Officers shall serve for a term of three years and may be re-elected for one additional consecutive term.

7. President

The President shall:

- Represent CARSA internationally;
- Preside over Council meetings;
- Promote the development of regional science throughout Central Asia;
- Facilitate cooperation with RSAI and other international organizations;
- Support the establishment of new national and local sections;
- Coordinate the organization of congresses, conferences, and scientific events.

8. Executive Director

The Executive Director shall:

- Manage the daily operations of CARSA;
- Implement decisions of the Council;
- Maintain membership records;
- Coordinate communications and international cooperation;
- Organize elections and annual meetings;
- Prepare annual activity reports.

9. Meetings

The Council shall meet at least once each year, preferably during the annual CARSA Congress or another official scientific event organized by a member section.

Additional meetings may be conducted in person or through online platforms.

10. Decision-Making

Council decisions shall be made by a simple majority vote of members present.

A quorum shall consist of more than half of the Council members.

Proxy voting may be permitted in accordance with regulations adopted by the Council.

11. Scientific Activities

CARSA shall promote:

- Regional science research;
- International conferences and congresses;
- Joint research projects;
- Academic publications;
- Capacity-building activities;
- Student and young researcher engagement;
- Cooperation with universities, governments, and international organizations.

12. Financial Matters

CARSA may receive funding from:

- Membership contributions;
- Grants and research projects;
- Sponsorships and donations;
- Conference and event revenues;
- Other lawful sources.

All financial activities shall be conducted transparently and reported annually to the Council.

13. Independence of Members

Each National Section shall maintain its autonomy and independent legal status.

Membership in CARSA shall not restrict participation in other professional or scientific organizations.

14. Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the Council.

Proposed amendments shall be submitted to Council members at least thirty (30) days before the vote.

15. Dissolution

The dissolution of CARSA may be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the Council.

Upon dissolution, any remaining assets shall be transferred to scientific or educational organizations whose objectives are consistent with those of CARSA.

BY-LAWS

By-Law 1. National Sections

The founding National Sections of CARSA are:

1. Kazakhstan
2. Kyrgyzstan
3. Tajikistan
4. Uzbekistan

By-Law 2. Council Representation

Each National Section shall appoint two representatives to the Council.

By-Law 3. President

The President shall be elected by the Council for a one-year term.

By-Law 4. Executive Director

The Executive Director shall be elected by the Council for a three-year term.

RSAI MEMBERSHIP_Central Asian_Section_2026

First Name	Surname	Country	Section Membership Category	Establishment
Farhod	Ahrorov	Uzbekistan	Member Central Asian Section	Samarkand branch of Tashkent State University of Economics
Raya	Karlibayeva	Uzbekistan	Member Central Asian Section	Tashkent State University of Economics
Gulya	Karlibayeva	Uzbekistan	Member Central Asian Section	Tashkent State University of Economics
Bobur	Sobirov	Uzbekistan	Member Central Asian Section	Samarkand branch of Tashkent State University of Economics
Khusen	Ibragimov	Uzbekistan	Member Central Asian Section	Silk Road International University
Makhabbat	Ramazanova	Kazakhstan	Member Central Asian Section	Ualikhanov University
Zhanar	Argynbayeva	Kazakhstan	Member Central Asian Section	Narxoz University
Madina	Yussubaliyeva	Kazakhstan	Member Central Asian Section	East Kazakhstan Tecnical University
Zhadyra	Konurbayeva	Kazakhstan	Member Central Asian Section	East Kazakhstan Tecnical University
Aizada	Okanova	Kazakhstan	Member Central Asian Section	Narxoz University
Anargul	Belgibayeva	Kazakhstan	Member Central Asian Section	Ualikhanov University
Asel	Zhaken	Kazakhstan	Member Central Asian Section	Eurasian State University
Gulnur	Saspugayeva	Kazakhstan	Member Central Asian Section	Eurasian State University
Asel	Pazylova	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Ainura	Hamzaeva	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Kanykei	Samieva	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Gulchehra	Dyikanova	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Asel	Kaiypkulova	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Marat	Zikiraev	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Jyldyz	Irmatova	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Mirlan	Ubaidullaev	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Abdimitalip	Baimuratov	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Bekarstan	Jusupov	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Kanatbek	Jakypov	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Nurlanbek	Tanakov	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Gulbarchin	Israilova	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Baigeldi	Jusupov	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Gulnaz	Mametova	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Akbuura	Avazbek uulu	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Jamal	Kedeibaeva	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Kanjar	Mamashov	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Murat	Abdiev	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Gulzat	Asanova	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Aikokul	Orozalieva	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh Technological University
Almazbek	Atabekov	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Kyrgyz-Uzbek International University
Abdilbaet	Mamasydykov	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Kyrgyz-Uzbek International University
Nazgul	Shakirova	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Kyrgyz-Uzbek International University
Adina	Sakeeva	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Kyrgyz-Uzbek International University

Perizat	Alisheva	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Kyrgyz-Uzbek International University
Jyrgal	Samieva	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Kyrgyz-Uzbek International University
Gulumkan	Attokurova	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh State University
Tariel	Taalaibek uulu	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh State University
Bektur	Raiymberdiev	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh State University
Maksuda	Kenjeeva	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh State University
Tynystan	Pazylov	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Osh State University
Almash	Kutmanbekova	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Branch of the Russian State Social University in Osh
Zuura	Keneshbaeva	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Branch of the Russian State Social University in Osh
Ainura	Joroeva	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Jalal-Abad State University
Basharat	Moldokulova	Kyrgyzstan	Member Central Asian Section	Bishkek State University
Zarrina	Kadyrova	Tajikistan	Member Central Asian Section	Tajik State University of Commerce
Jamshed	Mashokirov	Tajikistan	Member Central Asian Section	Tajik State University of Commerce
Bakhtiyor	Abdulloev	Tajikistan	Member Central Asian Section	Tajik State University of Commerce
Mubinzhon	Abduvaliev	Tajikistan	Member Central Asian Section	Tajik State University of Commerce
Zoirsho	Sultonov	Tajikistan	Member Central Asian Section	Tajik State University of Commerce
Nurmuhammadi	Abdullozoda	Tajikistan	Member Central Asian Section	Tajik State University of Commerce

Papers in Regional Science
JOURNAL OF THE Regional Science Association International

Report

June 2026

Summary

In 2025, the journal has achieved several key results:

1. **Increased submission level** despite the transition to gold open access: in 2025 the journal received more than 600 submission.It is the highest number ever.

2. **Upholding the quality of accepted manuscripts**: The rejection rate remains around 90%, reflecting the Editors' commitment to rigorous selection and high academic standards.

3. **Diversifying published topics**: Recent issues have included contributions on emerging and socially relevant themes such as gender and regional science, regional cultural heritage, climate change, natural disasters, and regional development.

4. **Improving impact metrics**: The journal's CiteScore increased from 4.8 to 5.8. PiRS is ranking Q1 in Geography and Q1 in Economics (JCR) as well as confirming its leading position in Scopus-indexed journals (the IF raised from 2.3 to 4.0).

2. **Working on new editorial initiatives**: One major goal is the creation of a dedicated data repository to support transparency and replicability in regional science research: we are still working on Elsevier to implement it. The Publisher is not very reactive about this point.

1. EDITORIAL CHALLENGES

The current editorial team centered the effort on a key strategy: to consolidate the journal's leading position as a scientific reference in regional science and to address challenges stemming from its gold open access status. The aim was to prevent the loss of valuable contributions by increasing the journal's attractiveness through a more efficient review process. The task is no easy given the huge proliferation of contributions built with AI for which we do not have effective tools to control for despite the expertise of the editors

According to statistics released by Elsevier, the average time to the first decision (desk rejection or under review) dropped to 1 day (the lowest for the Elsevier journals in the field), and the average time from submission to acceptance is 181 days.

In terms of quantitative results referring to submissions we can emphasize:

1.1. Statistics on the editorial activity

Table 1 presents the number of submissions and rejection rates, together with pending manuscripts, i.e. papers that are in the website system at different stages from 2014 up to present.

Table 1. Number of submissions and rejection rates

Year	Submissions	Acceptance rate	Rejection rate	Pending manuscripts
2014	231	0,22	0,78	
2015	224	0,24	0,76	
2016	222	0,21	0,79	
2017	265	0,24	0,76	
2018	288	0,21	0,79	
2019	354	0,20	0,80	
2020	408	0,15	0,85	
2021	484	0,11	0,89	
2022	493	0,10	0,90	
2023	482	0,09	0,91	
2024	379	0,15	0,85	
2025	602	0,07	0,93	6
2026 (June)	343	0,01	0,99	33

In 2025, submissions reached approximately 600 with a rejection rate of 93%. In 2026, the submission pace has significantly increased. As of June, we received 343 submissions, projecting a total of around 700 by year-end—bringing submission levels back to those prior to the shift to gold open access. The goal for 2026 is to publish between 50 and 60 manuscripts across 6 issues. Importantly, the new format has not negatively affected submission quality. Tables 2 and 4 provide more detailed editorial statistics. Most rejections are due to manuscripts falling outside the scope of PiRS.

Despite the increased submission volume, the editorial team has maintained high productivity standards. Over the past seven years, we have achieved strong performance at every stage of the publication process (see Tables 2 and 3). These outcomes have been possible through close collaboration with Elsevier. **The publisher is committed to enhancing the visibility of PiRS, although some unresolved issues remain, particularly regarding:**

(i) the content of the journal's webpage, and

(ii) the data repository for replication.

We are confident these will be resolved by the end of the year

Table 2. Summary of activity for the journal office between Jan 01, 2026 and Jun 18, 2026 *(The statistics are an indication of how long key activities are taking in the process)*

Submission to Editor Assignment *Average number of days between the date the manuscript was received and the first Editor was assigned.*	**0.8**
Submission to Reviewer Invitation *Average number of days between the date the manuscript was received and the first Reviewer was invited.*	**5.2**
Submission to First Decision *Average number of days between the date the manuscript was received and the first decision.*	**6.9**

Table 3. Decision Summary of activity for the journal office between Jan 01, 2026 and Jun 18, 2026

(Total Decisions is the number of decisions made by the Editor with final decision-making authority for each submission during the specified time period. The Average Time to Decision is the number of days between the date the manuscript was received by the journal office, and the date the final decision was made. For a Revision, the Average Time to Decision is the average number of days between the date the Revision was submitted to the journal office and the date the final decision was made.)

Original Submission

Editor Decision Term	Total Decisions	Frequency of Decision	Average Time to Decision
Accept	1	0.3%	46
Major Revision	21	6.1%	82.9
Minor Revision	2	0.6%	39.5
Reject	58	16.9%	26.9
Reject - Invite to resubmit	5	1.5%	50.4
Reject - Out of Scope	255	74.3%	0.8
Reject - Potential Ethics Concerns	1	0.3%	48
Total Editor Decisions	**343**	**100%**	**11.5**

Revision 1

Editor Decision Term	Total Decisions	Frequency of Decision	Average Time to Decision
Accept	6	37.5%	33.3
Major Revision	2	12.5%	12
Minor Revision	8	50%	39.9
Total Editor Decisions	**16**	**100%**	**33.9**

Revision 2

Editor Decision Term	Total Decisions	Frequency of Decision	Average Time to Decision
Accept	6	54.5%	15.5
Major Revision	2	18.2%	22.5
Minor Revision	3	27.3%	24
Total Editor Decisions	**11**	**100%**	**19.1**

Revision 3

Editor Decision Term	Total Decisions	Frequency of Decision	Average Time to Decision
Accept	3	75%	22.3
Major Revision	1	25%	2
Total Editor Decisions	**4**	**100%**	**17.2**

Revision 4

Editor Decision Term	Total Decisions	Frequency of Decision	Average Time to Decision
Accept	1	100%	2
Total Editor Decisions	**1**	**100%**	**8**

1.2. Salient features of submissions, published articles and reviewers

Figure 1 presents the geographical distribution of submissions. **The trends confirm a great percentage of submissions by Chinese authors.** The submissions from all the geographical origins dropped proportionally in 2024, but in 2026 results are expected to improve in terms of number of submissions.

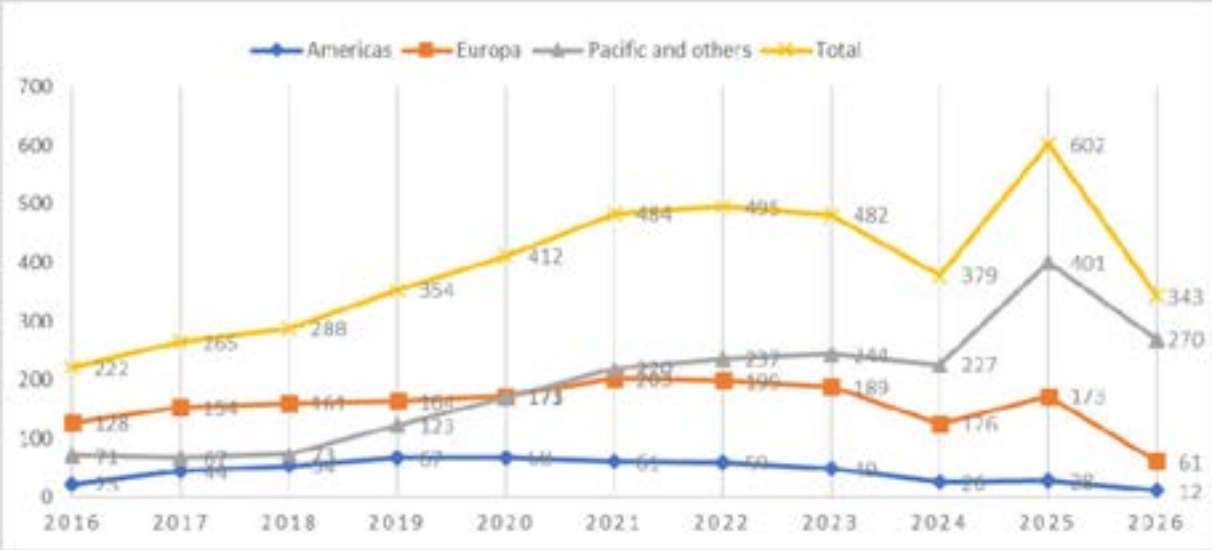


Figure 1. Geographically detailed number of submissions, 2016–2026 (June)

In terms of accepted articles, statistics rebalances in favor of European and PRSCO scientists (Figure 2).

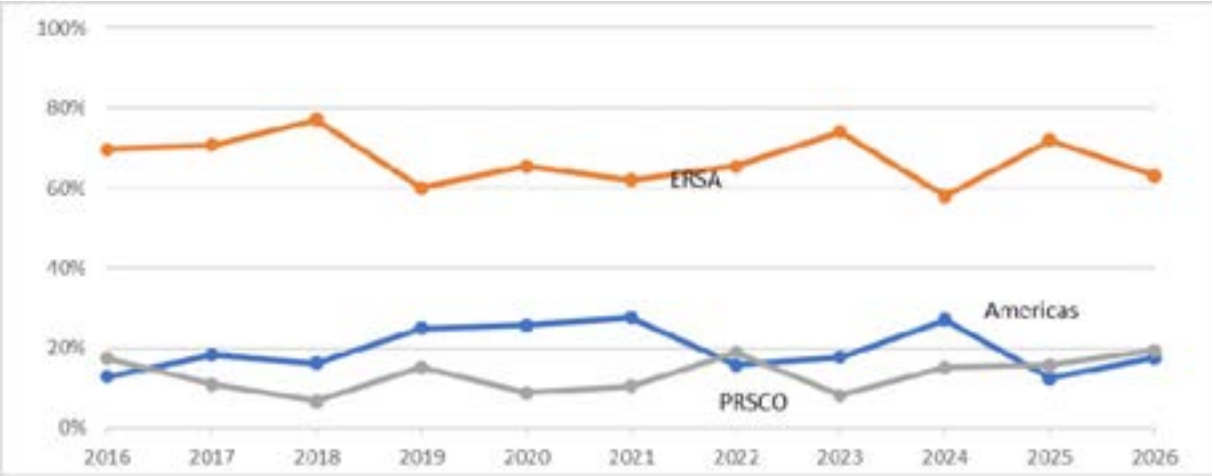


Figure 2. Geographic distribution of authors in author pages (% per year and proportion), Vol. 95–105, 2016–2026(until issue 3)

In the same wake, statistics on reviewers confirms the previous trends. The number of referees in 2025 dropped: it becomes more complicated to find persons that are willing to provide this service and, hence, the ones that are available are requested to evaluate more than one manuscript. The geographical distribution of referees has registered an increase of reviewers from Americas and the share of reviewers from ERSA and PRSCO dropped, and statistics for 2026 confirms the contributons of reviewers from Americas.

Table 4. Number of reviewers and proportion of reviewers by supra region

Year	Reviewers	ERSA	Americas	PRSCO
2016	318	62%	26%	12%
2017	375	60%	25%	15%
2018	368	49%	38%	13%
2019	468	47%	45%	8%
2020	403	63%	31%	6%
2021	378	50%	36%	14%
2022	233	59%	33%	8%
2023	211	73%	19%	8%
2024	369	73%	14%	13%
2025	284	63%	30%	7%
2026 (until June)	143	62%	25%	13%

Overall, the data confirms that a key challenge for the coming years will be to **rebalance the geographical composition of both authors and reviewers**, a step that is closely tied to enhancing the international visibility and consolidation of RSAI. In this regard, and recognizing the importance of acknowledging the work of reviewers, **we requested that Elsevier retain a system for issuing certificates to reviewers as recognition for their service. It appears that Elsevier has implemented something along these lines, although our contact has not provided a clear explanation—we intend to follow up on this matter.**

We also continue to promote the visibility of published articles through the RSAI official website and newsletter, as well as via the social media platforms of ERSA and NARSC. The marketing strategy committed by Elsevier—particularly the inclusion of *PiRS* in **ScienceDirect**, effective since September 2024—is expected to contribute significantly to this objective.

Regarding subject areas, **Figure 3** shows the distribution of published pages by discipline. The share of contributions in **economics** and **geography** has increased, likely reflecting the journal's strong JCR rankings in these fields. In contrast, the representation of public policy and engineering topics has declined.

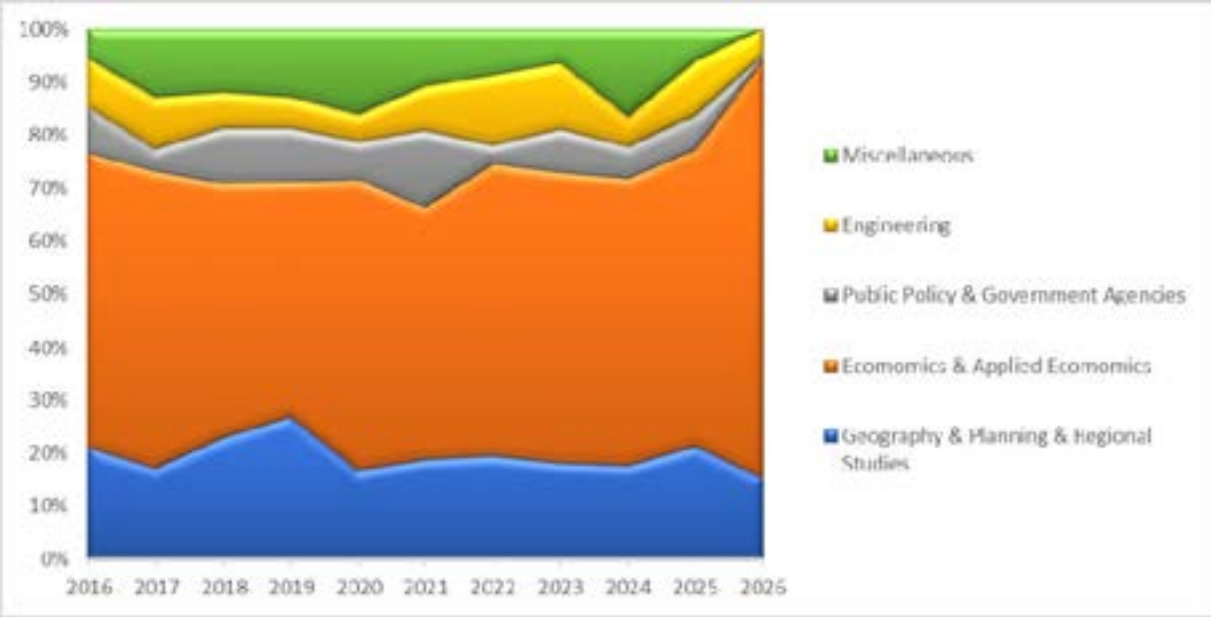


Figure 3. Author pages by affiliation of the author(s), Vol. 95–105, 2016–2026(until issue 3)

Even if the general breakdown in terms of areas keeps relatively stable, in each area, the last numbers and issues of the ***journal published innovative and relevant research topics under the lens of the regional science: gender issues, environmental issues, natural disasters and cultural heritage.*** It is worth nothing the that 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 Martin Backman award went to three contributions belonging to these new research topics.

2. IMPACT FACTOR

The Clarivate and CiteScore IF for 2024 have been released: our IF in CiteScore increased to 5.8 (from 4.8) and the Clarivate JCR raised from 2.3 to 4.0 positioning PiRS well above the direct competitors (Figure 4).

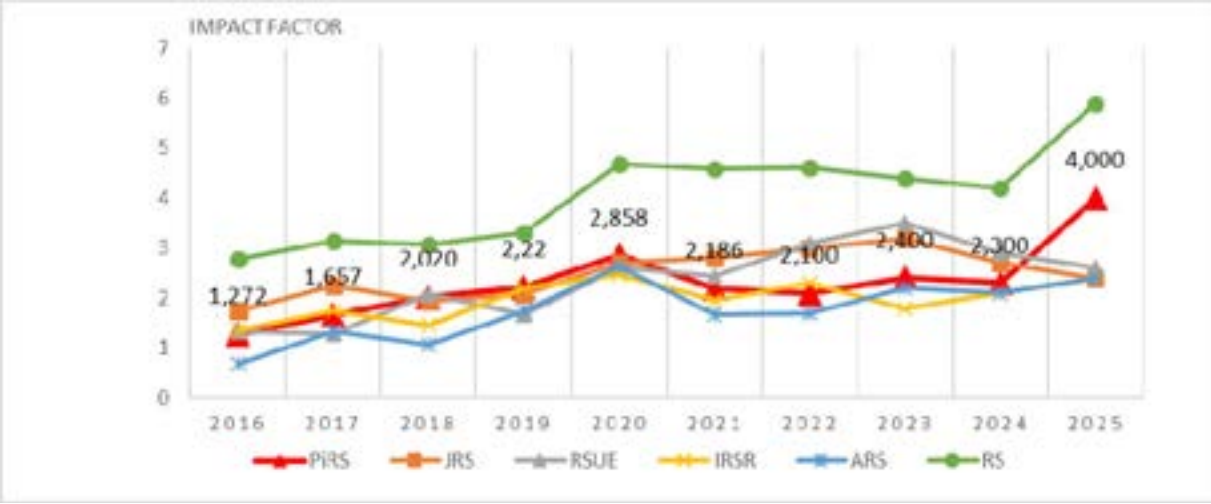


Fig. 4. Citation Impact Factor for various regional science journals, 2016–2025

The last available data for SCIMAGO PiRS confirms its position in the first quartile. In addition,

1. The **number of cited documents consolidates around 120**, while non cited ones dropped to 21.

2. **The per-document citation increased from 2.8 to 4.2**. PiRS keeps its position in the best quartile for what concerns both Environmental Science and Social Science (Geography, Planning and Development) with an IF of 1.14.



Fig. 5. Metrics based on Scopus® data as of June 2026

The decision to move to a gold open access journal with all the archive free available online will generate a tangible return for the 2024 IF index onward; we hope to mantain our IF in 2026 given the full dissemination of PIRS publication in ScienceDirect. In addition, the increasing relevance of the underpinning commitments of the CoARA and DORA agreement towards open science practices will call PiRS to implement initiatives to make research material available in peers-to-peers platforms as, for instance, a repository for the databases of the published articles to replicate results.

3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The action and initiatives implemented by the current Editorial team helped PiRS to consolidate its reputation and visibility in academia and serving RSAI in its dissemination mission.

The most visible achievements are the increase in the number of submissions, the drop of the delay in managing and publishing contributions as well as the opening of new lines of scientific discussion of interest for the scientific communities.

The transformation of the journal from the hybrid to the gold open access format and the changing conditions of the scientific environment moving towards an open science model entail important challenges for the Journal and call for new initiatives to keep being PiRS a point of reference in regional science.

Rosella Nicolini
Editor-in-chief, on the behalf of the Editorial Team

Bellaterra (Barcelona), Spain
July 13 2026

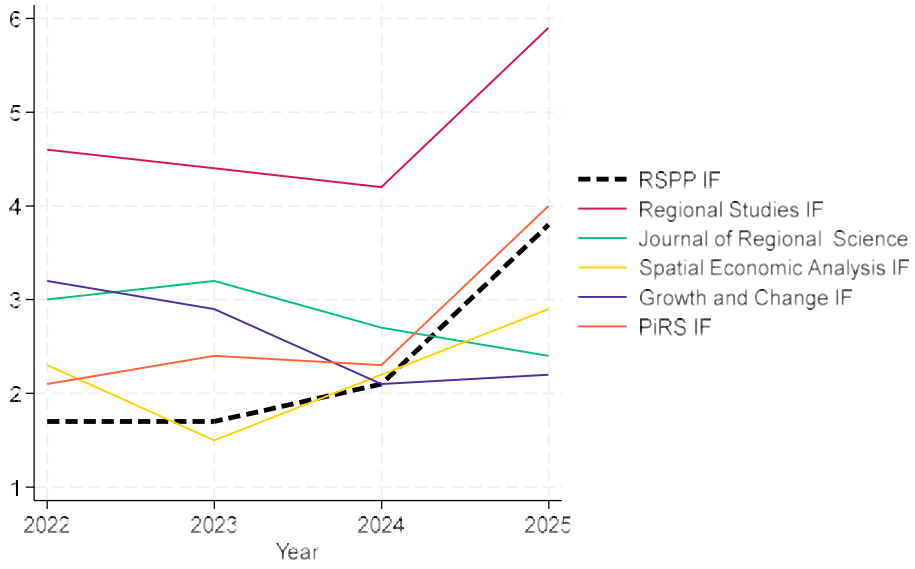


A first milestone for the new editorial board

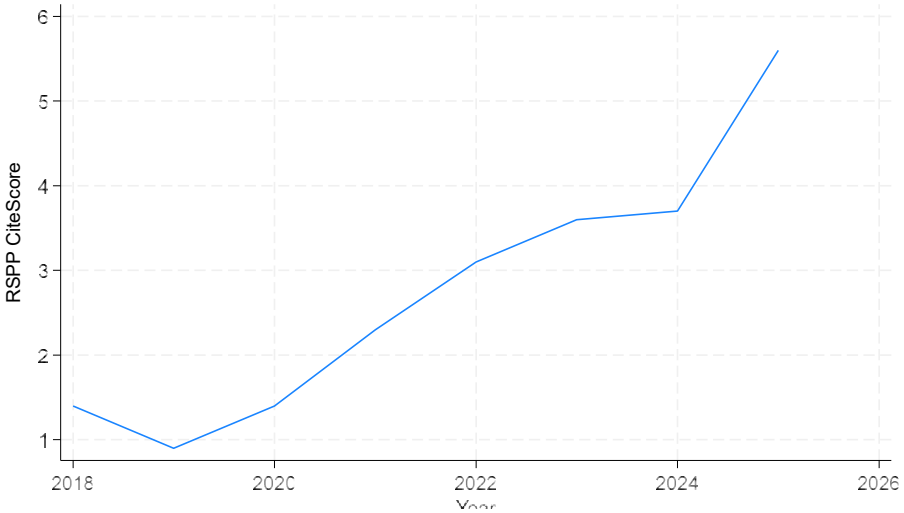
- Information on the new board's achievements over its first 18 months after being appointed (see also the editorial on issue 9/2026: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1757780226000582)
- In this short presentation:
  - Overview of early achievements, and
  - Plans and initiatives for the next future

RSAI

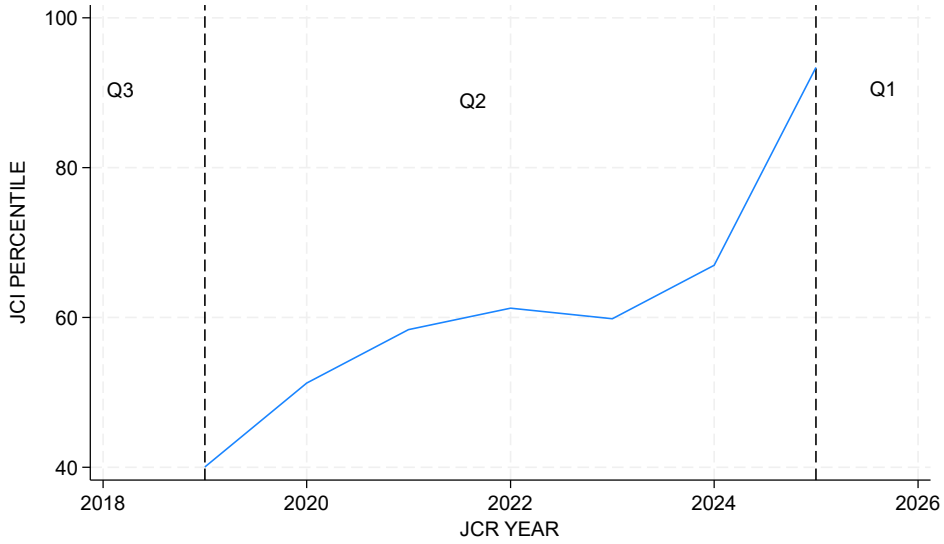
1. Substantial increase in the Impact Factor



2. 6-fold increase in CiteScore since 2019



3. 6-fold increase in CiteScore since 2019



From the past to the future

- The growth of RSPP's Indexing is the result of a process of:
  - careful selection of papers that fit the journal's thematic scope
  - linking clearly to the relevant policy debate
  - addressing important policy questions as promptly as possible within the boundaries of academic debate.
- While these results are very pleasing for both the editors and the *Regional Science Association International*, they also place a non-negligible weight on our shoulders and charge us with substantial responsibility. We are happy to accept the challenge, and in the short run we plan to work on the following goals.

Plans for the short run (1)

- The RSAI Council has recently agreed to the editorial board's proposal of a new award to be given annually to the best reviewer of the journal.
- This initiative values the crucial role played by our colleagues who kindly agree to volunteer their time for the benefit of the journal; help improve the quality of the papers published; and withstand the pressure we all feel, both as authors and editors, caused by the increase in the number of journals, journal articles, and, consequently, of the requests sent and received to review papers.
- Beyond recognition on the journal and association websites, and a certificate to be presented at a regional science conference chosen by the winner, we also plan to grant the reviewer the possibility of an article processing charge waiver for a manuscript submitted by the reviewer in the following calendar year.
- The waiver will not affect editorial screening, peer review, or acceptance decisions. We believe this to be a tangible sign of the journal's gratitude for this important, and often underestimated, type of professional service.
- Crucial issue: the contract with Elsevier ends at the end of 2028. Presently, the waiver can be taken from the EiC's pocket, but plans for 2029 onwards should be made.

Plans for the short run (2)

- Inspired by a couple of recent spontaneous submissions to the journal, we are considering creating a new **notes section**, i.e. shorter papers that, without compromising on academic rigor, address timely policy topics requiring fresh evidence and quick reactions in a shorter format (about **4,000 words**), which is often at odds with the longer time typically needed to assemble full-fledged academic papers.

Plans for the short run (3)

- The editors will keep striving to maintain a diverse profile of papers, welcoming both qualitative and quantitative works, and inviting authors from all over the world.
- We firmly believe this to be an asset for both the journal and the authors: RSPP evaluates submissions on quality, relevance, and fit with the journal's mission, and aims to publish top papers dealing with local policies.

Plans for the short run (4)

- The editors will reinforce the goal of publishing successful thematic special issues.
- The journal is presently finalizing several special issues guest-edited by leading scholars in their fields.
- These SIs address timely policy topics: on policies to address territorial inequalities in the Global South, on policy measures to integrate migrants, on strategies addressing the emerging paradigm of remote work, on the revision of the European Union's Cohesion framework, and on the policy lessons stemming from the unfortunately ongoing conflict in Ukraine following Russia's invasion.
- We have evidence about the positive role played by the special issues in attracting new readers, and generating citations.
- We count on the RSAI's global audience to receive more stimulating proposals, which will add to the diversity and quality of the papers published in the journal.

Plans for the short run (5)

- The editors are also active in promoting the journal's inclusion in national and international rankings.
- Recently, the journal has been listed as Top Class in the Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research (ANVUR).
- Two more applications have recently been submitted; and on this front we invite our readership to suggest relevant rankings that might be important for our authors' careers.
- We are confident that, based on the journal's growing reputation, and the excellent impact indicators, many such applications will be accepted.

While we feel this board has already made significant progress, we most importantly believe that a longer and more successful path awaits us and the journal's global community. We count on your support for making the next steps a fruitful shared endeavor.

Thank you for your attention, and we all look forward to receiving your best policy-relevant papers soon!

Andrea Caragliu, Politecnico di Milano
André Chagas, University of Sao Paulo
Hee-Jung Jun, Sungkyunkwan University
Neil Reid, University of Toledo
Terciane Sabadini Carvalho, Federal University of Paraná

Thank you for your attention!

RSAI

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RSAI

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	(1)	(2)
	Time trend	Dentinho management
Year	6.792***	-
	(7.78)	
Dummy, =1 after Prof. Dentinho's appointment	-	57.60***
		(4.03)
Constant	-13648.1***	16.78***
	(-7.77)	(5.27)
Observations	17	17
Adjusted R^2	0.713	0.515

Table 1. Time determinants of papers published on RSPP

*t statistics in parentheses. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01*