



International Council  
for Research and Innovation  
in Building and Construction

W107- Construction in Developing Countries  
TG127- Social Value in Built Environment



Smart Villages Lab

# The 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Smart Villages and Rural Development (COSVARD 2026) - Jointly hosted with CIB Working Commission, W107 (Construction in Developing Countries) and Task Group, TG127 (Social Value in Built Environment) Incorporating Smart Villages Poster Competition 2026 (see details in separate flyer)

## Smart Villages Program

Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning  
Smartvillageslab.msdl.unimelb.edu.au

**29-31 October 2026**

## University of Melbourne

### Organising Committee:

A/Prof Hemanta Doloi (Chair)  
Prof Robert Crawford  
Dr Hannah Robertson  
Dr Gao Shang

## Support Committee

### GRI Deemed University (local partner)

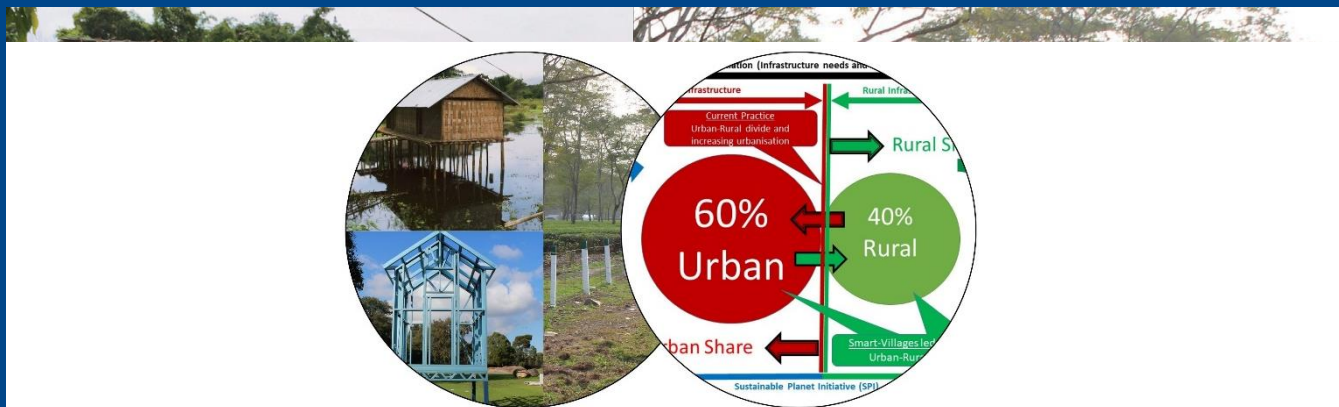
Dr B. Sangeethavani (Co-Chair)  
Dr R.T. Balamurli (Co-Chair)  
Dr Santhosh Loganathan (Co-Chair) NITT

### CIB TG127

A/Prof Ani Raiden (Co-Chair) – NTU, UK  
Dr Suhair Z Alkilani (Ch-Chair) UTS, Australia  
Prof Martin Loosemore (Co-Chair) UTS, Australia

## Key Affiliating Partners

Indian Institute of Technology, Madras  
National Institute of Technology, Trichy  
Smart Cities Research Institute (SCRI) - Swinburne University of Technology, Australia  
Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi  
Indian Institute of Technology, Tirupati  
Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati  
CIB



## Harmonising one-planet living through "Urban-Rural Share"

**Key Dates**  
Abstract submission: 20 May 2026  
Full paper submission: 30 June 2026  
Full paper acceptance: 30 August 2026  
Camera-ready paper: 30 September 2026

**Registration on or before: 10<sup>th</sup> Sept 2026**  
**Conference date: 29-31 October 2026**

**Contact:**  
A/Prof Hemanta Doloi (hdoloi@unimelb.edu.au)  
Chair (COSVARD 2026)

In collaboration with  
GRI Deemed



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fb: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/smartassam/>



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With over 40% of the world's population now living in rural areas, there is global interest in research associated with the creation of "Smart Villages" to counter the ever-growing "Urban-Rural Divide" and harmonise the living on the planet with new "Urban-Rural Share". Smart Village research being undertaken in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne is exploring rural community development, practices and relevant policies with a focus on community-centric planning of affordable housing, infrastructure, sustainable development and growth, community empowerment and other issues related to the creation of Smart Villages.

### About the conference

This will be a peer-reviewed conference with a scientific committee comprising global leaders and experts. Full papers will be subject to a double-blind review before acceptance.

### Themes

Conference themes include, but are not limited to:

#### Rural Housing

Housing affordability, low-cost housing, materials selection, energy and water solutions, sanitation, reusability and recycling of waste, skill development, environmental design, disaster resilience and other relevant topics.

#### Rural Infrastructure

Construction and maintenance of roads and other forms of infrastructure, access to education and healthcare, provision of services, including energy, potable water, waste and sewage management, creation of public spaces, ICT applications and operations, and other related topics.

#### Rural Economy

Building social capital, micro and community-led finance, income generation, farming support, crop selection and improvement, market access, pricing, various forms of tourism and other related topics.

#### Sustainability

Environmental, Social, and Economic sustainability, implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

#### Smart Governance

ICT and data-driven solutions, machine learning applications, alternative forms of governance and other relevant topics.

#### Circular Economy

Framework for local manufacturing, local production, local consumption, use and re-use, repairing, refurbishing, re-cycling products and services, including other relevant topics.

#### Social Procurement, Social Value and Value-for-Money

Models for promoting localised trades and contracts, evaluation of community specific social benefits, value-for-money assessments, alternative forms of procurement strategies and other relevant topics.

#### Rural Enterprises and Rural Entrepreneurship

Models for supporting people to build their entrepreneurial capability and capacity to leverage on new opportunities and empower rural communities at large.

#### Rural Culture and Experience

A solid connection to land, agriculture, and nature characterises rural culture and experience. They encompass the way of living, values, habits, and traditions of people living in remote or rural areas. There can be socio-cultural differences between regions, countries, and even communities.

#### Climate Change, Global Warming and Role of Rural Development (targeting the 40%)

Solutions for alternative, value-based, context-specific development models targeting the 40% global population who still live in rural areas but with relatively in low-carbon footprints. The climate action undertaken among the 60% urban population will make sense only when the greenhouse gas emission is contained among the remaining 40% rural population. In the Smart Villages program, we strongly oppose the current practice towards closing the gap of "Urban-Rural Divide" but rather promote the harmonised "Urban-Rural Share" with a clearly defined and purpose-based lifestyle among both communities. Should we fail to contain the current 40% of rural communities in a climate-positive natural environment and allow the currently prevailing unsustainable practices in their modernisation spree, the damage to the planet will be completely irreversible.

#### Smart and Sustainable Infrastructure for Rural Areas

Modern Housing Solutions for Rural Communities, Developing Efficient Transportation Networks in Villages, Water Supply and Sanitation: Urban Standards in Rural Settings, Building Climate-Resilient Rural Infrastructure.

#### Digital Connectivity and Technology Access

Role of Technology in Delivering Urban-Like Services to Villages, E-Governance and Digital Public Services for Rural Communities, Cost-effective digital solutions for water supply, sewage, and solid waste management.

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