



Observatory PASCAL

Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions

PASCAL UNIVERSITIES REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT PROJECT (PURE)

PURE Briefing Paper No. 8B

Further Advice on Managing CDG Visits March-April 2009

From: Chris Duke, Academic Director PURE

To: Consultative Development Group Lead Reviewer (CLRs) and Region Link Person (LPs) and copied to your CDG Members

Date: February 2009

This short briefing paper follows the main advice for conducting CDG reviews that is contained in Briefing Paper 8A. It is being sent to the two of you: as a CDG team leader (CLR), and as the matching Link Person for your Region. I am copying it to your CDG colleagues as well, so that they are clear about what is being done, and what role they need to play.

I hope that this note will help you to make the most of the CDG visit. These should turn out to be very enjoyable and interesting activities. They will be fully engaging, and quite intense and demanding.

A. Preparing for the visit

Along with this note, the Glasgow Pascal Office will send you a full contact list of all reviewers and all the other host link persons. You are encouraged to make direct contact with anyone in this Network; please copy correspondence to the Pascal office if it might be of wider interest (PUREadmin@educ.gla.ac.uk).

By the time you read this you should have studied BP8A, and looked over the other PURE briefing papers. Please read the Region Profile that has been provided, and is also available on the Pascal PURE Website. Ask Mary Serafim if you encounter any difficulty in accessing the PURE Website (mary.serafim@rmit.edu.au).

Before you visit the Region you will receive its supplementary Regional Briefing Paper (RBP) – Link Partners, please get this in on time! All members of the CDG should become familiar with the Region Profile and the RBP. Use them throughout the visits.

B. The spirit of exchange during the visit

Throughout this visit and through this work, please try to keep in mind what the visits are all about. The CDG is called 'consultative', with an emphasis on being developmental. The idea is to help the Region to understand better what it is wanting to do (maybe even raise its ambitions) and to act as adviser and sounding board in clarifying this and developing good strategies and methods to achieve this.

The whole PURE project (see the different stages set out in BP1) is designed to assist this. From your visit the Region should be able to develop its Regional Action Plan for HEI engagement, decide what special issues it wishes to focus on, and maybe make a note of examples of successful good practice that it wishes to share. Please keep a note of the hot subject of measuring and benchmarking, and report anything of general interest for other PURE regions. Don't forget that the heart of the matter is how to get the best out of higher education for regional development, not just about regional development alone.



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CDG members need to be very good listeners, and to keep focused on the central issues. Please look for connections across your different group meetings and visits. Maybe raise issues from one meeting that seem helpful to clarify questions coming up elsewhere. While remaining tactful, if you see apparent contradictions, try to bring the points together and resolve what the reality is.

The Link Partner should try to keep this approach in mind is creating the programme of meetings for the CDG.

C. Benchmarking tools

You will have the draft Higher Education Benchmarking Tool, sent out with BP8A. As Region Link Person partnering the CDG you have this for distribution to HEIs. You will both receive before the visit a draft Region Benchmarking Tool.

Both these Tools are being pioneered in the first round of CDG visits. We will all be interested to hear how you use of them (as Regions and as CDGs) on this first occasion. The Regions should continue to use the tools throughout the PURE project period and after. These lay down a basis from which to assess change and a means to track progress from this baseline.

D. The first meeting

These Benchmark Tools should be introduced in the opening meeting. Here the CDG will meet the Regional Coordinating Group (RCG) and a range of stakeholders from different sectors in the Region and its HEIs. How far and in what way the tools are used or referred to after that will depend on the CDG, and on local circumstances and the judgement of both the CDG and the Link Partner.

The Link Person arranges this and the later meetings, including any visits thought to be necessary. The CDG takes the lead in the first meeting, explaining the whole PURE project and its main purposes, as well as the purpose of the CDG visit, and inviting questions and clarification.

In other meetings the initiative lies with the regional participants to tell the CDG briefly their purposes, hopes and obstacles for practising engagement between high education and other partners – and prospective partners – in the region. This will lead into open discussion and exchange, in which the CDG will try to pursue its main interests and leads in understanding what the institutions and groups in the Region are attempting, and what might done to enhance their success.

E. Immediate CDG preparation

If you have not already done so, as Coordinating Lead Reviewer (CLR) you should now make contact with the other members of the CDG by e-mail. You may wish to exchange ideas on what looks important, interesting and problematic about the region, and what in particular you wish to explore when you are there. If you need more initial information, you should write to the Region Link Person seeking this. Please, LP, do your best to help.

If the CDG feel that they particularly wish to explore a topic or meet particular parties, as CLR you should let the LP know this right away. LP, please try to make arrangements for this, within the limited time available.

The time will seem very short to do all that the CDG may want to. We had to compromise, making visits quite brief, since many CDG members are very busy. Also, the demands of these visits on local organisers (LPs and colleagues) are considerable, even for a brief visit.



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F. Using the time well during the visit

It will be evident that CDG members should not plan to do anything else 'on the side' during the time of the review visit itself - they may by arrangement arrive earlier, or stay on privately afterwards. Team members will need to keep and compare notes as they go along. This will make it easier to produce a clear, brief, fully agreed report, once the visit has been completed. The CDG should meet for initial briefing on arrival and before the Region meetings begin, and get some private time as a team each day or evening there to debrief.

Your CDG should begin drafting its summary report as it goes along, sharing out responsibility for recording key points. The exact shape of your short report for Vancouver is left to the CDG to decide, using the issues from the Region's Profile and Briefing Paper. This will help take the whole PURE project forward, including creating cluster sub-groups of regions.

It will be desirable for the CDG to meet with the Regional Coordinating Group (RCG) and others at the end of the visit for a brief summary of their interim findings and impressions, both as a check and in case the RCG has points to add for further consideration.

As we all know, the regions are diverse in many ways. What kind of region works best for what kind of purpose will be of important shared interest for the whole Network of regions and PURE participants.

To help your team construct its Vancouver report (which we are calling RVR1 as in BP8A) a simple checklist is provided in Annex 1 below.

A separate note is also provided in Annex 2 of specialist interests so far identified in the Regional Profiles that have already been completed.



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ANNEX I

Points to include in your short Regional Visit Report (RVR1) for the Vancouver PURE Plenary Workshop

- A brief sketch of essential regional characteristics important to understanding what follows (this should be available from the Regional Profile).
- The main planning hope and priorities, and the main obstacles and barriers to more effective partnership, in engaging universities in regional development. This can include national policy and administration, cultural attitudes, how regions are organised and work, the management of higher education institutions, attitudes to the public, private or third sector, etc. as well as more obvious resource constraints.
- For both of these topics, it will be useful to identify the different areas of regional development (as used in the earlier pre-PURE planning discussions at Shannon):
 - Civic and citizenship.
 - Cultural.
 - Economic.
 - Environmental.
 - Social including health.
- A note of any of the critical national policy issues (also identified at Shannon) that may influence and preoccupy all regions.
- And specifically how the region perceives and is responding to the new (financial, economic and wider) global crisis that has occurred since PURE was planned.
- Your CDG's central (tentative and interim) findings and advice, in addressing these five broad areas.

In addition RVR1 should list the following, where applicable:

- (i) Possible specialist sub-group cluster subjects (and possible partner regions).
- (ii) Possible examples of good practice that may be written up later.
- (iii) Initial use of and reactions to the Benchmarking Tools.
- (iv) If possible, first indicative notes about a Region Action Plan.



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ANNEX II

Indications of special interest from Regional Profiles that may be a basis for Regional Clusters to be agreed at Vancouver in May.

Note that this is a rough, provisional and incomplete list from those Profiles already completed. These will be added to from the areas identified or confirmed in the RVR1s.

The list is being provided now to stimulate thought and interest as the CDG visits draw closer and take place. It may help Regions to think more about their own special interests and indicate sub-clusters that they might wish to join. Sub-clusters will require clarification of purpose and scope, as well as strong enough interest among enough participant regions. At least two 'twinning' regions would be needed in any event; but clusters of 4-5 regions would be more productive.

These special interests have been identified so far (not in popularity order):

- Creative arts and cultural engagement strategy.
- Closer university-business cooperation.
- Customer-supplier relations, also hi-tech industry cooperation.
- Tourism and especially ecotourism in various forms.
- Reducing poverty and social exclusion.
- Metrics for impact evaluation.
- Small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
- The elderly, also other health issues.
- Innovation and regional innovation systems (RIS).
- Ecological sustainability.
- Building learning cities and regions, developing regional leadership.
- Migrant populations.
- Strengthening civil society for democracy, human rights etc.