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SOCIAL INNOVATION AND URBAN FORESTS - THE ROLE OF SCIENCE AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS TO INFLUENCE DECISION MAKING ABOUT URBAN FOREST DESIGN.

Christoph Schröder

Degree: GIS expert and Environmental researcher,
Institution: European Topic Centre at University of Málaga
City: Malaga, Andalusia
Country: Spain
Mail: christoph.schroder@uma.es

Based on my MSc in Geography (University of Bonn) I have developed expertise in Geographic Information Systems and land use/cover change analysis from local to global scale with particular interest in the Mediterranean. Over the last few years, I have developed a strong involvement in science-policy interfaces on the European level, trying to find smart ways to solve important environmental issues relevant to policy-makers.

The main focus of my activities at ETC-UMA is on data integration and thematic assessment on European scale for a wide range of topics from sustainable tourism to nutrient inputs on agro-ecosystems. This data-driven work is supporting the European Environment Agency in their policy monitoring and formulation. I have also applied my GIS expertise on a variety of projects dealing with terrestrial and marine ecosystems (Med-IAMER) and territorial development (ESPON ESaTDOR). In recent year, I have gained a profound expertise in the assessment of user requirements for Earth Observation products, particularly addressing habitat and wetland monitoring.

Abstract

Planning and management of urban green areas and particularly urban forests are part of a decision-making process that takes place at the local level of administration. Different urban planning priorities have an effect on the final design of these spaces. Often, the decision making process is a top-down process without taking into account neither the citizens' needs and opinions nor scientific evidence of the benefits of urban forests nor best practices available at national or international level. The University of Málaga, together with the bottom-up initiative Bosque Urbano Málaga, gathered scientists, practitioners and citizens to evaluate the role of scientific evidence and the potential of social movements to influence the decision making about urban forest desing. Both diverse communication and the creation of an active citizenship were considered as key to influence the public opinion and build a solid ground for a bottom-up approach for the desing of urban green spaces.