



Observatory PASCAL

Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions

PASCAL UNIVERSITIES REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT PROJECT (PURE)

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Health warning. Please note that this paper derives mainly from the CDG reports, the RVR1s. they are NOT therefore necessarily the ideas and intentions of the regions themselves, especially in respect of notes about Action Plans. These are offered to encourage positive forward thinking, not to say what should be done. Participants from the different regions will update the Workshop on the regions' own latest thinking on each of these subjects.

The participating regions

These notes are based on the reports of visits by the Consultative Development Groups (CDG) to PURE participating regions in March-April 2009. Not all 15 Regional Visit Reports (RVR1s) were available when these notes were written. Some are provisional, and subject to further comment by the host region. These notes are therefore incomplete. None the less they give a good basis for discussion and decision at Vancouver, subject to possible addition and adjustment subsequently.

For convenience regions are identified by first letter in alphabetical order:

Buskerud, Norway	(B)	Darling Downs, Australia	(D)
Essex, England	(E)	Flanders, Belgium	(F)
Gaborone, Botswana	(G)	Glasgow, Scotland	(GI)
Jamtland, Sweden	(J)	Kent, England	(K)
Lesotho (Lesotho)	(L)	Melbourne, Australia	(M)
Northern Illinois, USA	(N)	Puglia, Italy	(P)
South Transdanubia, Hungary	(S)	Thames Gateway, England	(T)
Varmland, Sweden	(V)		

The PURE project benefits from a wide diversity of participating regions. They vary in size (both territory and people), socio-economic profile, and also 'constitutional' character. At one extreme **N** has a population exceeding 9.5 million, and **F** has over 6 million. **P** has over four million people, **M** 3.5m and **L** about 2 million. (The **G** big city CDG visit is deferred to the northern autumn of 2009.) **E** with 1.7 m and **K** with 1.65m, **T** with 1.5m and **S** approaching one million are of medium size. Others are of small population size: several have between 100 and 300k: **B** 254k, **D** 227k, **G** 186k, **J** 127k, and **V** 273k.

Several regions have recently experienced (**D**) or may soon encounter (**J**, **V**) local/regional authority amalgamations. Whereas **P** is an administratively strong region with its own ministerial and cabinet structure and several provinces, **S** is purely a statistical planning region comprising three counties and having no administrative or executive authority at all. **T** is different from all other regions: it is a special purpose



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development and regeneration authority spanning 3 national regions and 17 local authority (LA) areas. **F** is different again: a federated entity within Belgium related to the Flemish community.

The 'natural' region from a university perspective also varies partly with the character of the institution. In the two Australian regions one (**D**) has a jurisdictional area of three recently amalgamated LA areas but its geographical area of economic and social linkage is wider. In the case of **M**, there are four possible meanings of region running concentrically from the City heartland to the whole of the State of Victoria. All are 'correct'.

One Vancouver Workshop session will be devoted to a consideration of the nature and diversity of regions for development and engagement purposes.

Benchmarking

A well tested Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and a draft Regions benchmarking tool were distributed to all regions prior to the CDG visits.

Most regions have not so far felt ready, or had the time, to test the tools. However, it is expected that the CDG visits will have encouraged regions' representatives at Vancouver to be prepared to comment on their relevance and utility to each different region.

M has already put the HEIs tool out to its universities and (at time of writing) four have completed it for that institution. It is also planning to try out the Regions tool, possibly with two different levels of Melbourne region.

For others, the tool is being considered as a main strand in carrying out an action plan in the next 18 months, for example enabling institutions without 3rd mission data-gathering arrangements to discover how much is happening 'locally' in different departments and units, perhaps with a view to developing a clear 3rd mission policy and monitoring arrangements.

B hoped to be able to trial the Regions tool before the Vancouver meeting. Both **G** and **L** reacted favorably, but found the HEI tool daunting, and to be used in different sections with different parts of the University. Feedback will follow on the Regions tool. **J** intends to trial the Regions tool. It is suggested that the **T** Action Plan might evolve around benchmarking. **V** is interested in both tools and is already trying out the HEI tool.

One Vancouver Workshop session will be devoted to a consideration of benchmarking in the PURE project.

Possible examples of good practice in engagement to be developed for publication

Most regions have engagement activities in which they can take pride and which they were pleased to explain to the visiting CDGs. The nature of these visits was not such as to allow firm recommendations for good practice case studies. Also some regions will wish to consider these ideas further in reflecting on the discussions during the visit, and some may have already done so. Some reports suggested a number of possibilities, others none. Possibilities so far suggested are listed in **Annex A**.



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Special interest subjects and cluster groupings

The PURE project was planned with the idea that each region is unique, and its plan of work should be tailored to fit particular circumstances and stages of engagement and development. Also a diverse range of regional partners was deliberately sought, to allow comparison and learning across different circumstances (unitary and federal national systems, large and smaller regions, metropolitan and regional/rural remote, etc).

It was also assumed that among the different aspects of 'engagement' some would be more important than others for the different regions, but that among the 15 there would usually be several sharing an interest in any main topic.

As in the papers for and discussion at the Limerick PURE planning meeting in May 2008, two kinds of special interest may be distinguished: those to do with the *content* or subject-matter of development (economic development, SMEs and innovation systems, active citizenship, environment, tourism, creative industries, mega-events etc); and those to do with *processes* (the nature of national devolution to regions, regional administrative systems, university governance and management, mechanisms for engagement, etc).

PURE is deliberately international/global in scope, and it was assumed that clusters of several regions would span different continents. This assumption still holds up in the light of RVR1 reports. However, it also emerged in several cases that there was merit in linking more neighboring and similar regions which share most in historical, political, cultural and economic senses. This can be seen in the reports from **L** and **G, B, J and V** in particular. It was less clear in the case of Australia where the two regions **D and M** are very different.

The CDG experience also suggests the desirability of seeking to involve additional regions from countries already involved, to allow more intra-national comparison. This came up explicitly in the case of **P** in Italy. Such a development may also assist the process of lobbying for 3rd mission policy development with some national governments.

This should be considered at the Vancouver workshop in the context of a possible 2nd (or subsequent) cohort of PURE regions.

One important question is how regions will participate, and how many different clusters they are able to join. Some regions with strong regional development groups may be able to disperse the effort and engage in multiple clusters by devolution. Also any cost of taking part might thus be shared according to keenness of interest. Participation may take the form of regular electronic and other exchange of information, materials and ideas, together with exchange visits and attachments (possibly for universities by means of graduate students as well as administrators or faculty).

On the other side, there is a question what support PURE centrally can provide to each cluster, and to securing useful linkages between them.

Cluster choice and formation will be a session subject at the Vancouver Workshop. John Tibbitt will assume responsibility for supporting this activity.

Subjects identified as of particular interest and therefore possible bases for creating clusters are listed by Region in **Annex B** to assist participants in identifying possible partners and main themes (*note that this list is incomplete until all RVR1s are available*).



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The following possible special cluster subjects appear likely to attract interest from several regions:

- Innovation and RIA for economic development, SMEs (B G J M P S T)
- Population changes, ageing and brain drain (B D J P V)
- Community, active citizenship, social inclusion, youth (D L P S T)
- Rural and remote communities (B D S V)
- The role of central government (J M S V)
- Environmental sustainability, tourism (B G J S T V)
- HE access and progression, credit transfer, short cycle HE (D M N T)
- Creative and cultural industries and activities (G S T)
- Third mission management issues (J P S)

Action Plans

It would be unrealistic to expect most regions to have anything like a firm action plan, given the early stage of systematic consideration of engagement for many of the partners in some of the regions. Some RVR1s made little reference to action plans; others set out more possibilities for consideration than a region could realistically attempt, to encourage wide thinking.

It is important for PURE participants to do everything possible to have Action Plans agreed by mid-year 2009, allowing time to make and evaluate progress by the time of the June 2010 Jamtland Conference and PURE Workshop twelve months later; and in time to be included in the summative PURE report on the 1st cohort project at the end of the year.

Meanwhile a 2nd round of CDG visits prior to the March 2010 PURE Workshop should enable regions to review progress by that time. In particular, the 2nd round visits will facilitate the sharing of problem-solving as obstacles are encountered. The specialized cluster sub-groups within the project may be especially useful in this way.

The Action Plans will be discussed in a general way in the Vancouver Workshop which is all future action-oriented; but it will be for each region to determine and share within the PURE Network by the end of June 2009 its agreed Action Plan.

References to action plans extracted from the RVR1s and listed below:

(B) Making the University-Region Agreement work in practice:

- Developing the LLL, R&D, Skills and Tourism Competence and Innovation Team.
- Activities around population dynamics - rural depopulation, immigration, rising unemployment.

(D) Developing a sense of identity and direction in the new regional authority:

- Developing effective partnership and trust between all stakeholder partners.
- Determining development priorities and outcomes (next 20 years) and becoming a State 'lighthouse' community engagement pilot



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- (G)** Broaden the local RCG and hold a series of online meetings with the CDG:
- Use the HEI tool to widen involvement within the University and synthesize the results.
 - Cluster and exchange experience with other regions prior to 2nd CDG visit in February 2010.
- (L)** Broaden the local CDG and use online meetings to review progress with the CDG:
- Re-present the PURE project within the University and use the HEI tool to involve Departments and synthesize the results with the help of master's students.
 - Feed back comments on the Regions tool to the PURE network.
 - Cluster and exchange experience with other regions prior to 2nd CDG visit in February 2010.
- (M)** Conduct a series of evaluative case studies of engagement development projects (four identified, to be added to):
- Compare internal university engagement arrangements and the roles of leadership.
 - Monitor and evaluate the evolving role of OKC as the central region-wide linking mechanism.
- (P)** Established a working group on teaching/learning practices in the universities to prepare students better for active citizenship and effective participation in the new knowledge economy:
- The regional government to create an effective forum for the contribution of HE to regional development.
 - Use the PURE HEI benchmark tool to take stock of universities' current attitudes and engagement activities. Develop an inventory of current engagement activities and monitor what they are doing.
 - Use the draft regional tool to identify areas of need and gaps that universities might be able to fill; begin a data collection process.
 - Set up a Universus review group, to report by the end of 2009 on the potential of Universus as a CPE arm for all the Region's universities.
 - Consider the sustainability of Knos and Bollenti Spiriti, and monitor their progress.
- (S)** Monitor engagement in *Pecs European Capital of Culture Year 2010*; treat the whole Year as an action research and learning project:
- In the absence of a regional planning authority, create an effective regular Forum for regional planning
 - Use the two PURE benchmark tools as a backbone for action. The HEIs tool would enable the Universities to see for the first time what its engagement looks like, as a basis for Third Mission development. The Regions tool would help the proposed Forum to clarify the current situation and what it most needs of it universities.
 - Set up an Access and Widening Participation working party focused on 'lower level HE', to look at bridging into vocational career pathways and/or higher education.
- (T)** Evolve an Action Plan around benchmarking, both HEIs and Region.

Annex A

Possibilities examples of good practice suggested so far:

(B) Cluster-based innovation: NCE Systems Engineering ind/univs collaboration:

- Region-University agreement.
- R&D collaborative projects (lighting and health, local food, competence brokerage for tourism initiatives).
- Papirbredden-Drammen city HiBu campus community library and Papirbredden-Innovation business incubator.

(D) Several grassroots community projects with University involvement.

(G) Placement of University of Botswana architecture students with the City:

- The University Business Clinic.
- The University Dept of Environmental Science Environmental Watch and environmental projects.
- Linking University's undergraduate programmes embedding contributions to the City.

(L) Law student involvement in reinterpreting the law for community groups and six other initiatives as listed in the Lesotho RBP.

(M) The Victoria University – Bulldogs alliance

- The work of Deakin University with Geelong City and region
- Dual sector (TAFE and HE) institutions, VET and progression pathways

and several others

(S) The Waste Management system of the City of Pecs involving the University:

- University engagement in preparing for the 2010 European Capital of Culture.
- The regional innovation system and processes at different levels.
- The University of Pecs Romology programme and study of the social inclusion of minority groups through educational, cultural and social policies.
- The University of Kaposvar's engagement with the rural community and economy through its agriculture-related expertise.

(T) Town centre FE and HE provision (Medway and South end)

- Progression arrangements.
- University input to TG analytical resources.
- Consistency of Government support

(V) Technical hunt and other outreach activities linked to human capital strategies.

Annex B

Special interests by Regional for possible cluster formation

(B) Tourism:

- National vs. regional strategic development.
- National/international versus regional R&D collaboration.

(D) Social and civic dimensions of regional engagement:

- Social and economic development in remote rural and regional areas.
- Use of new media technologies for engagement and development.
- Short-cycle TAFE-university higher education.

(G) Economic development and innovation:

- SME development.
- Creative and cultural enterprises.
- Environmental sustainability.

(J) National innovation funding policy and new universities:

- Population change, ageing and brain drain.
- Central government pressure for regional amalgamation.
- Internationalizing regional opportunity and university engagement.
- Regional coordination of development activities.
- Performance monitoring (especially for tourism).
- Practical tools for university management and planning.

(L) Social and civic engagement (with a focus poverty reduction, health, civil society and older adults)

(M) The region' and its meaning for engagement purposes:

- Regional innovation systems and cluster capability, especially with SMEs

(P) Transparency in governance, quality of civic consultation and participation:

- Understanding and carrying out universities' Third Mission.
- Regional capacity for innovation involving HE- innovation systems, especially the SME and creative industry sectors.
- Inter-university collaboration for regional development (Universus).
- Developing the full potential and socio-economic participation of youth.



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(S) (*Some of*) Regional innovation systems, especially the SME sector – regions and their HEIs becoming learning city/regions:

- University third mission and fragmented Faculty autonomy - developing the culture and systems for integrative University engagement.
- Pecs 2010 European Capital of Culture (mega-events).
- Cultural and creative arts.
- Rural and remote peripheral regions in relation to the urban centre(s).
- Tourism (ecotourism involving SMEs, with a distinctive 'green/organic' identity).
- New community forms including NGOs as partners in active civic life.
- Implementing regional development within political uncertainty.

(T) Creative industries:

- Education-led regeneration for poverty reduction and social inclusion
- Supporting SMEs and promoting innovation
- Maximizing opportunities from mega-events (Olympics)
- Best practice credit transfer
- Becoming an eco-environmental region

(V) Regional innovation systems:

- Metrics and templates for evaluating HEI impact on the region

Also common to the 3 Nordic regions:

- Ageing and brain drain
- Low participation in HE in rural areas
- Tourism (R&D, clusters, Centre of Excellence)
- The tension between national and regional policies over HE and innovation
- National/international versus regional R&D collaboration

The multiplicity of players in regional development and belief in larger regions

Chris Duke 8 May 2009