

GISCA 2019 - GIS IN CENTRAL ASIA CONFERENCE, BISHKEK KIRGISTAN

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This proposal aims at supporting the upcoming 2019 conference, serving as an integrating venue and focal point for Geographic Information Science across Central Asia, Russia, China and Austria. GISCA has been established as a collaborative platform among EPU member institutions and beyond, for communication, collaboration and learning in Geographic Information Science, GIS and related sciences and technologies. GISCA has been launched by the Eurasia-Pacific Uninet Austria-Central Asia Centre for GIScience (ACA*GIScience) in 2005 and was organized regularly since then in Central Asian countries and China. Beyond that, GISCA now is a widely recognized event showcasing the presence and impact of EPU in Central Asia.

The GISCA series of conferences aims at building, maintaining and enhancing a Central Asian network of GIS professionals supporting the sustained development of this region into an environmentally friendly, secure and prosperous society. Geographic Information Science and Technologies have evolved into a key instrument for managing our societies, environments and infrastructures, as well as individuals' daily lives. Continued success of this development depends on cooperation across disciplines, open information policies and a highly educated workforce.

General objectives of GISCA conferences:

- Highly visible platform for regional cooperation and exchange, in particular between Central Asian and Austrian institutions ('networking event')
- Initiator for externally funded projects in research and education
- Attractor for industry sponsoring
- Continuing education opportunity for scientists and professionals in GIScience
- Publication of results from current research, in particular for young scientists in the partner region as a stepping stone towards first journal publications
- Awareness building for the potential of GIScience in the partner region

In order to support the overall aim of enhancing the visibility, reach and scientific level of the regional EPU network several **key steps** will be taken:

- Organisation of the Central Asia GIS 2019 conference – see gisca19.aca-giscience.org
The conference will be held in Bishkek, locally organised by the KSUCTA, an EPU member organisation.
- The conference date is May 30 – June 2, with some pre- and post-conference side events
- The EPU ACA*GIScience centre in Bishkek will actively manage promotion, organisational measures and publication of proceedings.
- Cooperation with international organisations and industry will be enhanced, eg through workshops alongside the conference, e.g. o Training courses in various GIS-related themes of Faculty training seminar for GIS teachers (co- funded by Erasmus+ DSinGIS) o Alumni meeting of the Erasmus Mundus 'gSmart' initiative o Spatial Data Infrastructures workshop, supported by www.aca-giscience.org
- Demonstrating the value of EPU membership to member institutions
- Generating of new joint applications for externally funded projects in research and education

Most aspects of these plans already have been triggered and conference planning and preparation is well under way (see conference website mentioned above).

In 2018, GISCA is focused on the theme of “Geoinformatics for Regional Development”. Geographic Information Science as a conceptual foundation, Geoinformatics as the methodology and GIS as software technology are powerful instruments for linking information across different sources by location.