



**37<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL  
NO - DIG  
FLORENCE 2019**

Fortezza da Basso • FLORENCE (Italy)

**30<sup>th</sup> September • 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019**

**37<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL NO-DIG 2019  
FLORENCE  
from 30<sup>th</sup> September to 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019**

The 37<sup>th</sup> edition of the International No-Dig conference that took place from the 30<sup>th</sup> of September to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October in Florence produced stunning results in terms of both turnout and high-quality technical-scientific output.

Here are the stats:

- 95 papers;
- 287 delegates representing 18 countries
- 4 workshops
- 106 exhibitors and 14 sponsors
- 1025 visitors from 40 countries

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2019 the annual board meeting of the presidents of the various societies affiliated with the International Society for Trenchless Technology (ISTT) was held at the *Fortezza da Basso* of Florence. The items on the agenda included upcoming steps towards the International No-Dig conferences to be held in Kuala Lumpur in 2020, in Panama in 2021 and in Helsinki 2022.

The Board delegates were also treated to an entertaining Tuscan olive oil tasting that took place before the Chairman' Gala Dinner that was held in same evening in the exclusive venue of La Pergola Theatre, the longest-operating theatre in Italy. They were welcomed by Florence deputy-mayor Cristina Giachi, who underscored the importance of every facet of innovation for the Tuscan capital. A brass sextet provided musical entertainment.

The official conference was kicked off by Florence mayor Dario Nardella on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September and speeches followed from ISTT president Jari Kaukonen, IATT president Paolo Trombetti, the vice-president of ANCE (the Italian national association of building construction firms) Piero Petrucco, the energy sector director of Utilitalia (the Italian association of water, energy and environment agencies) Mattia Sica, and the general director of the Indonesian Ministry of Public Works Sjarief Burhanuddin. After the official speeches and before the ribbon-cutting there was a performance of the Historical Parade of the Florentine Republic, which is a re-enactment of an ancient Tuscan procession in historic costumes, including a performance by standard-bearers tossing their flags in the air in an artistic exchange.

The over 1600 sqm exhibition space provided an opportunity for participating companies to show off the best and latest trenchless technology now available worldwide. Visitors showed great interest in exchanging information and building business opportunities. 50% of the exhibitors were from Europe, 10% from the Americas and Asia, and 40% from Italy. The event also featured a fascinating practical demonstration with machinery for horizontal directional drilling, which was carried out by one of the exhibitors in the Enzo Pazzagli Arts Park using PVC pipes for the no-dig.



The three-day conference generated fruitful meetings and exchanges of expertise among professionals and practitioners from the world of entrepreneurship, academia, sector associations, and public administration. The thought-provoking technical-scientific sessions included 95 papers by world-class experts who outlined the latest innovations and methods. As scientific committee president Prof. Samuel Ariaratnam noted: *“An astounding result both in terms of participation and in terms of the number of final papers accepted. Such a top-level scientific programme hadn’t been seen at the International No-Dig conference in many years.”* The 287 delegates who participated represented 31 countries. 29% were from Italy, 40% from other parts of Europe, 15% from the Americas, 14% from Asia and the remaining 2% from Australia.

Equally popular were the four workshops organized for professionals registered with their respective engineering and geology associations and for the design and technical offices of utilities and public works departments. These workshops drew 150 participants and spawned interesting debates and much food for thought.

Social events included the Gala dinner on Tuesday the 1<sup>st</sup> of October in Florence’s *Certosa* (Charterhouse), a building complex that overlooks the city from the surrounding hills. The 283 guests were welcomed into its courtyards, ancient walls and vaulted ceilings at sunset for an evening of fun, dance and the best culinary traditions.

As per custom, this was the moment for ISTT to present its 2019 Awards to the winners:

- McConnell Dowell Constructors Ltd Watercare in the “New project” category
- SAERTEX multiCom GmbH in the “New technology” category;
- Zahra (Ellie) Kokankar Kouchesfehani and Amin Darabnoush Tehrani, Center for Underground Infrastructure Research and Education (CUIRE); Department of Civil Engineering; The University of Texas at Arlington; Dr. Mohammad Najafi (PI) for the “Academic Research” category.
- Special recognition in the form of a gold medal was awarded to Prof. Samuel Ariaratnam for his constant commitment and professionalism in the sector.

The International No-Dig conference closed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October with an innovative and interesting Plenary Session supported by ISTT and IATT. It saw the Finnish, Italian, French, British, Colombian, Brazilian and U.S. associations illustrate the market developments and future scenarios of trenchless technology. The closing session received great applause and President Jari Kaukonen said he hoped this success could be repeated at the next International No Dig in 2020.

A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who participated in and contributed to the conference’s success. And see you soon!