



FIRST INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON
URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES
Songyang County | 10th -14th November, 2019



CONCEPT NOTE

Theme:

Rural revitalization through innovations and valorisation

SUMMARY



Title of event:	The First International Forum on Urban-Rural Linkages·Rural revitalization through innovations and valorisation
Type of event:	International forum
Leading partners:	UN-Habitat, Zhejiang Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, Lishui Municipal People's Government
Organizer:	Songyang County People's Government
Location:	Songyang County, Lishui City, Zhejiang Province, China
Dates:	November 10 – 14, 2019 (the formal meeting will be November 11 - 13).
Duration:	3 days for main event + 1 day for registration and 1 day for participants' departure
Participants:	50 international participants+150 domestic participants, 200 in total
Scope:	Global

BACKGROUND

Urbanization processes shape large areas of the world, while the revitalization of rural regions has been neglected for a long time. Nevertheless, cities and villages are indispensable for the sustainable development of mankind. With the advent of ecological civilization, people began to re-examine the significance of villages and appreciate more idyllic scenery, poetic landscapes, vernacular culture, and folk customs. As a result, a laid-back country life where people live in harmony with nature catches on. The new era arrives with a new mandate, i.e. to accelerate rural revitalization and allow villages and cities to share the achievements of modern civilization in sync, which not only relieves “big city urban diseases” to a certain extent, but more importantly provides a new way of thinking for sustainable urban and rural development around the world from the perspective of a community of shared future for mankind.

Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG11) promotes sustainable cities and communities including rural areas, and supports positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, per-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning (Indicator 11a). Member States of the United Nations commit to the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and promote sustainable development in both urban and rural areas. As the United Nations focal agency for human settlements comprising the urban-rural continuum, UN-Habitat is mandated to foster the implementation of SDG11 and NUA by strengthening Urban Rural Linkages (URLs). More on Urban-Rural Linkages work by UN-Habitat can be found at <https://urbanrurallinkages.wordpress.com/>. Besides, UN-Habitat proactively responds to United Nations’ ongoing reform through innovation and opens itself to bold new tools, technologies and ideas on sustainable urban and rural development.

The Songyang Innovative Rural Development Programme aims to thoroughly analyze and capture the unconventional inspiring practices implemented in the rural Songyang County, and how such innovative inventions have contributed to revitalizing the rural area through empowering the local people technically, financially and mentally. Harnessing the successful story of Songyang’s rural development is expected to provide valuable lessons and inspirations to other rural areas worldwide. Mutually, best practices from other rural districts will in turn, stimulate further innovations in Songyang. As a result, innovative and sustainable development initiatives are expected to significantly strengthen rural areas and their linkages to cities, relieve the demographic pressure of urban areas, and extensively contribute to the overall prosperity of human settlements.

In recent years, Songyang has been putting rural development in the context of urban-rural integration by focusing on culture and architecture and implementing the “architectural acupuncture” strategy to systematically promote economic and social restructuring in rural areas. It actively explores a road of rural revitalization built on culture and has achieved favourable results. United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) invited the People’s Government of Songyang County to the first UN-Habitat Assembly. This forum is part of the activities agreed upon in the letter of intent between UN-Habitat and Songyang People’s government during the first UN-Habitat Assembly in May 2019; see press release at https://new.unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2019/07/songyang_press_release_rs.pdf.

As part of the Songyang Innovative Rural Development Programme, the Forum will be of interest and benefit to a broad base of stakeholders: government authorities, relevant international organization representatives, academia, and other stakeholders working in the urban-rural continuum in different capacities. Participants will be inspired by innovative practices in China and beyond. Through plenary sessions on normative work and impact stories, guided exhibitions, networking and technical visits, participants will gain insights on innovations for rural revitalization. Furthermore, the Forum will be the first forum to promote the role of rural development within the continuum of human settlements to implement the agenda 2030 vision of ensuring that *No One and No Place is left behind*.

THEME

The theme of the Forum is: **Rural revitalization through innovations and valorisation.**

“Rural diseases” and urban slums caused by the rural recession are a common challenge for the whole world. Globally, villages and towns must undergo a painful transformation in the course of modernization, which makes rural revitalization a common issue in the world. At present, China is implementing the rural revitalization strategy to systematically promote rural construction in the aspects of economy, politics, culture, society, ecological civilization and party building, and exploring a new path for rural revitalization in line with ecological conservation. The forum is going to focus on the systematic thinking and innovative practice of rural revitalization from the perspective of ecological conservation and look into important topics such as rural values rediscovery and effective revitalization of rural industries. This will lead to an in-depth reflection on the unsustainable urban-rural development and efforts to try to tackle the global challenge of urban and rural sustainable development in the scope of rural revitalization.

OBJECTIVE

The forum is going to invite international guests and domestic guests. International guests include United Nation officials, high level government representatives from various countries and international organizations, experts, academia and media. Domestic guests include leaders of state ministries, provincial, municipal and county leaders and media. The total is about 200. Participants at home and abroad are to discuss the case of Songyang County based on the forum topic and share and record their experience, strategies and new ideas of rural revitalization. Participants will also have the chance to go on field visits, which are aimed to inspire experience sharing around the conference topic. Through round-table forum and field visits, participants will carry out discussions on sustainable urban and rural development on a broader spectrum, and be encouraged to adapt more innovative approaches for rural area development for the common aspiration and pursuit of “shared cities and regions for all” and “equal rights and opportunities for all residents in cities and all other settlements in the continuum of human settlements”.

APPROACHES

Keynote speeches

Theme1: Rural Revitalization through Valorisation

In the new era, villages are not only about agriculture, but also are important for eco-conservation, leisure and sightseeing, and unique cultural experience. They have become the novel space for wellness preservation, eldercare, innovation, entrepreneurship, and living with prominent economic, ecological, social and cultural values. We hope to inspire more people to re-evaluate villages and explore village values after sharing interpretation and perspectives of people from different regions in this regard.

Theme2: Rural Revitalization through Innovative Practices

Unlike cities, rural areas are relatively landlocked and lack of resources. In this case, it is necessary to think outside the box to achieve rural revitalization and growth. We must innovate the pattern of rural development, tackle the conundrum of unsustainable urban and rural development, and find a new path for rural revitalization in line with the concept of eco-civilization. It is hoped that exchanges of hands-on experience and innovative practices in rural areas in different regions will inspire more people to think about rural development and learn from effective innovation experience to promote rural sustainable development.

Round-table forum

Theme: Rural Revitalization through Innovative Practices

Rural revitalization would be unsustainable without industrial revitalization. As public infrastructure improves and modern technologies such as the Internet are extensively applied in villages, geographic and industrial boundaries between urban and rural areas have gradually blurred. Villages will witness the original single-product agricultural economy being gradually taken over by a new economic form as agriculture integrates with other industries such as agro-processing, leisure tourism, and cultural creativity. They will become the new place for global innovation and entrepreneurship. We hope that by sharing cases of rural revitalization in eco-agriculture, rural tourism, folk house economy, cultural creativity, etc. in different rural areas, people will explore the path of rural development driven by industrial revitalization, and fully activate the underlying driving force of rural sustainable development.

FIELD TRIPS

There will be one native Songyang County official introducing the field trip sites. All participants will visit Route 1 including sites of Shimenyu Bridge, Brown Sugar Factory and Damushan Tea Garden. Then participants choose one of the routes during the same time and attend the parallel events they are interested in. Theme of the parallel event is decided according to the different features of the routes; Rout 2 and 3 will be comprised of the first set of parallel events (A), Route 4 and 5 will be the second set of parallel events (B).

Route 1:

Shimenyu Bridge, once deserted, it has been transformed into a local market and leisure place for residents on either side of the bridge after redefining its social functions. It also leads people to peripheral villages on the banks of Songyin River.

Brown Sugar Factory is a rural museum that serves many functions. Originally, it is a traditional brown sugar processing and production factory, but now it also serves as the workplace of the village committee, holds cultural activities and is also used for leisure, sightseeing and business demonstration. As a featured agricultural factory, it has effectively promoted the adjustment of rural economic development model and the systematic transformation of rural production and lifestyle and has attracted many tourists around the country.

Damushan Tea Garden is the first 4A tourist attraction in China that integrates sightseeing, sports, leisure, and cultural activities. Besides, as a tea garden of more than 480 acre in the central area, it vigorously promotes industrial integration and has become the first demonstration park for the integration and development of the primary, secondary and tertiary industries on green food nationwide.

Route2 (Parallel event A1: Rural Architecture):

Hakka Indenture Museum is made of local slabs with traditional building techniques. The old indentures on display are the historical evidence of the farming period. From the tradition of contracts, visitors can have a comprehensive insight of Shicang Hakkas, e.g. their migration from Fujian Province, land purchase, levigation and smelting business, family lineage, and the ups and downs in history, and learn about Shicang's past as a contractual society with profound business spirit and rules observed by all.

Tofu Factory is a typical case of "featured agricultural factories" in Songyang. Based on the preservation of traditional handicrafts, it introduces modern concepts and technology for the systematic growth of the industrial value chain from planting to processing and sales to enrich villagers and stimulate the collective village economy, while developing diverse functions such as processing and production, cultural activities, leisure and sightseeing, business demonstration to make optimum use of resources and fully integrate functions.

Route3 (Parallel event A2: Culture and Heritage):

Hengkeng Village founded in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), it is a traditional Chinese village preserving the style and features from 400 years ago up to date. It is home to intact historical constructions and ancient post roads such as the Ye Family Ancestral Hall, Anfu Temple, Wenwu Temple, and ancient gallery Bridge, and therefore, is of historical and research significance and artistic value for understanding the defining characteristics and means of external communication of mountainous farming settlements in Songyang. Rich in bamboo, it has built the Bamboo Pavilion using Moso bamboo and promoted folk house economy and eco-agriculture.

Bamboo Pavilion is located in Hengkeng Village, which is known for Moso bamboo. The pavilion is a natural space with the quasi-dome made of bamboos bent downward and the stage paved with stones. People can stop by for leisure and entertainment. The pavilion changes its shape each year as new bamboos supersede the old ones

Route4 (Parallel event B1: Rural Architecture):

Pingtian Village exploits rural stock resources in line with the concept of “live protection and organic development” via “TCM (traditional Chinese medicine)-like modification and acupuncture-induced activation” to promote deep integration and development of eco-agriculture, folk house economy, cultural and creative industries and other industries with rural tourism. Pingtian has attracted ambitious and dedicated outstanding teams and young entrepreneurs back to the countryside and helped villagers start up their own businesses in local areas. As a result, the formerly desolated hollow village has taken on a new look and gradually transformed into a new rural community full of vitality. It has become a rural tourism base in China, a 3A scenic area in Zhejiang Province, and a “laid-back lifestyle and leisure tourism model village” in Zhejiang Province.

Route5 (Parallel event B2: Innovation in Rural Economy):

Shangtian Village - Banling Natural Village is a reform pilot of Songyang’s revitalization. It aims to explore a path of rural revitalization built on the collective economic system and characterized by diversified cooperation and development such as mixed ownership and farmer specialized cooperatives, engaging the local government, village and villagers as a whole. It has not only fully lifted villagers’ enthusiasm, but also contributed to a new rural construction model for realizing common prosperity.

	SUN(Nov.10)	MON(Nov.11)	TUE(Nov.12)	WED(Nov.13)	THU(Nov.14)
Morning	8:30-12:00 Arrival & Registration (in Tianyuan Mingdu Hotel & Xintiandi Hotel)	9:00-12:00, Field Trip#1 (in Shimenyu Bridge, Brown Sugar Factory, Damushan Tea Garden)	9:00-12:00. Field Trip#2 (Parallel event A1: Hakka Indenture Museum, Tofu Factory. Parallel event A2: Hengkeng Village&Bamboo Pavilion)	9:00-11:00 , Round-Table Forum (in Tanglan Mansion) Theme: Rural Innovation Practice 11:00-11:15 , Coffee Break 11:15-12:00 , Closing Event -Issuing "Songyang Consensus" -Launching "Rural Revitalization Awards" -Closing speech	Participant departure
	12:00-13:00 , in the Hotels	12:30-13:30 , in TianyuanMingdu Hotel	12:30-13:30 , in the Hotels	12:00-13:00 , Lunch, in the Hotels	12:00-13:00 , in the Hotels
Lunch	13:00-20:00 Arrival & Registration (in Tianyuan Mingdu Hotel & Xintiandi Hotel)	13:30-14:00 , Tree Planting Event (in International Friendship Garden)	14:00-17:30 , Field Trip#3 (Parallel event B1:in Pingtian Village. Parallel event B2: In Shangtian Village)	Participant departure	
		14:00-14:40 , Opening Event (in Tanglan Mansion)\Welcome remarks			
		14:40-15:00 , Coffee Break 15:00-17:00, Keynote Speeches (in Tanglan Mansion) -Round1:Rural Value Discovery -Round2:Rural Innovative Practice			
Dinner	18:00-19:30 , in the Hotels	17:30-19:00 , Welcome Dinner (in TianyuanMingdu Hotel)	18:00-19:00 , in the Hotels	18:00-19:00 , in the Hotels	18:00-19:00 , in the Hotels
	19:30-21:00 , Visit (in Songyang Ancient Street)	19:15-21:15 , Networking (in the Hotels)	19:15-21:15 , Networking (in the Hotels)		
Evening					

AGENDA

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