

# Current approach to Responsibility – how and why to teach it?

Kaarel Sahk

Rural construction and Water management department

Estonian University of life sciences

# Current approach to Responsibility – how and why to teach it?

- Responsibility and teaching of it is directly linked with the diploma with which curriculum graduates will be awarded. In Estonia, the graduates will receive the diploma of engineering, i.e. master degree in real estate is related with an MSc in engineering. From this arises a clear vision that responsibility as a subject will be engineering responsibility.
- According to the common practice, engineers and their professional societies have separate Codes of Ethics that are grounded on general and historical practice in the absence of a regulation like e.g. GAAP for accounting specialists.



# Current approach to Responsibility – how and why to teach it?



- The teaching must also include philosophical motifs. All students must be taught in a way that they are able to meet real estate market needs. After all, compliance is available if market professionals take part in university practice and also supervise the enterprise-based practice.
- Due to the small number of curriculums on the one hand and the heretofore limited interest from the side of firms and professional bodies, this is named exactly the basic mainstream for teaching responsibility.
- It is also evident that different building environment keywords like energy efficiency, sustainability, renewable energy etc must frame the picture. The presentation tries to answer the question how to arrange this on a small real estate education market



# Current approach to Responsibility – how and why to teach it?

- While I receive the call of 14-th ERES educational seminar I found myself thinking:
  - ➔ I have an subject for civil engineers students linked in one part of it with engineering ethics.
  - ➔ Civil engineering curriculum is more and more grounded on 3D design and it's developments – applications 4D, 5D and 6D
  - ➔ I have an experience from professional bodies like Estonian Association of Appraisers or Estonian Association of Civil Engineers or Estonian Society of Heating and Ventilation Engineers
  - ➔ Also some experience and information on the top level of RICS, ASCE, AI



# Current approach to Responsibility – how and why to teach it?



- Also some experience and information on the top **level of RICS, ASCE, AI**
- And why not, while on the worktable are some books like **Socially responsible engineering** by Vallero and Vesilind or Bradley's **Professional responsibility** or Simon Foxell's fresh book, 2019, **Professionalism in the Built environment**,
- And of course a real wish to be back in ERES society, **so as I Remember the 1-st seminar in Alicante and later ones.**

# Current approach to Responsibility – how and why to teach it?

- Some presumptions

- Real estate graduates will receive the diploma of engineering, *i.e* MSc in engineering
- Civil engineers will receive beside diploma the professional certificate.
- Basic professions are more or less connected with Professions act

- Some bases

- Higher education code
- Rule of Studies Regulations
- Professions act
- Building code
- Law of Obligations Act
- Land valuation act
- Codes of Contact of professional bodies

# Current approach to Responsibility – how and why to teach it?

## 2 founding conclusions:

- Real estate or civil engineering graduator should at least respond to responsibility from the viewpoint of engineering
  - with sub-clause that different engineering bodies have their separate approaches, commonly through standards of professions.

and

- Real estate or civil engineering graduator should at least respond to responsibility from the viewpoint of professions
  - with sub-clause that different profession awarding bodies have their approaches of conformity to curricula by approving it.
  - so is guaranteed the accept what market really needs



# The ways to teach Responsibility?

- The way to teach responsibility (personal experience):
  - ➔ As a part of academically studies, *i.e* obligations that are rising from *student's status*, or
    - ➔ As a part of different related subjects like *Real estate appraisal*, or *Construction economics*, or
      - ➔ As a part of some nearly directly subjects like *Project management* or *Construction law and Legal studies*, and
        - ➔ A special subject like *Ethics of Civil engineering*



# Responsibility – what it is?

- A duty or obligation to satisfactorily perform or complete a task (assigned by someone, or created by one's own promise or circumstances) that one must fulfill, and which has a consequent penalty for failure (Business dictionary)

Cambridge dictionary explained: **have responsibility to be in a position of authority over someone and to have a duty to make certain that particular things are done.**

- **Synonyms:** authority, control, power, leadership, management, influence; duty

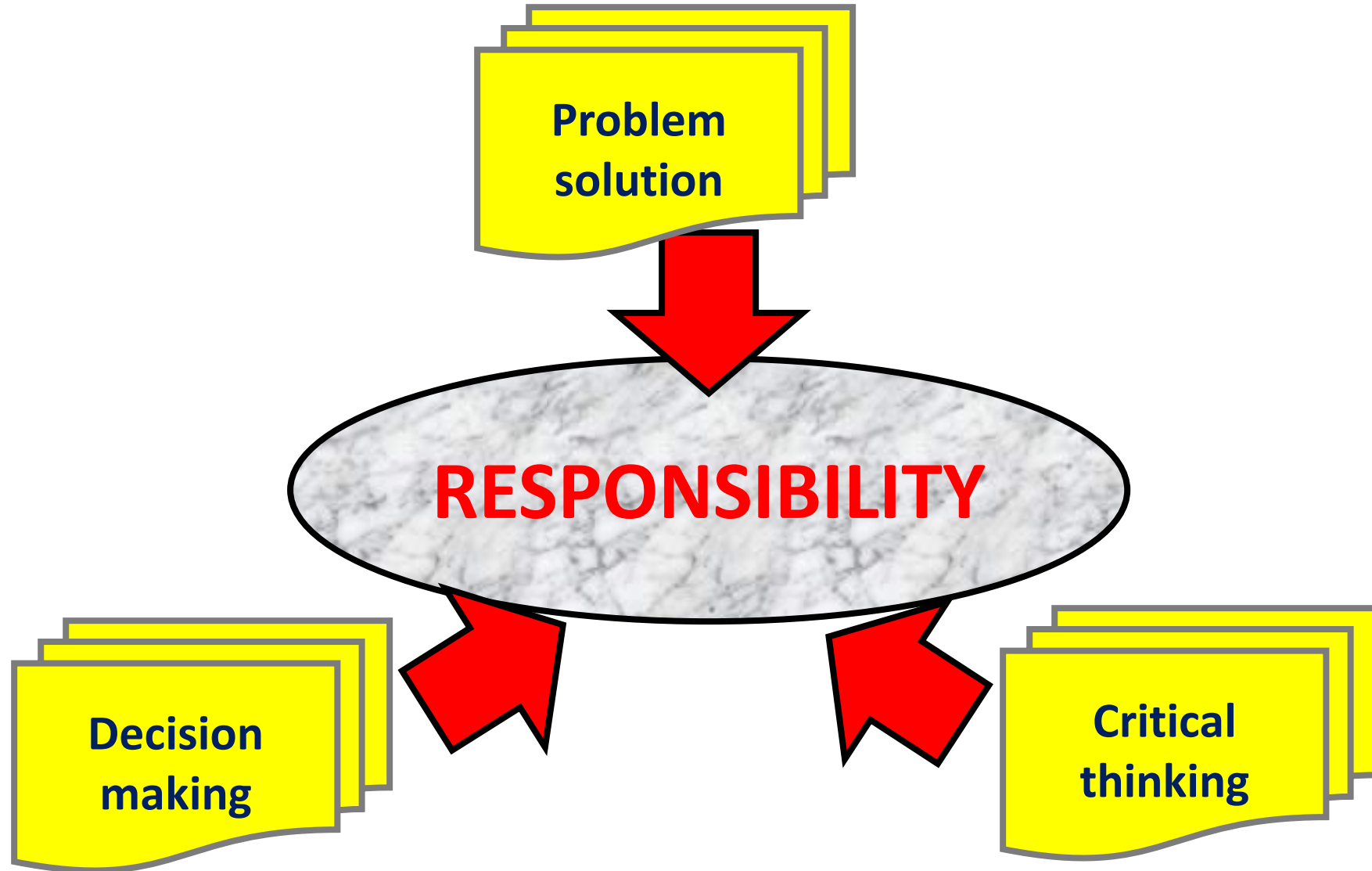
# How I teach it?

- Through different subjects
- Introducing professional activities or
- Linked professional bodies
- Through supervision studies based practice
- Through Bch and MSc thesis supervision, and
- Last but most important – acting as a college

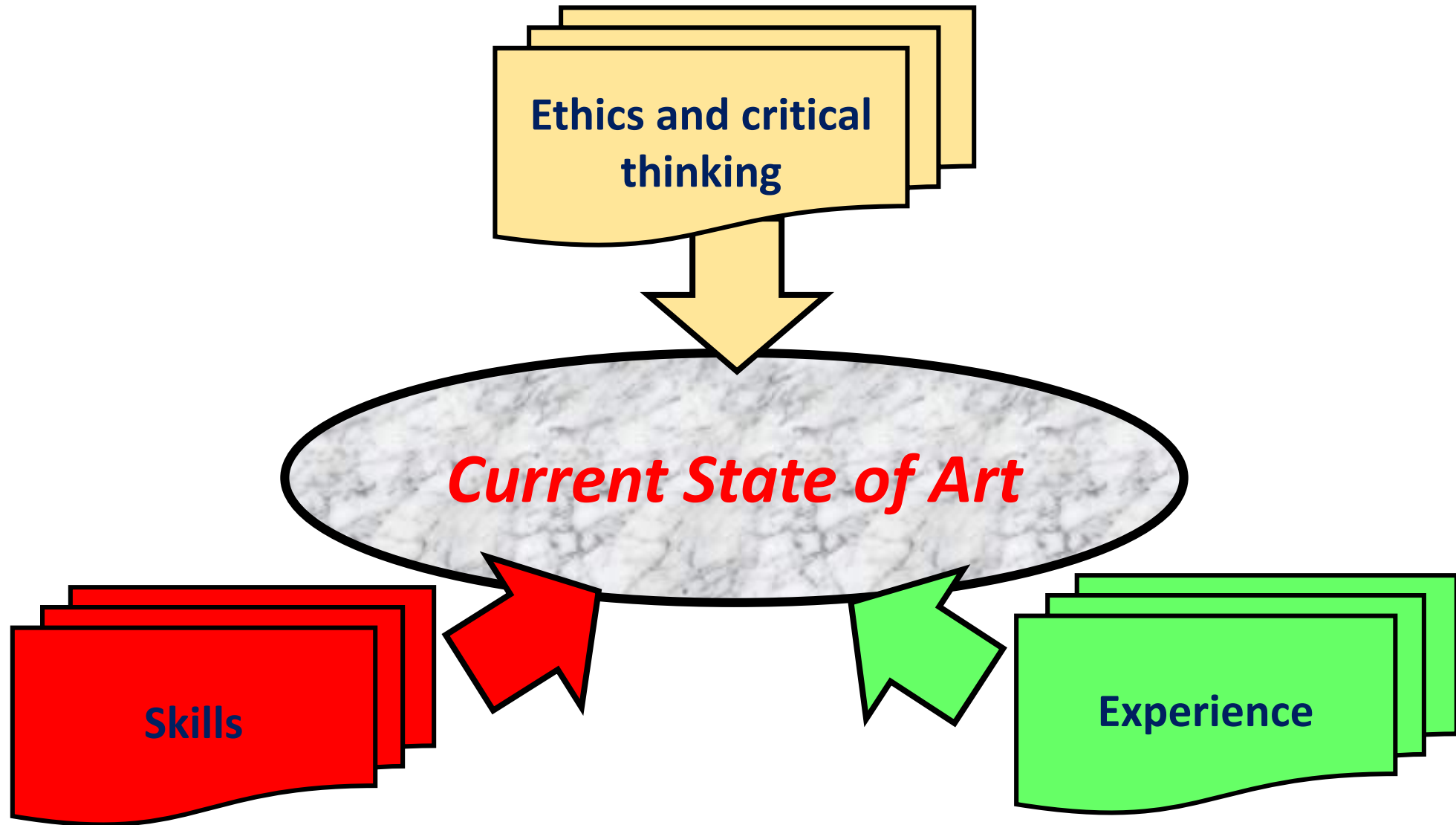
What my teaching include:

- ➔ What the responsibility is?
- ➔ What are the pillars of it?
- ➔ 3 attributes of responsibility
- ➔ Parties interested in, and finally
- ➔ The environment of responsibility

# What the responsibility includes?



# What are the pillars of...?



# 3 attributes of responsibility



- Ethical thinking
- Critical thinking

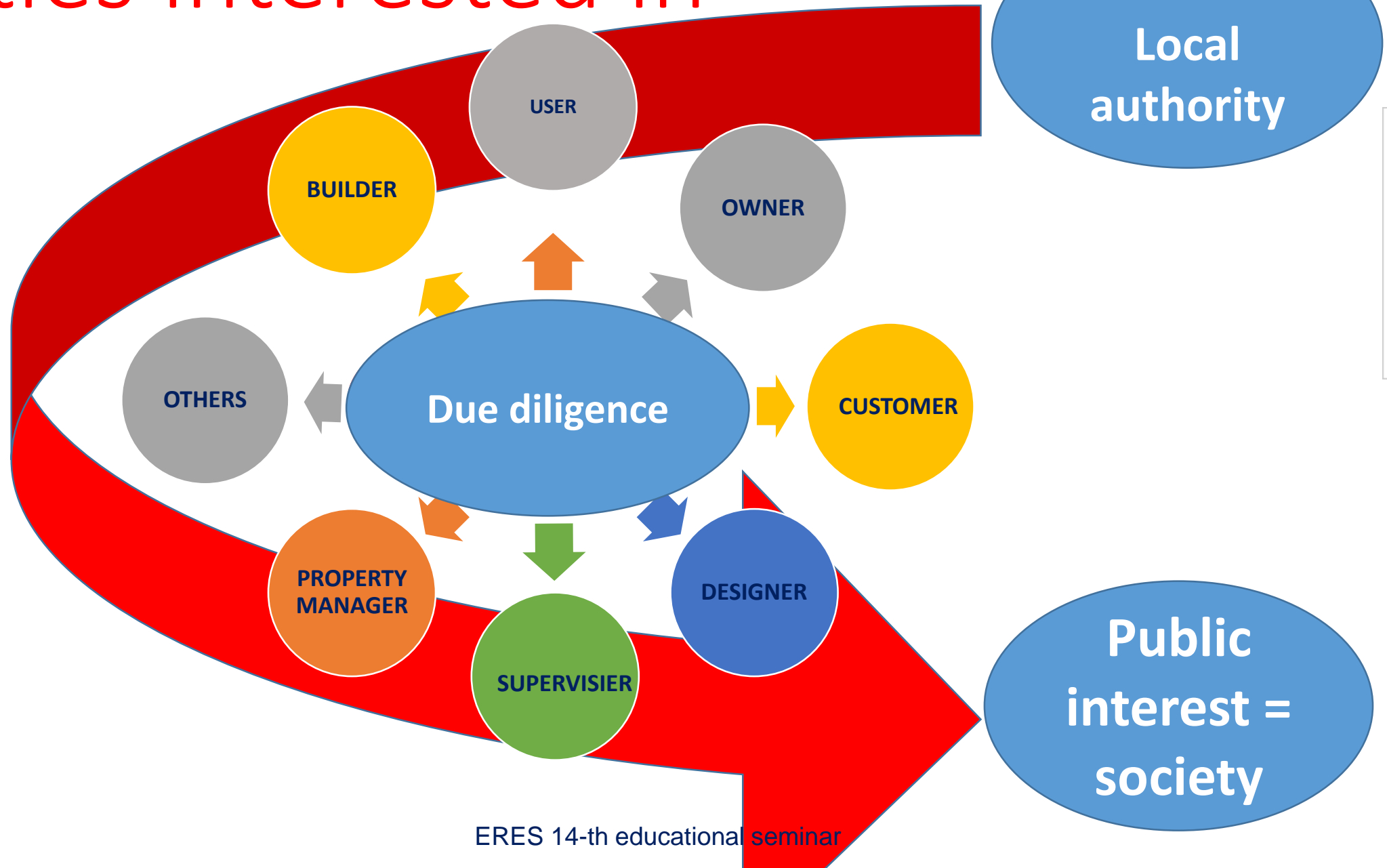


- Know how
- Skills



- Practical experience

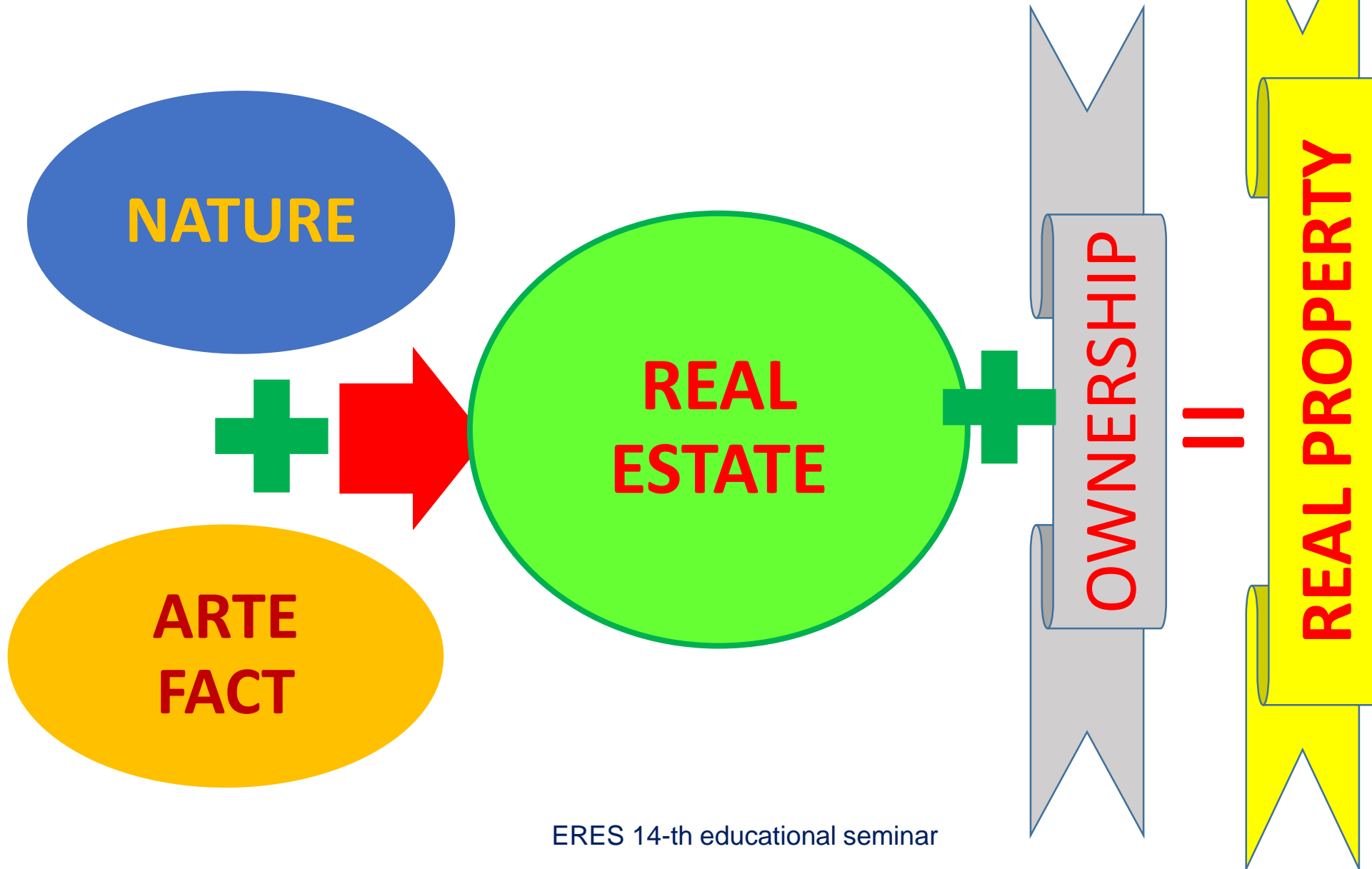
# Parties interested in



ERES 14<sup>th</sup> EDUCATION SEMINAR

- EXCHANGE
- AIMS
- MOTIVATION
- TEAMWORK
- IDEAS
- SOLUTIONS
- DEVELOPMENT

# Environment of responsibility



# What does it mean to be a building professional in the 21st Century

- The authors have proposed a number of essential actions, including:
  - Establishment of a shared identity and vision for practice and education
  - Better procurement processes
  - Increasing the available knowledge about building performance in use
  - Considering the need for an independent 'Institute of Building Performance'
- The debate also considered some shared principles that all individual building professionals might adopt.



# Some elements of a new professionalism

- What the individual professional can do:
  1. Be a steward of the community, its resources, and the planet. Take a broad view.
  2. Do the right thing, beyond your obligation to whoever pays your fee.
  3. Develop trusting relationships, with open and honest collaboration.
  4. Bridge between design, project implementation, and use. Concentrate on the outcomes.
  5. Don't walk away. Provide follow-through and aftercare.



# Some elements of a new professionalism

6. Evaluate and reflect upon the performance in use of your work. Feed back the findings.
7. Learn from your actions and admit your mistakes. Share your understanding openly.
8. Bring together practice, industry, education, research and policymaking.
9. Challenge assumptions and standards. Be honest about what you don't know.
10. Understand contexts and constraints. Create lasting value. Keep options open for the future.





# What an professional thought is

James Wates is the Chairman of CITB and has worked in the construction industry most of his life, starting on site as a schoolboy during holidays.

He joined **Wates Construction** as a management trainee, progressing through line management to running sites before taking on a general manager role in 1989. Since then he has progressed to Chairman of the main Group Board.

He was awarded the CBE in January 2012 for Services to Construction and the Charitable sector.

The firm is largest one family owned construction firm in England

# Why professionalism is as important to the built environment as it is to medicine

- Buildings, like doctors, keep us safe and healthy. They offer protection to us and our families.
- Despite this, the construction industry doesn't have the same reputation the field of medicine does.
- No matter how much people appreciate the buildings they live, work and play in, builders are not nearly as well-regarded as doctors are in our society.
- However, I believe that by raising levels of professionalism within our industry, we can uproot these negative perceptions and improve our reputation for the long-term.

# James Wates words



- Professionalism can be difficult to define but everyone recognises it once it's achieved.
- I get frustrated when I hear about so-called 'cowboy builders' doing shoddy work.
- I hate to think about the poorly built and maintained buildings that fail to keep society's most vulnerable warm and dry.  
James Wates
- I want to see the best and brightest young people pursuing careers in construction, and to do so, we need to challenge the various negative preconceptions that mar our industry
- One issue we need to tackle is the belief held by some that people who study at university don't go on to work in construction.
- One way we are challenging this is by working with industry and government to develop Degree Apprenticeships, a means by which people can earn their university qualification while also gaining on the job experience.

# James Wates thoughts

- We can learn a lot from the medical profession – it has a rich tradition of ethics tracing back to the Hippocratic Oath, giving us standards that we can aspire to.
- Professionals are required to hold a license or achieve acceptance into a chartered institute that sets industry-wide standards in order to practice.
- The construction industry could really benefit from setting and abiding by strong quality standards to embed a culture of excellence – and in so doing build trust within communities
- Also, construction has a large proportion of small and micro-businesses, many of which are just one or two men. These individuals may not feel as though they actively represent the industry when they're at work. They may not have team meetings or a collective space to spend time with colleagues. They may not have colleagues at all.



# Responsibility – what it is – XXI century

- And when there is a distinct lack of cohesiveness, there is a higher risk that the client isn't delivered a high-quality product.

**So we need to band together to stop isolation and segregation and encourage professionalism within individuals, irrespective of job title, in order to improve customer satisfaction and the industry's reputation as a whole.**



# Current approach to Responsibility – how and why to teach it?

These presented slides were an small conclusion of idea how it may look like in small real estate environment on the level of different and analogous curricula

Thank you for your attention!

- Kaarel Sahk, MRISC, MAI, MASCE, MCIB, Chartered civil engineer, State authorized expert, lecturer of Rural Construction and Water Management chair of Estonian University of Life Sciences

[kaarel.sahk@emu.ee](mailto:kaarel.sahk@emu.ee)

