

WISDOM

AUTONOMY



COMPLEXITY

DETAILED  
PROGRAMME

# THE WISE TOWN MANIFESTO 2026

A Joint Initiative by  
Prof. Giovanni Quaranta, Prof. Rosanna  
Salvia and Prof. Kwanphil Cho

REGENERATION

POLYCENTRISM

From  
Smart Cities  
to Wisetowns

13-17 **MATERA-**  
**MAY** **ASCEA**  
**2026** **MARINA,**  
**ITALY**

TEMPORAL  
DEPTH

COOPERATIVE  
INTELLIGENCE



**DETAILED PROGRAMME**  
**The Wise Town Manifesto**  
**International Launch Pathway**

Matera, 14 May 2026 | Ascea Marina, 15 May 2026

A Joint Initiative by Prof. Giovanni Quaranta, Prof. Rosanna Salvia and Prof. Kwanphil Cho

**Thursday, 14 May 2026 | Matera**

**Scientific Round Table on the Wise Town Concept**

**Venue:** University of Basilicata, Matera Campus, Via Lanera 20

**Institutional framing.** The Matera meeting marks the scientific opening of the Wise Town Manifesto pathway and takes place in connection with Matera's role as Mediterranean Capital of Culture and Dialogue 2026. The session is designed to consolidate a shared conceptual vocabulary and to open a structured discussion among the international delegations involved in the TNE NEW SEASON cooperation.

Time	Session	Speakers and content
09:30 – 10:00	Registration and welcome coffee	Arrival of participants and informal reception at the venue.
10:00 – 10:15	Welcome and opening of the scientific session	Prof. Giovanni Quaranta, Full Professor of European Project Design for Territorial Development, University of Basilicata. Introductory remarks on the objectives of the Matera session and on the scientific rationale of the Wise Town initiative.
10:15 – 10:35	Concept presentation	Prof. Kwanphil Cho, Handong Global University, Republic of Korea. Presentation of the Wise Town concept and its relevance for place-based regeneration, spatial design, international cooperation and a new urban civilisation.
10:35 – 13:00	International round table	Moderated by Prof. Rosanna Salvia, University of Basilicata. Plenary discussion among all participants on the scientific foundations, territorial implications and international applicability of the Wise Town approach.
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch buffet	Networking lunch with the international delegations and institutional guests.
14:30 – 16:30	Guided visit to the Sassi of Matera	Field visit to the historic urban landscape of Matera, conceived as a cultural and territorial complement to the scientific discussion of the morning.

**Round table participants (name and country of provenance)**

Country	Delegation members
China	Prof. Min Liu; Prof. Guoxing Zhang; Prof. Wensheng He; Prof. Chunjie Li
Vietnam	Prof. Tu Anh Trinh; Prof. Hoang Phuc Nguyen; Prof. Nguyen Hoai Pham; Prof. The Hien Dang; Prof. Byungwook Christopher Han
Republic of Korea	Prof. Kwanphil Cho; Prof. Ducksu Seo; Prof. Jae Young Lee; Prof. Yun Seon Kim; Prof. Sung Bae Jo

May, 15 May 2026 | Ascea Marina

**Public and Institutional Launch of the Wise Town Manifesto in Italy**

**Venue:** Fondazione Alario per Elea-Velia, Ascea Marina

**Session design.** The Ascea Marina event is organised in two stages: a morning public and institutional opening followed by three parallel scientific-institutional sessions, and an afternoon plenary session devoted to institutional restitution, concluding remarks and the signature ceremony of the Wise Town Manifesto.

**Morning programme**

Time	Session	Speakers and content
10:00 – 10:30	Arrival, registration and seating	Reception of participants and organisational coordination at the venue.
10:30 – 10:35	Welcome greeting	Stefano Sansone, Mayor of Ascea.
10:35 – 10:45	Opening introduction	Prof. Giovanni Quaranta. Introductory remarks on the institutional meaning of the launch and on the Wise Town Manifesto as a framework for international territorial cooperation.
10:45 – 10:55	Institutional greeting	Giovanni Caggiano, President of ASMEL.
10:55 – 11:05	Institutional greeting	Vincenzo Luciano, President of UNCEM Campania and National Vice-President of UNCEM.
11:05 – 11:15	Institutional greeting	Stefano Pisani, Mayor of Pollica and ANCI Campania Coordinator for Small Municipalities.
11:15 – 11:25	Regional institutional address	Angelica Saggese, Regional Assessor for Labour and Training, Campania Region.
11:30 – 13:00	Parallel sessions	Three simultaneous sessions combining scientific discussion and institutional dialogue, with balanced participation of the international delegations.
13:00 – 13:30	Scientific restitution in plenary	Return to plenary. Short scientific reports from the three session leads: Prof. Giovanni Quaranta, Prof. Rosanna Salvia and Prof. Kwanphil Cho (approximately 10 minutes each).
13:30 – 15:00	Lunch buffet based on local products	Networking lunch and informal exchange among delegations, institutions and territorial stakeholders.

### Parallel session allocation

Session	Thematic focus	Guides	International delegates
Parallel Session A	Territorial governance, inter-municipal cooperation and the construction of the Wise Town network	Prof. Giovanni Quaranta (scientific lead) and Giovanni Caggiano (institutional discussant)	Prof. Min Liu (China); Prof. Wensheng He (China); Prof. Hoang Phuc Nguyen (Vietnam); Prof. Ducksu Seo (Republic of Korea); Prof. Jae Young Lee (Republic of Korea)
Parallel Session B	Regeneration, social cohesion and the future of mountain and inner areas	Prof. Rosanna Salvia (scientific lead) and Vincenzo Luciano (institutional discussant)	Prof. Guoxing Zhang (China); Prof. Tu Anh Trinh (Vietnam); Prof. Nguyen Hoai Pham (Vietnam); Prof. Yun Seon Kim (Republic of Korea); Prof. Sung Bae Jo (Republic of Korea)
Parallel Session C	Small towns, design innovation and international perspectives on the Wise Town approach	Prof. Kwanphil Cho (scientific lead) and Stefano Pisani (institutional discussant)	Prof. Chunjie Li (China); Prof. The Hien Dang (Vietnam); Prof. Byungwook Christopher Han (Vietnam); Prof. Kwanphil Cho (Republic of Korea, also scientific lead of the session)

**Distribution note.** The allocation follows an intentionally balanced scheme (5 delegates in two sessions and 4 delegates in one session), ensuring that China, Vietnam and the Republic of Korea are represented in each parallel group. In Session C, Prof. Kwanphil Cho is counted both as scientific lead and as a representative of the Korean delegation.

### Afternoon plenary

Time	Session	Speakers and content
15:30 – 15:35	Institutional greeting	Stefano Sansone, Mayor of Ascea.
15:35 – 15:45	Plenary introduction	Prof. Giovanni Quaranta. Brief synthesis of the scientific trajectory of the day and transition to the afternoon institutional session.
15:45 – 16:00	Concept presentation	Prof. Kwanphil Cho, Handong Global University, Republic of Korea. Presentation of the Wise Town concept and its relevance for place-based regeneration, spatial design and international cooperation.
16:00 – 16:15	Institutional restitution of Parallel Session A	Giovanni Caggiano. Report-back from the morning discussions with emphasis on governance innovation, local administrations and inter-municipal cooperation.
16:15 – 16:30	Institutional restitution of Parallel Session B	Vincenzo Luciano. Report-back from the morning discussions with emphasis on territorial cohesion, mountain and inner areas, and the role of local communities.
16:30 – 16:45	Institutional restitution of Parallel Session C	Stefano Pisani. Report-back from the morning discussions with emphasis on small municipalities, local identity, design innovation and future-oriented local strategies.
16:45 – 17:00	Regional closing remarks	Angelica Saggese. Institutional reflections on the outcomes of the day and on the relevance of the Wise Town approach for regional labour, training and territorial development agendas.
17:00 – 17:20	Concluding remarks	Roberto Fico, President of the Campania Region.
17:20 – 17:45	Signature ceremony of the Wise Town Manifesto	Official signature of the Wise Town Manifesto in Italy, with Roberto Fico scheduled as first regional institutional signatory in support of the construction of the international Wise Town network.

The present version nevertheless reflects the intended political and institutional architecture of the event.

## PARALLEL SESSIONS

The three parallel sessions are designed to address all the pillars of the Wise Town Manifesto in an integrated manner. Each session develops the full conceptual framework of the Manifesto, while adopting a specific institutional perspective: local governance and inter-municipal cooperation; regeneration, welfare and territorial services; and heritage, innovation and cooperative intelligence for small towns.

The time structure is:

- **11:30–13:00** | Parallel Sessions
- **13:00–13:30** | Scientific restitution in plenary
- **13:30 onwards** | Lunch buffet featuring local products

### Common internal structure for each 90-minute session

A shared format across the three sessions would help ensure consistency and facilitate the plenary restitution:

- **10 minutes** – Opening framing by the scientific lead and institutional co-chair
  - **20 minutes** – Initial comparative inputs from international delegates
    - **40 minutes** – Moderated discussion
- **15 minutes** – Identification of three key messages and two operational proposals
  - **5 minutes** – Closing remarks and rapporteur designation

### Parallel Session A

#### Autonomy, Polycentric Governance and Inter-Municipal Cooperation

**Main institutional focus:** local governance, inter-municipal cooperation, administrative capacity, and territorial coordination.

#### Concise content:

This session explores how territories can strengthen their capacity for decision-making and action without becoming isolated, by building cooperation among municipalities, shared services, and multilevel coordination mechanisms. The central issue is how small municipalities and fragile territories can become active nodes within a wider polycentric network.

#### Development of the pillars:

The session addresses wisdom through long-term public choices; autonomy through local institutional capacity; polycentrism through municipal networks and shared governance; regeneration through the renewal of services and territorial functions; complexity through multilevel coordination; temporal depth through continuity of civic identity and institutional memory; and cooperative intelligence through shared learning, joint planning, and exchange platforms.

#### Expected output:

Three priorities for Wise Town governance, two possible tools for inter-municipal cooperation, and one proposal for the international Wise Town network.

#### Suggested leadership:

Giovanni Quaranta with Giovanni Caggiano.

## **Parallel Session B**

### **Regeneration, Welfare and Territorial Services for Inner and Mountain Areas**

**Main institutional focus:** inner areas, mountain territories, social cohesion, welfare, labour, and essential services.

#### **Concise content:**

This session examines regeneration not only as a physical transformation process, but as the rebuilding of a territory's capacity to provide services, work opportunities, care, and quality of life. Its institutional core lies in understanding how inner and mountain areas can regain centrality through more resilient, inclusive, and territorially rooted development models.

#### **Development of the pillars:**

Wisdom is reflected in long-term priorities for territorial resilience; autonomy in the local capacity to organise essential services; polycentrism in territorial welfare networks among municipalities; regeneration in socio-ecological renewal and care infrastructures; complexity in responding to depopulation, ageing, ecological transition, and social fragility; temporal depth in the valorisation of local knowledge and inherited ways of inhabiting; and cooperative intelligence in co-design among institutions, communities, and universities.

#### **Expected output:**

Three strategic directions for welfare and services in Wise Towns, two pilot actions concerning work, care, or local services, and one replicable territorial cooperation proposal.

#### **Suggested leadership:**

Rosanna Salvia with Vincenzo Luciano.

## **Parallel Session C**

### **Heritage, Innovation and Cooperative Intelligence for Small Towns**

**Main institutional focus:** small towns, cultural heritage, territorial innovation, internationalisation, and university-territory cooperation.

#### **Concise content:**

This session focuses on the relationship between heritage, innovation, and the future of small towns. The aim is to discuss how memory, identity, built space, culture, and innovation can become drivers for renewed attractiveness, local vitality, and international cooperation, while avoiding purely promotional or tourism-based interpretations.

#### **Development of the pillars:**

Wisdom is addressed through the strategic use of heritage as a future-oriented resource; autonomy through the capacity of small municipalities to define their own trajectories; polycentrism through networks among villages and their connections with larger urban systems; regeneration through adaptive reuse and the strengthening of civic spaces; complexity through balancing residents' needs, visitors, local functions, and innovation processes; temporal depth through memory, identity, and cultural continuity; and cooperative intelligence through collaboration among institutions, universities, communities, and international partners.

#### **Expected output:**

Three guidelines for small towns and villages, two project ideas linking heritage and innovation, and one proposal for international cooperation within the Wise Town network.

#### **Suggested leadership:**

Kwanphil Cho with Stefano Pisani.

# WISE TOWN

[www.wisetown.org](http://www.wisetown.org)