

Press release

HafenCity Universität Hamburg

Christian Schmidt

04/09/2025

<http://idw-online.de/en/news850511>

Research projects, Research results
Construction / architecture, Information technology, Politics, Social studies
transregional, national



A Year of Innovative Digital Tooling for Ukraine - successful conclusion for project SURPRISE

Researchers at HafenCity University Hamburg (HCU) supported sustainable urban planning and reconstruction in Ukraine. The cooperation between the University and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH successfully concluded a project focused on integrated urban development and reconstruction planning in Ukraine. In collaboration with local and national stakeholders in Ukraine, the SURPRISE project implemented prototype initiatives, developed citizen participation campaigns, and enhanced capacity for data-driven urban planning.

In November 2024, the project SURPRISE ("Sustainable Urban Planning and Resilient Reconstruction in Ukraine with Spatial Data Science") successfully concluded, marking a step forward for integrated and sustainable urban development in Ukraine. Funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the Special Expert Fund (SFF), the project was a collaborative effort between the chair of Digital City Science at HCU, GIZ, the Ministry of Restoration of Ukraine, and cities of Vinnytsia, Poltava, Zhytomyr, and Chernivtsi.

By sharing best practices and piloting innovative solutions, the project has equipped Ukrainian cities with tools and strategies to enhance urban planning processes and facilitate better collaboration between stakeholders. These efforts were complemented by training and capacity-building initiatives to ensure the sustainability of the project's outcomes. The main outcomes of the SURPRISE project include tailored recommendations for updating Urban Planning Cadaster systems, data-driven approaches for collaborative urban development, and model campaigns to enhance citizen participation in planning processes.

At the chair of Digital City Science (Prof. Jörg Rainer Noennig), the project was led by Jennifer Jiang, a trained architect and urban practitioner, who coordinated the research work of the HCU team. The team included urban development expert Arjama Mukherjee, data scientists Hana Elattar and Husain Vaghjipurwala, and XR developer Vincent Holtorf, among others.

Despite the ongoing war in Ukraine, the project team navigated regional challenges by adopting an agile and incremental approach, ensuring the effective delivery of its objectives.

The SURPRISE project has demonstrated the value of combining expertise in digital city science with practical implementation strategies to address topical urban challenges. The year-long partnership between HCU, GIZ, and Ukrainian stakeholders provides a strong foundation for potential future collaborations to further advance digital urban planning in Ukraine.

contact for scientific information:

Jennifer Jiang M.Sc.

Project manager and coordinator, Chair of Digital City Science, HafenCity University Hamburg

jennifer.jiang@hcu-hamburg.de

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jörg Rainer Noennig
Professor of Digital City Science, HafenCity University Hamburg
joerg.noennig@hcu-hamburg.de

Jacob Paulsen, Communications Lead
Chair of Digital City Science, HafenCity University Hamburg
jacob.paulsen@hcu-hamburg.de



SURPRISE (SFF2) End of Project Meeting
Jacob Paulsen
HCU Hamburg, Jacob Paulsen