



Editorial

Preface to this thematic issue

While we are getting better at the process of building models, our track record in actually using models for making timely and appropriate decisions is quite poor. Despite our improvement, it is still difficult to convince decision and policy makers to use them, especially when they are facing unpopular and controversial issues.

Today it is generally agreed that better decisions are implemented with less conflict and more success, when they engage or even are driven by stakeholders, that is by those who will be bearing their consequences. Increasingly there are more requirements for a bottom-up approach where the stakeholders play a role in the knowledge generation, sharing and possibly the decision-making process. Recognizing and supporting this trend “Environmental Modelling and Software” has launched this Thematic Issue to explore how we can better undertake our modelling with stakeholders. Our goal was to focus on the stakeholder part of the modelling activity. We were less interested in the technical details of particular modelling exercises, and more in the lessons learnt from the engagement of people, organizations and institutions in the modelling process. We tried to explore the role of the model and show how the modelling process becomes equally or even more important than the product, a particular model developed. We invited papers that showed links to planning and policy making, how stakeholders could be involved and how they played a role in both identifying the model goals and more generally providing guidance throughout the process. We have attempted to show how we could move further from participatory modelling to collaborative decision-making.

In addition to the authors, almost 50 people took part in the preparation of this issue. We are very grateful to our reviewers who have improved the quality of the papers tremendously by meticulously and persistently working with the authors, sharing their knowledge and experience. In one case the input of the reviewer was so valuable that he was invited to join the authors, an option that we very much encouraged. In other cases the reviewers remained behind the scenes. With gratitude, we respectfully acknowledge the participation of the following reviewers (the number of reviews submitted for this issue is given in parentheses):

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As this issue goes to print, the Journal continues to explore the challenges of collaborative modelling and is currently preparing a follow-up Thematic Issue on “Expert Opinion in Environmental Management and Modelling”.

François Bousquet*

Guest Editor

F. Bousquet Cirad ES Green TA 60/15, 73 rue JF Breton,
34398 CEDEX 5 Montpellier, France

*Corresponding author.

E-mail address: francois.bousquet@cirad.fr

Alexey Voinov

Faculty of Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC),
University of Twente, P.O. Box 6, 7500 AA Enschede,
The Netherlands

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