Editorial

Linking domains and synergising advances

Our publisher recently asked me for a "fun fact" about *BEPAM*. This did not take long to extract, since I could readily spotlight and unearth it from within the niche that we had positioned *BEPAM* in from the outset. Indeed, as far as we know, we could still "make a difference" compared to other journals in our field, based on our "fun fact" that:

> *BEPAM* is the only journal of its kind that *links* project management *to* asset management *of building and civil engineering infrastructure*.

Apart from being valuable to map and operationalise potentially useful links and exchanges between these hitherto (largely) independently developing fields of project management and facilities (or asset) management, it is also *BEPAM*'s mission to provide an over-arching forum to inspire, develop and disseminate inter-domain synergies. Basic examples include: "project managing" design and construction to target durability, maintainability and sustainability, thereby facilitating the downstream built asset management and collecting and analysing "big data" from asset management to provide proactive feedback to project managers of planners, designers and constructors, on maintenance hotspots, design-linked operational issues, energy use patterns and carbon footprints. *BEPAM* helps catalyse the cross-fertilisation of these hitherto separately "cultivated" fields.

The title of this editorial resonates with the above "fun fact". The "domains" we aim to "link" across the project management vs built asset (facilities) management "divide" include: cutting-edge research focus areas, leading-edge communities of practice and diverse disciplines, albeit all contributing to the development and sustenance of the built environment. Each of these domains may relate to the different parts of the project management or asset management supply chains. In addition, just as with other international journals, we do provide a common platform for comparing advances in different locations, be they in countries at various stages of development (with different priorities and constraints), or in geographical regions with vastly different socio-cultural characteristics (e.g. South America, the Middle East, North America), hence different drivers and barriers. Despite each such domain having its own special "eco-system", advances and lessons learned in one domain, can usually also provide lessons for some others.

More important, various domains can "advance" better and faster together, by generating synergies, where the "whole" system can grow in a more balanced, organic and sustainable mode, rather than if the individual parts continue to develop sporadically in separate silos, with duplicated, rather than shared knowledge bases and resources.

Moving on to the papers in this issue, the first paper on "Model for developing trust on US construction projects" aims to "identify the factors found on US construction projects that are perceived by contractors to strengthen or weaken trust between contracting stakeholders and to develop a framework for evaluating these relationships". The authors, Issa, Olbina and Zuppa, develop and propose "a trust model" to help large US contractors measure and improve trust with other project stakeholders.

The "softer" approach to developing trust in the above paper, is complemented in the second paper by Kapogiannis and Sherrat, who show how integrated collaborative technologies including BIM, can enhance team collaboration by helping to develop a collaborative culture throughout a project, specifically at the planning, design and construction stages. Moreover, this harnessing of "integrated collaborative technologies" is proposed on the basis of a UK-based study, as against the US-based model development

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in the preceding paper. Readers and future researchers may compare possibilities of adapting and synergising findings from both geographical domains, apart from considering possibilities of an integrated or balanced hard-soft approach. This balance could vary depending on where it is being applied, e.g., where the use of collaborative technologies has reached a reasonable level of maturity and/or where trust can be generated easier (i.e. with less barriers) and is less likely to be abused.

The third paper, while also from the UK, moves us to the domain of retrofitting heritage office buildings. Some links to the imperatives for increased collaboration as in the first two papers, may be discerned, as Tokede, Udawatta and Luther suggest that the government and other stakeholders should work together to incentivise retrofit investments in heritage buildings. The aim to minimise the contributions of such retrofitting in the built environment to global warming and climate change, also connects to the broader sustainability targets in the next paper on "Framework for sustainable construction practices in Sri Lanka". Relevant threads can also be traced back to the first and second papers in the suggestions by the authors Athapaththu and Karunasena "for successful adaptation of sustainable construction practices in eight key areas: legal framework, standards, guidelines or policies, design, procurement, technology, processes and innovations, people and organisational structure, education and training, measurements and reporting". On the other hand, those reading the fourth paper from a Sri Lankan perspective may be alerted by the previous paper from the UK, to another aspect (or facet) of sustainability, i.e. in retrofitting, that has recently received attention in the adaptive re-use of some colonial buildings in Sri Lanka. This facet may need more attention in the sustainability agendas of some other developing countries too.

Of course, research threads and strong links can be traced back further and wider, even in previous issues of *BEPAM*, apart from other fora. For example: the third paper as above, complements the paper by Atkins and Emmanuel in *BEPAM* 4.3 on "Could refurbishment of 'traditional' buildings reduction carbon emissions?"; and both the third and fourth papers can "synergise" directly in terms of driving towards sustainability in general, with the paper by De Silva *et al.* in *BEPAM* 7.3, on "Relationally Integrated Value Networks (RIVANS) for total facilities management (TFM)" over the full life cycle of the facility. Additionally, the "relational integration" aspects in "networks" targeting common overall value, advocated in this previous paper in *BEPAM* 7.3, resonate well with the collaborative thrusts in the first and second papers of this issue.

Sustainability frameworks and agendas should also pay greater attention to building services, given that they are the "heaviest" energy consumers in many countries. The design and installation of building services is therefore critical to sustainability. In the fifth paper, Hassanain, Adewale, Al-Hammad and Sanni-Anibire identify and rank the "factors affecting building services coordination during the design development and review stages". This enables stakeholders to prioritise their efforts, particularly in Saudi Arabia where the study was based, but also to draw suitably adjusted parallels before first testing these for relevance, then significance, in other regional domains.

Indeed, the sixth paper transports us to another geographical domain (in yet another continent), where Parida and Brown invite us to step back to the broader fundamentals of research in the built environment, with a focus on first the advantages of a "multi-disciplinary" approach and second on a "systematic review" methodology, to examine the extent to which a systematic review approach is transferable from medicine to multi-disciplinary studies in built environment research. Therefore, this exercise also benefits from drawing on and connecting built environment research to that in the health, and management domains. Furthermore, the authors state that "the foundational contribution of this paper lies in providing methodological guidance and an alternative framework to advance the longstanding efforts in the built environment to bridge the practitioner and academic divide".

The last observation justifies the juxtaposition of the above paper with the seventh, which is purely on "practice" and more specifically of interest to industry. Odediran and Windapo propose an integrated model for aiding risk-based entry decisions into the African construction market by multinational construction companies, thereby also shifting us to yet another continental domain. They identify significant risks, as well as ways of reducing and mitigating these through particular resources and related decision strategies.

To wrap up the above quick synergy-focused summary of the papers in this issue, it is clear that the mapping of such links and identifying the potential for linking corresponding knowledge bases and resources could multiply the benefits from such research and development in both theory and practice. However, we would welcome more papers on good "practice" and from hitherto poorly represented (in *BEPAM*) regions, mainly South America.

Some of our special issues have helped address at least one of these under-represented areas in the past, by drawing out a few more case study papers on practice, albeit still mostly from academics, as well as turning the spotlight on significant emerging domains for more focussed comparisons. Turning to forthcoming special issues, the following are currently at various stages in the pipeline.

"Service innovation through linking design, construction and asset management", the Guest Editors being Hedley Smyth and Grant Mills at the University College London, UK and Kamran Razmdoost at ESCP, Europe.

"Rethinking construction productivity theory and practice", the Guest Editor being Wei Pan from The University of Hong Kong.

"Built environment sustainability: what's new and what's next?", the Guest Editors being Sachie Gunatilake and Kanchana Perera from The University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.

"Public private partnerships: potentials, prospects, pitfalls & precautions", the Guest Editors being Suranga Jayasena at the University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka, Mohan Siriwardena at Liverpool John Moores University, UK and Giovanni Migliaccio at the University of Washington, USA.

Another one has just been approved on the fast-emerging theme of: "Data analytics and big data in construction project and asset management" with Guest Editors, from Australia and Hong Kong.

The wide spread of themes and dispersed locations of guest editors of the special issues above (and indeed other *BEPAM* special issues before) are other indicators of the extensive coverage and diversity of *BEPAM*. This clearly boosts the potential for linking and synergising advances in research and practice within these special focus areas, apart from in the regular issues in general.

Mohan Kumaraswamy