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**Special Session (SS14) on:**

***Revisiting rural-urban dichotomy for integrated regional development***

**Organisers:**

**Manisha Jain** - Leibniz Institute for Ecological Urban and Regional Development, Dresden, Germany. E-mail: [m.jain@ioer.de](mailto:m.jain@ioer.de)

**Artem Korzhenevych** (Chair) - Leibniz Institute for Ecological Urban and Regional Development, Dresden, Germany. E-mail: [a.korzhenevych@ioer.de](mailto:a.korzhenevych@ioer.de)

**The aim and scope of the special session:**

Contemporary urbanization as experienced in the global South has been referred to by different authors as informal, unregulated, or unplanned but all these terms mean the same thing, namely that growth has outpaced the policies and planner's visions.

Most of this growth takes place in close proximity to large cities, outside municipal boundaries. It is projected that future growth will continue to mainly take place in the urban fringe. These areas are already exposed to negative externalities of rapid growth due to lack of planning and adequate infrastructure provision.

On the one hand, such unsustainable development is an outcome of stringent dualistic (urban and rural based) policies and planning practices, which leave little room for incorporating the peri-urban zone into planning and proper governance. This demands revisiting rural-urban dichotomy for appropriately defining urban and rural based on area characteristics while incorporating crucial information on infrastructure provision and economic opportunities.

On the other hand, the lack of integrated socio-economic and spatial data, and the resulting deficits in the current methodological approaches makes analysis and elucidation of the growth characteristics as well as informed policy advice difficult. There is a need of new data sources, as well as of new approaches and methods, which can enable better analysis and policy advice. Given the advancement in the Geographical Information Systems and satellite data use, it is now possible to integrate socio-economic, geographical and infrastructure information for research purposes.

This session deals with the issue of moving beyond the stringent dichotomy and treating urban, peri-urban and rural areas as a whole system. This means integrating urban, peri-urban and rural parts into a single planning and analysis unit rather than seeing them as separate entities. New analytical approaches should then be applied to draw policy advice for integrated regional development. All relevant submissions are invited, covering both theoretical and empirical contributions to the topic.

**SUBMIT AN ABSTRACT**